

## **Teachers' Perceptions toward the Implementation of School-Based Curriculum (SBC) in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

As the government of Indonesia has decided to implement School-Based Curriculum (SBC), some issues on readiness of the schools and teachers have gradually emerged. The curriculum demands the teachers to be independent in teaching, including developing their own syllabus, and it has become an ordeal to those teachers who are not ready. This small qualitative study was to find out (1) teachers' perception toward the implementation of the SBC and (2) their problems in implementing the SBC and their actions on fixing the identified problems. The subjects were two English teachers from different schools in Lampung. The research instrument was a set of interview questions. It was found that the teachers were positive toward the SBC implementation regarding understanding of the SBC, syllabus organization, demands on teachers' creativity and innovation, and problems encountered by teachers. The obtained data revealed the teachers turning to group discussion and peer teaching.

**Keywords:** *perceptions, teachers' perception, SBC (School-Based Curriculum), implementation*

### **1. Introduction**

A curriculum serves as guidelines for the implementation of education in a country. Each country has developed its curriculum along the line of cultural, social and economic developments for the country's well-being. As explained by Nunan (1998), curriculum is one of the important factors involved in teaching and learning process where the teachers are the main agent of curriculum development. Richard (2001) elaborated the definition of curriculum to include all activities in which children engage themselves under the guidance and directions of the school. It is not simply about what students learn, but how they learn it, how teachers help them learn, using supporting materials, teaching-learning styles, methods of assessment, and educational facilities as pertinent to specific contexts.

### **2. Background of the Study**

#### **2.1 The School-Based Curriculum of Indonesia**

Since 1947, the government of Indonesia has developed its own curriculum, namely "Learning Plan 1947." From that moment, curriculum has been changed ten times (edukasi.kompasiana.com). The changes were to cope up with the ever-changing needs of students from time by time. With changes made, teachers as the key factors have to adjust themselves and their teaching-learning approaches to ensure success of the curriculum. Those responsible for the curriculum implementation, have to be creative in teaching methods, learner-centered activities, and assessment tools. In particular, teachers need to familiarize themselves with computer-assisted instruction, project-based instruction, the use of learners' achievement portfolio (Levin, 2001; Erdogan, 2015), and the use of new techniques like picture series in support of language skills development (Novita, 2014.), to name but a few.

Until now, the SBC revision in 2013 has been in its full operations stage. The current SBC curriculum was designed and developed on the basis of Government Regulation Number 20/ 2003. In this curriculum, teachers are required to act as curriculum developers and implementers; teachers are authorized to develop the syllabus relevant to their educational context, devise their own lesson plans, select or develop their teaching materials, and teaching media.

Generally speaking, teachers are now assigned with a new role in decisionmaking in support of the development and implementation of the curriculum. Those teachers who are not ready for being independent in their teaching context have encountered difficulty in responding to their learners' needs. As pointed out by Damayanti (2008), teachers still did not understand the differences between the SBC and the previous curriculum. Moreover, the teachers were required to adjust their teaching styles to fit in the new role; however, quite a number of teachers were not able to move away from the teacher-centered approach.

## 2.2 Teachers' Perception

Since perception is one of the key terms in this research, the researcher reviewed some literature regarding the meaning of *perception* and the process evolving out of perception. This research examined the teachers' perception of the new SBC curriculum regarding its implementation (edukasi.kompasiana.com).

Some prominent researchers have defined the term *perception* from different perspectives. Harrow (1972) defined perception as the process of becoming aware, attending to, or interpreting stimuli. Chaplin (1981) said that perception is the process of knowing objects and objectives events by means of the senses.

It is interesting that Sperling (1983) elaborated the definition of perception into an act of interpreting a stimulus registered in the brain by one or more sense mechanisms. According to him, there are several elements of perception, such as:

2.2.1 Personal feelings. Attitudes, drives and goals that are any mental fact, emotion, and strong desire can be seen to have an influence on a personal response because those are different from others.

2.2.2 The sensory nature of the stimulus, that is a perception, is based on the stimulus of the sensory because there is a comparison, nearness, connection, and closure of something.

2.2.3 The background or setting of the stimulus is related to the fact that we do not perceive objects as remote elements.

2.2.4 Learning-experienced teachers have their opinion about what they have received and what they want to do with the object of learning.

Richard (1985) pointed out that perception is the recognition and understanding of events, objects, and stimuli through the use of senses. Humans have capability to process what they hear and what they see, Then they categorize it and divide it into an experience or sensation which is called perception. Richard's definition was in line with Chaplin (1981), who emphasized the senses in contact with the process of knowing objects and objectives events.

It is without doubt that people have their own sensory mechanism and stimulus in their mind. They are able to interpret persons or objects around them by using their own learning capacity to interpret. In other words, each person carries a unique perception of his or her own, as derived from previous learning experience as well as exposure to acquisition of prior knowledge about phenomena.

The process of perception is vitally important to individual teachers in that it determines what and how they discern information inputs. They have their own interpretation of what and how to conceptualize, analyze, and sort out the target information for their own use and decision-making in specific situations.

The issue on perception was of prime importance in this research for the fact that teachers' perception was to determine their action upon what and how to implement the SBC curriculum as prescribed by the government's policy. The researcher also tried to identify problems encountered by the teachers in the curriculum's implementation process and their attempts at solving the problems.

### **3. Research Objectives**

This study aimed to find out (1) teachers' perception toward the School Based Curriculum (SBC) and (2) problems the teachers have encountered in implementing the SBC. It was expected that the obtained findings should shed light on the current practices of teachers at the implementation stage of the curriculum and then serve as resource data for the administrators at the school level as well as policy makers at the national level for practical actions to be taken by authorities concerned.

### **4. Research Methodology**

The study used a qualitative method to obtain data on perception and problems concerned from teachers. The researcher developed an interview instrument consisting of a set of questions on the SBC implementation and problems encountered by the teachers. Brief details on the subjects and the instrument are given below.

#### **4.1 The Subjects**

Since the research was a small qualitative study exploring teachers' perception in depth, the researcher looked for two volunteering teachers under administration of two separate schools to obtain data from different school contexts. The purpose in using two schools was not meant for comparison, but to detect any possible variation of practices in the stage of curriculum implementation. Two experienced teachers in the subject of English were willing to participate in the study and provide data as needed by the researcher.

#### **4.2 Research Instruments**

The contents of all interview questions were validated by three curriculum specialists prior to their actual use for data collection. The final version of the interview instrument consisted of ten open-ended questions on teachers' perception toward the SBC and problems encountered in the SBC implementation. The questions were written in Bahasa Indonesia to facilitate understanding of the interviewed teachers. These questions were guided by the work of Creswell (2012) who emphasized that open-ended interview questions should give

freedom to respondents in volunteering any information they consider relevant and appropriate, or holding back any information they may not wish to inform. It should be noted that the conducted interviews were not meant for the interviewer-researcher and the subjects to interact in the way that both could reciprocally influencing each other, as cautioned in the work of Kvale (1996).

## **5. Data Collection**

The researcher arranged with two volunteering teachers for face-to-face interviews to secure data in depth and in detail in the first place. However, both teachers were in two schools with different environments of education in Lampung, Indonesia, and were not conveniently accessible due to distance in school location. It was therefore agreed by both teachers to provide their responses by telephone.

## **6. Data Analysis**

All interview data were recorded for subsequent transcription. To avoid bias from subjectivity, the researcher coded the teachers' identity. The transcribed data were later verified by the two interviewed teachers to ensure accuracy in data analysis. All data pertinent to the SBC implementation and problems encountered with practical solutions were screened out as responsive to the research objectives.

## **7. Results and Discussion**

This research attempted to find out about the teachers' perception toward the SBC implementation, including the extent to which they understand the SBC. The teachers were expected to give data on their difficulties in implementing the SBC and how they handled those reported difficulties.

### **7.1 Perception: General Understanding**

From the results of the interview with ten open-ended questions on the two focused themes on curriculum implementation and encountered problems, it was found that both teachers had a good understanding of the SBC and were positive toward its implementation. Both were able to perceive the process of the SBC and take appropriate action on the curriculum implementation (Harrow, 1972; Chaplin, 1981; Richards, 1985). Their perception in terms of understanding was summarized as shown below.

- SBC is an operational curriculum developed and implemented by each school / education units, and developed in accordance with the conditions of the school, potential areas/ regional characteristics, socio-cultural community, and the needs of the students participants.
- SBC is a curriculum that gives authority to the individual schools to devise their own syllabus and in accordance with the conditions of their respective schools.

### **7.2 Implementation: Teaching Preparation**

As for how teachers' perception can lead them to appropriate and practical implementation, both teachers responded to the new demands of the SBC by developing a relevant syllabus and creating media and materials for their teaching. They noted that they

worked with other teachers in groups and secured peer support in team work for teaching performance assessment, as required by the SBC as well as their school.

The two interviewed teachers' responses to the questions on the SBC implementation, with a focus on the stage of teaching preparation were summarized as shown below.

- Finding sources and materials as well as innovative media and acceptable and efficient for students.
- I use school textbooks. But only as a supplement textbook learning activities my class.
- I tried to use variations in classroom teaching methods in accordance with the conditions and needs of learners.

Both teachers adopted teaching materials not only from textbooks given by their school, but also from other books they considered appropriate for their students. They explained that some teachers at their school created their own materials and did not use textbooks given to them by the school. The majority of teachers created their own teaching media because the schools were not able to provide facilities in support of their teaching, as prescribed by the SBC. The changes demanded by the new curriculum have put teachers under pressure in adjusting themselves and their teaching-learning approaches to ensure success of the new curriculum by being creative in a learner-centered mode (edukasi.kompasiana.com).

### 7.3 Problems Encountered and Practical Solutions

The interviewed teachers further explained that quite a few teachers at their school did not understand what they should do to reach the goal as specified by the SBC. Besides, some teachers were not able to be creative in their teaching as demanded by the SBC. In general, teachers were not able to gain insights into what to do to make their teaching *learner-centered*. Their responses were summarized as shown below.

- Media, and the source material should always be innovative.
- Sharing with other English teachers, such as the example in MGMPs.
- The difficulty may be in the preparation of syllabus and lesson plans because many are not yet understood. I myself still do not understand well about the SBC. But now it is introduced with the new curriculum.
- Sharing with principals and associates who know much more about SBC.
- Following a workshop on SBC.
- Looking for information on other sources such as books and the Internet.

Both interviewed teachers noted that most teachers in their school resorted to teachers' group discussion and peer assessment of teaching in order to evaluate their performances. Such a solution, to very many, proved helpful in their attempts at the SBC implementation. This point on teaching adjustment was emphasized by Damayanti (2008), who cautioned that teachers might not be able to move away from the teacher-centered approach to the learner-centered approach as required by the new curriculum.

## 8. Conclusion

As shown in this small qualitative study, school teachers have their own perception toward the implementation of the new curriculum. Their positive or negative perceptions will definitely determine their implementation of the prescribed curriculum. The two teachers in Lampung volunteered data on the SBC regarding their perception toward the new curriculum, their implementation attempts, followed by identified problems with solutions, as experienced by them and their peer teachers. Both teachers were positive to changes demanded by the curriculum.

It should be noted that those authorities concerned in the development and implementation of the new curriculum need to be aware of urgency in teachers' professional development in the areas needed to make the new curriculum a possible success. They cannot simply let those teachers struggle on their own in trying to be "creative" or "innovative." A new curriculum without its implementation training could perhaps do more harm than good to education at large, particularly learners in compulsory education. The new curriculum cannot be run on its own by demanding teachers to have their own interpretation of what to do now and next. All teachers' actions upon the newly prescribed curriculum will certainly have impacts on human capital to be developed for the social and economic well-being of the country.

## 9. The Author

Annisa Putri is a professor in education, currently working for Indonesia University of Education, Bandung, Indonesia. Her research interests include curriculum implementation, teaching and learning activities, educational management, and teachers' professional development.

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