

**Integration of Direct Instruction Methods and Independent Learning Curriculum in the
Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP)
at Darussalam Gontor University**

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Abstract

This research investigates the implementation of the Integration of Direct Instruction Methods and Independent Learning Curriculum in the Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP) at Darussalam Gontor University. The study employs a case study method to delve into the understanding of the execution, strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities within this integration. Findings reveal that TTDP at Darussalam Gontor University follows a three-step process: planning, execution, and evaluation. The execution involves the delivery of basic TTDP content, practical activities, and evaluation through tests and learning observations. The strengths of this integration lie in the enhancement of teaching quality, enabling trainee teachers to design more engaging learning experiences. However, challenges surface in the form of initial resistance to a shift in teaching paradigms and the need for institutional support. Opportunities exist in developing the professionalism of aspiring teachers and creating dynamic teaching materials. This research provides in-depth insights into the TTDP implementation, highlighting both positive changes and obstacles that need to be addressed. It contributes to understanding how the integration of direct instruction methods and independent learning curriculum can improve teacher training within this university context.

Keywords: *Direct Instruction Methods, Independent Learning Curriculum, Teacher Training.*

A. Introduction

Education is a fundamental cornerstone for societal and national development. In this era of globalization, the quality of education plays a central role in shaping individuals with the capabilities, knowledge, and skills to confront the challenges of the times.¹ Globalization affects education systems worldwide and has an impact on the quality of education. It also provides opportunities for countries to study the best education systems globally and replicate them. However, the impact of globalization on education also poses challenges and changes to the principles of education.² The Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP) at Darussalam Gontor University aims to prepare competent prospective teachers capable of leading the learning process effectively. In an effort to meet the evolving demands of the times, the focus has shifted towards learning approaches that need to be effectively integrated to achieve optimal outcomes.

One well-proven method in the context of learning is the direct instruction method, which provides clear structure and guidance to students.³ On the other hand, the Independent Learning Curriculum provides flexibility for students to manage their own learning according to their interests and needs.⁴ This paper discusses the integration of these two methods, direct instruction and the Independent Learning Curriculum, in the Teacher Training and Development Program at Darussalam Gontor University. This integration is expected to bring significant benefits, improve the quality of teacher education, and prepare prospective teachers with the ability to adapt to dynamic changes.

The implementation of the direct instruction method and the Independent Learning Curriculum in TTDP holds immense potential to provide a holistic learning experience for students. By combining structural aspects with flexibility in the learning process, it is hoped that TTDP graduates will possess better quality and be able to meet the complex needs of the education world. This integrative strategy is a progressive step towards refining the teacher education curriculum in line with the digital and global era, bringing a positive impact on the enhancement of educational quality and learning. Therefore, this paper will delve further into the integration strategies, challenges, and potential applications of the direct instruction method and the independent learning curriculum in enhancing the quality of TTDP graduates at Darussalam Gontor University.

B. Method

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method. This method will be used to deepen individual experiences, perceptions, and views as well as to understand a deeper context related to the integration of direct methods with the Independent Learning

¹ Sadegh Bakhtiari, & Shajar, H. (2006). Globalization And Education: Challenges And Opportunities. *International Business & Economics Research Journal (IBER)*, 5(2). p. 95.

² Nicholas Sun-Keung Pang. (2013). Globalization In The One World: Impacts On Education In Different Nations. BCES Conference Books, Vol. 11. p. 19

³ Sudirah, (2020), Penerapan Metode Instruksi Langsung (Direct Instruction) dalam Sistem Pembelajaran Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Matematika Kelas 3 SD. *ISEJ: Indonesian Science Education Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Mei 2020, p., 106-107.

⁴ Lidiawati dkk, (2023), Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar : Analisis, Implementasi, Pengelolaan Dan Evaluasi, Purbalingga: Eureka Media Aksara. p, 48

Curriculum in improving teacher professionalism. The data analysis used is by analyzing all existing data, reducing data, compiling data in units and categorizing data⁵.

C. Results

1. Integration of Direct Instruction Methods and Independent Learning Curriculum in the Teacher Training and Development Program

The Integration of Direct Instruction Methods and Independent Learning Curriculum in the Teacher Training and Development Program is an innovative approach that combines two essential elements in the field of education: structured teaching methods and a curriculum system that encourages independent learning. Through this integration, the primary goal is to prepare prospective teachers with a balanced set of skills, enabling them to provide both directed instruction and guide students in independent learning.

The integration of these two approaches in the Teacher Training and Development Program aims to produce graduates with the ability to adapt to various learning contexts. They are not only skilled in delivering structured instruction but also capable of supporting students in developing their self-directed learning abilities. Well-trained teachers in this integration can select and apply methods that suit the needs and characteristics of the students, making the learning process more effective and enjoyable.

Challenges that need to be overcome in this integration include ensuring that these approaches complement each other and do not conflict. It is essential to integrate carefully, considering the learning context, and ensuring that these approaches align with the educational institution's vision and mission. By achieving the right balance between direct instruction and student autonomy, the Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP) can create holistic educators who are responsive to the needs of learners, in line with the evolving dynamics of education.

2. Teacher Training and Development Program's Philosophical Foundation

a. The Teacher is More Important than Teaching Methods and Learning Materials

The teacher plays an indispensable central role in the learning process. Beyond methods and materials, the teacher exerts a significant influence on the students' learning experience. They are agents who motivate, guide, and shape the character of the students. An inspirational, caring teacher capable of building emotional connections with students will widen the gateway to understanding and students' interest in the subject matter.

A teacher who can perceive the individual needs of students, identify their potential, and provide appropriate support can assist students in achieving optimal performance. The use of suitable methods and relevant materials is undoubtedly crucial, but without the presence and quality of the teacher's inherent personality, the learning process may not reach the expected level of

⁵Lexy Moleong, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. (Bandung; Rosdakarya, 2000), p. 190

effectiveness. An inspiring teacher can make the learning process enjoyable and motivate students to continue learning.

Education that emphasizes the formation of a teacher's personal qualities and character will have a positive impact on the quality of learning. Teachers serve as role models for students, and through their example, students can understand ethics, values, and good attitudes. Furthermore, teachers who demonstrate empathy and concern for the social and emotional development of students can help create a conducive and supportive learning environment.

Although teaching methods and learning materials have significant roles in the educational process, the teacher holds a more fundamental role. The quality and character of the teacher influence the extent to which students can comprehend and internalize the subject matter. Therefore, the development and empowerment of teachers as educators and role models are imperative to enhance the quality of learning and shape a generation of high quality.

b. The True Curriculum is the Teacher

The expression "the true curriculum is the Teacher" embodies the concept that teachers have an immensely significant role and influence in shaping the curriculum applied in the classroom. Beyond just teaching materials or implementation plans, teachers bring their own personal character, experiences, and knowledge into the learning process. This creates a unique and specific dynamic in each class. The curriculum presented by a teacher is not merely information conveyed; it also encompasses values, attitudes, and culture that are lived and exemplified.

The role of the teacher as the "living curriculum" is crucial. Teachers shape students' perspectives on knowledge and the world around them. The way a teacher explains a concept, motivates, supports, and interacts with students reflects the real curriculum. An inspirational teacher can stimulate students' interests, guide them to explore further, and develop critical thinking. Conversely, when a teacher cannot deliver the material effectively or is less concerned about students' development, the curriculum will also be implicit in a less-than-optimal learning experience.

In this perspective, teacher development becomes a crucial aspect in improving educational quality. Teacher development should equip teachers with skills not only in delivering content but also in fostering good relationships with students and managing a conducive classroom atmosphere. By developing these skills, teachers can become the "living curriculum" that empowers and motivates students to learn better. Moreover, empowering teachers also includes recognizing and appreciating the crucial role they play in creating a meaningful learning experience for students.⁶

⁶ Badiyyah Waajida, Pamela W. Garnerb1 and Julie E. Owen, (2013). Infusing Social Emotional Learning into the Teacher Education Curriculum. *The International Journal of Emotional Education*. Volume 5, Number 2, p 31.

In order to achieve better educational goals, it is essential for educational institutions and governments to comprehensively support teacher development. Understanding that the teacher is the true curriculum, teacher development initiatives can be directed towards creating educators who can make a maximal contribution in shaping a generation that is intelligent, creative, and has strong values. Thus, "the teacher is the true curriculum" becomes a principle that must be highly upheld to advance the world of education towards a better direction.

c. Teaching is an Art

Teaching and learning constitute a multidimensional and complex process. Beyond merely imparting knowledge, teaching and learning involve elements of creativity, aesthetics, and human interaction. This approach posits that teaching and learning are an art, not just rigid scientific principles. Art in this context refers to the skills, intuition, and feelings that teachers bring into the classroom to create captivating and inspiring learning experiences for students.

Teaching and learning as an art involve sensitivity to the needs and characteristics of students. A teacher can sense the classroom atmosphere, adapt teaching methods, and play with strategies that align with the students' interests and development. In this regard, the teacher is not only an information provider but also a creator and manager of a learning environment that encourages students to participate actively and engage emotionally.

The art in teaching and learning is also reflected in a teacher's ability to inspire and guide students to discover and hone their talents and interests. Teachers who understand the values of creativity, imagination, and self-expression can shape a classroom that supports students' exploration in various forms of art, such as visual arts, music, theater, or literature. In this context, the teacher becomes a curator and a facilitator of learning that motivates students to discover their uniqueness and potential.

However, it is also crucial to acknowledge the scientific aspect, that is, structured methodologies, which remain a fundamental foundation in teaching. The art in teaching and learning does not negate the need for thorough preparation, analysis, and evaluation of effective teaching methods. Striking a balance between art and science in the teaching approach will produce quality teachers who are innovative and capable of addressing the complexities of contemporary education challenges. Viewing teaching and learning as an art opens the door to exploration and creativity while still adhering to scientific principles to create profound and meaningful learning experiences for students.⁷

⁷ Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl, (2017). Social and Emotional Learning and Teachers. SPRING. VOL. 27. NO. 1. p, 137.

3. Implementation Steps of the Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP)

The integration of direct instruction methods and independent learning curriculum in the Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP) at Darussalam Gontor University is carried out in three steps: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Planning involves setting objectives, designing training materials, planning practical activities, devising evaluation methods, and scheduling the activities. Implementation encompasses delivering the basic and advanced TTDP materials, conducting the first-stage practicum, and progressing to the second-stage practicum. Evaluation in TTDP is performed through tests and learning observation sheets.

a. Planning of Activities

Planning in the Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP) is the fundamental foundation that guides the entire process of the program. This planning is crucial to ensure effectiveness, sustainability, and the achievement of desired learning objectives.

The objectives of TTDP are clearly identified by the TTDP implementation team formed by the Faculty of Education. These objectives align with the vision of the Faculty of Education, which aims to produce graduates who excel in teaching methodology. The plan for training materials encompasses comprehensive and structured content in line with the established objectives. It includes explanations of the topics to be covered in the training, the teaching methods to be used, and the human resources required to support the quality of the training. Furthermore, the plan for practicums is carefully designed. Practicums provide participants with an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired. This allows participants to experience and enhance their skills under mentor guidance.

A well-planned evaluation is a critical part of the overall planning. The evaluation is designed to measure the achievement of objectives and the participants' level of understanding. The evaluation methods employ tests, assignments, and learning projects to assess participants' progress. Moreover, feedback from the participants is included to understand the extent of their understanding of the material and the effectiveness of the training implementation. Finally, scheduling of activities is a crucial step in planning. The TTDP schedule takes into account the training duration, time allocation for each training segment, as well as space for reflection and discussion. Flexibility in scheduling is also necessary to accommodate any changes or adjustments that may occur during the training. Overall, planning in the TTDP ensures that all programs run efficiently, objectives are achieved, and participants receive an optimal learning experience.

b. Implementation of Activities

The implementation of the Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP) is a crucial stage that involves the careful application of the planned activities. This stage includes the delivery of basic and advanced TTDP materials, as well as the implementation of practicums in two different stages. Effective execution at this stage will ensure that participants gain a good understanding, sharpen their skills, and can apply the learned concepts in real teaching contexts.

The delivery of basic TTDP materials begins with an introduction to the importance of TTDP activities, fundamental planning skills, implementation and evaluation of learning, as well as Teacher Preparation and Profile. In general, these basic materials explain the principles, theories, and fundamental concepts related to the field of teaching and learning. These activities are delivered in the form of workshops, presentations, and discussions to facilitate participants' understanding of the presented materials. Once the basic materials have been delivered, and participants have gained adequate understanding, the advanced TTDP materials can be integrated. Advanced materials delve deeper and emphasize more complex teaching strategies, case analyses, or advanced concepts in the field of education. The objective is to enhance participants' understanding and prepare them to face higher challenges in teaching and learning. To achieve this goal, the Faculty of Education collaborates with the Ministry of Religion to bring in experts and practitioners in the field of education. With decades of teaching experience, these experts and practitioners can provide detailed insights into the world of teaching and learning.

Next is the teaching practicum, and its implementation is a crucial stage that allows participants to apply the learned concepts. The first stage of the practicum involves observation and guidance by all trainers and TTDP participants and is conducted by model teachers as a benchmark and standard in the context of teaching and learning. In this practicum, participants practice developing teaching tools, implementing learning activities, and evaluating learning outcomes. In this stage, the instructors and trainers from the Faculty of Education, along with some student participants, act as observers and assess the abilities of model teachers in teaching. In the second-stage practicum, teaching practice is conducted in smaller groups guided by two supervising instructors. In this stage, participants are more actively involved in classroom teaching under the guidance and feedback of mentors and lead teachers. Participants hone their teaching skills, build their abilities, and develop the instincts of a teacher to be ready to tackle real challenges and issues that arise in the field.

c. Evaluation of Activities

Evaluation in the Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP) is a crucial stage that enables program organizers to measure participants' understanding, progress, and the effectiveness of the learning. This evaluation involves various activities such as tests, assignments, and projects carefully

designed to measure how well participants understand and can apply the material learned during the training.

The tests used in the TTDP activities aim to measure participants' understanding of the training material, their knowledge of teaching methods, and their ability to apply these concepts in a teaching context. Through tests, organizers can assess the extent to which participants have achieved the set learning objectives. The assignments used in TTDP activities aim to assess participants' understanding and skills in developing teaching materials. Assignments could involve creating lesson plans or learning modules. These tasks allow participants to demonstrate the application of the concepts they have learned in real-life situations. Organizers can assess participants' creativity, analysis, and critical thinking through the assessment of assignments.

Projects used in TTDP activities constitute a more in-depth form of evaluation, where participants are required to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained in the teaching practicum. Projects enable participants to integrate the concepts they have learned and practice relevant skills in a real learning activity. Evaluating projects provides information about participants' ability to produce high-quality and profession-relevant outcomes. TTDP evaluation considers various aspects, including validity, reliability, and transparency of the evaluation process. Accurate and comprehensive evaluation results provide an overview of participants' achievements and serve as a basis for organizers to make improvements and adjustments to the TTDP in the future.

D. Discussion

The SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a highly valuable method for analyzing the internal and external factors influencing the Teacher Training and Development Program (TTDP) at the Faculty of Tarbiyah, Universitas Darussalam Gontor. The SWOT analysis helps identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that can affect the effectiveness and success of the program.

The strengths of TTDP at the Faculty of Tarbiyah, Universitas Darussalam Gontor include having qualified and experienced teaching staff, collaborations with relevant educational institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Ponorogo and several public Islamic junior high schools (MTSN), adequate infrastructure and facilities, and a curriculum adapted to the Merdeka curriculum. These strengths are valuable assets for enhancing the program's quality and attracting participants. The weaknesses of TTDP include a lack of funding for program development and a limited number of trainers with expertise in the teaching models of the independent learning curriculum. Recognizing these weaknesses is the initial step to improve and enhance the program's quality.

Opportunities that can be leveraged include the increasing public interest in education programs, partnerships with educational institutions for job placements, and the possibility of obtaining additional funds through grants or sponsorships. Identifying and capitalizing on these opportunities can bring positive change and advancement to the TTDP.

Threats may stem from changes in educational policies or advancements in technology that could alter the learning processes. Responding to and addressing these threats is imperative to ensure the program's sustainability and excellence. Through this comprehensive analysis, the Faculty of Tarbiyah, Universitas Darussalam Gontor can devise appropriate strategies and actions to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the Teacher Training and Development Program. This analysis creates room for innovation, improvement, and sustainable enhancements to achieve better educational objectives.

E. Conclusion

Based on the discussions above, it can be concluded that the integration of Direct Instruction Methods and independent learning curriculum is an innovative approach that can bring significant benefits in preparing future teachers. Direct Instruction Method provides structure and direction, while the independent learning curriculum provides freedom and autonomy in learning. The integration of both creates a balance that combines the strengths of each approach, producing skilled, adaptive, and creative educators in leading the classroom. As a result, this integration opens up space for individual potential development and promotes lifelong learning.

To ensure the success of this program, it is recommended for the organizers to continuously monitor and evaluate the implementation of the TTDP. Periodic evaluations can provide in-depth insights into the program's effectiveness, the success of achieving objectives, and addressing potential changes and challenges. Additionally, it is necessary to enhance the role of mentors in guiding participants during practicums, providing effective guidance, and offering constructive feedback to advance participants' teaching skills. The integration of modern technology should also be considered to support and enrich the learning process. Throughout this process, collaboration between government institutions and educational bodies must be strengthened to produce graduates that meet the needs of the workforce. With continuous efforts and good collaboration, the TTDP at Darussalam Gontor University will become an excellent model in preparing quality educators.

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