



Exploration of Innovative Pedagogical Practices in Implementing an Independent Curriculum as a Manifestation of Independent Learning in The Diversity of Students

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Abstract: This study aims to identify and analyze innovative pedagogic practices that have emerged in response to the implementation of an independent curriculum in the context of Student Diversity, a curriculum that emphasizes teacher autonomy and student learning independence. This research uses qualitative approach with Case Study Method. Data collection techniques used in-depth interviews, participatory observation in class, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and documentation analysis. Informants of this study were teachers and principals in a public elementary school in Sumedang, West Java. The data analysis technique used in this study is Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three main stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. The results of this study indicate that high awareness among teachers of the importance of a strong foundation of pedagogic Science in implementing the Independent curriculum. This awareness encourages the creation of more integrated, collaborative, and student-centered learning, with a focus on developing each individual's unique potential. The study also identifies various examples of innovative pedagogic practices applied, such as differentiated learning to accommodate individual differences, project-based learning to increase relevance and engagement, and creative utilization of technology to enrich students learning experiences. The implications of the findings of this study indicate that teachers who have a high pedagogical awareness are able to design inclusive learning and responsive to student diversity. It is becoming an important foundation for the development of educational policies that support teacher autonomy and differentiated learning, as well as the strengthening of Teacher Learning Communities for the continuous improvement of professionalism.

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Introduction

Education in the global era requires transformation that is adactive and responsive to the dynamics of change and individual diversity. The implementation of the independent curriculum in Indonesia has now entered a new phase in the national education landscape. Carrying the philosophy of Merdeka Belajar, this independent curriculum provides great autonomy to educational units and teachers to continue to develop pedagogical practices in learning that are relevant and in accordance with the needs and characteristics of students (Kampus et al., 2024). Education truly aims to produce superior human beings, the curriculum is a guideline for the continuity of learning in schools in order to achieve a learning goal, the independent curriculum is present as a bridge from changes or challenges of the times that continue to develop (Wardani et al., 2024).



Merdeka belajar, inspired by the thought of Ki Hajar Dewantara, emphasizes the independence of student learning, freedom in choosing how to learn, and relevant learning tailored to the needs of students (Relevansi & Diferensiasi, 2023). The implementation of the independent curriculum is an approach that emphasizes diversity in learning, the content in this learning is focused on the essential (Tauhid et al., 2024). Teachers can use different learning approaches tailored to the needs of each student who has unique characteristics (Wahyudi et al., 2023). The diversity of students including differences in socio-economic background, culture, initial abilities, learning styles, and interests is a uniqueness that needs to be accommodated in the learning process (Sukri et al., 2024).

The educational paradigm continues to develop and undergo transformation towards 21st century education known as the knowledge era (Siswa et al., 2024). Efforts to adapt and implement independent curricula grow from a variety of innovative pedagogical practices that may not have been widely published. These innovative pedagogical practices are often referred to as “Hidden Gems” which have the potential to be a source of inspiration and valuable learning for the community of educators in realizing inclusive and quality Independent Learning (Qurota et al., 2024). Therefore, an in-depth analysis of these practices is crucial to identify the characteristics, mechanisms, and impacts of their implementation in accommodating student diversity, in the hope of formulating effective, inspiring, and replicable learning models or principles to improve the quality of inclusive education.

The dynamics of independent curriculum implementation has encouraged the emergence of a variety of teacher pedagogical adaptations in response to curriculum demands and student diversity. This study seeks to identify and analyze in depth innovative pedagogical practices that emerge as teachers' creative responses to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the context of student diversity (Sukri et al., 2024). The main focus is on understanding how these practices concretely embody the principles of Independent Learning, such as the personalization of learning, the freedom to choose how to learn, and the relevance of the material to the individual needs of the student. By examining the unique characteristics, implementation mechanisms, and challenges and support encountered in these practices (Iriansyah et al., 2023).

The specific problem faced by schools is the low readiness of some teachers in applying the principles of Independent curriculum, especially in designing differentiated and contextual learning. In addition, there are still gaps in understanding of the role of innovative pedagogical technologies and practices, as well as limited resources in supporting personalized learning. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze innovative pedagogic practices used by teachers in implementing independent curricula in the midst of a diversity of student characteristics. This study also aims to describe how the principle of Independent Learning is manifested through an inclusive and contextual learning approach.

The findings of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of educational theory and practice in Indonesia, especially in the context of the implementation of The Independent curriculum and the management of student diversity. In practice, the results of this study are expected to provide concrete examples and strategic recommendations for teachers, principals, and policy makers in designing and implementing learning that is more responsive to diverse learning needs (Merdekawaty & Suryani, 2024). Furthermore, this research has the potential to enrich knowledge about pedagogic innovations that are rooted in the local context and relevant to the educational challenges of the 21st century, thereby ultimately contributing to improving the quality of education that is equitable and in favor of the entire potential of diverse students.



Research Method

This research uses qualitative approach with Case Study Method. This approach aims to understand the meaning, experience, and perspective of teachers related to innovative pedagogical practices in the implementation of independent curricula and to accommodate student diversity. According to (Mahkrus and Hakim, 2020 in (Resmiyati et al., 2024) research that uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, means that the data obtained is entirely based on field findings that are processed by understanding field conditions. The type of research used is a multiple Case Study, this type of research examines several cases that show innovative pedagogic practices that are relevant to determine the immediate situation in the field related to the implementation of independent curriculum with a focus on research in pedagogic studies.

Case study as a research method or strategy to reveal a particular case in depth, including the background, circumstances, and interactions that occur. In line with (Dewi, 2019), states that a plural case study (multiple case study) is a case study research that uses many issues or cases in one study, which can focus on one issue and utilize many cases to explain it. The source of data in this study involved participants 3 internal teachers, 1 external Teacher, 1 internal principal, and 1 external principal. The place of this study on one of the state Elementary School Sindangraja in Sumedang, West Java. Teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam (In-depth Interviews), Observasi Partisipatif atau Non Partisipatif, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) dan dokumentasi.

The data analysis technique used in this study is Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. Data reduction is done by filtering and sorting important information from interviews, observations, and documentation. Furthermore, the data is presented in narrative and chart form for easy interpretation. Finally, conclusions are drawn through a reflective process with triangulation to ensure the validity of the findings.

Results and Discussion

A change of course will not immediately change the old things into new things, as is the case in education in Indonesia today. In Indonesia, the world of education is at a crossroads, facing transformation through an independent curriculum. A big question arises, “*will merdeka belajar really manifest in such a rich diversity of students?*”. This research seeks to answer these questions by exploring emerging innovative pedagogic practices. The data of this study were obtained through a series of in-depth interviews, participatory observations in the classroom, and focused group discussions (FGDs). Participants in the study included:

- 1) Principal of SD Negeri Sindangraja (1 person).
- 2) Principal of SD AR'rafi BHS (1 person).
- 3) Primary School Teachers (2 teachers of grades 1 and 2).
- 4) High School Teachers (2 teachers of grades 4 and 6).

The principal of SD Negeri Sindangraja stated that innovative pedagogic practices have been implemented with an independent curriculum, although from the results of field interviews it was seen that there were some teachers who still considered this change a challenge. School preparation includes following the direction of the supervising coach, training from related parties, as well as learning and evaluating through the Learning Community (KOMBEL) and the teaching independence Platform (PMM). In addition, the



school integrates several elements of pedagogical practice in the implementation of an independent curriculum in the school environment.

From the principal's point of view and also the view that emerges from teacher interviews, the implementation of Independent curricula, particularly in pedagogic practices with a unique diversity of students, is not just about replacing books or teaching methods, but more than that, it is about transforming mindsets. Teachers should see this change as not just a burden, but as a golden opportunity to innovate and develop themselves. The school encourages a strong collaborative culture, including through combos, PMMS, and weekly "learning clinic" sessions. In this session, teachers present their challenges in practicing pedagogy, and other teachers can share their experiences and *treatment* appropriate treatment, for example in dealing with students with diverse learning styles in low and high grades. Nevertheless, the data shows that in SDN Sindangraja, the application of pedagogical practices in the implementation of Independent curriculum motivated by diverse student differences, is still in the process of balancing with the ability of each teacher in digesting various changes.

Innovative pedagogic practices in the implementation of Independent curricula

Innovative pedagogic practices in the independent curriculum can simply be interpreted as ways of teaching that are creative, new, and different from conventional practices applied by teachers in implementing the applicable curriculum. In SDN Sindangraja can be interpreted as ways of teaching that are creative, new, and different from conventional practices. Examples of this practice include:

- a) **Differentiated learning:** teachers use a differentiated learning approach to adapt to the needs and level of readiness of students, especially in the lower grades. This strategy adapts learning content, processes, and products according to each student's needs, interests, learning styles, and readiness levels so that they can develop optimally without feeling frustrated. This approach emphasizes that no one single method is suitable for all students, so teachers need to develop a flexible range of materials, methods and assessments.
- b) **Pembelajaran Berbasis Projek (*Project-Based Learning (PBL)*):** in line with the Spirit Of The Independent curriculum, learning is directed at relevant and contextual projects. The aim is for students to explore actual issues and develop character and competence according to the Pancasila student profile. From the interview data, teachers of SDN Sindangraja saw PBL as very effective in actively involving students, where students seek, create, and present their work. For example, the project "Clean Environment at school" in high grades not only develops environmental knowledge, but also trains collaboration, creativity and a sense of responsibility. This method provides space for students to choose topics according to their interests, accommodating the diversity of preferences and potential of students.
- c) **Creative use of technology:** Data shows teachers are using technology to increase student engagement and understanding, and to provide diverse and accessible learning resources. The use of this method favors a more inclusive and adaptive learning to the differences in students' abilities.

The method mentioned by teachers at SDN Sindangraja provides space for students to choose topics according to their interests, thus accommodating the diversity of preferences and potential of students. Innovative pedagogical practices must certainly integrate technology, teachers utilize technology to increase student engagement and understanding, and provide a variety of diverse and easily accessible learning resources (Tanggulungan et



al., 2024). This is supported by the view (Zakso et al., 2022). That the use of this method favors a more inclusive and adaptive learning to the different abilities of students. Overall, innovative pedagogic practices in the Merdeka curriculum emphasize flexible, contextual, and student-centered learning with a variety of needs and characteristics, so as to effectively accommodate student diversity. This practice is driven by a deep understanding of how students learn, meeting their individual needs, and the goals and principles of the curriculum that will be implemented by educators (Sakti et al., 2023).

Overall, innovative pedagogic practices in the Merdeka curriculum emphasize flexible, contextual, and student-centered learning with a variety of needs and characteristics, so as to effectively accommodate student diversity. This practice is driven by a deep understanding of how students learn, meeting their individual needs, and the goals and principles of the curriculum that educators will implement. The use of PBL model is expected to develop 21st century competencies such as problem solving, critical thinking, and communication. Projects relevant to everyday life will allow students to see the relevance of learning to the real world, increase motivation and engagement, and create diversity that brings mutually beneficial learning outcomes.

Through a combination of learning, SDN Sindangraja shows its commitment to realizing the essence of the independent curriculum that is centered on students, respects diversity, and develops the holistic potential of each individual, several innovative pedagogical practices emerge in the implementation of the independent curriculum such as differentiated learning (Junaid & Baharuddin, 2020). Differentiated learning is a teaching strategy that adjusts the content, process, and learning products according to the needs, interests, learning styles, and readiness levels of each student so that they can develop optimally without feeling frustrated (Destari, 2023). This approach emphasizes that there is no single method that fits all students, so teachers need to develop various flexible materials, methods, and assessments (Stai & Blora, 2023).

Characteristics and mechanisms of implementation of innovative pedagogical practice

The characteristics and mechanisms of implementation of innovative pedagogical practices are related to changes in the characteristics or properties that distinguish the teaching approach carried out by a teacher. SDN Sindangraja primary and high school teachers revealed that the characteristics that must be developed in project-based learning are a focus on developing *soft skills* and character according to the Pancasila student profile, which encourages creativity, collaboration, and real problem solving. Teachers also provide free space for differentiated learning according to students' abilities, interests, and local contexts, and maximize the flexibility of adjusting materials, methods, and assessments. One of the characteristics that the teacher must have is "awareness" in the teacher himself, since learning directed from the experience, background, interests and capacities of students will provide space for students to manage their own learning.

Judging from the results above, this is in line with research revealed by (Iskandar et al., 2023). that the characteristics of innovative pedagogic practice refer to traits or traits that distinguish new and creative teaching approaches from conventional practices, such as *student-centered*, flexible and adaptive, creative, collaborative, inclusive, relevant and contextual, and integrating technology. The mechanism of innovative pedagogical practices in the implementation of the independent curriculum provides a more inclusive independent learning principle, responsive to student diversity, and oriented towards the development and character of students as a whole (Zakso et al., 2022).



Innovative pedagogic practices in manifesting the principle of Free Learning in the context of Student Diversity

Innovative pedagogic practice in manifesting the principle of Free Learning in the context of Student Diversity. The results of the analysis showed that innovative pedagogical practices in the implementation of The Independent curriculum showed the manifestation of the principle of independent learning, especially through the personalization of deep learning. An understanding of pedagogic science will guide teachers to customize learning objectives, content, processes, and products that put forward the needs, interests, and individual learning profiles of students. This reflects the principle of learning independence and relevance, where students feel learning is more in line with themselves.

Relevant and contextual learning often integrates local issues, cultural wisdom, and student experiences into learning. The teacher must be able to make the material more meaningful and interesting for students with different backgrounds, fulfilling the principle of relevance and connection with the real world. Through these innovative pedagogical practices, teachers not only procedurally implement the Merdeka curriculum, but also bring to life the spirit of Merdeka learning in diverse classrooms. Teachers act as facilitators who empower students to become independent, creative, and Responsible Learners, while appreciating and capitalizing on the wealth of differences that exist. This practice is also interpreted as a creative and new effort made by teachers in implementing learning that is in harmony with the philosophy of Free Learning, consciously and effectively accommodating individual student differences.

Supported by research that mentions relevant and contextual learning will produce innovative practices that often integrate local issues, cultural wisdom, and student experiences into learning (Daga, 2021). We as a teacher, must be able to make the material more meaningful and interesting for students with different backgrounds, of course, must meet the principle of relevance and connection with the real world. Through these innovative pedagogical practices, teachers not only procedurally implement the Merdeka curriculum, but also bring to life the spirit of Merdeka learning in diverse classrooms. They act as facilitators that empower students to become independent, creative, and Responsible Learners, while appreciating and capitalizing on the wealth of differences that exist.

This is supported by the opinion (Ruth et al., 2023) is defined as creative and new efforts made by teachers in implementing learning that is in harmony with the philosophy of free learning, while consciously and effectively accommodating individual differences owned by students. Guru not only tries new things in teaching, but the innovation is consciously and planned to be used to create a more equitable, inclusive, and effective learning for all students with all its uniqueness, in line with the spirit of independence in learning. These practices aim to empower students as active, independent learners who have equal opportunities to develop their potential to the fullest (Rakyat, 2025).

Impact on students and teachers on the implementation of innovative pedagogical practices

The Impact on Students and Teachers of the Implementation of Innovative Pedagogical Practices refers to the changes or influences that occur in students and teachers as a result of the implementation of creative, new, and different teaching methods in the learning process (Marpaung et al., 2024). The impact of the implementation of innovative pedagogic practices in the Independent curriculum is very significant for teachers and students, as identified from the results of interviews in the field as follows :



- 1) **Impact on students:** there is increased engagement and motivation to learn because learning is more personal, relevant, and provides choice. However, the results of interviews from classroom teachers also show that there are still students who have not been actively involved personally because there is no awareness of learning. Project-based learning and differentiated learning encourage students to explore concepts in greater depth and connect them to real life. Students from many different backgrounds will feel more connected to learning materials and activities when teachers understand the complexity of different student characteristics.
- 2) **Impact on teachers:** increased professionalism and creativity. The Independent curriculum requires teachers to accommodate the diversity of students, which encourages teachers to continue learning, innovating and developing more effective pedagogic practices. Although the implementation of innovative practices may require time, effort, and adaptation, and teachers may face challenges in designing truly differentiated learning or integrating technology effectively, these processes ultimately contribute to their professional development. Overall, the implementation of innovative pedagogic practices has the potential to create a more dynamic, responsive and beneficial learning ecosystem for the holistic development of students as well as the professional growth of teachers.

Based on deep learning content which certainly encourages the development of deeper understanding, such as in project-based approaches and differentiated learning, it encourages students to explore concepts in more depth and can relate them to real life (Ibtidaiyah, n.d.). When a teacher consciously understands the complexity of the different characteristics of diverse students, students from different backgrounds will feel more connected to learning materials and activities. Meanwhile, the impact on teachers can be increased professionalism and creativity, because the implementation of the independent curriculum will provide demands to accommodate the diversity of students who encourage teachers to continue to learn, innovate, and develop more effective pedagogical practices. Initial challenges and learning curve: implementation of innovative practices may take time, effort, and adaptation. Teachers may face challenges in designing truly differentiated learning or integrating technology effectively (Semai et al., 2023). However, this process ultimately contributes to their professional development. Overall, the implementation of innovative pedagogic practices in an independent curriculum, while it may present challenges at the outset, has the potential to create a more dynamic, responsive, and rewarding learning ecosystem for the holistic development of students as well as the professional growth of teachers.

Factors that facilitate the development of innovative pedagogical implementations towards diversity in the context of Independent curricula

Based on the results of discussions and interviews, it can be concluded that there are several factors that facilitate the development and implementation of innovative pedagogic practices that are responsive to diversity in the context of the independent curriculum such as; visionary and Supportive School Leadership, School Heads who have a deep understanding of The Independent curriculum and the importance of accommodating diversity, resources, as well as time) to teachers to experiment and innovate. Learning Community (KOMBEL) at SDN Sindangraja is a place for teachers to share experiences, ideas, challenges, and solutions related to pedagogic practices, because this collaboration allows knowledge to be transferred and inspire each other between teachers. Some of the factors that facilitate the development and implementation of innovative pedagogic practices that are responsive to diversity in the context of Independent curricula:

- 1) **Visionary and supportive school leadership:** principals who understand Independent curriculum and the importance of accommodating diversity, as well as providing full support (moral, resource, time) to teachers to experiment and innovate.
- 2) **Learning Community (KOMBEL):** KOMBEL at SDN Sindangraja is a place for teachers to share experiences, ideas, challenges, and solutions related to pedagogic practices, enabling knowledge transfer and mutual inspiration between teachers.
- 3) **Access to diverse learning resources:** lack of knowledge access to a variety of learning resources (physical as well as digital) that can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse students is an obstacle, so support in the provision of relevant tools and technologies is essential.
- 4) **Positive school culture:** a school environment that promotes the values of inclusion, values diversity, and creates a safe and comfortable atmosphere for all students and teachers to express and learn.
- 5) **Policy-making authority in schools:** principals apply *best practices* and are inspired by examples of successful implementation of pedagogic practices.

These factors interact with each other and create an ecosystem conducive to the growth of innovative pedagogical practices that effectively respond to student diversity in the spirit of an independent curriculum. Factors Facilitating the Development of Innovative Pedagogical Implementation of Diversity in the Context of the Independent Curriculum refer to various conditions, resources, and supports (Ngudi & Semarang, 2021). Environmental characteristics that enable and encourage teachers to design and implement creative and new ways of teaching, which are specifically aimed at accommodating individual differences in students within the framework of the philosophy and objectives of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum et al., 2023).

Description of the conceptual and practical implications of the research findings

The transformation of education in Indonesia through the implementation of The Independent curriculum has opened a new chapter in the effort to realize 'Free Learning'. This curriculum places teacher autonomy and student learning independence as the main pillars, but its implementation is faced with the complex reality of student diversity. This study aims to identify and analyze hidden gems or innovative pedagogic practices that emerge as adaptive responses of teachers in the context of student diversity in SD Negeri Sindangraja. The results of this data mining conceptualization are then presented in a structured manner in the following discussion, which is also visualized in a chart/mind map. The chart serves as a narrative map to guide the reader in understanding the relationships between concepts and key findings, while reinforcing a view of how educators struggle to realize the promise of independent learning amid the challenges that exist.



Figure 1. Chart of The results of conceptualization of data mining



To provide a more comprehensive and structured overview of the results of the conceptualization of the data Figure 1 Above which presents a mind map that summarizes the various aspects of innovative pedagogical practices in the application of The Independent curriculum at SDN Sindangraja. This chart is a visual representation of the results of selective encoding of interview, observation, and FGD data, identifying key themes and relationships between them. As seen in the chart, the core of this discussion is the implementation of an independent curriculum. From the core of the chart above, there are several main categories that are important findings of this study, namely; innovative pedagogic practices, in this chart are broken down into several sub-categories such as; differentiated learning, Project-Based Learning (PBL) (focusing on Pancasila student profiles, soft skills, exploration of current issues, collaboration, creativity, and provide space for students to choose topics), and the utilization of Creative Technologies (to increase engagement, understanding, and provide diverse and inclusive learning resources).

In the implementation characteristics & mechanisms section, describes the main characteristics of innovative practices found, such as student-centered, flexible & adaptive, creative & collaborative,. A teacher's awareness that includes a transformational mindset and an understanding of student differences. This manifestation of the principle of freedom of learning shows how innovative practices embody the philosophy of freedom of learning. Personalize Deep Learning (customizing goals, content, processes, products, reflecting independence and relevance), and integrase local issues & student experiences (making materials meaningful, engaging, and connected to the real world), and teachers as facilitators & enablers (valuing and harnessing differences, encouraging students to be independent, creative, and responsible).

Impact on students & teachers, this section visualizes the positive impact of implementing innovative practices. As with students, there is increased engagement, motivation, development of deep understanding, and a sense of connectedness. As for teachers, the impact is an increase in professionalism, creativity, and encouragement to continue to learn and innovate. Driving & facilitating factors that identify elements that support the development and implementation of innovative practices, namely visionary & Supportive School Leadership, Learning Communities (KOMBEL) as a place to share, access to diverse learning & technology resources, and a positive school culture (inclusive, respecting diversity, safe, comfortable). In addition, from all aspects involved, there must be challenges faced, such as the balancing process of teacher abilities, and the potential of students who are not actively involved.

It can be concluded from the results of research that has been conducted through interviews with principals and teachers related to the implementation of The Independent curriculum. An in-depth analysis of the conversation reveals several crucial aspects that highlight the role of pedagogy in transforming Indonesian education towards a more inclusive and adaptive future. First, the teacher's awareness of the significance of pedagogical science appears as the main foundation in the implementation of an independent curriculum. Principals and teachers collectively recognize that a deep understanding of pedagogic principles in the context of this new curriculum encourages a more integrated, collaborative, and student-centered approach to learning. This awareness allows educators to be more sensitive to the individual needs of students, thus being able to develop their unique potential holistically. Sejalan dengan pendapat dari (Ibtidaiyah, n.d.).

When a teacher consciously understands the complexity of the different characteristics of diverse students, students from different backgrounds will feel more



connected to learning materials and activities. Meanwhile, the impact on teachers can be increased professionalism and creativity, because the implementation of the independent curriculum will provide demands to accommodate the diversity of students that encourage teachers to continue to learn, innovate, and develop more effective pedagogical practices. Initial challenges and learning curve: implementation of innovative practices may take time, effort, and adaptation. Teachers may face challenges in designing truly differentiated learning or integrating technology effectively (Semai et al., 2023). However, this process ultimately contributes to their professional development. Overall, the implementation of innovative pedagogic practices in an independent curriculum, while it may present challenges at the outset, has the potential to create a more dynamic, responsive, and rewarding learning ecosystem for the holistic development of students as well as the professional growth of teachers.

The results of the discussion also highlighted the complexity of the obstacles faced by teachers in the implementation of The Independent curriculum in the classroom, ranging from lower to upper levels. Nonetheless, educators have developed promising early solutions, primarily through a focus on independent curriculum implementation approaches and the utilization of technology to increase student engagement. Principals and teachers recognize that in this era of digital transformation, technology is becoming a powerful tool to expand access and improve learning effectiveness. In fact, they stress the importance of wise integration of technology with a strong foundation of pedagogic science, ensuring that learning remains relevant, meaningful, and supports students' comprehensive development. In addition, awareness of the need for Inclusive Learning and responsiveness to student diversity is also an important point in the discussion. This is supported by the opinion (Anggraeni & Setrayaningsih, 2022) that the central role of teachers in implementing independent curricula, including how their pedagogical understanding affects classroom practice, leads to more effective and student-centered learning, and a teacher must use a differentiation strategy that requires a strong pedagogical awareness to accommodating student diversity under the merdeka curriculum. Supported by opinion (Wahyuni et al., 2023) pedagogical awareness of the diverse needs of individuals is a key in the pedagogical practice of a teacher. According to (Puspita et al., 2023) argues that as a teacher to highlight the complexity encountered in the implementation of an independent curriculum, teachers should be manifestations of their awareness of the importance of pedagogical science. And the need for inclusive learning must also be supported by the role of the learning community as a means of strengthening pedagogical awareness and teacher professionalism, which is one of the collective efforts mentioned from the results of the discussion above.

Principals and teachers understand that each student is an individual with unique and different potentials, so the pedagogical approach must be flexible and able to accommodate their individual needs and interests, which is the essence of deep understanding-based learning in an independent curriculum. In the discussion section will be discussed further about the findings in the field that will be deepened through the analysis of 'Hidden Gems'; exploration of innovative pedagogical practices in the implementation of Independent curriculum as a manifestation of Independent Learning in the diversity of students.

Conclusion

The conclusion obtained from the findings of this study is that high awareness among teachers of the importance of a strong foundation of pedagogic Science in implementing the Independent curriculum. This awareness encourages the creation of more integrated,



collaborative, and student-centered learning, with a focus on developing each individual's unique potential. The study also identified various examples of innovative pedagogic practices applied, such as differentiated learning to accommodate individual differences, project-based learning to increase relevance and engagement, and creative utilization of technology to enrich students' learning experiences.

Recommendation

This research has succeeded in providing valuable insight into innovative pedagogical practices in the implementation of Independent curricula, especially in addressing student diversity, through a case study approach. Principals are expected to continue to strengthen the collaborative culture through Fostering Effective Learning Communities and providing reflective spaces for teachers. Teachers are encouraged to continuously improve their pedagogic competencies through training and exploration of innovative student needs-based learning approaches. Researchers are further advised to conduct longitudinal or comparative studies across different levels of education and regions, in order to see the consistency and long-term impact of innovative pedagogic practices on diverse student learning outcomes.

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