# Looking from Within: Prospects and Challenges for Progressive Education in Indonesia

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**Abstract**
Many Indonesian scholars (Azra, 2002; Darmaningtyas, 2004; Yunus, 2004), have attempted to bring progressive education to their country. They believe that progressive practices such as critical thinking, critical dialogue and child-centered instruction will help students learn better. However, this implementation is resisted because of cultural constraints and different philosophical beliefs, from which Indonesian education is historically based. In Indonesia, rote learning and teacher-centered classrooms, for instance, are still seen by some as appropriate. This article examines this tension between progressive and traditional Indonesian educational philosophies. It focuses particularly on child-centered instruction (CCI), and discusses the likelihood of its implementation in the Indonesian educational context.

**Keywords:** Indonesia, progressive education, child-centered learning, cultural constraints, critical thinking

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## Introduction

Progressive education (PE) emerged in the in the late nineteenth and early 20th century, became established as an association (Progressive Education Association/PEA) in 1919, and had a heyday of both support and criticism that lasted until about 1955 with the end of PEA and its flagship journal, *Progressive Education*, two years later (Cremin, 1959). Part of a larger social reform movement to create a better and more equitable society, PE was concerned with using schools as the agent of progressive ideals such as democracy, community and citizenship. Though meaning different things to different people, and taken up and levelled in simplistic ways, PE based its philosophy on liberalism and pragmatism which meant simultaneously broadening the curriculum while honing in on "real" problems facing individuals. Specific ideas of an expanded curriculum concerned opening up the curriculum to interests of the child (especially tailoring education to the growing immigrant population at the turn of the century and beyond) as well as with family and community life. It encouraged organized but more free-flowing activity, and problem solving through collaborative, participatory inquiry. PE emerged as a strong reaction against the "traditional" form of top-down, teacher-centered American education of immobile bodies and a static, prescribed curriculum.

With its focus more on the student rather than the curriculum or the teacher, the basic tenet of PE was the development of students' critical thinking. This type of thinking, according to philosopher John Dewey, a prominent influence on PE, only emerges when education allows students to express their opinions freely (Dewey, 1897). For Dewey, critical thinking was part of reflective thinking, which he defined as, "Active, persistent and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (1909, p. 6). As the main objective of PE, critical thinking allows students to carefully consider received knowledge, and thus more fully participate in their learning (Dewey, 1997; Gutek, 2004). It encourages what today we think of as child-centered instruction (CCI), which gives students opportunities to ask questions and give responses during their learning process.

An important way that critical thinking can be generated is through collaborative learning (Dewey, 1997; Gutek, 2004), since teachers-students and student-student collaboration is part of the inquiry process. PE teachers, therefore, should be trained to teach using methods, such as "learning by doing, activity learning, group projects and problem solving" (Gutek, 2004, p. 296). Furthermore, PE, through CCI, has provided new insights into pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) because it merges three things: the child, content and pedagogy. This "child-centeredness," though only one critical part of PE, attracted education policymakers in many parts of the world, and still does, by encouraging CCI within their respective educational contexts (see Isikoglu, Basturk, and Karaca, 2009.) This is not an exception to Indonesian educational settings (see Tilaar, 2002). However, the so-called 'effective' classroom practice of CCI does not always meet with success in the Indonesian educational context.

In this paper, I first provide the context of the analysis, which includes the Indonesian social, cultural and educational practices (Wahyudi & Fisher, 2006). I then analyse the nature of progressivism and scrutinize social and cultural factors leading to its ineffectiveness. In the final section, I provide suggestions to change Indonesian education to allow the implementation of CCI.

## The Indonesian Context

Indonesia is remarkably rich in culture, religion, and language (Atwell, 2006; Wahyudi & Fisher, 2006; Mardiana, 2008). Over 40 ethnic groups and more than 200 ethnic languages are spoken in the Indonesian archipelago (Bjork, 2003). In the early days of

Indonesia's independence in 1945, Indonesian founders struggled to unite these diverse groups (Winarto, 2006). One means the government employed was to establish a unitary state system (Nishimura, 1995; Winarto, 2006). This *pancasila* ideology unifies ethnic and cultural diversities in Indonesia, and thus those living under the unitary state of Indonesia are encouraged to speak one national language, the Indonesian language, and live under one nation, the Republic of Indonesia. This policy has helped bring a sense of belonging to the Indonesian state. People of different ethnic backgrounds negotiate their ethnic cultural values to fit with the spirit of the unitary state. As a result, the Indonesian people synthesize their local and national "collective" identities; 'Indonesian culture' thus refers to the combinations of multiple cultural values belonging to various ethnicities living within the Indonesian unitary state (Winarto, 2006).

To further the unitary state ideology, the republic of Indonesia has adopted a centralized government system, including the system of education, since the 1970s (Noel, 2008). For instance, the regulations related to curriculum, school evaluation, and pedagogical process are determined by the central government (Bjork, 2004; Jones & Hagul, 2001). However, in the present Indonesia, the system of education has been partly decentralized (Bjork, 2004). For instance, the local government is now allowed to insert local curriculum content into the national curriculum (Bjork, 2005). A more decentralized system of education would open up a small space of hope for PE, if it allowed teachers enjoy more freedom to bring in local content that considers the needs of the students.

The other effort made to improve Indonesian education is through introducing teaching approaches known as PAKEM (active, creative, effective, and joyful teaching method) (Atwell, 2006). The PAKEM system mandates teachers to be classroom facilitators, and student participation is highly encouraged. PAKEM, guided by progressive principles, aims at helping students to enhance their problem-solving skills; it also develops students' potential and encourages them to be creative. In addition, PAKEM encourages students to work cooperatively and thus individual differences are appreciated. This instructional process indeed resembles the CCI proposed by John Dewey.

However, like other failed school reforms, PAKEM lacks success in many Indonesian schools. Factors leading to this problem seem to be complicated, which will be elaborated later on. This article, therefore, focuses on possible reasons why child-centered instruction does not work well in the Indonesian educational setting. In the following section, I analyse the causes of CCI ineffectiveness in the Indonesian educational system. My analysis starts with the social and cultural barriers that inhibit the implementation of CCI.

## Child-Centered Instruction in Indonesia

Teachers have become the scapegoat for the failure of CCI (see Bjork, 2003; Noel, 2008). However, the factors for this failure are more complicated than they seem. Cultural, social, philosophical, and political factors contribute to the difficulties of CCI implementation in the Indonesian context. The following section attempts to address the force of those sociocultural factors that impact school culture, and explore the conflicts taking place within Indonesian school buildings.

### School culture

Culture refers to the beliefs and ways of life of a group of people (Giddens, 2001). It shapes the way people dress, communicate, engage in religious practices, and do daily activities. Because culture and society intersect, different societies produce different cultural values, which in turn shape different ways of thinking and behaving (Giddens, 2001; Hall, 1996; Newman, 2004). In short, culture shapes one's identity. For that reason, I argue that people who live in a particular setting construct their own collective identities, which are not

necessarily shared with individuals beyond their localities. This is because identity is relational; it is embedded in space, time, and culture. It is relative to how we see ourselves and compare ourselves to different people in a larger social sphere. In other words, we identify ourselves through our relationships to others. To be sure, students living in different social status and going to different types of schools think and act differently (Finn, 1999). For example, Indonesian students living in rural areas who attend low-income schools, will definitely perceive things differently from those living in affluent environments.

To confirm the belief that certain cultural values influence school culture, Finn (1999) conducted a study of the effects of cultures on educational practices. He finally concluded that certain cultural values indeed shape school culture. He shows four types of schools, which are influenced by cultures and thus school practices are different in those four schools. In the first type of school, the 'working class school', students are trained to sit still and to listen, and lessons are transferred top down. Students are required to copy notes given by their teachers. The learning atmosphere in the 'middle-class school' is somewhat similar to those in the first type of school. It is still mostly teacher centered teaching through textbooks, in which students are to read textbooks and answer questions afterward. In the 'affluent professional school', the focus shifts to developing students' personality and creativity, while in the 'executive elite school', stimulating students' reasoning and problem solving competence is what is valued. Finn shows how students' backgrounds—particularly social class— influence the entire culture of the school including curricular expectations and pedagogy.

Finn (1999) also suggests that parents' social and educational backgrounds shape their ways of raising children. For example, in the traditional families, parents tend to dominate their children during interaction, which leads to children's passivity. Children were discouraged to communicate and express their opinions. In addition, in a traditional family, there was a fixed division in roles of family members. For instance, children were shaped to listen and to respect authority, their elders. Children coming from this type of family will certainly face difficulties adjusting to their progressive classroom, since the social discourses clash (Finn, 1999). In sum, Finn's work shows how differences in class and family social, cultural and educational background shape school cultures.

The school culture is defined as daily activities performed by students, teachers, school administrators and other school members. Their everyday customs, rituals, and ceremonies taking place within a particular school building are seen as a school culture. Colley (1999) sees that "the culture of a school is composite of the conditions that are specific to the students, teachers, administrators and parents of a school building" (p. 12). This definition implies that school culture influences curriculum and regulations implemented at schools based on the people it serves. At the same time, however, school culture is constructed through ideologies, customs and cultures surrounding a school building (Hinde, 2004). The forces of culture are both internal and external.

Hinde (2004) adds some other factors shaping school cultures. She suggests that in addition to local ideologies, school governance, such as types of leadership, shapes school cultures. For example, when a particular school adopts hierarchical leadership, in which teachers are expected to abide by principals' commands, school cultures tend to be different, if compared to schools that adopt transformational or distributed leadership.

Colley (1999) suggests that successful school cultures are characterized through attributes of school members, such as "openness, informality, care, attentiveness, lateral working relationships, reciprocal collaboration, candid and vibrant dialogue, and willingness to face uncertainty together" (p. 12). Meanwhile, unsuccessful schools are also characterized through its members' attributes, such as unwillingness to care, to collaborate, and to solve

school problems together. School cultures may positively influence educational practices and at the same time, they also inhibit the function of schooling.

In what follows, I review Indonesian school cultures, which inhibits the implementation of CCI. I draw from studies by Brett Riley Noel (2008), Christopher Bjork (2003, 2004, and 2005), Sudarwan Danim (2003), Yunita T. Winarto (2006), and other scholars on Indonesian school cultures. I also consult some in-service teachers in their first accounts of Indonesian school cultures. Finally, I refer to my own reflexivity as an insider of the Indonesian educational system**.**

Referring to Colley's (1999) notion of school cultures, I see that all kinds of activities taking place within Indonesian school buildings are considered Indonesian school cultures. There are positive school cultures that enhance learning and also the negative ones that inhibit learning. Colley (1999) suggests that "the culture either enhances or stifles growth" (p.10). Here, I focus on Indonesian school cultures that inhibit the implementation of CCI, in particular. The review does not imply that Indonesian education has failed to educate Indonesian citizens. Instead, it merely identifies school cultures that inhibit the implementation of CCI.

## The Ideology of Indonesian Society and School Cultures

Most Indonesian children, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, are raised to listen and to abide by their elders' commands and requests (Danim, 2003; Winarto, 2006; Zulfikar, 2010), and thus respecting elders is a necessity, and a strict code of conduct. Since their childhood, most Indonesian students have been exposed to cultural and social contexts, in which elders are seen as wiser, more intelligent and more experienced individuals, and thus they are worth respecting, and thus, children are not taught to express their ideas that may contradict those of their parents. Winarto (2006) asserts that:

> Whatever the form of family is in a heterogeneous society like Indonesia, parents, older generations and/or close relatives play important role in planting the 'seeds' for cultural transmission and perpetuation. The similar their cultural and religious backgrounds are the easier the parents' jobs-supported by their kindred/relatives-in transmitting their values and norms to the children (Winarto, 2006, p. 21)

Parents' roles within a particular Indonesian household are significant in shaping their children's ways of being in the society. For all children, their family is the first institution of their socialization (Poole, 2007), and influences how they will be raised and educated.

As culture shapes one's life, Indonesian children's cultural values in a way shape their ways of being at school. Since children are not accustomed to learning independently, most students come to class uninspired, hoping their teachers provide them with what to do and how to do it. This applies to most students in Indonesia, in which they position themselves as knowledge receivers rather than as knowledge seekers. Twenty in-service teachers that I interviewed suggested that their students are reluctant to raise questions or comment on teaching materials; they would rather receive information from their teachers. For these teachers, this condition stifles the learning process. However, they argued that since they are teaching in remote areas, in which most students come from low class families, this fact is common. Student parents' main concern is not at developing their children's creative thinking; rather, their expectation is that their children can help them with family work, such as plantation and farming.

In addition, I found that some college students in some parts of the Indonesian archipelago also consider themselves knowledge receivers. For example, in my educational

philosophy class, I found that only a small number of students participate in the instructional process. The rest of the students chose to listen and to write down information I passed to them. The students suggested that they are accustomed to taking notes on everything the teachers dictate. They seem comfortable being non-participative in their learning. While students understand that classroom participation is essential for effective learning, they noted that they were raised to act and behave passively in the classroom.

This phenomenon is not unique to Indonesian students, though it is deeply embedded in Indonesian culture. Marsh, Richards & Smith (2001) indicate that students in many parts of the world are not willing to fully engage in autonomous learning. It means that they fail to participate in the classroom, and thus a child-centered system of education is not possible. They indicate that while the notion of independent learning is popular; in practice this concept "leads to confusion of message for both students and tutor" (March, et al., 2001, p. 384).

This confusion is aggravated by the emergence of two conflicting principles of learning. While some believe that learning is the process of independent construction of knowledge by learners, others view it as the product, in which knowledge is transferred by teachers (Marsh, et al., 2001). They argue that:

> A culture that does not prepare its children to be independent and autonomous cannot reasonably expect it to emerge spontaneously in adulthood. ... The transition from thinking based on explanation to one based on critical evaluation is a major one. The move from an individual/competitive ethos to a group/consensual learning environment, from a 'closed' learning agenda to an open and flexible one, places greater demands on individual learners (Marsh, et al., 2001, p. 389).

This quote indicates that independent learning as promoted by CCI is challenged by certain social and cultural patterns.

Another part of school culture that may inhibit the emergence of CCI is Indonesians' perceptions of teachers. Indonesians see teachers as respectable people from whom knowledge is derived. Teachers in Indonesia are assumed as more than mere facilitators of learning (Danim, 2003). Some inservice teachers I interviewed agreed with this. They affirm that teachers are seen as moral boulders, in which they foster both intellectual and spiritual competence in their students. As teachers are seen as such in the Indonesian society, it is difficult to expect students to raise critical questions to their teachers. It has been fossilized in students' minds that they do not enjoy many privileges to criticize their teachers. As this way of perceiving teachers persists in the Indonesian society, the future of progressive education is less likely.

Muhaimin (2005) suggests that Indonesian teachers, especially within Islamic education, are seen within six attributes: *ustadz, mu'allim, murabby, mursyid, mudarris, and muaddib*. These attributes define teachers in Indonesian education, as committed, competent in their field, professional in their classroom practices, role models for their students, and responsible not only to transfer knowledge but also to shape students' attitudes. They are life-long learners who care not only to improve their own knowledge but are also responsible to teach students to be intellectually and spiritually matured.

In a *pesantren*, the oldest type of educational institution in Indonesia (Nishimura, 1995), these attributes are more obvious. Teachers in the *pesantren* are seen as intellectually and spiritually mature. These qualities elevate the teachers' position to mentor, and they are respected for their deep Islamic knowledge and wisdom. For that reason, students in the *pesantren* do not contradict their teachers' opinions. They tend to sit still and listen to their teachers' preaching.

Indonesian teacher attributes seem to be different from those of progressive teachers. Progressive teachers are encouraged to use democratic teaching styles, such as implementing dialogic education. There is no or little emphasis is given to spiri students' spirituality. Progressive education focuses on empowering students' intellectual capacity through critical thinking and a democratic approach. It encourages creative thinking and collaborative problem-solving. In the Indonesian classroom, however, the focus is on student discipline; they have to sit politely, listen to teachers attentively and are not encouraged to contradict teachers' opinions explicitly (Damin, 2003). This suggests that the ideologies and cultural practices of general Indonesian society have shaped school cultures that discourage the implementation of CCI.

**The Influence of School Governance on School Cultures**

Hinde (2004) suggests that school cultures are also shaped by school governance and its underlying philosophy. Indonesian education is based on a philosophy resembling idealism. It aims at shaping students to be intellectually and morally adequate (Nishimura, 1995). In addition, Indonesia education prepares its students with skills that help them get jobs and make money but also shape their moral conduct (Nishimura, 1995). It also treats students as immature human beings needing adult help; thus, teachers are positioned as intellectual adults that are capable of helping their unformed students. For this reason, it is not surprising that teacher-centred instruction is still commonplace in the Indonesian classroom. This philosophical basis perhaps stifles the implementation of CCI.

One of the Indonesian founders, Ki Hajar Dewantara, suggests that Indonesian education lies on seven principles. First, Indonesian education aims to promote students' personal talents without coercion. Second, it guides students to "think and act of their own free will" (Nishimura, 1995, p. 22). Third, it is not exclusive; it should respect cultural values embedded within the Indonesian society, and should be accessible to all Indonesian. The fourth principle is independency, in which foreign aid for education should be rejected to maintain Indonesian's sovereignty. The fifth principle is non-cooperation, that Indonesia should rely on its own power to help improve education. The sixth principle is 'self reliance' (Nishimura, 1995, p. 23). The seventh is to "dedicate oneself to children." Taken together, these principles suggest that Indonesian educators and policy makers may want to develop a culture- and religious-specific education, such as the *pesantren*, in order to preserve its unique culture.

The other factor to inhibit CCI is thick curriculum content. Indonesian education requires teachers to fulfil the fixed structure of the national curriculum. There is no room available for teachers to negotiate the curriculum content. This type of rigid curriculum expectation has put teachers in a dilemma. While they were invited to engage in instructional reform and to implement creative and democratic teaching, they were trapped into meeting curriculum deadlines (Bjork, 2003). This obligation perhaps has reduced teachers' teaching creativity, since they focus on meeting curriculum deadline for the sake of summative examination rather than promoting interesting instruction. This fact is supported by in service teachers I interviewed. All of them perceived that meeting the curriculum deadline is their priority. They have to pay attention mostly to preparing their students to succeed on summative examinations.

Another problem with implementing CCI in Indonesian schools is that students are required by the curriculum to learn various subjects that are not necessarily in line with their field of interests. These students may be less likely participate in the classroom. The students in my educational philosophy class agree that they sometimes choose not to participate in the learning process upon taking subjects that are not of their interest. As the result, they do not engage in a genuine learning; they only participate when their participation is counted toward the final grade. Otherwise they will remain silent.

In the process of instruction, most Indonesian teachers, as found by Bjork (2004) and Noel (2008), use the "teacher talk" method (Shor, 1992). Teacher talk refers to the amount the teacher talks and dominates classroom activities. For example, teachers tend to spend time explaining the lesson, and give only a small chunk of time for students to responsd and participate in learning. This kind of practice prevails because some Indonesian teachers fail to be creative in their teaching (Azra, 2002; Bjork, 2005; Noel, 2008; Tilaar, 2002).

Most in-service teachers I interviewed suggested that improving their teaching competence is not their main concern, nor is it their colleagues. As found by Bjork (2004) and Noel (2008), students are not able to make *students* as their subject matters, and some of them lack the ability to provide generative themes (Freire, 1970) representing students' interests. It has been evident from the work of Noel (2008) that most Indonesian teachers do not share classroom authority with their students. They tend to maintain the status quo, through which they see themselves as more intelligent and more experienced than their students (Noel, 2008), and this is in line with strong cultural expectations.

Noel (2008) further comments that:

> Most teachers teach from a raised floor space with their students seated in uniform rows in front of them. The teacher/student ratio is generally very high especially in urban settings. In rural settings, many teachers are responsible for more than one grade level within one classroom. Most often, students do not talk unless they are addressed. (Noel, 2008, p. 80)

Here, Noel describes an 'unsuccessful' or non-progressive Indonesian classroom culture. He suggests that teacher-centred classrooms still dominate in Indonesia. Indonesian teachers still create boundaries – both physical and emotional − with their students (Danim, 2003). This condition can be easily found in working class and middle class Indonesian schools in both rural and urban areas. However, in present Indonesia, I see some shifts in classroom cultures, in which teachers have realized that teaching is not merely a one-way transfer of knowledge. However, it has yet to become a common phenomenon.

**Revitalizing CCI in Indonesian Classrooms**

No school reform succeeds without changing the school culture. To encourage the use of CCI, I see that Indonesian school cultures need to shift. My first suggestion is to change parents' outlook on the nature of schooling and education. This suggestion seems fantastical, since it is almost impossible to change cultures embedded in certain communities. However, it can happen over time. Education practitioners in Indonesia can begin by inviting parents to engage in regular meetings within the school building. The aims of the meetings may vary, but one goal is to make parents aware of their significant role to shape their children's critical thinking.

In 2003, The Indonesian school system established school committees (Komite Sekolah, the Indonesian term) in all schools. The school committee was established based on the government regulation no. 20, 2003 chapter 56. The committee acts as the controlling agency, advisory agency and supporting agency. In addition, the committee encourages parents and general society to participate in improving schools. Through effective roles played by school committee, parents and the larger community are aware of their significant role in shaping their children's critical thinking and active participation in learning. When students get used to reflective, critical thinking, the implementation of CCI may be more feasible. However, the school committee in many Indonesian schools has been incapable of exercising these significant roles (Rahmawati, 2009).

The other changes in school culture should aim at teacher education. Teachers are important components in an educational institution (Shor, 1992). The quality of education is closely related to teachers' qualification. I believe that for teachers to implement CCI, they need to be properly trained and well informed about it. The training should target multiple issues, such as teachers and students' interaction, teachers' languages and teachers' attitudes in the classroom. This is because shaping teachers' attitudes is as important as improving teachers' instructional skills. Teachers should be encouraged to regularly reflect on their teaching

In addition, teachers need to understand that interaction is related to academic achievement. Finn (1999), Kohl (1994), and Shor (1992) indicate that teachers need to get involved with their students. This information is important because Noel (2008) indicates that most Indonesian teachers set up barriers and distance themselves from students, which makes student participation less likely

In addition, teachers need to develop awareness about the language used in instruction. Kohl (1994) discourages teachers to speak with the language that may humiliate students, since humiliating students will definitely inhibit learning process (Gutek, 1992; Kohl 1994). In addition, humiliation, such as 'you are not smart enough to learn this subject', for example would shape students' identity, in which they will position themselves the way they are labelled (Macionis & Plummer, 2002). Therefore, teachers' good communication skills are prerequisite for effective classroom practices.

In making CCI applicable in Indonesian classroom, teachers need to learn about students' interests; this is what Shor (1992), borrowing from Freire (1970) refers to as generating interesting learning themes. In response to this demand,Indonesian policymakers and teacher trainers should support special training addressing this issue. For example,teachers can learn that to teach a particular subject such as a healthy diet, they might start by asking their students about their own diet habits instead of immediately following prescribed curriculum content. When teachers start the lesson this way, students will be motivated to give responses because the issues being discussed are theirs.

This section has suggested several steps that teachers might consider in encouraging students to participate in their learning process. The teachers' content, tone and language of instruction, attitude toward students and their ability to generate interesting learning themes are perquisite to the effective implementation of CCI. However, these suggestions remain useless if there is no political will of the government to improve Indonesian education.

There are several main issues that the central government needs to address in order to improve Indonesian education. It has been evident from the work of several scholars, one of which is Bjork (2005), that class size has been a big issue experienced by the Indonesian education system. Scholars such as Lee and Loeb (2000) have found that class-size negatively impacts instructional process. For sure, CCI is more difficult in a large classroom. Teachers find it challenging to monitor all students from one big classroom and it is difficult to encourage everyone to participate.

To solve this problem, the Indonesian government needs to provide sufficient financial resources to deal with big class size. The government annual budget should target this issue. For instance, students in one classroom should be limited to 20-25 students. Such a small classroom size helps teachers to effectively monitor students' progress, and can encourage students to participate and engage in active learning.

The other issue that needs addressing is that of extensive subject matter. Individual teachers are not authorized to reduce the amount of content. Educators and administrators

need to encourage the central government to reconsider its required content. The central government may need to think of reducing some unnecessary or repetitive subject matters from the curriculum. For example,, policymakers could advocate to offer subject matter that is closely linked to students' interest and their field of knowledge.

To revise the curriculum content, Indonesian educational policymakers may adopt types of curriculum designed from overseas countries, which are culturally and socially different from Indonesia. However, the Indonesian government needs to make an in-depth evaluation on the weaknesses and the strength of the imported curriculum. In addition, the policymakers ought to measure and consider the applicability of the curriculum, since it may not fit the Indonesian context.

As a matter of fact, Indonesian education has undergone constant curriculum changes; Indonesian education has implemented the curriculum of 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, Competent Based Curriculum (KBK, the Indonesian term), and School Based Curriculum (KTSP, the Indonesian term). However, none of these adopted curricula have worked well to improve the Indonesian education system. This is because in-depth evaluation of the applicability and relevance of the adopted curriculum has not been properly done (Danim, 2003).

In adition to changing the curriculum, the Indonesian government should design new kinds of assessment. In present Indonesia, teachers are not able to be creative in terms of assessment systems because they are trapped with the mandates of the national curriculum (Zulfikar, 2009). Teachers are powerless to challenge the assessment system. There has been indeed a rejection of summative assessment as practiced in the Indonesian setting (Zulfikar, 2009). However, this system prevails. Marsh, et al (2001) suggest that to enable teachers to implement child-centered instruction, they should be given authority to design their own formative assessment, which is in line with the process of learning. They argue teachers are the one who understand the conditions of their students, and are thus best suited to design assessments. Unless the Indonesian government shifts its assessment system, CCI will face its greatest challenges in the Indonesian classroom.

The other issue that the Indonesian policymakers need to consider is classroom setting and facilities. As discussed earlier, Indonesian students in most schools sit in rows in big classrooms. Circular seating is much more effective in helping students learn. In addition to seating arrangement, Indonesian classroom should be equipped with devices that help effective learning to occur. Projectors, computers and on-line access are important technologies to import to Indonesian classroom. These facilities will enhance the feasibility in the implementation of CCI. For example, the projector enables teachers to project learning materials in the classroom vividly. This allows students to grasp knowledge in multiple ways, and at the same time perhaps help them communicate subject matter with their colleagues.

## Conclusion

This article explores multiple factors leading to the ineffective implementation of CCI in the Indonesian context. Cultural difference is considered one of the main factors that inhibit Indonesian education to implement this type of instruction. Ideologies of the general Indonesian society and school cultures are believed to contribute to the ineffectiveness of CCI in the Indonesian classroom. In addition, the article recognizes that school governance also inhibits teachers to implement this teaching practice within their classrooms. Issues of standardized curriculum and system assessment, and classroom setting have made CCI difficult to apply in the Indonesian educational context. To provide insights on how to revitalize this kind of instruction in the Indonesian classroom, this article offers some suggestions such as improving teachers' pedagogical competence through teacher education,

curriculum reformat and also the government political will and support, to open the space that allows the implementation of CCI in the Indonesian classroom.

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