School-Level Curriculum: Learning from a Rural School in Indonesia

A dissertation presented to

the faculty of

The Patton College of Education of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Eny Winarti

June 2012

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This dissertation titled
School-Level Curriculum: Learning from a Rural School in Indonesia

by
ENY WINARTI

has been approved for
the Department of Teacher Education
and The Patton College of Education by

______________________________
Ginger Weade
Professor of Teacher Education

______________________________
Renée A. Middleton
Dean, The Patton College of Education
Abstract

WINARTI, ENY., Ph.D., June 2012, Curriculum and Instruction

School-Level Curriculum: Learning from a Rural School in Indonesia

Director of Dissertation: Ginger Weade

In relatively poor schools, in which school facilities and human resources are limited, people rarely expect to find high National Examination (UASBN in Indonesia) test scores. Rimpang Elementary School was an exception. This study focused on studying this anomaly. A main research question: “What factors explain the unusual UASBN performance of a relatively poor elementary school?” and four sub-research questions related to the School-Level Curriculum (KTSP) and the National Examination (UASBN) were generated in order to holistically explain this phenomenon.

In order to respond to those questions, the research method used Grounded Theory. The data collected from documents, interviews, reflective journal and field notes, and classroom observation were processed through initial coding, focused coding, theoretical coding, and memo writing.

The study indicated that in Rimpang Elementary School, the teaching performances of classroom teachers played an important role in enabling the students to obtain relatively high scores in the UASBN. However, instead of validating the unusual UASBN performance of a relatively poor elementary school, the study of the curriculum transfer process uncovered inconsistency between the KTSP and the UASBN. The study showed that during the curriculum transfer process, a number of significant ideas were
left out. In addition, the study revealed that as a measure, the UASBN lacked test validity.

This study suggested that educational practitioners should be able to pin down the terms of reference in the curriculum transfer process in order to reduce misunderstanding. To do so, they should equip them with strategies to implement ideas into practice, including the strategies to embed pedagogical theories within the curriculum.

Approved: ____________________________________________

Ginger Weade

Professor of Teacher Education
I dedicate this to my family, especially my parents. Thank you for the teaching that “bener luput iku gumantung sapa sing nyawang, dhek kapan, lan neng ngendi.” I am blessed to be one of your children.
Acknowledgments

I would never have been able to finish this challenging project without the guidance of my advisors and committee members, support from family, and help from friends.

My deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Ginger Weade, who was willing to guide me since I joined this university until finally I was able to complete this big project; Dr. Brett Noel, who introduced me to strategies to finish my study on time and who patiently helped me deal with the language and cultural barriers during the process of dissertation writing; and Dr. George Johanson, Dr. Henning, and Dr. Francis Godwyll, who stimulated me with their questions, assignments and projects so that I could develop my research topic.

I would also like to thank my respondents, who were willing to join in this study; Pam in the Writing Center and Erik Hookom who kindly shared ideas related with challenges in word choices related with cultural barriers and who proofread my writing before submission to my advisor and committee members; and Rashmi who helped me with the figures. I also thank my family, especially my father, yu Senik and mas Heri who had always challenged my thought and ideas. Special thanks go to FCJ Sisters in Yogyakarta, especially Sr. Inez, FCJ., to Fr. John Nugroho, SJ., Fr. P. Wiryono Priyotamtama, SJ., and the members of Magis Yogyakarta, from whom I learned about observing without judging and writing daily reflective journals only a few years before I
decided to continue my study. That training and guidance were great helps, especially when I collected and analyzed the data.

Finally, I also would like to thank mas Tolhas, mbak Asih, mas Nowo, mas Popo, kak Mica, Mahmoud, Eliza Ngumbi, Ben Hargrove, and Permias members in Ohio University as well as Pak Yojo’s and Pak Fauzi’s families for their friendship. Getting along with you made me aware of the informal curriculum of my study.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

People in Indonesia continuously talk about schooling. Parents in Wonosari, the capital regency of Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta Province, where I was born, for example, may insist that their children go to school even though there are no strict regulations for parents to do so. They tend to worry about their children and their interests in schooling. If they do not have enough money, they sometimes go to great extremes so that they can send their children to school. In the village where I was born, people often sell their land or other valuable items, such as jewelries, so that they can pay the school fees of their children. Parents consider that schooling, although resource consuming is a good investment for the family. They may spend a great amount of money for the education of their children. At the same time, they assume that by sending their children to school, they invest the money for the future of their children so their children can get good jobs (Triaswati, 2005).

This concern for school is often noted within the literature of professionals in Indonesia. For instance, Karsono (2005), who studied the role of school courses in imposing the values of the New Order, was told to be good at school so that he could grow up to be “someone”, unlike his grandfather, who remained a servant until he passed away. Similar to Karsono, Yudianti (2009) in her article about globalization in education explicitly stated that education was one of the keys for national development and poverty alleviation.
Not only professionals but also people, especially parents, say that it is necessary for children to go to school. When I was a child, people kept telling children at my age that schooling would give us many benefits. They said that if children diligently did their homework and assignments, and continuously went to higher levels of formal schooling, they would be able to have a better life. The belief that schooling will bring success and a better position in society with more respect and more privileges is very prevalent in Indonesian society today regardless of the fact that some famous Indonesian people, such as Andrie Wongso and Bob Sadino, worked successfully and were financially successful without relatively high formal education degrees, while people who have relatively high formal education degrees remained jobless (Kompas, 2008).

A typical societal belief assumes that children and teenagers need to spend their time at school. Societies tend to be critical of children who do not go to school and label them uneducated, undereducated, or even uncivilized. The Indonesian government is also concerned about schooling. In the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Undang-Undang Dasar 1945), there is a particular section consisting of five articles that discusses Indonesian education. In one of the articles, it is mentioned that 20% of the national budget should be spent on education. In addition, after the Indonesian Independence, a number of education institutions were founded, such as the National Education Committee (Komisi Pendidikan Nasional), whose job is among others to specifically study the Indonesian education system (Komisi Pendidikan Indonesia, 2001).
However, do those who are concerned with education realize that in fact there is a correlation between students’ background, students’ academic success and students’ future? In recalling my childhood, I notice that most of my friends who achieved academic success and obtained good jobs and position in society were primarily those from relatively rich families with sufficient parental cares and concerns. Those who were less successful academically, socially, and economically were mostly students from relatively poor families without sufficient parental care who lived in rural areas.

In my hometown, it is common for those in the lower class to work as house cleaners. Some of them work for long, irregular hours so that they need to stay in their employers’ houses. They only visit their own home once in a week or sometimes even once in a year, regardless of their status as married women. Sometimes their husbands work in different areas, and the same as these house cleaners, they also seldom go back home. Some of these housekeepers are single mothers because their husbands leave them. Some of them even have more than one child from different husbands. Because these house cleaners have to stay away from home, they leave their children in their parents’ houses.

Studying the inequalities of child rearing practices between the lower and the middle socio-economic class communities, Lareau (2003) indicated that in the lower socio-economic class, in which parents struggled with severe economic problems, children usually did not receive sufficient attention and academic training from their parents. While the lower class people stayed in a community of similar kinds of people,
the schools built for them were also of relatively low quality, especially in terms of school discipline and facilities. Given this condition, it is common for the children of the lower socio-economic class to be academically less successful.

Considering this dilemma, when Kompas (June 22, 2009) reported that ten poor rural elementary schools in Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia obtained high results on the National Examination (Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional, UASBN), it was considered phenomenal. Gunungkidul is known to be challenging geographically and demographically (Pemerintah Kabupaten Gunungkidul, n.d.; Regional Development, 2005). As one of the five regencies of the Special Province of Yogyakarta, which is located about 39 kilometers from the capital of the province, Gunungkidul is typically mountainous. It is also influenced by the existence of the karst of the Seribu Mountain Range with several active volcanoes. The rainfall is generally high. It is about 1500 – 2500 millimeters/ year. However, because of the karst condition, the soil cannot retain the water. During the dry season, drinking water comes from the reservoir or from outside of the region. People sometimes have to pay for this basic necessity (Pemerintah Kabupaten Gunungkidul, n.d.; Regional Development, 2005).

Social welfare in Gunungkidul in comparison is less promising than in more urban areas. It was reported that although the number of poor families had decreased about 4% from 1999 to 2001, the number of poor families was still relatively high. Among the 18 sub-districts, about seven had a proportion of poor families higher than 50%. The rest had a range between 30% - 50% in each region (Pemerintah Kabupaten
Based on the most recent census information, since 2001, poverty has decreased little over the past decades (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010).

The quality of human resources in Gunungkidul is also relatively low. Based on the 2002 data given by the Statistics Bureau (Badan Pusat Statistik), out of 58,641 of the total youth ages 15-19 years old, only about half of them go to school. Of these, about 30% of the youth were noted as working. The rest were either seeking jobs or their occupational status was noted as unidentified (Disdikpora, 2009; Regional Development, 2005). Gunungkidul is also known to have high rates of school dropouts. In 2007, it was listed that only about 30% of the total population graduated from elementary schools, and about 15% dropped out of elementary school, or did not ever experience formal education (Disdikpora, 2009).

Based on recent statistics, the teacher-to-student ratio is relatively low. It is indicated that in the elementary schools in the area, there were about 63,643 students with 5,782 teachers distributed in 563 schools with 3,834 classes. However, the conditions of the schools were very poor. Almost half of the total classrooms needed to be repaired and more than 20% of teachers were not well prepared to teach. Meanwhile, no description about these inadequacies was published (Disdikpora, 2009). Referring to the study by Lareau (2003), it is likely that such inadequacies mainly occurred in very rural areas. However, it is difficult to determine the cause of these inadequacies because the statistics covered whole regions and were not broken down by smaller districts. Reflecting on my
experience when I was in elementary school and learning from the society around me, I noticed that in the capital of the district, like in Wonosari, it is common to have more than twenty-five students in a class with one teacher.

The transportation and roads are also problems. Based on the report, the road system was mainly divided into national, provincial, and local roads. Out of the total road length in the area of 1,146.64 kilometers, approximately one-fourth were in poor condition, which were normally local roads. The transportation facilities were varied. They included public urban passenger transport, becak (rickshaws) and ojek (motorcycles used for public transportation). All of them used the same road ways. Public urban transportation connected the sub-district capitals (regions within the districts) to Wonosari (the district capital and the center of activities). Therefore, if people lived far away from the sub-district capital and decided to commute from their homes to the district capital, they had to either take ojek or travel on foot since becak only operated in Wonosari (Regional Development, 2005).

With less than adequate social, cultural, financial and intellectual capital, the implementation of the decentralization of the school curriculum, in which each region had to fulfill its own education needs, should have made education in that district less developed and resulted in students getting poor grades on the UASBN. However, as reported, ten schools in this region had performed well on the UASBN. This occurrence has motivated me to study factors that explain the performance of such rural schools with such limited resources.
Statement of the Problem

The previously presented description indicates that there has been an anomaly in the performances of these rural schools. Schools with limited facilities and human resources often perform as expected and demonstrate low academic achievement. For this reason, this study investigates this anomaly. In order to explore the phenomenon, this study seeks to answer the main research question: What factors explain the unusual UASBN performance of a relatively poor elementary school?

To provide a holistic response to that question, four sub-questions related to Indonesian School-Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendididikan, KTSP) and the National Examination (Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional, UASBN) were generated and formulated as the following:

1. What do the members of the school body, especially the head of the curriculum section (seksi kurikulum), the staff member for the Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT), the school principal, and the classroom teachers understand about the School-Level Curriculum (KTSP)?

2. What do the members of the school body, especially the school principal and the classroom teachers do to extend the national standards to develop the KTSP?
3. What do the members of the school body, especially the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal, and the classroom teachers understand about the UASBN?

4. How does understanding about the UASBN by members of the school body, especially the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal and the classroom teachers influence teaching practices?

The participants’ responses to these questions serve as explanation to this anomaly.

**Significance of the Study**

There are specific reasons why this study is of importance besides my personal interest and curiosity. Rural schools have been stigmatized and considered to be less able to reach the government’s expectations (Teese, 1997). The ten rural schools in Gunungkidul mentioned previously were exceptions to this pattern. By studying similar schools as those in Gunungkidul, the findings of this study will become an aid for other rural schools to learn from the selected school how to better prepare students for the UASBN.

In addition, in the short term, the results of the study will become a primary step towards more holistically informing the school system in Indonesia, especially because this study analyzed the coherence between what to teach, how to teach, and what to test. The results of the study will assist education executors in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum implemented in Indonesia. This study will also
consider important aspects of student-teacher communication and teachers’ leadership. Moreover, the findings will contribute to the identification of the teacher qualification needed in rural schools in Indonesia and can serve to provide input to other institutions that prepare classroom teachers.

**Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

This study focused on the study of a *successful* rural school in one of regions in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. Due to the time constraints and the need to study the case in depth related to curriculum process, only the most rural and *successful* school in the region was taken as a single case study. The criteria of being *successful* was measured based on the results of the UASBN and the data obtained from the local government. Since the starting point was the results of UASBN, the limitation that followed was that the study only focused on the sixth grade of an elementary school in the selected school. It is important to note that in Indonesia, the UASBN is only given to the sixth grade of elementary school students.

Consequently, by this sampling selection, as with typical qualitative inquiry, the results of the study are not generalizable (cf. Patton, 2002). Nevertheless, by the depth of the study and thorough analysis of curriculum development cycles, analysis of curriculum developers’ understandings in curriculum development, and curriculum implementation in the classroom setting, the results of the study may be applied across settings if the characteristics of other rural or urban schools with limited resources are consistent with the description of this particular case (cf. Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002)
Another limitation in this study relates to the documentation, such as the education laws and curriculum that are generally written in Indonesian. Some terms commonly used in international organizations have an equivalent in English. However, some of them are rarely found in the lists of the international organizations that cooperate with the Indonesian government, or sometimes, English terms are used differently in different organizations to address the same Indonesian terms. As a result, language barriers can be a potential problem in this study. On the one hand, translating the documents into English is necessary. On the other hand, translating Indonesian terms not commonly used might result in gaining or losing meaning (cf. Nida, 2003). To reduce any shift in the meaning, some expressions that are thought to be critical are kept in Indonesian and then will be followed by an English explanation. The same treatment is applied to the interviews because they were conducted in Indonesian and even in the local language, the Javanese language. The reason for interviewing participants in the Indonesian language or Javanese language is that in Indonesia, especially in this area, English is considered to be a foreign language, and only a relatively few people in the target area speak English.

**Definition of Concepts**

As mentioned in the Limitations and Delimitations section, language barrier has the potential to create significant challenges. For these reasons, this section is intended to provide the key concepts used in this study. The key concepts are presented in italics and are briefly described. It is expected that while the concepts are kept brief, the whole
explanation might build a context, which will help readers to better understand the related concepts. The key concepts being used in this study are School-Level Curriculum, *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP), national education standards, *school committee, school board, national examination, Ujian Akhir Berstandar Nasional* (UASBN) and *elementary school, Badan Standar Nasional* (BSNP).

The term *school-level curriculum* in this study refers to *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP), which is slightly different from the term *school-based curriculum* or *school-focused curriculum* in general (Marsh, 2009). In this context, school-level curriculum or KTSP, instead of school-based curriculum or school-focused curriculum, is preferred considering that in the school-based curriculum, it is assumed that the school decides all the curriculum policy, meanwhile, in the school-focused curriculum, it is assumed that curriculum policy is determined at the school level, considering the interests and needs of the community (Marsh, 2009). In this study, school-level curriculum refers to a curriculum at the school level, which is generated from the *national standards*, and is developed at the school level. This curriculum covers the school vision and mission, school rationale, school goals and objectives, academic calendar, general lists of required subject matters and syllabi. In Indonesian context, such a curriculum is sometimes associated with *decentralized curriculum in Indonesia* (Badan Standar Pendidikan Nasional Pendidikan, 2006; Pusat Kurikulum, 2007).

The *National Education Standards* are defined as education standards covering *standar kompetensi lulusan* (graduate competency standards), *standar isi* (curriculum
content standards), *standar proses* (learning process standards), *standar pendidik dan tenaga kependidikan* (education executors and education staff standards), *standar sarana dan prasarana* (school facility standards), *standar pengelolaan* (school management standards, *standar pembiayaan* (school finance standards), and *standar evaluasi* (learning evaluation standards) (Peraturan Pemerintah, 2005). These standards tend to be general and conceptual, and are expected to be applicable to all Indonesian schools in all regions, regardless of any economic, cultural, and social differences. These standards function as the direction and quality control for the KTSP (Pusat Kurikulum, 2007). Further explanation about the standards to be included in the KTSP development is discussed in Chapter 4.

In order to accommodate the needs of the society, the government suggests that in developing the school curriculum, each school involves a *school committee*. This committee consists of classroom teachers, community leaders, selected students’ parents, and business people (Undang-Undang Pendidikan Nasional, 2003; Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Pendidikan Nasional, 2005). The members of the school committee are then proposed by the related schools and are approved by the *school board*, which is determined at the district level and whose jobs include monitoring the quality of education (Undang-Undang Pendidikan Nasional, 2003).

Since Indonesia is very diverse, allowing schools to adopt, adjust, and/or adapt the National Standards offer many challenges in relation to school quality. For this reason, the Indonesian government considers that a *national examination* is needed at the
end of each level of schooling. In Indonesia, the national examination is given at the end of grade six (elementary school), nine (junior high school), and twelve (senior high school) (Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Pendidikan Nasional, 2005). At the elementary school, this test is called *Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional* (*UASBN*). This UASBN consists of 25% national test items, and 75% local test items. The educational board called *Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (National Education Standards Board, BSNP) is responsible for the development of these test items (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional, 2008). Additional regulation concerning this distribution is discussed in Chapter Two and further explained in subsequent chapters.

**Glossary: Acronyms**

In field studies, words and phrases are sometimes maintained in the language of the primary data. The importance of keeping the language in the original is that readers of the research can appreciate the complexity of language differences. Therefore, a glossary of acronyms is presented next to assist readers of this dissertation so that they can consult if there are difficulties making sense of the acronyms used in the research. The English terms used to explain the original words are deemed to be the closest in meaning to the original words according to the researcher.

**BAN.** *Badan Akreditasi Nasional. National Accreditation Board.*

**BP-KNIP.** *Badan Pekerja Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat. National Vocational Board.*

**BPPD.** *Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah. The Department of Regional Development Planning.*
**BSNP.** Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan. National Education Standards Board.

**Disdiknas.** Dinas Pendidikan Nasional. National Education Department at the Regency.

**Disdikpora.** Dinas Pendidikan Pemuda dan Olahraga. Department of Youth and Athletics.

**GBPP.** Garis-Garis Besar Program Pengajaran. Teaching and Learning Guidelines.

**KBK.** Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi. Competency-Based Curriculum.

**KKG.** Kelompok Kerja Guru. Elementary Classroom Teachers’ Working Group.

**KTSP.** Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan. School-Level Curriculum.

**LPMP.** Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan. Institute of Education Quality Assurance.

**LPTK.** Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan. Teacher-training Institute.

**Manipol USDEK.** Manifesto Politik Undang-Undang Dasar 1945, Sosialisme Indonesia, Demokrasi Terpimpin, Ekonomi Terpimpin, dan Kepribadian Indonesia. An ideology introduced by Soekarno combining the Indonesian Constitution of 1945, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Indonesian Nationalism.

**Mulok.** Muatan Lokal. Local Content Curriculum.

**Permendiknas.** Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional. Regulations issued by the Ministry of National Education.

**PGSD.** Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar. Elementary School Teacher Training.

**PKI.** Partai Komunis Indonesia. The Indonesian Communist Party.
**SBM. Sekolah Berbasis Manajemen.** School-Based Management.

**SD. Sekolah Dasar.** Elementary School.

**SPG. Sekolah Pendidikan Guru.** Vocational high schools that prepare students for teaching kindergarten and elementary schools.

**TK. Taman Kanak-kanak.** Kindergarten.

**UAN. Ujian Akhir Nasional.** National Examination for high school students. It is given to the third grade of Junior and Senior high school students.

**UASBN. Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional.** National Examination for Elementary School students. It is given to the sixth grade students of Elementary School in Indonesia.

**UPT. Unit Pelaksana Teknis.** Technical Implementation Unit.

**Organization of the Study**

In the following chapter, theories of curriculum and curriculum change are introduced, and an overview of curriculum changes in Indonesia is presented. Concepts that contribute to theories of curriculum and curriculum change will help readers to better understand how the curriculum in this context is studied. The review of past curriculum changes in Indonesia will help the readers to place the present curriculum initiatives in context with the historical development of Indonesia’s traditionally centralized education system. This tracing back and contextualizing helps to demonstrate the particular challenges of the implementation of the current Indonesian curriculum that education executors face, especially in under privileged areas.
Chapter 3 provides a rationale for the use of Grounded Theory adopted for the study. It also includes the step-by-step procedures used in the study, such as sampling selection of the data, sources of the data, and methods to collect and to analyze the data.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides background information about Indonesian education. There are three sections presented: a review of literature on curriculum theory, a review of curriculum changes in Indonesia, and an overview of the decentralization of education in Indonesia. The first section reviews curriculum theory, which covers curriculum definitions, types, decision-making, development, implementation, and evaluation and change. The second section gives reviews of curriculum changes in Indonesia. The reviews of the curriculum changes in Indonesia are divided into four different periods: in pre-and post-colonization years, in the Soekarno Years, in the Soeharto Years, and in the Reformasi Years. The third section discusses the decentralization of education in Indonesia and explores the curriculum in the Reformasi Years and is central to this study. The third section presents a general overview of the 2003 Education Acts and the changes in the curriculum that resulted from the enactments of the Acts.

Review of Curriculum Theory

To comprehend current school practices, it is necessary to understand the nature of curriculum and develop a lens for analysis. This review discusses six major topics: defining curriculum, types of curriculum, curriculum decision-making, curriculum development, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation and curriculum change.

Defining curriculum. Many authors have differently defined the word curriculum. Oliva (2009), for example, classified the definition of curriculum into two parts: narrow and broad. In the narrow view, curriculum is defined as subjects taught in
In the broad sense, *curriculum* is defined as “all the experiences of learners, both in school and out, directed by the school” (p. 3). Other authors, such as Eisner (2002), and Goodlad and Richter (1966) define it as a series of planned activities. Eisner (2002), however, further explains that these planned activities are expected to have an educational impact on one or more students.

In Sowell’s (2005) definition, the term *curriculum* is more comprehensive. Sowell defines a curriculum as what is taught to the learners, including the intended or unintended information, skills, and attitudes, which are communicated to the learners either inside or outside of schools during the teaching and learning processes. Tanner and Tanner (1980) add even more to this list. They argue that a curriculum includes:

1) the cumulative tradition of organized knowledge; 2) modes of thought; 3) race experiences; 4) guided experience; 5) a planned learning experience; 6) cognitive/affective content and process; 7) an instructional plan; 8) instructional ends or outcomes; and 9) a technological system of production. (p. 36)

Generally, a curriculum comprises a learning plan that includes learning content and learning experiences that are happening in and/or out of school, but still in the context of schooling. This plan is expected to have an impact on one or more students. Based on that conclusion, *curriculum* is understood as a set of planned learning materials and planned experiences that occur within a given school context and includes expectations that impact student learning.
Types of curriculum. A curriculum can be classified in many ways. This section discusses types of curriculum based on the making of decisions, and on the ways it is delivered. Identifying curriculum based on the making of decision will facilitate better understanding of the process of curriculum decision-making in Indonesian curriculum, which will eventually provide insight into how Indonesian curriculum was and is now treated. The identification of the types of curriculum based on the way it is delivered will help readers understand the previous and current practices of the Indonesian curricula.

Types of curriculum based on the decision-making. A curriculum can be classified according to levels of authority. Goodlad and Richter (1966), Goodlad and Su (1992), and Oliva (2009), for example, state that a curriculum can be classified into three categories: societal, institutional, and instructional. At the societal level, a curriculum is usually designed by and decided on by the public consisting of various social representatives, such as politicians, representatives of special interest groups, school administrators, and professional specialists. They indicate that on this level, decisions are made without any negotiation at the local level. According to Goodlad and Su (1992), this type of curriculum involves a sociopolitical process in determining the goals of education.

Unlike the societal curriculum, an institutional curriculum serves districts and schools (Goodlad & Richter, 1966; Oliva, 2009; Sowell, 2005). At this level, the curriculum is generated from the societal curriculum, and is developed by and decided on by local education staff and laypersons, such as groups of administrators, teachers,
community members and parents. Although this level of curriculum is noted to be the most democratic, Oliva (2009) considers that the development becomes less efficient, especially because the team consists of people who are sometimes not well informed about the curriculum development process. However, Goodlad and Richter (1966) refuted this premise and argued that the process from the board and managers to teachers, as a top-down approach, is often unclear for those who are responsible for implementing the curriculum.

At the third level, an instructional curriculum is the curriculum as it is delivered to students. It is the level at which educational objectives and the selection of learning activities takes place (Goodlad & Richter, 1966). At this level, teachers work individually or in groups together with other bodies, such as administrators and principals (Sowell, 2005). Oliva (2009) emphasizes that at this level, teachers are assigned to expand the curriculum by making it operational for their teaching and student learning. Teachers have the responsibility to develop the taught curriculum, which covers writing the goals and objectives of learning, selecting learning materials, identifying resources in the school and community, sequencing or re-sequencing the subject matter, implementing the plans, and evaluating learning.

In addition to the societal, institutional, and instructional curriculum levels which are directed at students (who do not design the curriculum), Goodlad and Su (1992) and Sowell (2005) offer one more type of curriculum, which is different for each individual. This type is called experiential curriculum. Experiential curriculum is defined as the
curriculum “perceived and experienced by learners” (Sowell, 2005, p. 6). In other words, at this level, the curriculum that has been learned could be much different from the one that was planned, developed, and evaluated by either the public, educational leaders or teachers. Defining curriculum in this way offers a multitude of aspects that are entirely based on the perceptions of the learners.

Types of curriculum based on the ways in which it is delivered. Based on the way a curriculum is presented, English (2010) introduces the “3X3 curriculum matrix.” The first three components of the axis of the matrix include formal curriculum, informal curriculum and hidden curriculum. The components of the other axis include the written curriculum, taught curriculum and tested curriculum. In the form of a matrix, English defines a formal curriculum as a curriculum which appears officially in the government regulations. This formal curriculum might appear in the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, or the tested curriculum. The written curriculum might appear as the curriculum guidelines written in the curriculum documents, while the taught curriculum refers to the curriculum content delivered in the classroom, and the tested curriculum is the curriculum which is presented in standardized tests (English, 2010).

Unlike the formal curriculum, the informal curriculum covers other curriculum aspects, such as the values of identifying curriculum content which might not be implicitly stated in the formal curriculum. The similarity of the informal curriculum and the formal curriculum is that the informal curriculum might also be reflected in the written, taught and tested curriculum (English, 2010). For example, in the written
curriculum, an informal curriculum might be illustrated in the efforts of the teachers to recognize students’ progress. In the taught curriculum, it might appear in the teachers’ efforts to deal with students’ personalities, and in the tested curriculum, in teachers’ observation of the changes of the students’ behavior.

Different from the first two, the hidden curriculum is delivered without recognition. It contains teachers’ expectations behind what is explicitly written and taught. Like the other two types, however, this hidden curriculum can also be present in the written curriculum, taught curriculum and tested curriculum (English, 2010). For example, in the written curriculum, the teaching of national history is intended to instill students’ nationalism. Since the way teachers deliver the materials are in the form of classroom discussion, it is expected that the students will be able to critically think about the topics. Meanwhile, presented in the format of an essay test, the teaching of history in this way can stimulate the students’ reasoning skills. All of these exemplify that the hidden curriculum, as it is named, implicitly appears in the written, taught and tested curriculum.

**Curriculum development.** There are various approaches to develop a curriculum (e.g. Oliva, 2009; Saylor, Alexander & Lewis, 1981; Taba, 1962; Tyler, 1969). Making reviews of the different approaches, Oliva (2009) indicates that while Taba’s method tends to be inductive, the others’ tend to be deductive. Tyler’s approach focuses on identifying general objectives by gathering data from learners, teachers and subject matter. By contrasting the terms *goals* and *objectives*, Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis’
model focuses on the classification of broad goals into domains. By analyzing and synthesizing these three models, Oliva (2009) tries to combine all of them in one approach.

Regardless of their different approaches, all of these curriculum theorists appear to include four steps in curriculum development: analyzing the learners’ needs, formulating the curriculum aims and objectives, identifying learning experiences, and organizing learning experiences.

In analyzing the needs, the needs of the students as human beings should be negotiated within the needs of the society (Oliva, 2009). After the needs are identified, the goals and objectives are formulated. These goals and objectives become the direction of the curriculum content (Oliva, 2009; Saylor, Alexander, & Lewis, 1981; Taba, 1962; Tyler, 1969). It is important to note that goals and objectives in this context are different. Goals tend to be long-term and gradual aims while objectives are relatively short term and more direct aims as a result of instructions (Brandt & Tyler, 1983; Oliva, 2009).

Based on the goals and the objectives of the curriculum, curriculum designers select the learning experiences needed by the learners. For example, curriculum designers might classify learning needed by the students into the humanities, the social sciences, the biological sciences, and the physical sciences, including Mathematics (Goodlad & Richter, 1966). In addition to the learning, curriculum designers can consider the kinds of learning experiences that contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2009), for example, propose four models: the
information-processing, social, personal, and behavioral systems’ family of models. Each of these learning models is based on the teachers’ learning philosophy in which each model of learning is generated (Philips & Soltis, 2009).

**Curriculum implementation.** Curriculum implementation in this context refers to the instructional development as proposed by Oliva (2009), which identifies two major cycles: curriculum development and instructional development. Oliva indicates that while curriculum is broader and conceptual, instructional development consisting of instructional development and instructional implementation is narrower and more directed toward the classroom setting. For this reason, the word curriculum implementation in this study is used interchangeably with instructional development and implementation.

Similar to curriculum development, the instructional development also includes the statement of the goals and objectives of learning (Dick et al., 2005; Oliva, 2009). The major differences are that while the curriculum is broader, more abstract, and tends to be closely aligned to the policy makers, the instruction tends to be more specific and to be closer to the center of learning: teachers and students (Oliva, 2009). In other words, while the curriculum tends to be conceptual, the instruction tends to be more operational.

Weade (1987) illustrates that curriculum and instruction can be merged in circles as depicted in Figure 1. As seen in the classroom setting, a teacher brings with her/him to the classroom the curriculum already generated into instructions. In delivering the curriculum in the form of teachers’ instructions, dialogues between teachers and students
often happen. The dialogues between the teachers and the students provide opportunities for the delivered curriculum to be negotiated, evaluated, adjusted, and even changed. It is in this cycle that curriculum evaluation and change is continuously taking place.


**Curriculum evaluation.** As mentioned in the previous section, classroom feedback has the potential to be the input for curriculum evaluation, revision and even change (Weade, 1987). Classroom feedback can be in various forms. Students’ test scores are the most often discussed (see Dick et al., 2005; English, 2010; Oliva, 2009). This approach is preferable because a test gives immediate feedback to teachers. However, the
challenge of using tests as an instrument to measure the appropriateness and the success of a program is that the tests are sometimes inappropriately designed and selected (Crocker & Algina, 2008; English, 2010). In addition, in the context of teaching and learning, tests sometimes lead the teaching away from the objectives of the learning. Instead of teaching the students to understand the content, teachers might teach their students to prepare for the tests (Jones, Jones & Hargrove, 2003).

McNeil (2006) proposes a more holistic curriculum evaluation technique. This evaluation involves context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation. Context evaluation refers to the study of learning environment evaluation. Input evaluation refers to the study of the selection of learning strategies to obtain the learning objectives. Process evaluation refers to the study of the design and implementation of the curriculum, and product evaluation refers to the study of the effects of learning (McNeil, 2006). The results of the evaluation are used to determine whether or not a curriculum needs to be revised, adjusted, or even changed (Dick et al., 2005; McNeil, 2006; Oliva, 2009).

Curriculum change. As mentioned in the previous section, the curriculum evaluation might help the curriculum designers to identify whether or not a curriculum needs to be changed (Dick et al., 2005; McNeil, 2006; Oliva, 2009). However, curriculum change is sometimes influenced by the results of the politics of curriculum making (McNeil, 2006). The next section discusses the general reasons for the needs for a
curriculum to change, the models of curriculum change, and the aspects needed for a curriculum to successfully change.

**Reasons for curriculum change.** The need for a curriculum in a broader context to change appears to be mostly imposed by its relevance to the society. Studying the determinant factors of curriculum change in America, Cuban (1976) and Godlad (2002) indicated that there are major and secondary causes of curriculum change. Cuban and Godlad identified that broad social, economic and political movements can be considered as the major causes of change. Meanwhile, legislation, court decisions, influential groups and persuasive individuals who act as mediators between the environment and schools, such as John Dewey, William T. Harris, Edward Thorndike, John Franklin Bobbitt, and Ralph Tyler, can be regarded as secondary causes (Cuban, 1976; Godlad, 2002).

In a wider context, educational content can be influenced by the values of related nations towards global change (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Spring, 2009). The trade liberation has resulted in financial problems in many developing countries as well as contradictory educational goals (Carnoy, 2002; Spring 2009; Weisbrot & Baker, 2005). Carnoy (2002) indicates that this financial condition affects education in three main ways. To cope with the fiscal problems, most governments cut the public spending on education and try to solicit other financial sources for educational expansion. At the same time, the finances spent on education increase because the labor market necessitates the governments to provide an education system that prepares students to become more skillful laborers. This situation is worsened by the fact that the quality of national
education is compared internationally. Providing education loans and programs, international organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), introduce new values of education through the Human Capital World Model, the Progressive Education World Model, the Religious Education Models, and the Indigenous Education Models that are at times, contradictory (Spring, 2009).

In the Human Capital World Model, education is considered as an economic tool in which everything should be accountable and measurable. Therefore, economic values will dominate the content of the curriculum. In contrast to the Human Capital World Model, the Progressive Education approach, in which education is considered as a social institution that helps students face social problems, focuses students’ learning on preparing them to engage actively in social and political change. Unlike the Human Capital World Model and the Progressive Education model, the Religious Education World Model emphasizes the study of religious texts and values. The advocates of this system assume that the Human Capital World Model and the Progressive Education World Model have ruined the value of religions since these two tend to be more secular. Like the Religious Education World Education model, the Indigenous Education World Model also rejects secularism. The major difference is that the Indigenous Education World Model focuses education on the traditional values of indigenous people (Spring, 2009).
Models of curriculum change. MacDonald (2003) identifies three models of curriculum change: top-down, bottom-up, and partnership. In the top-down model, a curriculum writer, and not the person who is closely related to schools, develops the curriculum, including the curriculum objectives, materials, and assessment. The major concern of this model is obtaining curriculum fidelity between core concepts and its best practices. In the bottom-up model, the triggers are invariably from the local level including concepts and practices, teachers and school environments. To improve the trustworthiness of the innovations, the curriculum researchers on the teachers’ side convince teachers of the importance of their voice in the curriculum development. Unlike the first two, the partnership model assumes that it is important to involve all of the parties engaged in education to develop the curriculum together. Criticizing the notion of bottom-up curriculum change, this model proposes collaboration among administrators, curriculum developers, professional, associations, researchers, teacher educators, teachers, and parents.

Aspects for successful curriculum change. In addition to the triggers of the curriculum change and the models of curriculum change, Fullan, Cuttress, and Kilcher (2009) propose eight aspects needed in order to successfully change the curriculum. The first force engages the moral purposes of education personnel, such as the educators, community leaders and society. In other words, the change should incorporate the needs of the people who are involved in education. The second requirement is building capacity, which covers not only the physical building, but also individual and collective
capacity and infrastructure, including “policies, strategies, resources, and actions designed to increase people’s collective power to move the system forward (schools, districts, states)” (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2009, p. 10). Other elements needed are the understanding towards the change process, developing cultures for learning, developing cultures of evaluation, focusing on leadership for change, and fostering coherence making, cultivating the community, and district and state level development (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2009).

**Concluding remarks for the curriculum theory.** From the viewpoint of curriculum theory, which covers defining curriculum, curriculum development, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation, and curriculum change, it is clear that curriculum refers to a continuous process in which its change and development is adjusted based on the related context, including social, economic and political conditions.

**Review of Curriculum Changes in Indonesia**

As previously mentioned curriculum in this study is defined as a set of educational plans, which include the aims of education, the learning materials and the learning experiences, which might occur either inside or outside of school. By definition, Indonesia in fact has implemented many different curricula. Each has had its own characteristics, based on the political and economic conditions that prevailed during different time periods. To facilitate understanding, the following review classifies the curricula and curriculum processes within four major political periods in Indonesia: The Pre-and Post- Colonization Years, The Soekarno Years, the Suharto Years, and the
Reformasi Years. While each of those periods had sub-periods that were important and impacted education, the following sections summarize these periods in order for the reader to understand the implications and the challenges of the curriculum changes that have been made in the last decade, which is the period after Suharto, most often known as the Reform Era, as these are central to this study.

In reviewing the Indonesian curriculum over time, there are two important ideas to discuss. The first is its social, economic and political condition, and the second is about the curriculum itself. The curriculum in each era is sub-categorized into curriculum decision-making, content, and implementation. These three are used to summarize the aspects and elements of curriculum, curriculum development, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation, and curriculum change.

**Indonesian condition in the pre-and post-colonization years.** *De jure,* Indonesia got its independence in 1945. However, the struggle to gain independence probably would not have occurred if people in the community had not shared some similar values and taken ownership of their future. The diversity of more than 350 ethnic groups has caused this effort to delineate just how some of these shared values are and how they have been a source of conflict and political disharmony over the years. For this reason, the origins of Indonesia and Indonesia before its independence are discussed in order to help readers understand the historical education values from the Indonesian ancestors that still have influence even now. Sedyawati, Zainuddin, and Wuryantoro
(1991) stated that Indonesia before the colonization referred to many areas that later became Indonesia.

Sedyawati et al. (1991) indicated that before the independence, Indonesia could be divided into four different stages: pre-history, Hindhuism-Buddhism, Islam, and Western. Indonesia in the pre-history is considered as the longest period, in which the present government system was not yet developed (Sedyawati et al., 1991). During these early periods, most Indonesians made a living from agriculture (Drakeley, 2005; Vlekke, 1965). However at the same time, many made their living from the sea (Kartodiharjo, 1987; Ricklefs, 2001; Sedyawati et al., 1991). Ricklefs (2005) and Vlekke (1965) stated that it was the strategic geographical position of Indonesia that made this country become involved in the buying and selling activities of trading, which later led to cultural assimilation and acculturation. As seen on a world map, Indonesia lies between two continents: Asia and Australia. Yet, due to the close proximity, the first influence came from Asia and helped to develop the traditions and values still seen and studied today.

Beginning in the 15th century, Indonesia began to be influenced by the Western cultures especially through exploration and port colonization by the Portuguese in Sumatera and Maluku (Kartodiharjo, 1987; Ricklefs, 2001). Soon after, the greatest influence came from the Dutch whose occupation stretched the whole archipelago by the 1800s (Ricklefs, 2001). This occupation lasted for more than three hundred years until in 1942, the Japanese replaced them (Drakeley, 2005; Ricklefs, 2001). The Japanese occupied Indonesia until the turbulent times of 1945, when Indonesia won its
independence. Although the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the Japanese influenced Indonesia, it was the Dutch and Japanese who had significant influence on the early state education system. While the religious schools trace their influence to Islamic and Catholic influences, this study focused on Indonesian public schools.

Curricula in the pre-and post-colonization years. As previously mentioned, the social, economic or political changes, such as changes in legislation policies and demands from groups of people generally drove curriculum change (Cuban, 1976; Goodlad, 2002). One or some of these forces appeared to influence the need for curriculum changes during the pre-and post-colonization. Before the colonization, the curricula were known to be less formal (Rifa’i, 2011). Not formally stated and written, these curricula tended to be decentralized, based on the needs of the institutions, which were founded on religion, especially Hinduism and Buddhism, and Islam (Rifa’i, 2011; Sedyawati et al., 1991).

However, it is important to note that during the colonization, the colonists tried to centralize the curricula once they began to consider providing education for the people whom they monopolized (Chandler et al., 1987; Embree, Simon & Mumford, 1934). It was not until the beginning of the 20th Century that the Dutch began to make a large effort to educate native children, and then it was mainly the upper-middle class and aristocrats which they offered education (Chandler, et al., 1987; Vickers, 2005).

Another significant factor was that during the colonization, two other types of schools existed and went against the colonial education systems. They were Muhammadiyah and Taman Siswa (Embree et al., 1934). While the first tended to be
religiously based, the latter were more secular in their vision and mission. *Taman Siswa* tried to embrace education, culture and religion at the same time (Ali, 1994; Febre, 1952; Madjelis Luhur Taman Siswa, 1962; Makmur, Haryono, Musa, & Hadi, 1993; Pranata, 1959; Tauchid, 1963). *Taman Siswa* is known to be more accommodative and its motto “Tut wuri handayani,” which means that teachers are required to follow the students’ personal development, is used as the current slogan of Indonesian education (Djojonegoro, 1996).

**Curriculum decision-making.** During the pre-and post-colonization, especially before the colonization, the curricula were determined at the institution level based on the policy of the teachers, called *pande* during the Hinduism-Buddhism period and *kiai* during the Islam period. The purpose of education was the achievement of human virtues. It is significant to recognize that teachers were very carefully selected by the society. During the Hinduism-Buddhism influence, the teachers were generally from the caste of Brahmana, the highest rank in the social hierarchy, who were noted to have a good quality of life. These *pandes*, the same as *kiais*, became the role model for the students and the society. *Kiais* became not only teachers and religious leaders, but also the community leaders (Gunawan, 1986; Mestoko et al., 1986; Sedyawati et al., 1991). During this phase, if the students were not satisfied with the teachers, it was possible for them to find other teachers (Rifa’i, 2011).

Different from the education system before the colonization, the education system during the last decades of colonization tended to be more centralized. The colonists, who
were at the governmental level, determined the aims of education as well as the curriculum content and implementation. A study by Embree et al. (1934) revealed that when the Dutch were in power, the implicit education agenda was to maintain the authority of the colonial rule, and to prepare skillful laborers at a cheaper price (Djojonegoro, 1996; Embree et al., 1934; Sedyawati et al., 1991; Tilaar, 1995). For that purpose, the government selected and trained teachers, and determined the content of learning and the learning strategies (Embree et al., 1934; Makmur et al., 1993; Sedyawati et al., 1991).

As mentioned previously, Taman Siswa was noted to be an educational institution that tried to go against the colonial education. It was commonly believed that the education system introduced by the colonists had imprisoned the minds of the Indonesian people. This institution considered academic achievement to not be the major purpose of education. The balance between intellectual and personal development became the major intent of education according to Taman Siswa (Rahardjo, 2009). With these different values, Taman Siswa did not adopt the curriculum suggested by the Dutch. Instead, they adopted a different form of curriculum, the institutional curriculum decision-making (Embree et al., 1934; Makmur et al., 1993).

**Curriculum content.** As in the theory of curriculum development, the content of a curriculum generally follows the aims of education (Oliva, 2009). Before the colonization, the aim of education was for the attainment of human fulfillment (Santosa, 2010; Sedyawati et al., 1991). To achieve this end, the content of education was mostly
related to religious teaching although common knowledge such as writing and science also were considered (Sedyawati et al., 1991). Living together with the pandes or kiais, the students, called cantrik (in Hindhuism-Buddhism) and santri (in Islam), in patapan (the name of the place for education according to Hindhuism-Buddhism, not necessarily a building) or in pesantren (the name of the place for studying according to Islam), stayed away from the crowd, fasted and lived in the ways requested by their teachers (Rifa’i, 2011; Santosa, 2010; Sedyawati et al., 1991). Probably, in such a way of learning, the cantrik and santri were introduced with both the implicit and explicit curriculum (cf. English, 2010).

When the Dutch seized Indonesia, the aim of education shifted. The greatest change occurred when Verenigde Oost-Indies Compagnie (VOC, the group of Dutch business people in East Indies) were in control to represent the power of Dutch. When the VOC took over, education was directed to prepare skillful labor at a cheaper price (Djojonegoro, 1996; Embree et al., 1934; Sedyawati et al., 1991, Tilaar, 1995). However this public opportunity was only offered to the elite after the Ethic Policy took hold in 1901 (Chandler et al., 1987; Rifa’i, 2011). It is also useful to note that the Dutch implemented a hierarchical caste system based on race, ethnicity, and socio-economic standards (Ali, 1994; Djojonegoro, 1996; Embree et al., 1934; Tilaar, 1995). They also discriminated against students based on their level of intelligence (Ali, 1994). In addition, the government prescribed the academic subjects and its instructions and selected the teachers (Embree, et al., 1934). With this system, it was assumed that as more native
Indonesians accepted Dutch nationalism, the Dutch would get more skillful labor at a cheaper price; and at the same time, this strategy would diminish Indonesians’ loyalty to a greater Indonesian nationalist agenda and cause conversion to a more Dutch worldview (Gunawan, 1986).

Realizing the hidden curriculum of oppression by the Dutch, Ki Hadjar Dewantara introduced a different educational model, *Taman Siswa*, which was known to be the antithesis of colonial education (Jasin, 1987; Sjamsuddin, Sastradinata, & Hasan, 1993). Aiming at educating people to be good Indonesian citizens and self-fulfilled human beings, academic achievement was not the major purpose of education (Rahardjo, 2009). Although academic attainment was still considered important, the contents of the curriculum were directed to instill nationalism in the Indonesian youth. Therefore, history, local language and sports became important courses, while foreign language was necessary as the children grew older (Madjelis Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa, 1962). A detailed description of each course can be found in Madjelis Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa (1962) and Soeratman (1982). It is important to note that many *Taman Siswa* educated Indonesian youth got involved in the struggle for Indonesian Independence (Majelis Luhur Tamansiswa, 1982; Surjomihardjo, 1986).

**Curriculum implementation.** As stated previously, the curriculum implementation can be understood as the realization of the curriculum content (see Oliva, 2009; Weade, 1987). Before the colonization, the educational systems in Indonesia were completely decentralized. The content of the curriculum, the curriculum organization and
the curriculum implementation entirely depended on teachers. Sedyawati et al. (1991) highlighted three important concepts related to the curriculum implementation before the colonization. They were the concept of educating (mendidik), instructing (mengajar) and knowing and/or understanding (tahu), the concepts of teaching (perguruan), and the concept of students (pemuridan).

Sedyawati et al. (1991) stated that the word mendidik, which is now sometimes used interchangeably with mengajar, was more preferable in the education system before the Indonesian colonization. Mendidik referred to any efforts to introduce human values to the students. In this context, a good student was the one who continuously learned from her/his teachers, and helped teachers to fulfill their daily needs. Obedience to their teachers was greatly valued during the process of education. However, teachers also had the responsibility to be the role models for their students, especially in terms of knowledge and human virtues. Living together in patapaan or pesantren, teachers and students had personal dialogues, discussions, and evaluations, but at the same time, teachers took the roles of parents for their students (Sedyawati et al., 1991).

In relation to students’ evaluation, one significant difference between the Hindhuism-Buddhism and the Islamic education system was that in the Islamic schools, different levels of education began to be introduced whereas none previously existed. It was indicated that students who went to Pesantren were those who had finished their study in Langgar (a mosque in a village) (Gunawan, 1986). When students finished
reading the Qur’an and recited it, they were permitted to move to the next level (Sedyawati, et. al., 1991).

During the colonization by the Dutch and by the Japanese, education in Indonesia, including the curriculum implementation was relatively more centralized compared with those before the colonization. Research by Embree, Simon and Mumford (1934) revealed that during the Dutch colonization, the government, which consisted of the Dutch in majority and the native Indonesians (priumbi/bumiputera), determined the content of learning, and the curriculum implementation. Teachers were strictly trained before they began to work as teachers, and were regularly supervised and evaluated by the government. The learning and teaching processes also became more formal. The learning and teaching processes took place in a building called sekolah. Sitting in a row, students were expected to stay still in the class and to follow instructions given by the teachers. Schooling also began to be classified into elementary, secondary and tertiary education, which were also differentiated for Dutch and local people (bumiputera) (Embree et al., 1934). Those schools were given Dutch names such as Volkshool, for rural schools, which was at the level of elementary schools (Makmur et al., 1993).

In terms of curriculum implementation, education during the Japanese colonization was not much different from the education during the Dutch colonization. The only changes were related to the school segregations and the language of instruction. During the Japanese colonization, school segregation was abolished and the Indonesian language became the only language of instruction. Japanese was the only foreign
language used. Thereafter, schools named in Dutch were changed into Indonesian. For example, the *Volkschool* was changed into *Sekolah Rakyat* (Makmur et al., 1993).

Different from education systems offered by the colonists, as an antithesis of the colonial education systems (Pranata, 1959), *Taman Siswa* offered different ways of curriculum implementation. Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the leader of *Taman Siswa*, assumed that colonial education had intimidated students with impractical knowledge. According to Ki Hadjar, some of the knowledge given at the colonial schools could not be implemented in students’ daily life (Pranata, 1959). For this reason, *Taman Siswa* considered that it was important for teachers to personally understand their students so that teachers could make a connection between the students’ life and the knowledge that would be useful for the students. In this type of schooling, students were trained to solve their personal problems (Madjelis Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa, 1962).

To train the students in *Taman Siswa*, teachers were encouraged to adopt the philosophy of farmers in taking care of their paddy fields. Like a paddy, in each stage of development, children have different natures and characteristics. Therefore, teachers in *Taman Siswa* should be able to recognize those differences and should be able to provide different instructions at the different stages of development (Madjelis Luhur Persatuan Taman Siswa, 1962; Pranata, 1959). With such models of education, *Taman Siswa* is known to have educated Indonesian youth who got involved in the struggle for Indonesian Independence (Majelis Luhur Tamansiswa, 1982; Surjomihardjo, 1986).
Considering the important roles of teachers in education, the education system in *Taman Siswa* required teachers to dedicate their lives to education. In *Taman Siswa*, a person should be personally and spiritually qualified before she/he offered him/herself to be a teacher. She/he should be able to be a role model for her/his students. An effective teacher, according to *Taman Siswa*, was a professional who at the same time was a good facilitator for the students and a good communicator for her/his society (Rahardjo, 2009).

Another important aspect to note in relation to curriculum is that while much literature discusses the Indonesian education system, almost none discusses how education during pre- and post-colonization was evaluated beyond the ability of students to recite. Only the informal way of learning versus evaluation during Hindhuism-Buddhism and Islam are present (Santosa, 2010; Sedyawati et al., 1991).

**Indonesian condition in the Soekarno years (1945-1966).** The Indonesian condition in the Soekarno Years was indicated by the growth of Indonesia as a nation and the development of party politics. Soekarno and his vice president were educated in the Dutch system, and both knew that public education was an important factor not only in trying to bring about a national character beyond religious and ethnic identities but also for economic development. In the beginning three main parties existed. The Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI*) grew in popularity in the 1950s and preceded a time known as the Guided Democracy, a time of major authoritarian rule and economic suffering. Under the Guided Democracy, the political and economic tensions in Indonesia increased, reached their peak, and resulted in the September 30 Movement in
1965 (Drakeley, 2005; McGlynn et al., 2007). Soekarno was accused of creating the plot of the movement. Being recognized as the person who could halt the rebellions without clear identification of who actually had planned the movement, Soeharto was chosen to chair the Ampera Cabinet, the name of the Cabinet which worked from 1966 to 1967 with the March 11 Executive Order (Drakeley, 2005; McGlynn et al., 2007; Sulistyo, 2007) and later was selected as president in every single Indonesian election until 1998.

**Curricula in the Soekarno years.** After the Indonesian Independence, some significant changes happened at the governmental level. One of the changes was the implementation of the National Constitution, *Undang-Undang Dasar 1945*. Because of that constitution, The National Committee (*Badan Pekerja Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat, BP-KNIP*) and the Ministry of Education and Culture indicated the importance of changing the curriculum that had been implemented (Djojonegoro, 1996; Jasin, 1987; Tilaar, 1995). Because of the political conditions, the committee could only develop the 1947 Learning Plan (*Rencana Pelajaran 1947*) (Djojonegoro, 1996).

In the 1950s, during the Guided Democracy, the 1950 Education Acts (*Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 1950*), the first Indonesian Education Acts, was issued, but these Education Acts were not enacted until 1954, after a significant debate related to community education, religious education, private schools, aims of national education, and the Indonesian language (Tilaar, 1995). Reviewing the report of debate happenings in the BN-KNIP meeting, Tilaar (1995) indicated that the debate on community education was related to whether the concept of education would be limited to the formal
education at schools; the debate on religious education was about whether this course
should be included in the curriculum; the debate on private schools related to the position
of these private schools in the national education and the government’s treatment of these
kinds of school; the debate on aims of national education was about the model of
educated Indonesian people; and the debate on the Indonesian language was whether the
Indonesian language should be used as the language of instruction.

In line with the 1950 Education Acts and the Presidential Decree 1959 (*Dekrit
Presiden 1959*), education was considered as a political tool (Instruksi Menteri Muda,
1959; Tilaar, 1995). To adjust this demand, the minister of education, Prijono, also
enacted *Pancawardhana* as the principles of the education system, which covered
intellectual, moral, emotional, skills, and physic development (Instruksi Menteri Muda,
1959). As the consequence of the enactment of *Pancawardhana*, 1964 Curriculum
(*Kurikulum 1964*), called *Rencana Pendidikan 1964* (1964 Education Plan) was

By nature, these two curricula, the *Rencana Pelajaran 1947* and the *Rencana
Pendidikan 1964*, were not much different. The only differences were that the *Kurikulum
1964* was better organized and more complete compared with the *1947 Kurikulum*, and
that the *Rencana Pendidikan 1964* explicitly included political agenda in the curriculum
by the enactment of the *Pantjawardhana* (Instruksi Menteri Muda, 1959). In other words,
the changes from the *Rencana Pelajaran 1947* to the *Rencana Pendidikan 1964* were
influenced by the effort to complete the elements of the curriculum and at the same time to serve the changes of the political condition in Indonesia.

**Curriculum decision-making.** As noted, the transfer of authority from the Dutch to the Indonesians and the political conditions at that time necessitated the reform of the education system. The ministry of education managed all elements of education. It was said that Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, as the first minister of education, created and worked with BP-KNIP to evaluate the education system that had been implemented (Djojonegoro, 1996). This statement indicates that the curricula were decided at the governmental level.

**Curriculum content.** The unstable condition of the country only allowed BP-KNIP to produce a simple curriculum structure, which simply included the language of instruction, materials, teaching and learning activities, and evaluation techniques (Djojonegoro, 1996; Jasin, 1987). The aims of education were not explicitly stated in the document (Djojonegoro, 1996). Given such a condition, the challenges of the teaching and learning processes at this time were the absence of guidelines with which teachers might direct their implicit curriculum.

As the political condition changed, indicated by the time when Soekarno turned to more leftist ideology, the new demands required further curriculum changes (Jasin, 1987). The *Rencana Pelajaran 1947* was changed and replaced by the *Rencana Pendidikan 1964. Pancasila* (the official philosophical foundation of Indonesian states) and the *Manipol USDEK*, a new ideology introduced by Soekarno which by Soeharto
Legacy was known to abuse the values of *Pancasila*, became the foundation of Indonesian education (Tilaar, 1995), although the education system became more documented (see Atmaprawira, 1961). The government also introduced *Pantjawardhana*, which was by the head of UNESCO mission for Indonesia known as the five principles of education (Atmapawira, 1961), to the school system in order to support their programs (Tilaar, 1995). These five principles covered nationalism, intellectual, aesthetic, skills, and physical development (Atmapawira, 1961).

To achieve the first principle, civics, history, and geography were considered crucial. Writing, reading and arithmetic became important to obtain the second principle; and literature and art education was assumed to be prominent for the achievement of the third principle. Vocational education and *Manipol USDEK* were offered to obtain skills and moral development. Sports and health education were offered to support the physical development and health (Atmapawira, 1961).

*Curriculum implementation.* As previously mentioned, during the implementation of the *Rencana Pelajaran 1947*, the political condition of Indonesia was not yet stable. As a result, the *Rencana Pelajaran 1947* was not well documented (Djojonegoro, 1996) and literatures related to Indonesian education from 1945-1950 mostly discussed the efforts to shift colonial education into Indonesian education. Instead of considering the teaching and learning processes, most literatures dealt with the reorganization and renaming the formal education system (Rifa’I, 2011; Sjamsuddin et al., 1993).
Different from the *Rencana Pelajaran 1947*, the *Rencana Pendidikan 1964* also discussed the teaching and learning principles (Atmaprawira, 1961). The document said that in educating students, teachers should consider students’ learning involvement, students’ creativity, students’ background and interests, course practicality, and experiential learning. Regardless of the limited explanation about the adoption of Western education systems, such as Dewey’s and Kerschensteiner’s, the document mentioned that those principles could be adopted in curriculum implementation with some adjustment based on the Indonesian context (Atmaprawira, 1961).

While the curriculum document had clearly included more curriculum elements, such as the aims of education, it is difficult to locate the information related to the learning evaluation. Sjamsuddin, Sastradinata and Hasan (1993), however, indicated that the education evaluation system in the 1960s referred to students’ learning assessment, which was more subjective in the form of essay tests in which the scoring system ranged from 1-9. They also argued that such an evaluation was so subjective that the grade sometimes did not reflect students’ capability. Consequently, most people hardly trusted the grades written on the students’ transcripts.

It is important to note that after the independence, teachers were urgently needed. Consequently, people could become teachers after they finished their teacher education training at *Sekolah Pendidikan Guru* (high school level that prepare students for teaching kindergarten and elementary school) known as SGB and SGA, and latter changed into SPG (Djojonegoro, 1996, Tilaar, 1995). These special secondary schools were to prepare
kindergarten and elementary school teachers (Baedhowi & Ditjen Dikdasmen, 2003; Soeprapto, Sastradiwiryia, & Supriadi, 2003; Supriadi & Hoogenboom, 2003). This approach was eventually deemed to degrade teachers’ qualities (Darminta, 2001; Tilaar, 1995).

**Indonesian condition in the Soeharto years (1966-1998).** Soeharto’s coup d’état in 1965, created a major shift in ideology and greatly influenced Indonesian education. Two big national agendas were put forward during that time: the effort to ban the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) and the effort to solve the economic problems. To ban PKI, the government introduced specific guidelines to understand and implement *Pancasila*, the Indonesian ideology (*Pedoman dan Penghayatan Pancasila, P4*) in 1978 (Djojonegoro, 1996), which was enacted after the government banned all people who were accused or were involved in the PKI party from all government institutions and society (for further description about the PKI, see Lemelson, 2010).

To solve the economic problems at that time, in 1966, Soeharto often partnered and collaborated with the West. He borrowed heavily from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI). Based on some of the initiatives advanced by these institutions, he agreed to implement a short-term investment program (Rosidi, 2007). As early as 1967, the government introduced the Foreign Investment Acts, which promoted many changes in education (Sadli, 2007). In the subsequent decades, Indonesia tended to depend much on foreign loans (Soehartono,
2007), and at the same time, industries on a large scale were introduced to Indonesia leading to an economic boom (Rosidi, 2007).

**Curricula in the Soeharto years.** Because of such economic and political conditions, the *Kurikulum 1964*, in which *Pantjawardhana* became part of the curriculum, was considered to be irrelevant with the policies of the New Order. For that reason, *Kurikulum 1964* was changed into *Kurikulum 1968* with the emphasis on education as an aid to obtain national objectives and to bring the values of *Pancasila* back (Suradi et al., 1986). Meanwhile, the 1950 Education Acts (*Undang-Undang Pendidikan no. 4 Tahun 1950*) was still implemented until the 1989 Education Acts (*Undang-Undang no. 2 Tahun 1989*) was enacted. Although the introduction of the 1989 Education Acts stated that the importance of bringing back Pancasila into the teaching and learning activities as the reason to change the 1950 Education Acts to the 1989 Education Acts, it is difficult to locate the reason why it took a long process to change the laws (*Undang-Undang*).

The curricula offered after the *Kurikulum 1968*, such as *Kurikulum 1975* (1975 Curriculum), *Kurikulum 1984* (1984 Curriculum), and the subsequent *Kurikulum 1994* (1994 Curriculum), did not experience many changes except modifications to its rigidity and it being highly centralized (see Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1975; 1985; 1990). It is important to note that as Indonesian policies become more related to the foreign investment and loans (Rosidi, 2007; Sadli, 2007; Soehartono, 2007), in these years, Indonesia began to get international loans for development, including educational
development (Nielsen, 1998). Yet, although the *Kurikulum 1984* was changed into the *Kurikulum 1994*, the Education Acts being enacted remained the same as the 1989 Education Acts.

**Curriculum decision-making.** Like the curricula in the Soekarno years, in the Soeharto years, the government determined the curricula. However, in the Soeharto years, an education commission was developed. The government appointed this commission to determine the curricula. Over thirty years, this commission developed three curricula: *Kurikulum 1974, Kurikulum 1984*, and *Kurikulum 1994*. Surprisingly, although those curricula were named differently, in general, they stated similar education goals and aims (see Departemen Pendidikan 1975; 1985; 1990).

In these curricula, the government subsumed all elements related to education in a document called *Garis-Garis Besar Program Pengajaran* (Teaching and Learning Guidelines). The elements covered the aims and goals of education, courses to be taught, instructional objectives, learning content, teaching methods, time allotments and learning assessments. The government also determined the textbooks to be used (Departemen Pendidikan, 1975; 1984; 1990). In other words, the institutional or instructional curricula were absent in Soeharto years. All of the content of the curricula were decided and were determined by the central government, and only the central governments determined the implicit curricula reflected in the learning materials.

Given such conditions, similar to the era before, teachers were merely curriculum implementers with national, standardized, and norm-referenced tests given at the end of
the 6th grade, 9th grade, and 12th grade. These tests not only claimed to be direct measures of student performance, but also teacher performance. These practices ended on paper in 1998 with the downfall of Soeharto and his government, but many education executors habitually retain many of the old practices (Bjork, 2003; Noel, 2008).

Curriculum content. In the 1960s, especially after Soeharto became president, Indonesian education was directed to educate Indonesian citizens to become knowledgeable and skillful in addition to educating them to become good Indonesians. For that purpose, there are three different types of activities covered in the curricula: intra-curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. Intra-curricular were activities done at schools. It was defined as activities in which teachers conducted classroom learning. Co-curricular was defined as additional activities done outside the school hours. The purpose of these activities was to implement the knowledge students received at schools. Different from the first two activities, the extra-curricular activities were not directly related to the formal knowledge that the students learned at schools. Extra-curricular activities were intended to help students study further their hobbies and interests. Such activities’ classifications were explicitly stated and listed in details in Kurikulum 1984 (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1984).

Curriculum implementation. As mentioned previously, the curriculum content and implementation, which covered teaching and learning materials and teaching learning methods, and learning evaluation, were determined by the government (Departemen Pendidikan, 1974; 1984; 1994). This determination mandated that teachers at that time
function as curriculum implementers without necessarily modifying or adjusting the curriculum. The teachers’ quality was evaluated based on the teachers’ loyalty and obedience to the government rules (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1984; Nielsen, 1998).

Regarding the degradation of teachers’ qualities related to the formal education background of the teachers during the Soekarno years, the New Order introduced 2-year post-secondary diploma programs, known as D-II upgrading activities, which were supported by the World Bank Loan. The purpose of this program was to increase the teachers’ subject mastery and the instructional skills of kindergarten and elementary school teachers (Nielsen, 1998).

**Indonesian condition in the Reformasi Years (1998 – present).** By 1998, the Soeharto government, which consisted of his political allies and family, was considered to be one of the most corrupt governments in the world. With the Asian monetary crisis, Indonesia’s economy was in trouble (Soehartono, 2007). The monetary crisis that had begun in 1997 brought Indonesia to replicate the history of the 1960s depicted in the film, *The Year of Living Dangerously* (Djiwandono, 2007). Students, intellectuals, and activists demanded Soeharto to step down (Subianto, 2007). In addition, they fought for regional autonomy with the assumption that this system would provide better governance and economic stability (Kristiansen & Pratikno, 2006).

Considering these protests, the government passed Laws on Regional Autonomy (*Undang-Undang tentang Pemerintah Daerah*, 1999) (Kristiansen & Pratikno, 2006). In
the Undang-Undang, it is mentioned that decentralization becomes the choice of the government system, in which the education department is part of it. In other words, the changes of the education system in the reformasi years were indirectly driven by the enactment of the Undang-Undang tentang Pemerintah Daerah, which influenced changes in education policy. Because the curricula that are generated from this Undang-Undang are central in this study, they are discussed separately in the next section.

Decentralization of Indonesian Education

Considering the Undang-Undang tentang Pemerintah Daerah and after studying the results of the literacy tests provided by the World Bank, the National Education Commission (Komisi Nasional Pendidikan, 2001) indicated that the quality of education would increase if (1) teachers were qualified; (2) teachers’ professionalism was encouraged; (3) teachers’ welfare was supported; (4) there were laws that managed the whole system, from the higher to the most local level; (5) teaching and learning used an appropriate approach; (6) learners were healthy; and (6) the facilities that supported learning were available.

For those reasons, the Komisi considered that the 1989 Education Acts (Undang-Undang pendidikan tahun 1989), which were passed during the Soeharto years, were irrelevant because it had broken the Indonesian democracy principles since Indonesia is very diverse socially and geographically. The Education Acts no. 20, 2003 (Undang-Undang Pendidikan nomor 20 tahun 2003) was passed to replace the 1989 Education Acts. Since then, the Education Acts no. 20, 2003 had become the foundation for the
2004 Curriculum, which was questioned by many people for having insufficient rationale and did not last very long (Berita Indonesia, 2006). In 2006, a new curriculum was created, which is used now and is known as *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP), and is central to this study. To obtain a complete picture of the decentralization of Indonesian education, the section that follows summarizes the nature of the 2003 Education Acts and the major changes of Indonesian curriculum.

**The 2003 Education Acts.** The Education Acts are considered more philosophical than functional and they necessitate more operational rules. For this reason, the Indonesian government passed the 2005 Government Rules about National Education Standards (*Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia tentang Standar Pendidikan Nasional tahun 2005*). These rules included the coverage, the functions and objectives of the standards. The standards covered the learning content, learning processes, students’ competency, learning assessments, teacher requirements and school unit facilities, management, and budgeting roles. The success of a school was then determined by the criteria listed in the standards.

To measure and supervise the success of a school, the central Indonesian government developed a team called the National Education Standard Board (*Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan*, BSNP) (*Peraturan Pemerintah RI tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan*, 2005). This board regularly monitors the education content, process, graduates’ competencies, staff, facilities, management, budget, and learning assessments (*Undang-Undang Pendidikan 2003, Pasal 35*). To complement the BSNP, the Ministry of
National Education (MONE) passed rules related to the quality control of the national education (Peraturan Menteri tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan, 2007; Peraturan Menteri tentang Rincian Tugas Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan, 2008). In these rules, it is mentioned that the BSNP, together with the National Accreditation Body (Badan Akreditasi Nasional, BAN) and the Institute of Education Quality Assurance (Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan, LPMP), monitor and supervise schools. All of the rights and responsibilities of these bodies are thoroughly prescribed in these rules.

**Changes in the curriculum.** The changes in the Education Acts influence many different aspects of education. Since the focus of this study is on the curriculum changes, only changes that are deemed to influence the curriculum are discussed. Specifically, these are the curriculum development, the content of the curriculum, the assessment and the education staff and education professions.

**Curriculum development.** Based on the 2003 Education Acts, the current curriculum, School-Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, KTSP), is developed locally. As an institutional curriculum, KTSP is generated from the National Standards, which is in the form of the National Standards, and is adjusted by the school committee, which consists of school staff, students-parents representatives, local leaders, and business representatives. This type of curriculum is not a curriculum model or design, but a curriculum development model (Pusat Kurikulum, 2007). The school unit, which consists of educators, together with the school committee develops the KTSP
(Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 2003). Therefore, each school might have a different curriculum from the others, which was unlike the previous curriculum that was centralized (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 1989).

However, allowing the schools to develop their own curriculum does not mean giving the schools free license to be fully independent (Puskur, 2007). In the decentralization of Indonesian education, the BSNP has the authority to determine the competency standards, basic competency and the structure of the KTSP. It is said that such decentralization system will maintain the quality of the Indonesian education (Peraturan Pemerintah, 2005; Puskur, 2007; Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 2003).

**Curriculum content.** Explicit changes in the elementary school curriculum content are in the courses and their contents (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 1989; Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 2003). In the 2003 Education Acts, it is mentioned that the contents of the curriculum should support the development of students’ faith, character, and intelligence so that the students are able to cope with the changing global needs. Further, it is explained that at the elementary level, the curriculum should include religious education, civic education, language, mathematics, sciences, social sciences, arts, sports and physical education, life skills, and vocational education and local content. The local content (*Muatan Lokal, Mulok*) is directed to stimulate students’ awareness towards the local potential and to preserve and appreciate local historical contributions.

In the *Undang-Undang Pendidikan 1989*, the names of the courses were not explicitly stated as in the *Undang-Undang Pendidikan 2003*. The 1989 document only
stated that the content of curriculum should cover Pancasila education, religion education, civic education, Indonesian language, reading and writing, mathematics, science and technology, geography, national and general history, arts and skills, health education, paintings, and the English language. Further, it was explained that those topics were the elements that should be covered in students’ learning. Two or three of those elements could be condensed into one single course (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 1989).

Another difference is that in the 1989 Education Acts, Pancasila education was one of the required courses offered in each level of education, while civic education was another required course (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 1989). It was explained that Pancasila education was intended to direct students’ attention to moral development based on the philosophy of Pancasila. Meanwhile, civic education was meant to equip students with the knowledge related to their position as parts of the nation. Such difference does not appear in the Undang-Undang Pendidikan 2003. Pancasila education does not exist in the 2003 Education Acts (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 2003). Instead, the document says that the teaching of civic education is intended to instill the concept of nationalism in the students. The moral dimension is not listed and even compared with the Undang-Undang 1989, the term Pancasila is rarely mentioned.

Another change in the curriculum includes offering different types of languages to the students. In the Undang-Undang 1989, two languages became the major focuses of language learning – Indonesian and English (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 1989). Unlike the 1989 Education Acts, the 2003 Education Acts do not specify the language to be
taught to the students. In the explanation section, it is stated that the language learning can be adopted from the Indonesian language, local languages, and foreign languages, especially English. The reason to include these three languages is that Indonesian is the national language, the local language is the mother tongue of the students, and the foreign language, especially English, is considered to be important in the global era (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 2003).

Assessments. The assessments based on the 1989 Education Acts are different from the ones based on the 2003 Education Acts although both include the Ujian Nasional (National Examination). The learning assessment prescribed in the 1989 Education Acts only includes the learning assessment by the government (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 1989), which is considered to be the summative test. The guidelines of the formative test, which provides more immediate feedback about students’ learning, are included in the Garis-garis Besar Program Pengajaran (GBPP, Teaching and Learning Guidelines, 1994). The other assessments, such as the accountability of the curriculum implementation and the related elements, are not thoroughly discussed in the 1989 Education Acts.

On the other hand, the 2003 Education Acts explicitly states that evaluation, accreditation and certification are essential for the sake of quality control. These controls are done by the BSNP, LPMP, and independently appointed institutions respectively, and are directed to the students, institutions, and education programs (Undang-Undang
Pendidikan, 2003). Peraturan Pemerintah (PP, Government Regulations, 2005) provides detailed explanation about the nature and the process of these assessments.

_Education staff and education professions._ The school management and curriculum in the decentralized system also had wide implications on the role of teachers. In the previous Acts, particularly the Undang-Undang Pendidikan 1989, the words _tenaga kependidikan_ was used to refer to both education staff and education professionals (Undang-Undang Pendidikan 1989). Unlike the 1989 Education Acts, the Education Acts of 2003 state that the education staff (_tenaga kependidikan_) and the education professionals (_tenaga pendidik_) are different (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 2003). The first includes lab assistants, librarians, and other support staff in the field of education. The latter only covers teachers. It is explained further that:

> pendidik merupakan tenaga profesional yang bertugas merencanakan dan melaksanakan proses pembelajaran, menilai hasil pembelajaran, melakukan pembimbingan dan pelatihan, serta melakukan penelitian dan pengabdian kepada masyarakat, terutama bagi pendidik pada perguruan tinggi.

(pasal 39, ayat 2)

which, according to my translation, means education executors are professionals whose tasks are planning and implementing the learning process, evaluating learning, guiding and training, as well as conducting research and serving the community, especially for professors.
Regarding the education professions, the 2003 Education Acts introduce the idea of teacher certification as an attempt to motivate teachers’ development. This certification is done by accredited universities appointed by the government (Undang-Undang Pendidikan, 2003). The nature and procedures of certification are separately discussed in the Government Regulations (Peraturan Pemerintah, PP, 2007).

Based on the explanation above, although the recent curriculum is more decentralized, its evaluation remains centralized, and even more rigid. While the decentralized curriculum development might empower the lower hierarchy, the centralized standardization, evaluation and accreditation at the same time have the potential to create frustration because of the strictness of the system. Such a condition results in the change of teachers’ jobs, roles and responsibilities. The following section discusses the current studies of the decentralization of education in Indonesia.

**Current studies of the decentralization of education in Indonesia.** The implementation of decentralization in education in Indonesia has both advantages and disadvantages. The advocates of decentralization claim that decentralization in Indonesian education has empowered local schools, encouraged the betterment of each group involved in education, and increased students’ scores (e.g. Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, Patrinos, & Santibanez, 2009; Bandur, 2008). On the other hand, those who oppose decentralization argue that it does not work in Indonesia, and some of them mention that it has more negative impacts than positive (e.g. Ammirrachman, Syafi’I, & Welch, 2009; Bjork, 2002; 2003; 2006; Ferimeldi, 2005; Gaylord, 2008; Utomo, 2005). The next
section reviews the implementation of decentralization in Indonesian focusing on the curriculum development, the content of the curriculum, the learning assessment and the education professions.

*Curriculum development.* In relation to the curriculum development in the decentralization system, which involves the local community, Bandur (2008) indicated that the implementation of SBM had a positive impact on local empowerment. The study showed that the implementation of SBM caused local communities in Flores to actively participate in school development. In order to get the information about this empowerment, Bandur analyzed questionnaires from more than five hundred respondents selected from 42 schools. The questionnaires queried the information about the process of the school council selection and the opinion of the respondents related to this selection process. It is important to note that by definition, the article used the term *school council* to refer to school committee as defined in the *Undang-Undang Pendidikan 2003*.

However, the research instruments and the interpretation of the survey questions might have been misleading to the respondents. The wording in the questionnaires may have been misleading since they were formulated directly with *wh*-question forms to elicit the respondents’ opinions about the implementation of the decentralization in education. The responses to the questions were then graded using the Likert scale (Bandur, 2008). The weakness of these kinds of questions is that it can lead the respondents to provide answers expected by the researchers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).
With this design, these questionnaires might contain bias if the respondents did not all have similar understanding of the content of the questions.

The responses to the relations between the stakeholders’ opinions about the implementation of decentralization in education and the students’ achievement were computed using Pearson-Product Moment correlation and gave the result $r = 0.20$ (Bandur, 2008; p.144). To interpret its correlation, the value $r$ should be squared (Aron, Aron & Coup, 2008), giving the result $r^2 = 0.04$, which is relatively low for a correlation. It is appropriate to say that based on the responses, there was a positive correlation between the implementation of decentralization in Indonesian education and the students’ achievement. However, the relatively low $r^2$ value did not indicate a strong relationship between these two variables. It is important to note that a relationship does not always entail a cause and effect relationship (Aron et al., 2008). Under these circumstances, the effectiveness of the implementation of decentralization in Indonesian education in maintaining school quality is still in question, especially after the studies on the implementation of decentralization in Indonesian education by Bjork (2003, 2006), Ferimeldi (2005), Gaylord (2008), Sumintono (2006), and other researchers tended to offer negative results.

Bjork’s (2003, 2006) qualitative studies about the implementation of decentralized education in different regions of Indonesia showed that some cultural aspects caused the failure of the implementation of decentralization in education. Studying the Local Content Curriculum (LCC, *Kurikulum Muatan Lokal*), Bjork
indicated that the local people who should be extensively involved in designing the local curriculum did not actively participate in developing the curriculum. Based on the Government Rules, school units were required to adjust their local curriculum; however, the study by Bjork revealed that the local people did not initiate or contribute to the local curriculum development. Instead, they agreed to whatever was proposed by teachers or just kept on using the older courses and simply changed the names.

Research by Sumintono (2006), which was conducted in Lombok, an island and a province in Indonesia, contributed further explanation of the results of the studies by Bjork (2003, 2006). Sumintono’s study demonstrated that the documents related to the School-Based Management (SBM) were not clearly formulated, which caused different interpretations among educators and school practitioners. The school stakeholders including the parents, the community leaders and the business people, did not have sufficient knowledge about the SBM policy. These conditions were also worsened by the fact that the school committee at the school level was hand-picked based on the bureaucrats’ preferences (Sumintono, 2006). The result was a school committee that simply approved the school policy without understanding the context and content.

In addition to the challenges of implementing decentralization due to cultural aspects, another study by Ferimeldi (2005) revealed another challenge related to intellectual capital together with the cultural capital. His study involved two groups of participants: government officials and principals, in the study of the implementation of the SBM. Aiming at studying the perceptions and challenges of the implementation of the
SBM, he adopted a mixed method. The results of the study revealed that there were perception differences between the governmental officials and the principals, and the SBM implemented in Western countries. These barriers made the SBM difficult to be successfully implemented in Indonesia.

Curriculum content. As previously mentioned, the stated purpose of current civic education is to instill the concept of nationalism in the students. However, a study by Gaylord (2008) indicated another failure related to the implementation of decentralization. Focusing on the teaching of democracy after the reform era in Padang, Gaylord indicated that some teachers failed to be consistent in bringing the values of democracy that they knew but they neglected to put into daily practice. In one of the classroom observations, Gaylord found one autocratic teacher who challenged the students who did not follow his rules. The study concluded that that the autocratic model was influenced by the teaching habits developed during New Order years.

Another phenomenon related to the curriculum content involves the Local Content Curriculum (LCC, *Muatan Lokal*). A study by Faridi (2010) revealed that in central Java, most elementary schools adopted English language teaching as the *Muatan Lokal*. This teaching aimed at encouraging students to produce simple sentences in English. Despite sounding like an optimistic and brilliant program, the study revealed that the teachers, who are classroom teachers, did not have sufficient English speaking abilities. Consequently, while teachers only relied on the textbook, the absence of an English speaking background made them poor models for their students.
**Assessment.** As indicated in the evaluation standards, three aspects are included in the assessment: students’ learning, teachers’ certification and school accreditation. Among the standardized aspects that directly impact students, learning assessment in the form of school exams appears to be the most problematic (Alam, 2008). *Ujian Akhir Nasional* (UAN, the National Exam), one of the means to assess students’ learning, has received many recent critiques (e.g. Langit-Dursin, 2010; Marcellino, 2010; Suparno, 2009). Most of the criticism questions the validity of the test items in the Indonesian language section (Marcellino, 2010; Suparno, 2009). Although there has been debate on this controversy, it is difficult to locate studies of *UAN* validity that were properly conducted and academically published. *Tempo Interaktif*, a reputable newspaper in Indonesia, for example, offered a public polling related to *UAN* 2010 without providing any academic review from April 28-May 05, 2010 (Tempo Interaktif, 2010). One of the responses related to the polling on the website was noteworthy. Presented rhetorically, Senik (2010) questioned whether there had been studies on the reliability and validity of the *UAN*, and whether there was coherence among curriculum/syllabus, test items and learning indicators which led to the development of the items presented in the polling.

While it appears to be difficult to locate academic studies related to the learning assessment, a study by Bandur (2008) revealed that the improvements in students’ achievement were positively correlated to the quality of decision-making processes. To understand this notion, it is necessary to study the teachers’ competency and integrity, which is possibly available at least in part from the teachers’ certification.
**Education staff and education professions.** Based on Government Rules about teachers’ academic qualification and competence (*Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Standar Akademik dan Kualifikasi Guru*), teachers are expected to receive a teachers’ certification. In order to obtain that certification, a teacher should accomplish specific requirements, such as academic qualification, teaching experience, qualification-subject matching, and teaching workload. In addition, the reports of the results of the students’ learning assessment can be one of the documents for a teachers’ portfolio (*Direktorat jenderal pendidikan tinggi*, 2010). However, a study by Raihani and Sumintono (2010) revealed that the practices of certification had been abused, especially because a primary motive of teacher certification was the increased salary.

The results of a study by Utomo (2005) raised another concern about teacher certification. Focusing his quantitative study on the teaching of the Indonesian language (*Bahasa Indonesia*) based on a sample of sixty-five primary school teachers in Jakarta and Bandung, Utomo highlighted that teachers confidently claimed to know what Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) was, but they found it difficult to implement it in the classroom. Instead, they tended to use methods, techniques and materials from the previous curriculum.

The notion of school accreditation also had a serious impact on schools in remote areas of Indonesia. Studying about the challenges of the implementation of decentralization in West Papua, which, despite its wealth of natural resources, the province remains deplorably poor. Mollet (2007) indicated that the system and the culture
developed during the New Order had caused West Papua to struggle with the new system. Because of the slow infrastructure development during the New Order, teachers had become reluctant to work in the province and this “snow ball effect” caused a negative impact on education, contributing to a low quality of education and low quantity of the graduates. As a result, the low qualities of the few graduates made them remain jobless and they got relatively low-income jobs in their own regions.

**Concluding remarks of the curriculum changes in Indonesia.** From the illustrations, the curriculum changes in Indonesia tended to be influenced by the social, economic and political conditions rather than influenced by the results of curriculum evaluation. As seen, the change of the Hinduism-Buddhism education system into the Islamic education system was influenced by the social power at the related time periods. The same case also happened in the curriculum changes during the Dutch and the Japanese colonization, during the Soekarno years, during the Soeharto years, and during the *Reformasi* years. Accordingly, the governmental influences were also reflected in the curriculum development, curriculum content, and curriculum implementation.

Through the history, especially after the Indonesian Independence, Indonesia has implemented three different Education Acts: *Undang-Undang no. 4 tahun 1950 (Education Acts no 4, 1950), Undang-Undang no 2. Tahun 1989 (Education Acts no. 2, 1989)* and *Undang-Undang no. 20 Tahun 2003 (Education Acts no. 20, 2003)*. However, it is difficult to locate the patterns of the changes of the Education Acts. The only clues are that in the introductions of those Education Acts, it is written that the needs for the
Education Acts to change were for the social, economic and political reasons (Undang-Undang no. 4 Tahun 1950; Undang-Undang no. 2 Tahun 1989; Undang-Undang no. 20 Tahun 2003). For example, it is stated in the Undang-Undang no. 2 Tahun 1989 that the change of the Undang-Undang no. 4 Tahun 1950 into Undang-Undang no. 2 Tahun 1989 was caused by the political change related to the importance of bringing back the values of Pancasila into the education system after the implementation of the Manipol USDEK in the education in 1965. Yet, it took nearly forty years for the government to develop the Undang-Undang no. 2 Tahun 1989. During those years, three different curricula: Kurikulum 1964, Kurikulum 1974, and Kurikulum 1984, were used. Later, the Kurikulum 1994 was introduced five years after the enactment of the Undang-Undang no. 2 Tahun 1989. The Indonesian economic crisis in 1998 triggered the enactment of the Regional Autonomy Laws (Kristiansen & Pratikno, 2006). This enactment indirectly required curriculum change. The centralized education systems that were generated from the Undang-Undang no. 2 Tahun 1989 needed to be changed into the decentralized education system that were generated from the Undang-Undang no. 20 Tahun 2003. This change indirectly required the curriculum to change: the change of Kurikulum 1994 into Kurikulum 2004 and Kurikulum 2006, which were consecutively known as Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi (KBK, Competency-Based Curriculum) and Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP, School-Level Curriculum).
Being influenced by the decentralized governmental system, the design of the curriculum, the curriculum content, the learning and teaching techniques and the assessments are related to decentralized-centralized education system (Pusat Kurikulum, 2007). Based on the decision-making, three types of curricula: societal, institutional, and instructional curriculum, have been applied in the current curriculum (see Oliva, 2009). Basically, the central government provides sets of standards. The schools are expected to adjust those standards to make it more operational. At the classroom level, teachers have the authority to develop their own teaching curriculum in the form of a syllabus (Pusat Kurikulum, 2007). The Indonesian government also assigns National Accreditation Board (Badan Akreditasi Nasional, BAN,), which consists of school stakeholders, to monitor the qualities of the development, including the assessment of learning (Peraturan Pemerintah, 2007).

The implementation of this decentralized education system requires teachers’ leadership and creativity. Studies about the implementation of decentralization of Indonesian education revealed that some schools struggled with the implementation and the development of School-Level Curriculum (Bjork, 2002, 2003, 2006; Ferimeldi, 2005), and with the learning and teaching practices (Gaylord, 2008; Noel, 2008; Utomo, 2005). Bjork (2002) indicated that with such a complicated system, only schools that were relatively independent with good teacher leadership would be able to successfully implement this education system. These schools did not focus on the short-term results, but more on the long-term results. This approach is similar to the characteristics of the
above discussed triggers that support successful education change (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2009).

Studies about the implementation of decentralization in Indonesian education offer similar results as studies about the implementation of decentralization in education in other countries (e.g. Blair, 2000; De Grauwe et al., 2005). Blair (2000) conducted the research in six different developing countries from different continents (Bolivia, Honduras, India, the Philippines, Ukraine, and Mali) and De Grauwe et al. (2000) conducted the research in West Africa (Benin, Mali, Guinea, and Senegal). These studies revealed that school board representativeness and the power distribution of a decentralized system offered new problems in the developing countries due to the limitation of the human capital and finance.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This study aimed to seek responses to the following research question: What factors explain the unusual UASBN performance of a relatively poor elementary school? To obtain holistic responses, the following sub-questions were generated to guide the study:

1. What do the members of the school body, especially the head of the curriculum section (seksi kurikulum), the staff member for the Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT), the school principal, and the classroom teachers understand about the School-Level Curriculum (KTSP)?

2. What do the members of the school body, especially the school principal and the classroom teachers do to extend the national standards, to develop the KTSP?

3. What do the members of the school body, especially the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal, and the classroom teachers understand about the National Examination (Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional, UASBN)?

4. How does understanding about the UASBN by the members of the school body, especially the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal and the classroom teachers influence teaching practices?
The following sections discuss the research methods, the main research tool, the pilot study, the data processing, the trustworthiness, and the timeline of this study.

**Research Methods**

Being designed qualitatively, this study is aimed at understanding the phenomenon happening in a rural elementary school in a relatively poor region in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, with the primary question: “What factors explain the unusual UASBN performance of a relatively poor elementary school?” In order to get responses from that question, this study used Grounded Theory as a research method, which is considered to be the most appropriate for this study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) define Grounded Theory as “the discovery of the theory from data” (p.1). A theory in this context can be defined as an abstract concept generated from observations or a theoretical understanding of a phenomenon. While the abstract concept is intended to explain a phenomenon, the theoretical understanding is aimed at showing the patterns and connections of a phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006). In other words, by adopting Grounded Theory in this study, the patterns that explain the phenomenon of the implementation of the School-Level Curriculum in relation with the results of the UASBN can be demonstrated.

There has been a common belief that schools in rural areas usually have poor facilities and people assume that schools with poor facilities will struggle academically to perform well. Therefore, studying the elements that develop a pattern of the education system of the selected elementary school is considered to be an effort to understand the
anomaly that might contribute to the abilities of these rural elementary students to perform well in the UASBN.

**Selection of participants.** The selection of participants in Grounded Theory is directed to gain the richness of the data for theory building. For this purpose, the researcher selected participants that were relevant with the study (see Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Appropriately, the participants that the study used were only participants who could provide information to explain what factors explain the unusual UASBN performance of the students in a rural elementary school in a relatively poor region in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The following sections explain the selection of the participants for this study.

**Setting.** The setting of this study was a rural elementary school in a relatively poor region in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It is needed here to explain the meaning of “rural” in the Indonesian context because “rural” in Indonesia might confuse people from different backgrounds. Based on Indonesian Laws no. 5, 1979 (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 5., Tahun 1979), rural is defined as the smallest unit of an organization led by a sub-district leader (camat). Based on Indonesian Laws no. 22, 1999 (Undang-Undang No 22., Tahun 1999), there is distinction between “rural” and “rurality.” Based on these Laws, the word “rural” does not change its meaning even though the larger context might change; still, it is the smallest unit of an organization. “Rurality,” however, is defined as an area in which agriculture becomes the major way of living. The word “urban,” which was understood as kawasan kota, in contrast with rurality, is defined as
an area in which secondary activities, such as industry, education, and economy, are the main activities (Undang-Undang No. 22, 1999). Further, it is explained that in the Laws, an urban area can also be understood as a developed rural area. This concept implies that a rural area is less developed than an urban one.

Brown and Cromatie (2002), however, argue that in this era, in which modern technology is widely used, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between rural and urban areas. Koentjaraningrat (1964) indicates that rurality cannot only be defined by its geographical and demographical conditions, but also by its customs and traditions. Sarman (2008) indicates that rural and urban areas of Indonesia are easily identified from the way of living in the community. Sarman adds that in rural areas, the majority of the people make a living from basic activities, such as agriculture. It is also noted that the homogeneity in jobs encourages people to migrate as it is said that homogeneity in jobs makes the area less dynamic. Such a description fits with the rurality of Gunungkidul as previously described. In Gunungkidul, during the dry season, agricultural activities will become the trigger of migration since during that season, the irrigation systems do not work well. To avoid this confusion, the definition of rurality proposed by Koentjaraningrat (1964), which is supported by Sarman (2008), is preferred, that is rurality distinguished by geographical, demographical, and cultural aspects.

In addition to the concept of rurality, it is important to note that this study focused on public schools under the Department of National Education. In Indonesia, a public school is defined as a school run by the government. A private school is a school
operated by private or independent institutions, including a local community (Undang-
Undang Pendidikan, 2003). The public schools under the Department of National
Education are emphasized considering that there is another type of public school called
*Madrassah Ibtidaiyah*, which is under the Department of Religious Affairs, but is
required to adopt the National Standards in addition to the religious courses (Undang-
Undang Pendidikan, 2003).

Another important aspect to note is that different from the private schools in the
United States, private schools in rural areas in Indonesia are less preferred over public
schools. Besides the relatively expensive school fee, the private rural schools tend to have
more challenges with funding and qualifications. Private schools are often chosen if there
is no public school in the immediate area (Bangay, 2005).

**Participants.** To select the participants, the researcher referred to the hierarchy of
the Education Department in the selected regency in Yogyakarta (see Appendix A). The
head of kindergarten and elementary school curriculum section (*kepala seksi kurikulum
pendidikan TK dan SD*), a school principal, and two sixth grade classroom teachers were
chosen as the participants. These people were deemed to be able to provide relevant data
related to the study.

Referring to the hierarchy, the head of *seksi kurikulum* was interviewed as an
initial sampling. The results of the interview with the *kepala seksi kurikulum pendidikan
TK dan SD* provided information whether or not the tentative participants needed to be
adjusted or even changed. Further discussion on initial sampling is presented in the Pilot
Study section, considering that in Grounded Theory, the sampling processes, known as initial sampling and theoretical sampling, are closely related to data collection and data processing and analysis. Meanwhile, the selection of the pilot setting and participants were adjusted based on the results of the interview with the initial sampling.

**Data Collection.** In order to gather data, four data sources were used: interviews, document analysis, observations, and reflexive journals. It is important to note that in Grounded Theory, the process of the data collection is determined by the emergent findings in the process of data collection (Charmaz, 2006). Therefore, involving those data sources would solidify the findings. The detail of each source is presented as follows.

**Interviews.** As mentioned in the Participants’ selection section, the initial interview was with the head of seksi kurikulum. The purpose of this interview was to obtain information about the schools in the regency (kabupaten), including the number of schools and the school organizations in the kabupaten. The interview was conducted by appointment at the office of the head kindergarten and elementary school education (kepala bidang pendidikan TK dan SD). It was audio-recorded and the researcher also recorded field notes.

Based on the initial interview, the researcher selected school sites for the next phase of data collection. In the selected school, the researcher interviewed the principal about the school and the curriculum development that took place at the school level as well as their perception about the National Examination (*Ujian Akhir Sekolah*)
Berstandar Nasional, UASBN) and its influences in classroom teaching. Using a semi-structured format, the researcher asked specific questions about how the principal interpreted the National Standards, who developed the School-Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, KTSP), what procedures were taken, and how the development was organized. The interview was audio-recorded. A list of the topics for interview is presented in Appendix B.

The researcher then proceeded to conducting interviews with classroom teachers about KTSP development and its implementation. The interviews were semi-structured and some of the content of the interview questions was adjusted based on the results of the interview with the head of seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD and the school principal. The purpose of interviewing teachers was to obtain information about the general principles they observed and used in developing and implementing the curriculum.

In addition to interviewing the head of seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD, the school principal and the six grade teachers, the researcher also interviewed the sixth grade students. The reason for only interviewing the sixth grade students was that in the Indonesian context, it is only the sixth grade students that take the UASBN. The same as the interviews mentioned previously, the interview to the students also took semi-structured format. A list of topics for interviewing the students is listed in Appendix B.

**Document analysis.** Besides the interviews, documents were used as another source of data. Prior (2003) defines documents as any documentation such as “paintings,
tapestries, monuments, diaries, shopping lists, stage plays, adverts, rail tickets, film, photographs, videos, engineering drawings, the content of human tissue archives, and World Wide Web (WWW)” (p. 2), which are produced in social settings and include the notions of production, consumption and content. For the purpose of this study, education documents covering education laws and regulations, as well as the national standards, the KTSP, the lesson plans, the lesson unit plans, and other related documents were collected and analyzed. In analyzing the documents, the researcher studied the consistency between the laws and the regulations generated from the laws, and the implementation of the laws and regulations reflected in the KTSP, lesson plans, and lesson unit plans.

**Classroom observation.** In addition to interviews and document analysis, data were also collected from classroom observations. In developing curriculum, at times, teachers need to make adjustments in implementation. By conducting classroom observations, the researcher was able to fill in any information gap between the interviews and the documents. The observations were conducted after the KTSP, the lesson plans, and the lesson unit plans were analyzed. In the observations, the researcher focused on studying how teachers implemented their lesson plans into daily practices, what challenges they met in implementing the curriculum, how they dealt with those challenges, and other relevant information. The results of the observations were descriptively recorded in case other information was needed during the processing of the data.
Another aspect to consider, since an observation can be obtrusive for the participants, the researcher joined numbers of social activities at school such as teacher-student gathering to make students and teachers familiar with the researcher. The video recorder was also used to record the classroom observation. The results of the recording belong to the researcher and were only copied when the teachers requested it.

**Reflective journal and field notes.** In addition to the interviews, document analysis, and classroom observation, a reflective journal and field notes were used for recording data. According to Glesne (2006), journal and field notes add richness to the collected information. In the reflective journal and field notes, the researcher was able to include his/her spontaneous reactions, feelings, impressions, and expectations. In addition, they provided backup documentation in case of mechanical difficulties. These writings provided additional data for reflection and analysis.

**Main Research Tool – The Researcher**

In qualitative study, a researcher is considered as an instrument, in which her/his background might influence the way she/he interpreted data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Patton, 2002). For this reason, it is necessary for me as a researcher to describe my background as it might influence the way I analyze the data.

From my reflection, my family background, educational background, and working experiences have influenced me as a researcher. I was born in Wonosari, the capital of Gunungkidul, as the fifth of six children. My parents were teachers before they were fired because of the PKI issue in 1965 (see Chapter 2). The accusation of my father’s
involvement in the movement had caused my father to be sent to jail and my mother had to abandon her job because of the social pressures. This event became a turning point in the life of my family. My parents were challenged not only by the economic issues, but also by the social ones. The government’s policies had made my family feel excluded from the society. For example, the government required the suspected citizens to get a letter of permission (Surat Keterangan Kelakuan Baik), which should be attached when people applied for college education and jobs, to ensure that the people and their relatives, especially parents and/or wife/husband, did not get involved in that political party or other crimes.

For this reason, my parents did not value schooling as an economic asset for our future life in the same way as people in my surrounding areas. My parents valued academic achievements from the abilities of their children to implement their knowledge they obtained at school in our daily life. For example, since my parents sold petroleum in an Indonesian small stall (warung), when I was in grade six, I was required to be able to calculate the content of the petrol in a particular drum, and the amount of money that we should prepare to buy the petrol from the supplier as well as the money that we would earn if we were able to sell the whole of the petrol.

In addition, it is common for all of the people in my family to bring academic life to the dining room table. It is there that I began to learn that different people might see the same thing differently because of their background knowledge. I always find it stimulating to talk about a daily life topic with my family, since they all have different
perspectives based on their academic background. Language and power, culture, laws, education, sociology and personal leadership became significant issues in my family. Even though my parents and my entire family were driven out from the society, we all still believe in the power of education.

Influenced by people in my family, I took the English education program as my major in my undergraduate studies. One challenge that I had was that I took English, and not other languages, not because of my interest, but because of the strategic rationale. The program in the university that I joined was considered prestigious. It was predictable that most students were from middle to upper socio-economic levels, except me. While I did not feel it necessary to fight for prestige, I had to struggle when among my friends, because it was harder for me despite the habits of having academic discussion that I had developed in my family.

When I was suffering under such a condition, my family introduced me to the value of learning to like something that I dislike. I began to enjoy learning English but still I was interested in how English had become so powerful in the society. With my personal background, and passion in education along with the power of the English language, I became interested in introducing the power of English to the less fortunate young people. I volunteered teaching English in a youth organization in my hometown. The participants were mostly dropouts and jobless, ranging from the age of eighteen to twenty five years old.
In 1997, a principal of a relatively poor private high school in my hometown offered me a part time job teaching in her school. It was the first formal job that I had after I thought that it would be impossible for me to get a decent job because of my family background. I felt honored at that time because of the offer. In this school, I learned how the students from the lower socio-economic families struggle for academic achievement. Similar to Indonesian poor schools in general, this school lacked facilities. The textbook collections were very limited. The resources were so lacking that there only one book for every three students. However, I was less sensitive and less experienced at that time. Comparing it with my life, I drew a temporary conclusion that their failure was mostly caused by their low motivation and their less persistence.

Not long after I worked in that poor private school, another principal from a well-known private high school in Yogyakarta offered me a part time job teaching in his school. Again, I felt honored because of the offer. Not only was the job offered to me but the offer included the pay of experienced teachers. It is important to note that in Indonesia, becoming a permanent teacher gives more prestige and better salaries. In that school, I became aware of the habits of learning of the students from middle to upper socio-economic families. Their parents seemed to value prestige more than learning. Their parents invited classroom teachers to give extra lessons to their children with the expectation that their children would obtain better grades on the final tests. At the same time, the school accreditation also challenged teachers to make the students’ learning achievements in terms of students’ grades look good. In those schools, my family values
that had always been part of my life were seriously challenged. It was there I learned
about the conflict among governments’, teachers’, students’, and student parents’ values
in school settings.

The social pressures that had stimulated me to become an independent person and
the discussion habits that I had in my family had helped me examine problems in the
society. In that school, I learned that schools’ accreditation, which was measured based
on students’ test results, had led teachers to teach in a way that sometimes they did not
pay much attention to the principles of students’ learning development. Consequently, the
students sometimes blamed teachers for not understanding them. The students often
rebelled against the teachers’ authority; meanwhile, the teachers claimed that the students
were troublemakers. The condition was even worse when the parents placed high
expectations on their children, but their children could not reach them. In such a situation,
the parents sometimes placed pressures on the teachers.

Once a student’s parents asked me to give an extra lesson to their child and
offered extra money for the lesson. While I noticed that some teachers accepted it, I
refused it. I noticed that these parents asked me to give an extra lesson to their child with
the expectation that I would also give a good grade to their child, or at least I would not
fail her/him. Rejecting such an offer was relatively easy for me because of my sense of
independence. In addition to my family background, my part-time teaching jobs did not
require me to join any government teachers’ affiliation that might bring many bad
consequences for me. This arrangement made it easy to do what I believed I needed to do when confronted with such a moral dilemma.

True to my upbringing, my non-bias focus continues through out my academic career. In 1998, my alma mater offered me a teaching job in its language center. Because I wanted to be more focused with my work in the center, in 2000, I stopped teaching in high schools. I then became an academic coordinator and at the same time, a curriculum designer in the language center until I got a scholarship to continue my studies.

Becoming the curriculum designer and the academic coordinator in the language center required me to communicate with the education system bureaucrats. The language center where I worked was sometimes appointed by the government to give education training, and as the curriculum designer, I had to negotiate the program that I had developed for them. Also, because of my background knowledge, I sometimes needed to be in the class to provide instruction. It was while working for that center that I began to recognize the differences between the language used by the bureaucrats and the language used by the practitioners. This insight eventually helped me to recognize the gap between the education bureaucrats as the policy makers and the teachers as the policy implementers.

I did not consider valuable the paradoxes that I had experienced until I took classes in sociology, which discussed the relationship between education, politics, economics, poverty, and equality issues. The readings, the discussions, and the assignments in those classes helped me identify the connections of various social issues and recognize the values that I shared and did not share with people from the same socio-
economic background. These experiences helped me become more sensitive and critical about different lifestyles that I meet in my everyday life.

**Pilot Study**

To understand divergent aspects that might possibly emerge during the data collection, a pilot study was conducted from October 18 to 21, 2010, one week prior to the data collection. The pilot covered sample selection and access, interviews and observations. The process of setting selection and questions proposed in the pilot study were similar with those planned for the main study. It is suggested that piloting the study, in this context with a principal and teachers, in a different community that has similar characteristics with the sample will help the researcher make the study more effective and efficient (Glesne, 2006). The following sections discuss the processes of the pilot study, the findings and their contribution to the main study.

**Participant selection and access.** The selection of the pilot setting was based on the information given by the head of the kindergarten and elementary school curriculum section (*kepala seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD*), Bu Candra, as the initial sample. Before I met Bu Candra, I delivered the IRB approval to the Regional Development Planning Agency (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah, BPPD*) at the province level. Hierarchically, before I entered the school, I had to have a letter of permission from BPPD at the province and regency (*kabupaten*) level. The letter required me to include schools to be studied. However, because I had not decided which school to select, I was allowed to meet with the head of kindergarten and elementary school division in the
regency education office (kepala bidang pendidikan TK dan SD). The kepala bidang pendidikan TK dan SD told me that I did not need to talk to the head of the national education department (kepala dinas pendidikan). After I explained the purpose of my study to the head of bidang pendidikan TK dan SD, the head of bidang pendidikan TK dan SD suggested that I meet with the head of the kindergarten and elementary school curriculum section (kepala seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD), Bu Candra.

A semi-structured interview with the kepala seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD was held on October 14, 2010. The questions covered the personal background and responsibilities, the elementary education in the regency including its hierarchy, the relationship between national standards and local curriculum, the local curriculum, the elementary school learning evaluation, the achievement processes of rural schools in the regency, and the success of some rural schools in the regency. These questions were intended to elicit the general information of education, covering the school organization pattern, the process of curriculum transfer, and the goals of education at the regency level, the learning evaluation, and the implementation of School-Level Curriculum in the regency. A list of topic questions is presented in Appendix B.

The results of the interview revealed that the kindergarten and elementary school curriculum section in the regency was part of the regency education office as seen on Appendix A. It was also indicated in the interview that due to the decentralization system in Indonesia, such an organization might be different among kabupaten in the same province. The type of decentralization adopted in education was delegation, one of which
is an aspect of the power transfer (for further explanation about types of decentralization in education, see Abu-Duhou, 1999; King, 1998; McGinn & Welsh, 1999). In this case, although the province still kept ultimate power over the kabupaten, they allowed the kabupaten to modify the education organization and their curriculum. The province only indirectly controlled the regions. The same pattern was also applicable to the lower level of hierarchy: the kabupaten to the national education department at the regency (dinas pendidikan nasional), the dinas pendidikan nasional to seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD, the seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD to the Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT), the UPT to the schools, and the schools to the teachers in the related school. Based on that organization, Bu Candra, suggested that I go to the technical implementation unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT) first before I entered the school.

In addition to clarifying the organization pattern, the interview results indicated while the ten schools reported in the news were in relatively limited facilities, there were two schools that had nearly the same characteristics. Therefore, these two schools were selected, one school for the pilot and the other for the main study. These two schools were located in relatively remote areas compared with the other eight. Both were located at different sub-districts (kecamatan), in which transportation was known to be limited and most of the society made a living by becoming sharecroppers and becoming house cleaners.
As suggested by Bu Candra, in order to enter the school, I should go to the UPT to ask for permission. However, since the location of the office was far away from the school and relatively difficult for public transportation to access, and since the direction signs were difficult to find, it was much easier for me to get to the location of the school than to get the location of the UPT. When I arrived at the school, it happened that one of the school staff was asked to deliver a letter to the office unit. Taking a different motorcycle, that staff member helped me to reach the UPT.

When I was in the UPT, one of the staff made a copy of the letter of permission from the regency development plan agency and gave me permission to go. He even explained that I could go directly to the school and conduct my interview. Based on the information from Bu Candra, the UPT was the expansion of the dinas pendidikan nasional. The UPT was the mediator between the dinas pendidikan nasional at the kabupaten and schools in the kecamatan. This experience made me curious about the role of the UPT. I felt that I needed to further explore the information about the relationship between the dinas pendidikan, the UPT, and the school principal.

After delivering the letter of permission to the UPT, I went back to the school to meet with the principal and set the schedule for the interviews and observations. I am confident to say that I could make contact with the principal relatively easily before we set the schedule in part because I was born and grew up in that kabupaten, although I stayed in an urban area. In addition, when I was in high school, I was actively engaged in a number of community service programs. In 2008, I was involved in a youth
organization that conducted international programs that were located in some rural areas. These programs included youth from Australia, the U.S., Germany and Poland. I stayed with the villagers for a few days. These experiences helped me become familiar with the rural people, which eventually helped me to develop a good rapport with them.

Essentially, I explained to the principal about the purpose of the study and the procedures that I planned to implement. He willingly set the schedule for me to have an interview with him and a sixth grade school teacher. To my surprise, he even mentioned that he would allow the teacher to leave the class for the sake of my interview. He also mentioned that I could discuss with the teacher the time for the classroom observation and the students’ interview.

**Piloting interview processes and findings.** Piloting the interview was conducted from October 18 to October 21, 2010. The questions for the interviews with the principal and the teacher for the pilot study were adjusted based on the responses given by the head of seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD, Bu Candra, as the initial respondent. From the personal communication, two major concerns, in addition to the organizational pattern, were used to develop interview questions. They were the School-Level Curriculum (KTSP) and the National Exam (UASBN). The topics of the questions were relatively the same, but the phrases to ask questions were adapted based on the information given by Bu Candra. She mentioned that since the School-Level Curriculum was still relatively new, the curriculum section in the kabupaten created school clusters (gugus sekolah) and working groups of elementary classroom teachers (kelomok kerja guru).
I also got information that regardless of the working groups, the teachers could create their own curriculum. Even in the same cluster, it was possible for each school to have different curriculum. Implemented at each education unit, this curriculum is known as School-Level Curriculum (Peraturan Pemerintah No 19, 2005). I noticed that instead of the word school, the word education unit (unit pendidikan) was chosen in order to contrast the abstract concept school and school as a building.

Bu Candra also provided information about what KTSP meant for her, what it consisted of, who should develop the KTSP, and how KTSP should be developed and implemented. Further explanation about KTSP from Bu Candra is discussed in Chapter 4 since, as indicated in Grounded Theory, information given by the initial respondent can also be part of the data (Charmaz, 2006).

Besides the information about the School-Level Curriculum, I also got information about the integrated national exam (Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional, UASBN). Bu Candra explained the rationale of UASBN, the test items developers, and the test items composition. The same as the KTSP, more discussion about the UASBN is presented in Chapter 4.

Because the organization pattern was founded to be hierarchical rather than linear, the interviews were also designed hierarchically. Accordingly, first, I interviewed the school principal. Based on the results of the interview with the principal, I adjusted the questions to interview the teachers. After interviewing the teachers, I interviewed the
students. To provide a more detailed description of these processes, each step of the interview is presented in the following sections.

**Piloting the interview with the principal and its findings.** The purpose of piloting the interview with the principal was to test whether languages used to word questions would be understandable to the interviewees. In addition, the pilot interview helped the researcher to predict the amount of time needed and the depth and breadth of the information a researcher might possibly obtain. This information would facilitate the researcher to identify whether adjustments, such as rewording questions related to the interviews, would be needed before the actual data collection was conducted.

In piloting the interview with the principal, Pak Jati, a semi-structured interview was planned with the purpose of getting the information about the principal’s education perspectives on the decentralization of education in Indonesia, School-Level Curriculum, integrated national exam, teachers’ efficacy, students’ background, learning supports and motivation. A list of topics for the interview is presented in Appendix B. However, because the principal gave an extensive explanation, some new information and words that needed clarification such as *main school clusters, thematic methods of teaching, discrete methods of teaching, school grants, school merger and school-based examination (ujian sekolah)* emerged, and consequently the interview tended to shift from a semi-structured to a combination of the semi-structured and open-ended interview.

The language adopted for the interview was mainly Indonesian. However, being born and growing up in that area, the principal appeared to be influenced more by the
localized Javanese language and culture. This fact was reflected in the intonation, the speed, and the volume of the interview responses, as well as his word choice. For example, he tended to speak softly and slowly so that sometimes he was difficult to follow. Sometimes he inserted the word *nek* to replace the word *kalau* [if], a common Javanese usage. This arrangement inspired me to be more flexible in using the language, and to consider the possibilities of interpreting his utterances based on Javanese perspectives.

**Piloting the first interview with the sixth grade teacher and its findings.** Piloting the first interview with the sixth grade teacher, Bu Pertiwi, had a purpose similar to the pilot interview with the school principal. The focus of the interview was similar, but in this case, the interview was directed to get a more in-depth understanding of the implementation of the KTSP. The questions were adjusted based on the results of the interview with the principal. The interview emphasized more the syllabus development, lesson unit plans, classroom learning and teaching, and integrated examination, although the other themes of the questions were relatively the same as those addressed to the principal.

In the teachers’ pilot interview, the sixth grade teacher was female and she was not from the same origin as the principal. Besides being from a different *kabupaten*, she was also younger, though they used the same local language. Although they used the Javanese language, they tended to have different language styles and accents. The teacher spoke relatively louder and clearer and her accent did not emerge as much as that of the
principal. Therefore, although when I interviewed her I overheard the loud voice of music used by nearby sport teachers, I could still follow her speech patterns.

In addition to the language usage, the teacher’s pilot interview revealed some new words that probably would emerge in interviewing teachers and needed to be further investigated. These new vocabulary included: *teacher standardization, classroom composition, school facilities, testing blueprint, and testing development*. The information gained from interviewing the principal and the teacher was used as the major reason for conducting the observations of teaching and learning.

*Piloting the second interview with the teacher and its findings.* Piloting the second interview was conducted after the observation. The purpose of piloting the second interview was to test the clarity and appropriateness of the questions that emerged after the observation. The answers to the questions were deemed to be important enough to adjust the questions addressed to the students. From the results of the interview, it was indicated that for questioning the students, I needed to word the questions in such a way that the questions would be able to elicit students’ responses about their family background, learning supports, and learning motivation.

*Piloting the interview with the students and its findings.* Different from the questions addressed to the principal and the teacher, the questions addressed to students were mainly aimed to get information about students’ background, learning supports and learning motivation. The purpose of piloting the interview with the students was to test
whether the wording of questions was understandable and whether the questions were appropriate.

Unlike the language used to interview the principal and the teacher, the language used to interview the students was Indonesian. When I talk to children in the villages around Java, I usually use formal Javanese language. However, in this particular classroom setting, I had to use formal Indonesian because it is listed in the government regulations that Indonesian is the classroom language. In addition, I realized that talking to children requires speaking on their level, which is sometimes less formal and less structured. Yet, as I have been familiar with the Indonesian language of children from urban areas, during the interview with the students, I tended to use expressions that were not familiar to the students. Since I usually used Indonesian with students in the city, in which the accent and the language choices are different, the students sometimes did not understand what I was saying and I needed to re-explain and reword my sentences. In addition, I found that many expressions used by students related to modern technology, such as Hp (hand phone), sms (text message), and PS (play station); however, they had limited vocabularies related to jobs that they might consider in the future (one of the students mentioned that she wanted to be a sales assistant). I surmised that a potential problem might be that they did not know what they wanted to be in the future because of the limitation of their immature perspectives.

I met other challenges when I indirectly asked the students about their family background. At that time, I asked the students about with whom they lived, how they
reached school, who usually helped them do school homework when they were home, and was there anyone to remind them to study. I was so surprised when there was a child staring at me without answering my questions. His face turned red. After the interview, I got information that he was from a broken family.

**Piloting the observation and its findings.** In addition to piloting the interview, I also piloted the observation. According to Glesne (2006), piloting the observation in a similar manner is supposed to facilitate the researcher in critiquing the observation techniques (Glesne, 2006). This approach enables the researcher to recognize what makes the respondents comfortable while being observed. It also assists in determining the suitable media to help the study: a video recorder, tape recorder, or field notes. It will also allow the researcher to study the culture of the respondents. For these reasons, I also piloted the observation.

To observe, I entered the class together with the teacher. Before the learning and teaching processes began, the teacher introduced me to the students. The teacher also allowed the students to ask me questions before I explained my purpose of being with them. I told them that I would video and tape record their activities and take some necessary notes of what I observed. This approach made the students more comfortable with my presence in the class. I thoroughly followed all the learning processes in depth.

I noticed that among fourteen students, only three were male and they sat close to each other on the first and second row. Female students surrounded them. During the lesson, these three students seemed to be less motivated compared with the other
students. They rarely took an initiative to answer questions until the teacher asked. This inspired me to consider the classroom composition in the main study.

In addition to the classroom setting, I found a unique cultural pattern present in the classroom. While the teacher was asking the students to work on some calculations, the teacher was wandering around and looking at the students’ work. A student from a different row came to the teacher asking questions. Like a mother talking to her little daughter, the teacher asked that student to wait for a while until she finished explaining the calculation to a male student in front of her. She also came to some students who seemed to be less motivated. In addition, the language used by the teacher to communicate with the students was also unique. I recognized it when the teacher instructed the students to do the calculation, but it seemed that the students did not respond as expected to the teacher. The teacher then explained the concept by exemplifying the instruction in a real life situation. This experience stimulated me to later consider teachers’ and students’ communication in the main observation.

**Additional pilot findings.** During the pilot interviews, I also met with some other teachers, especially with the principal and the classroom teachers. We discussed many issues related to the schools and the students, including the students’ background and motivation. The information sometimes became complementary to the information that I received before. For example, once on a talk during break time, the principal mentioned that sometimes the students left the school because of their parents. For example, the parents got divorced and this student had to move to another village with his mother.
Another student was said to be the only child in the family, and her parents had spoiled her very much. This information helped me better understand students’ behavior in the classroom.

When I further asked about how the school communicates with the students’ parents, the principal explained that they had a chance to meet parents at the end of the semester when the parents were required to get the students’ reports. The principal added that most parents did not have permanent jobs. Some of them were farmers, but some of them worked as house cleaners and sharecroppers in different areas. This situation made it difficult for the school to regularly invite parents to come to school often. With the limited time I had and the culture involved, having direct interviews with students’ parents became less possible. Interviewing them might not be able to uncover the complexity of the students’ lives because rural Javanese people tend to be reluctant to share their life difficulties with new people. Second, to overcome this difficulty, I needed to stay with them without disturbing their activities, which was impossible for me because of the time constraints.

Another finding was that my being together with them during the break time made students feel familiar with me although I did not often talk to the students. When I came to the school for the second, the third and until the end of the pilot study, students came to me after I finished parking my motorcycle, greeted me and shook my hand in the same way as they usually did to the other teachers. Also, I tried to attend activities outside the academic ones. On occasion, there was a partnership program between the
school and the local community known as the health program. Once a week, the local community provided healthy food to the school staff and the students. At first, they did not tell me about this program until one day when I came to school when the program was going on. They invited me to eat together with them. Many times, they mentioned that the food was nothing. I realized that it was the typical language used by the local community to show their hospitality. Since the food was simple, the community seemed to guess that I might not be willing to join with them. I learned that they had labeled urban people in that way. They were surprised when I accepted the invitation. Being together in such an activity made me learn about the cultural patterns developed in that community, and this approach helped me to better understand the phenomena.

To conclude, this pilot study helped to prepare me for the main study. It helped me become more open to other possible ways, such as joining in non-academic activities, which might contribute to the richness of the data. At the same time, I could better understand the context while: recognizing things that I should have done but did not and things that I should not have done, adjusting the language that I would use, and recognizing terms and expressions that probably would emerge when I communicated with the respondents. These considerations eventually helped me to be more sensitive to the data and served to inform the process of data collection.

**Data Processing**

Before analyzing the data, the researcher transcribed in verbatim all interviews. The process of transcribing allowed the researcher to be familiar with the data (Kvale &
Brinkmann, 2009). The researcher then theoretically sampled the data gathered from interviews, observations, documents, journal entries, and field notes (Glasser, 1978). This sample process involved initial coding, selective or focused coding, axial coding and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006).

Initial coding is the process of naming the segments of the data to indicate what the data is about (Charmaz, 2006; Wertz et al., 2011). It was the first step in moving the concrete data to begin making an interpretation. An example of an initial coding in this study is presented in Appendix C. The next step of the analysis was focused coding. In this step, the researcher indicated the most significant and/or the most frequent codes appearing in the open coding (Charmaz, 2006; Wertz et al., 2011). It was used to synthesize and explain a larger unit of the data. An example of selective or focused coding is presented in Appendix D. In axial coding, the researcher sorted, synthesized, and organized the data to make sense of the data (Charmaz, 2006). One of the focused codes was a category and the others tended to be its properties. An example of an axial coding in this study is presented in Appendix E. The next step in the coding was theoretical coding, the process of integrating the substantive codes that the researcher had made to develop a theory (Charmaz, 2006). Finally, to theoretically code, the researcher used models introduced by Glasser (1978). An example of this step is given in Appendix F.

In addition to the coding process, the researcher also included memo-writing in the process of report writing. Writing memos in Grounded Theory is considered as “the
pivotal intermediate step between data collection and writing drafts of papers” (Charmaz, 2006; p. 72). It is the analytical and conceptual step of writing a research report, which encourages the researcher to write more than descriptive writing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This memo became the first draft of the report (Wertz et al., 2011). An example of memo-writing is presented in Appendix G.

It is important to note that to generate a theory using Grounded Theory, theoretical sampling was continuously done in the process of data analysis. This process was evident, in its beginning emergent stages, during the pilot study. The idea of theoretical sampling was not only a matter of sampling methods, but also the process of going back and forth from the emergent concept to the samples and/or data collection (Charmaz, 2006; Glasser, 1978). The complex relationship of converting the raw data with regard to accepted theory involved analyzing, categorizing, and investigating. The example of how an emergent concept once generated from memo-writing required the researcher to look back at the sample is presented in Appendix G.

In sum, although findings in the pilot were primarily designed to inform and shape processes of data collection of the main study, categories for coding emerged in the latter phase of the pilot study. Considering this continuous process of data comparison, early translation was also avoided. In the translation processes, there will usually be meaning gain and loss. Too early translation will remove the data away from the original sources. The translation presented in the Appendices is intended to provide readers with understandable examples.
Trustworthiness and Confidentiality

In qualitative inquiry, trustworthiness becomes the major issue (Hoefl, 1997; Patton, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The term trustworthiness covers credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bowen, 2005). Credibility refers to the ability of the study to reveal the believability of the findings. Transferability means that other researchers can obtain similar findings based on a study of their own, dependability refers to the stability of the findings, and conformability is defined as internal coherence of the data. Accordingly, this study involved data triangulation, continuous crosschecking with the participants, and the presentation of a detailed description of the phenomena.

Another important issue needed in handling qualitative data is confidentiality (Glesne, 2006). Since personalizing the participants was prominent to contextualize data and to help readers understand the context, while the readers and confidentiality also became the researchers’ concern, pseudonyms were used to replace the proper names of the research participants and settings.

Timeline

Table 1 summarizes the implementation of the study, as it had previously been scheduled prior to the implementation. Although the setting of the study was located in the same province as the Merapi Mountain, the Merapi eruption in October 2010 did not affect the process of data collection much except the trip from the province to the kabupaten, which took a longer time than usual.
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<th>Description</th>
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<td>October 7, 2010</td>
<td>Get permission letter</td>
<td>Get permission letter from the government office at province level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 6, 2010</td>
<td>Get permission letter</td>
<td>Get permission letter from the government office at <em>kabupaten</em> level</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Interview</td>
<td>Interview with the <em>kepala seksi kurikulum pendidikan tingkat TK dan SD</em></td>
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<td>October 18-23, 2010</td>
<td>Pilot study</td>
<td>Pilot the interview questions and the research equipments</td>
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<td>October 25-29, 2010</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Interview with a staff of UPT and a sixth grade teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1-6, 2010</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Personal communication and another sixth grade teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 8-21, 2010</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Observe classroom engagement</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
<td>Interview with sixth grade teachers after classroom observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3-20, 2010</td>
<td>Process the data</td>
<td>Transcribe the interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>January - August 2011</td>
<td>Analyze data</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2011–February 2012</td>
<td>Write the results</td>
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Chapter 4: Findings

As listed in the previous chapters, the main purpose in this study is to identify factors that explain the unusual UASBN performance of a relatively poor elementary school in rural Indonesia. In order to respond to that purpose holistically, four sub-questions were generated:

1. What do the members of the school body, especially the head of the curriculum section (seksi kurikulum), the staff member for the Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT), the school principal, and the classroom teachers understand about the School-Level Curriculum (KTSP)?

2. What do the members of the school body, especially the school principal and the classroom teachers do to extend the national standards to develop the KTSP?

3. What do the members of the school body, especially the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal, and the classroom teachers understand about the UASBN?

4. How does understanding about the UASBN by members of the school body, especially the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal and the classroom teachers influence teaching practices?

To seek answers to these questions, interviews, documents analyses, on-site observations, and documentation in the form of reflective journal and field notes were
conducted in a rural school in one of five regencies (kabupaten) in Yogyakarta Special Province in Indonesia from October to December 2010. The resulting data bank included fifteen interview transcripts, analyses of twenty one national, provincial documents, a collection of reflective journal and recorded field notes following fifteen on-site interviews, and a collection of journal entries which were written after some informal talks with teachers, including journals that I wrote after I attended the funeral of a relative of a classroom teacher and that I wrote after I attended the students’ picnic. Interviews involved the head of seksi kurikulum, a staff member of the UPT, a school principal, two classroom teachers, the current sixth grade students of the selected school, and the current sixth grade students. An additional interview with the head of a teacher-training center was included to provide additional description of the challenges faced by classroom teachers. Documents analysis included the rules and regulations of the national education, especially those related to the curriculum development, annual reports and similar documents provided by the selected school, and unpublished lesson plans developed by the sixth grade teachers in the selected school. These documents were treated as raw data.

Following the methodology in Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006), documentary evidence was constructed in the form of initial coding, selective or focused coding, axial coding, theoretical coding, and memo-writing (Appendices B, C, D, E, F, and G). The analysis of the data generated three main core categories: Rimpang Elementary School, School-Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, KTSP), National Examination (Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional, UASBN). Data collected at the
school level at Rimpang Elementary School provided information needed to contextualize the data and findings related with KTSP development and UASBN.

Rimpang Elementary School is the closest setting to where the performance of teaching can be viewed as a factor that contributed to students’ scores on the UASBN. Following the description and findings at the school level is the school curriculum (KTSP), which presents different interpretations of KTSP by the school body, and the KTSP development process. The next presentation provides different perspectives about the national exam (Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional, UASBN) by the head of the curriculum center, the school principal and the teachers of Rimpang Elementary School. The discussion of the influences of teachers’ understanding about UASBN as reflected in their teaching practices in the classroom is presented afterwards. Being organized this way, this information attempts to answer the research questions.

Additional findings that are deemed to be relevant with this study are discussed at the end of this Chapter. Although this section might not directly contribute to the answers to the research questions, this discussion might provide readers with a more detailed description of the phenomenon in one rural school in Indonesian.

**Rimpang Elementary School**

Rimpang Elementary School is the first core category generated from data analysis. There are four categories to describe Rimpang Elementary Schools. They include entry and access to Rimpang Elementary School, Rimpang Elementary School location, and Rimpang Elementary School’ profile. The Rimpang Elementary School is
divided into four sub-categories. They are School enrollment history and conditions, School facilities, School personnel and community, and School culture. These categories and sub-categories are discussed in the following sections.

**Entry and access to Rimpang Elementary School.** Entering and accessing in research are often considered as the technical procedures to obtain human subjects approval or technical permission from the related institution. In fact, as said by Weade (1990), in qualitative research, access is “a socially constructed process that must be negotiated, established, monitored, adjusted and reestablished” (p.119) during the study. This section reviews the process of entering and accessing the Rimpang Elementary School.

The education staff members, especially the staff member of the UPT of Panjala, the school principal and the teachers in Rimpang Elementary School, were relatively cooperative. In fact, it was one of the teachers of Rimpang Elementarry School, Pak Kukuh, who enabled this welcome a few days before my actual arrival at the school. It had been suggested by the head of curriculum section (*kepala seksi kurikulum*), Bu Candra, and based on the results of my pilot study I meet the staff member of the UPT of Panjala. There, I explained to one of the staff member of UPT of Panjala, Pak Waskita, that I had gotten news that Rimpang Elementary School achieved the first rank for the UASBN. I mentioned that from that news, I intended to study what made Rimpang Elementary School reach the high scores for UASBN.
From the results of the interview, Pak Waskita indicated a particular teacher, Pak Kukuh, who I could interview. Instead of allowing me to contact Pak Kukuh by myself and just giving me directions to visit or taking me to Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Waskita called Pak Kukuh and then wrote a formal invitation letter to ask him to come to the UPT of Panjala office. In other words, Pak Waskita made a phone call to ask Pak Kukuh to come to the UPT of Panjala office and gave the letter of invitation at the time Pak Kukuh came to the UPT of Panjala office.

Pak Waskita did not only invite Pak Kukuh to help me get easy access for my interview, but they also provided many of the necessary documents related to Rimpang Elementary School that I needed. Pak Waskita mentioned that I could take them the next day when I went back for the interviews with him and the teacher. In Javanese culture, this kind of response is very common, especially if the host is comfortable with the conversation with the guests. They will not mind helping their guests to the best of their abilities.

The next day, I went back to the UPT of Panjala office. At that time, the headline news was about the Merapi eruption (it is important to note that Merapi is the most active volcano in Indonesia, which is surrounded by four different regencies of two different provinces: Central Java and Yogyakarta Province). Everywhere, including in the office, people were busy following the news. It was understandable since people might have relatives who stayed close to the mountain. Consequently, the television at the front room of the office, where I could have had my interview, was on. When Pak Kukuh came, Pak
Waskita suggested that I have an interview in his room considering that the sounds of the television might become a distraction.

It is important to note that it was Pak Kukuh who gave me the direction to get to Rimpang Elementary School. He suggested that I take the route from Paliyan (another kecamatan in Wanapertiwi) and not to take the route from Panjala. He indicated that although the road from Panjala was relatively better, there was a sharp winding road that might be more dangerous for those who were not accustomed to taking that path. In fact, Pak Kukuh planned to drop me at the school. However, since the office hours had been over, and it was raining, he drew me a map to get to the location on another day.

A few days after interviewing Pak Kukuh at the UPT office, I went to Rimpang Elementary School to meet with the school principal, Pak Tarjo and to have an interview with him. Based on the information from Pak Kukuh, I also had access to interview the current sixth grade teacher, Pak Lantip. The previous teacher, Pak Kukuh, did not teach the sixth grade students anymore. He currently taught the fifth grade students, but sometimes was asked to replace the sixth grade students when the current sixth grade teachers were absent for official responsibilities, such as attending teacher training. Based on the results of the interviews, I identified other related data gathered from documents, observations, and other potential interviews. In retrospect, it was the teacher, Pak Kukuh, who had provided the primary means that gave access to reach the school.

**Rimpang Elementary School location.** Rimpang Elementary School is located in *Padukuhan Inggil, Desa Argoseneng, Kecamatan Panjala*. It is a kecamatan in a
kabupaten in Yogyakarta Province. From Wanapertiwi, the capital of the regency, to the kecamatan, where the Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT) is located, it should have taken about thirty minutes to reach the location from Wanapertiwi by automobile; however, the map is not the territory. Because of the road conditions, it might take more than thirty minutes to get there. The road from Wanapertiwi to Panjala is relatively well paved asphalt; however, the land is not stable enough resulting in the road being bumpy in places. In addition, there are a lot of difficult turns when navigating in the mountains.

Rimpang Elementary School, which is located about fourteen kilometers from UPT of Panjala, is, in fact, located between Wanapertiwi and the UPT. It is only about thirty kilometers from Wanapertiwi. However, it takes approximately an hour to get to the location. There are also many alternative routes to get to the school, but there is no better choice. Almost all of them are dangerous. Public transportation is very limited. Buses only pass early in the morning and the afternoon, at the time the students go to and back from school, and the nearest stop is about a forty minute walk from the school. A motorcycle is the most practical mode of transportation for the sharp, narrow, winding non-asphalted road which often has a slope of more than 45° like the road to Rimpang Elementary School. It can be predicted that the road will be slippery during the rainy season making it extremely dangerous. In such conditions, those who ride a motorcycle should be very skillful, otherwise, they can be injured because of road accidents.
It is also important to note that probably because of the location, there are few settlements along the way to Rimpang Elementary School. There are still many hutan lindung (forest preservations) through which few people pass. It is known that wild animals still live in these nature preserves. Once, when I was on my motorcycle, on the way to Rimpang Elementary School, I saw a long snake in the middle of the road. It was about nine o’clock in the morning, just a few minutes after the rain stopped, and I did not notice anyone around the place.

It was not only the potential road accidents and the presence of wild animals that might become obstacles to reach the location, but the non-asphalted road often causes flat tires. The school principal shared with me his experience. One time, he was on his motorcycle on the way to school, and he got a flat tire, but there was no mechanic nearby and there was no phone service available. The only thing he could do was to leave his motorcycle on the way, and to walk to the school. It could be predicted that he was late to arrive at school. He indicated that he also had to walk back to his motorcycle after the office hours ended.

Considering the location, I noticed that some people become discouraged to go there. Probably because of the remoteness of the location, Google map cannot give directions. I also hardly found any road signs. When I asked for the direction to the administrative staff in Dinas Pendidikan and in Dinas Pengembangan dan Penelitian offices (the government institutions that deal with education and research in the regency), they asked me in turn why I was so eager to go to that location. They explained that they
were also unsure about the directions. I better understood the challenges of the school when I had an interview with the school principal. The school principal indicated that the facilities for the school clusters was stored at the main cluster which was more accessible for both the other school clusters and the facilities provider and that the monitoring team rarely visited the school. This illustration exemplifies how a school in relatively remote areas might have been treated and disadvantaged.

**Rimpang Elementary School’s profile.** To illustrate Rimpang Elementary School, four elements are involved in this description. Those elements are school enrollment history and conditions, school facilities, school personnel and community, and school culture. The sections that follow describe those aspects.

**School enrollment history and conditions.** Rimpang Elementary School is considered by many to be old and it is difficult to trace its history. Pak Tarjo indicated that he was an alumnus of that school. He graduated from Rimpang Elementary School in 1965. This school used to be called Sekolah Rakyat (SR, a name given to elementary schools during the Dutch colonization until the 1960s, see Chapter 2). Pak Tarjo said that before he went to SR, the school only accommodated the first through the third grade of elementary school. If a student intended to continue her/his study, s/he needed to go to the kecamatan (Interview with the Pak Tarjo, November 3, 2010). Considering the long school history, it could be expected that the school should have been well developed.

However, this advantage is not the case of Rimpang Elementary School. It is important to note that based on the current government regulations, a school should
consider the content of education, the number and the qualification of the teachers, the school facilities, the education budget, and the learning evaluation and certification (Peraturan pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 66 tahun 2010, pasal 184 ayat 1).

Meanwhile, it can be said that Rimpang Elementary School hardly meets these requirements. According to the school principal of Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Tarjo, the total number of the students from the first to the sixth grade levels ranged from 70 to 100 students. Based on Individual Report of Rimpang Elementary School, academic year 2010/2011 (Laporan Individu Rimpang Elementary School tahun akademik 2010/2011), the number of the students at the first grade and second grade levels were twelve students total: seven male and five female students at the first and the second grade levels. At the third grade, the number of the students slightly decreased to only nine students, consisting of five male and four female students. At grades four and five, the number of the students were about the same, but the composition different. At grade four, there were five male students and six female students and at grade five, there were only two male students and nine female students. Additionally, there were sixteen students at grade six, consisting eleven male and five female students (Laporan Individu Rimpang Elementary School, academic year 2010/2011). The statistical data revealed that the number of the students at each grade was not evenly distributed. Pak Tarjo explained that the number of the students at grade six was increasing since there were some new students who moved from different schools in different cities or countries. Pak Tarjo added that when the students went to the higher grade, the number of the students might
change. The students might drop out of their school, or move in and out of Rimpang Elementary Schools because of their parents. He emphasized that in general, the number of the students tended to be decreasing. If the number of the students is continuously decreasing, it is possible, in ordinary circumstances, that Rimpang Elementary School would be merged with another school in the neighboring area.

In addition to the challenge related to the declining number of the students, Rimpang Elementary School also has challenges related to the number of the teachers (Sekilas Potret, Rimpang Elementary School, 1989-2009, unpublished document). It was reported that in 1989, Rimpang Elementary School had only three teachers and a school principal. This situation meant that one teacher would teach two grade levels since there are six grades in Indonesian elementary schools. In 1996, as the government attention to education increased, the government added two teachers (Sekilas potret, Rimpang Elementary School, 1989-2009, unpublished document). However, it seemed that the number of teachers was still not sufficient because there would still be one teacher who should be the classroom teacher for two grade levels. The limitations and challenges of this school confirm the necessity of this study.

**School facilities.** The school facilities of Rimpang Elementary School seem to be far below the national standards. It was reported that the school had six classrooms: three classrooms were in relatively good condition, and the other three were relatively poor. The school was equipped with one library that was difficult for the students to access since it was located in the teachers’ common room which was side by side with the
school principal’s room, and an outdoor playground. The school had only one student toilet, and one teacher toilet (Laporan Individu Rimpang Elementary School, academic year 2010/2011). It is important to note that the school did not separate the toilet between boys and girls, but only between teachers and students. Meanwhile, in the rest of Indonesia, in which the majority of the population is Muslim, and in which gender differences become more of a concern, it is typically expected to separate male and female as well as teacher and student toilets.

The book collection in the school library was also not extensive. It was reported that for each course at each grade, there were two different textbook titles for each teacher. For students, there was only one of these and approximately eleven copies for each grade. Considering the number of the students at each grade, it is impossible for each student to have a book at the same time. In addition to the lack of course books, the school only had two hundred and fifty copies of fiction and non-fiction books with different titles. The school also had fifty five copies of dictionary, world atlas, and encyclopedia in thirty different titles (Laporan Individu Rimpang Elementary School, academic year of 2010/2011). For the non-course books, the school typically had only one exemplar for one title. It is important to note that a public library in rural Indonesia is rarely found and that access for interlibrary loan system is not yet available in Indonesia.

**School achievement.** Despite the limitation of Rimpang Elementary School, in the academic years of 2007/2008 and 2008/2009, Rimpang Elementary School was included in the five best ranked schools of more than five hundred elementary schools in
the UASBN at the kabupaten level. It is important to note that there are approximately five hundreds elementary schools in this kabupaten. In the 2010 UASBN, the scores of the students of Rimpang Elementary School ranged from 23.15 to 27.90, and in the 2011 the students’ scores ranged from 21.70 to 27.10. It is important to note that UASBN includes three courses: Mathematics, Science, and Indonesian Language. Further explanation about the UASBN is discussed in the National Examination (Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar National, UASBN) section.

In addition to the academic achievement, Rimpang Elementary School also actively engaged in many of curricular activities held by the UPT or Education Department at kabupaten level. Although rarely winning in the competition, Rimpang Elementary School often participated in sports and traditional song competition at the UPT level.

**School personnel and community.** In addition to the school conditions and school facilities, it is important to identify the school personnel and community since the identification of the school personnel and community might influence curriculum implementation (cf. Curriculum Theory presented in Chapter 2). In this study, the school personnel are defined as personnel who are involved in the education processes, including school principal, and teachers. The community includes student-parents and students. The description of each of them is presented as follows.

*Pak Tarjo.* Pak Tarjo, the school principal, was an alumnus of Rimpang Elementary School. He graduated from Rimpang Elementary School in 1965, and then
attended Sekolah Pendidikan Guru (SPG, a high school that prepared its students to become a kindergarten or elementary school teacher). He became an elementary school teacher nine years later in 1974. After he graduated from SPG, Pak Tarjo began his career as an elementary school teacher at Candi Elementary School, Karangmojo, another kecamatan, which is located about seven kms to the east of Wanapertiwi. Pak Tarjo commuted from Panjala to Karangmojo until he was assigned to Girisekar Elementary School, Panjala, which is relatively close to his hometown, two and a half years later, in 1976. Pak Tarjo worked at Girisekar Elementary School, Panjala, about eight years. In 1984, he was asked to assist Giripurwo Elementary School, Purwosari for another eight years. This school is about seven kilometers to the southwest from Panjala.

In 1998, Pak Tarjo began his career as a school principal. He first worked as a school principal in Banaran Elementary School, Playen, another kecamatan in the same kabupaten. Playen is about twenty five kilometers to the northeast from Panjala. He worked there for about two and a half year until he was assigned to be the school principal at Pacar Elementary School, Panjala, which is relatively close to Rimpang Elementary School. He was in Pacar Elementary School from 2000 until 2009, when he was asked to assist Rimpang Elementary School. While having extensive experience as a teacher and principle, he is relatively new at Rimpang Elementary School.

Having been a school principal for more than ten years, Pak Tarjo is relatively accommodative and thoughtful about the government regulation, the geographical condition of the school, and the socio-economic condition of the community. Based on
the government policies related to poor rural schools which mandates that a school administration should include the study of the geography and ecology; the study of the school candidates funding, society, and culture; the study of the balance between the number of the schools in the related areas and the number of the school year children; the study of the distance of the schools in the same school clusters; and the study of the budget for the coming years in order to predict the schools’ sustainability (Peraturan pemerintah Republik Indonesia nomor 66 tahun 2010, pasal 183 ayat 3), Pak Tarjo confidently said that it would be impossible for the government to ask Rimpang Elementary School to merge with another school nearby considering the location and socio-economic condition of the community. He explained that each pedukuhan (smaller community unit than a county) was separated by hutan lindung (forest preservation) and rivers that often went dry. In addition, the transportation was difficult. He was doubtful that parents would send their children to an elementary school that was far away from their home. Further, he explained that instead of asking Rimpang Elementary School to merge with other schools nearby, the government had recently provided teachers with tunjangan khusus (extra stipend). According to him, this bonus had made the teachers more dedicated in teaching regardless of the amount of the extra stipend.

Beginning in 2006, in addition to the extra stipend given to the permanent teachers, the government allowed schools to hire part time teachers. The program is called Guru Wiyata Bakti (the program of hiring part time teachers). The school principal in charge at that time responded positively about the program (Sekilas potret, Rimpang
Elementary School, 2009). Pak Tarjo mentioned that Rimpang Elementary School currently had nine civil servants (one school principal, six classroom teachers, one religion teacher, and one school administrative), and four *guru wiyata bakti*. The *guru wiyata bakti* taught Javanese language (the vernacular language), English language, and sports.

Looking back at Pak Tarjo’s work experiences, it can be concluded that the school principal had been working in rural schools for almost ten years. Pak Tarjo indicated that his motivation to work in such schools was that by working there, he would be better able to apply himself to advancing education. He explained that in remote areas, after graduating from elementary schools, children usually would be asked by their parents to get married. Meanwhile, he noticed that many children in fact were motivated to continue their study. In his point of view, getting married too early would not be beneficial for the will-be parents or for their children. Personally, he felt that they were not yet mature. His statement confirmed the study about daughters from relatively poor society by Wolf (1992). Wolf indicated that in relatively poor society, parents expected their daughters to get married early with the expectation that this would reduce the parents’ responsibilities in taking care of their children. Pak Tarjo was proud of the fact that about eighty people in the surrounding community attended *kejar paket B* program (non-formal education program given to people who do not get the chance to study at junior high school).

Pak Tarjo is thoughtful about the personal development of the students. Once he mentioned that he was considering whether it would be applicable to introduce a new
teaching system. For him, the most ideal elementary school teaching system was that the classroom teacher followed the students on to higher levels of education until the students graduated from elementary school. He thought that it would be very positive since in the Indonesian elementary school, an elementary school teacher is a classroom teacher, meaning that the teacher teaches all courses at a particular grade. By having the same teacher for all of the elementary school years, the teacher would be able to extensively monitor the students’ personal and academic development.

Pak Tarjo is also considerate in that he also pointed out the drawbacks of the teacher caring system that he might introduce. He identified that the greatest challenge with the system that he mentioned might come from the teachers. While the caring system that he mentioned might be good for students’ development, the results might also be different, especially if the teachers were less dedicated to children’s education. He explained that based on his experience, instead of increasing students’ motivation, a teachers’ failure to handle the class sometimes discouraged the students to study. His concern that such a system has not yet been implemented is related to the teachers’ capability. So far, he noticed that some teachers were reluctant to teach at a higher-grade level. He indicated that some teachers were not confident to teach more mature students at higher grades because as the students grew older, they became more critical. Despite the strengths and weaknesses of the system that he supported, he planned to offer it to the next school committee meeting. Regardless of his brilliant idea, without other teachers’ supports he would not be able to make a change (cf. Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2009).
Pak Kukuh. Pak Kukuh is the previous sixth grade teacher in Rimpang Elementary School who was recognized as a dedicated teacher for his achievement in encouraging the students resulting in two consecutive academic years, Rimpang Elementary School getting high scores in both 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 UASBN. Pak Kukuh’s education included elementary school, junior and senior high school, *Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar D-2 program* (see Chapter 2) and *Pendidikan Matematika S1 program* (undergraduate program majoring in mathematics education). The reason for him not taking *Sekolah Pendidikan Guru* (SPG) was that the program was abandoned at the time he should enter his high school. The program was transferred into *PGSD D-2 program*. After he graduated from high school, he did not directly go to *PGSD D-2* due to his limited budget. Instead, he went to *PGSD D-2* in 1993, three years after he graduated from high school. In 1996, he began his teaching career at Rimpang Elementary School. In other words, he had been teaching at Rimpang Elementary School for about fifteen years. He had not have experienced teaching at many other schools.

Pak Kukuh’s explanation serves to better explain the teachers’ experience after the Indonesian Independence as it is presented in Chapter Two. At the beginning, Pak Kukuh did not have a plan to teach elementary school students. His reason to take *PGSD D-2 program* was for the job. His father passed away when he was a child. In the past, in Indonesian culture, a father was thought to be the person who was responsible for the family funding. For that reason, he said,
“Saya bilang saya pengin sekolah duwe dhuwit 50 ewu. Pengin nyoba saya. Ada PGSD. Saya waktu itu bandingannya ada dua saya hanya berpikir saya kira masih laku gitu ya itu yang saya pikirkan”,

which means he wanted to continue his study, but he only had 50 thousand (about $5). While he wanted to try to apply, it was only the PGSD D-2 program that fit with his lack of money and was relatively promising for the future job.

Despite his eagerness to continue his study, Pak Kukuh explained that he still kept his “bad” habits at the university. There, he seldom brought books and he even did not take any notes in the class. He depended on his friends’ notes that he borrowed when the exam was approaching. He assumed that if he failed, there would be a second chance. It can be understood from what he said, studying education was not his first priority. At first, he dreamed about the Law Department, but then, because of his family condition, he changed his direction. One thing that he emphasized in relation to this experience was that he just “mengalir seperti air” (follow with the flow). This is a famous Javanese philosophy that means surrendering oneself to God.

Although when he was a student Pak Kukuh labeled himself as a “bad student,” he was eager to learn from his experiences. In 1999, he took the S1 program majoring in Mathematic Education. In Indonesia, writing a final project is one of the requirements for S1 students to graduate. When it was time for Pak Kukuh to finish the project, in 2002, he set his ideal high. He was motivated to write his undergraduate thesis considering himself a problem solver. He studied mathematic teaching problems that he met in his daily
teaching. He indicated that his consideration of choosing the topic was that he wanted to learn more about the topic. He further explained that he wanted to be an expert in mathematics.

As can happen to anyone, people sometimes get stuck in the planning. This dilemma also happened to Pak Kukuh. He did not finish his undergraduate thesis until 2007 when he did not have any other choice but to finish it. Otherwise, he would have to leave the university without completing his degree. He was given about five months to finish his undergraduate thesis while he was still teaching in the morning and working on his project in the afternoon. Finally, he completed it. It is important to note that transportation for him was still an issue because he had to commute both to his office and to his school. He is from another kabupaten in Yogyakarta, and the kabupaten where Rimpang Elementary School is located to the east. Meanwhile, the university that he attended is located to the north of his village. Each took approximately an hour to reach from his house.

Pak Kukuh is not only a responsible person, but also a thoughtful and considerate teacher. Born in another kabupaten in Yogyakarta province, Pak Kukuh had more chances to meet students from different socio-economic backgrounds. He indicated that students in the city tended to be more motivated. According to him, the students in the city were often from relatively rich families in which they had someone to drive them to school. In addition, they were given enough pocket money from their parents and also had their breakfast before school. Frequently, the students even had the opportunity to
take extra lessons after school. The opposite was the case with many students in rural areas like those in Rimpang Elementary School.

Comparing the students that he met and his students in Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Kukuh was encouraged to study the possibility of Rimpang Elementary School students becoming capable of achieving scores as high as children at city schools. For the sake of his dream, he was willing to spend his extra stipend to facilitate his students. He provided extra lessons for free to his students outside of the regular office hours. Buying note books can also be a serious issue in Rimpang Elementary School. For that reason, Pak Kukuh asked his students to tell him if they could not afford one. Once, he also spent his money on a picnic for his students after the students obtained high scores in a formative test.

Pak Kukuh realized that some of his students were from broken families. Some of them grew up in single parent families. Others even stayed with their old and illiterate grandparents. With such troubled conditions, Pak Kukuh indicated that he sometimes needed to take the role of parents for his students by trying to get close to them. He explained that one of the challenges was that when he had to deal with the students of a different sex. In Indonesia, this kind of situation has a potential for student-teacher relationship issues. To anticipate this problem, he developed class cultural understanding in such a way that students also developed their empathy for their friends and were accepting if one of their friends needed extra help from Pak Kukuh. He even developed a form of sisterhood/brotherhood caring, meaning that he encouraged his older students to
teach and help their peers and juniors. He explained that once, when one of his students asked him to help a particular student who was noticed to be academically poorer than the others, he came up with the idea of peer tutoring.

Students’ motivation about their future was another concern for Pak Kukuh. He was aware that it would be difficult for his students to continue their study. In his understanding, although the government freed students from the school fee, parents still needed to provide money for students’ boarding and other daily needs considering that to further their education, the students needed to go to the city. If the students commuted, transportation would be another issue. As discussed, transportation is relatively limited in that area. About these concerns, Pak Kukuh was very realistic. He did not tell his students what teachers in general say that getting high scores at school meant having a good future life. Instead, he told his students that if the students got good scores at school, they would be recognized by the society, especially their juniors. If they could not continue their education, then, it would be mostly because of chance. The reason behind what he said was that if he told the students what most teachers did, he would create family problems. According to him, it would become a serious issue in a family if a student who got a high score at school forced her/his parents to send them for further education, while the family had financial problems.

As a teacher, Pak Kukuh also developed good relationships with other teachers from different schools. He said that he used to be asked to become a visiting teacher in Panjala Elementary School, which is still in the same UPT as Rimpang Elementary
School. Once he also became a visiting teacher at Sadeng Elementary School, which is located at a different UPT. The last two years, he also became the president of teachers’ communication in Panjala. In that forum, he sometimes got a chance to share his experiences with other teachers.

Despite his enjoyment teaching the sixth graders, Pak Kukuh had just recently asked for permission from the school principal to teach the fifth graders. He explained that his family became one of his primary considerations. His wife was assigned to teach in a different province from Yogyakarta, and takes about four hours or more to reach. For that reason, it was impossible for his wife to commute. Meanwhile, he had one child who stayed with him. Since his wife stayed in Temanggung, he had to be a father and “a mother” for his child. He had to prepare breakfast for his child and ensure that everything had to be ready before he went to his office. He sometimes needed to console his child before he left. It is important to note that in Indonesia, parents and children tend to have close emotional relationships. The way to take care of children is not the same as the one in the U.S. or even in the cities in Indonesia. In his community, leaving the children in a day care was not yet acceptable. All he could do was ask one of his relatives to help caring for his child. According to Pak Kukuh, under such conditions, which often worsened with the road conditions, it was likely that sometimes he would not be able to arrive at school on time. Then, he would blame himself if the students could not improve, despite his habit of giving extra assignments to the students just in case he could not
arrive on time at school. In the meantime, he had already trained his students to study with or without teachers.

*Pak Lantip.* Pak Lantip began his career as an elementary school teacher in 1992, one year after he graduated from his SPG. Before he taught in Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Lantip taught in Argopertapan Elementary School, in another *kecamatan* in the same regency as Rimpang Elementary School. He taught in Argopertapan Elementary School for seventeen years until finally, in the academic year of 2009/2010, he was assigned to teach in Rimpang Elementary School. In other words, he was relatively new to Rimpang Elementary School when interviewed. In the academic year of 2010/2011, he was assigned to replace Pak Kukuh teaching the sixth graders.

Although having got his *Sarjana Pendidikan* title (S.Pd., an academic title for an undergraduate in Education), Pak Lantip did not mention when and how he obtained his degree. He also did not share much about his experiences during his study. Based on the data listed in the individual report of Rimpang Elementary School, academic year of 2010/2011, Pak Lantip obtained his S1 degree in 2010. What he revealed was that he had spent most of his time teaching at the sixth grade elementary school. He said that when he first taught, he was assigned to teach the sixth graders. He also indicated that he spent one year when he taught the third, the fourth, and the fifth graders.

Compared with Pak Kukuh, Pak Lantip tended to accept whatever was said in the government regulations. Like the grand design for education offered by the government, Pak Lantip emphasized students’ academic achievement more than students’ character
building. For example, when I asked him about decentralization in education in relation to the implementation of KTSP, instead of commenting or critiquing the government policies, Pak Lantip just said that kita rather than saya (we rather than I) would not be able to do anything, but follow and agree with what had been decided by the government. According to him, what we can do was just give the best that we could do. Accordingly, he indicated that he provided extra lessons to his students and also attended media training for teaching science. He assumed that becoming creative in using educational media helped him to improve his teaching so that in the end, he would better motivate his students to learn.

Instead of becoming proactive, Pak Lantip wished that he could get more facility supports either from the school, government, or society. He assumed that a teacher was very significant in determining the schools’ and the students’ success. If, for example, a teacher intended to develop his teaching and learning activities, but he was not supported and facilitated by the people around him, he would be discouraged. In other words, Pak Lantip thought that he would not be able to teach satisfactorily, if he did not get financial support in the form of school supplies from the people around him, such as the school and its people, the government, and the society.

Pak Lantip admitted he was occasionally too permissive in that he sometimes did not “strictly” direct the students to be better-behaved. On one occasion, his students went on a picnic with him. The students gathered at school, and walked together to the picnic ground. At that time, the male students planned to play Indonesian football. However,
those students who were assigned to be responsible for the event did not want to bring the ball from their school. They preferred to borrow one belonging to a student from a different school. Meanwhile, the students did not ask for permission from the owner of the ball. When the students were planning to take the ball, the owner was not home. They persuaded Pak Lantip to buy one at a warung (local store) on the way to the picnic ground. Without any hesitation, Pak Lantip agreed, but unfortunately, there was no warung on the way to picnic ground that sold any balls. Instead of being cooperative, one of the dominant students, who was in fact the captain of the class and who was also responsible for the event, was angry and decided not to attend the picnic. He decided to go back home. His bad mood ruined the classroom dynamics. In fact, the day before the event, Pak Lantip suggested that the students bring the ball that belonged to the school, but they rejected the suggestion. When the captain of the class was ngambeg (uncooperative) because of his failure to get the ball, Pak Lantip could not persuade him to be a more responsible leader. Instead, failing to win the cooperation from this captain, Pak Lantip let this captain go, leaving his friends and his responsibilities. When I talked to him about this dilemma, he explained that this student only obeyed two Rimpang Elementary School teachers. One of them was Pak Kukuh.

Despite being permissive and less proactive, Pak Lantip was humble in that he was willing to recognize the capability of others. For example, he explicitly said that he did not mind learning from Pak Kukuh although he had been a teacher long before Pak Kukuh became a teacher. Another example that Pak Lantip was willing to learn from the
people around him, including Pak Kukuh, was when there was a students’-parents’ school meeting. At that time Pak Lantip, as the classroom teacher, was assigned to announce to the students’ parents that for the UASBN, the parents were asked to collect a particular amount of money. Such an announcement is a tricky issue in Indonesia, especially in rural areas like Rimpang Elementary School since the parents are mostly from the low socio-economic societies. Feeling less confident, Pak Lantip asked Pak Kukuh to give the same speech as he had before without any additional information. It is important to note that in Javanese culture, although people might easily compliment to the strength of others, it is not easy to ask for help from others who are noted to be better than oneself.

In relation with the teacher leadership principles, Ki Hajar Dewantara, *bapak pendidikan* (the father of education), emphasized three teachers’ leadership principles: (1) *ing ngarsa sung tuladha*, (2) *ing madya mangun karsa*, (3) *tut wuri handayani*, which means that a teacher should be able to become a role model, a friend for the students and at the same time to be a supporter for the students (Rifai, 2011). Referring to these teacher leadership philosophies, it can be seen how Pak Kukuh and Pak Lantip had acted drastically different in the way they got along with the students.

*Students’ parents and students.* As listed in the Pilot Study in Chapter Three, it was difficult to have interviews with students’ parents because of the limited time and the cultural barriers. For this reasons, the data about the background of the students was based on the information from the school principals, the teachers, the students and the observations on the students’ parents meeting. According to Pak Tarjo, the school
principal, the students’ parents and the community around Rimpang Elementary School were willing to support the school programs. The only challenge related to their supporting the school activities was that the students’ parents could not provide much help for their children’s learning at home. Pak Tarjo and Pak Lantip indicated that the students’ parents who mostly graduated from elementary school did not have sufficient knowledge to help their children do the homework. In addition, as sharecroppers and house cleaners, their parents did not have enough time to assist their children at home. They usually left their home early in the morning and just arrived home at the evening when they were tired from working in the field.

This information is supported by the results of the interviews with the students and the teachers. During the interviews with the students, some of them said that no one helped them do their homework when they were at home. Some of them even said that no one cared about whether or not they studied at home. Pak Kukuh indicated that some of them lived with single parents. There was a student whose father had recently left him and that there was also a student who stayed with his grandparents who were old and illiterate. Another student lived with his mother since his father was working in Jakarta, another province, which is far away from the village.

The family background and the community definitely influenced the students’ ideals. When I asked the students whether or not they were happy studying, some students explained that they were and some others were not. Those who said that they were happy said that by studying, they would be able to become pintar (smart children).
However, when I asked further what they meant by *pinter*, I noticed that they tended to connect the word *pinter* with academic achievement and prestigious jobs in the rural area such as a doctor and a policeman. Some other students indicated that they wanted to be *guru ngaji* (teachers who teach reading the Qur-an). Others did not have concrete ideals. They said that they wanted to be *orang yang berguna* (useful people), and when I asked them what was meant by *useful people*, they said that useful people were those who could make their parents happy.

Three students who said that they were not happy learning indicated that they did not like learning because of boredom. One of them said that he got bored without any reason while the other two mentioned that they did not like learning because of the teachers. They clarified that they expected to have Pak Kukuh as their teacher. One of them added that they were not happy learning because of their friends. It was challenging to find such outspoken students in a rural Javanese school since based on Javanese culture, people tend to avoid openly expressing their feelings.

In Indonesian context, it is believed that family is the first place in which the students might get education before the community and the school (Driyarkara, 2006; Rifai, 2011). This entails that the family background in some cases will influence the way the students perceive education. The study by MacLeod (2009) indicated that children from relatively poor family found it difficult to make sense of schooling because they could not get the proof that schooling benefitted them. This difficulty made such students less motivated in schooling.
School culture. Driyarkara (1980) indicated that school community functioned as an institution that furthers the students’ learning that they get from home. This entails that the school culture will influence the way the students learn. To help readers understand the school culture of Rimpang Elementary School, three different communication categories are presented. The first is the communication among teachers, the second is the communication between students and teachers, and the third is the communication between teachers and school community around the school.

Teachers’ communication. Teachers’ communication in Rimpang Elementary School was largely influenced by Javanese culture in general. Although it had been listed in the regulations that the Indonesian language is considered to be the official language (UUD 1945, pasal 36), most teachers used the Javanese language in their communication. The Indonesian language was only used in formal events, such as teachers’ meetings and the school principal’s briefing. Other than those events, Javanese language was preferred. In addition to Javanese language preferences, cultural controls were also extensively implemented. As an illustration, from the beginning of the interview with the school personnel, the interview was conducted in the school principal office. I did not realize the reason until I found that in fact, the school principal’s office was separated from the teachers’ common room. In the common room, each teacher was provided with one personal table and chair. I did not notice any chairs left, except one in front of the entrance. That empty chair was provided for the teacher who was piket (on duty) on that day.
Once, there was no teacher in the common room but Pak Lantip and I. Pak Lantip told me that probably teachers attended a funeral in one of the communities nearby. Since there was no one but the two of us in the room, we decided to have our interview in the common room. I realized that in Javanese culture, it would be considered improper for two adults to have a talk in a relatively closed room. Since the common room faced the street and we could see people pass by, I had an interview in the common room until some teachers arrived. They suggested that we move to have the interview in the school principal’s room. They said that in just a second, the room would become crowded. They explained that having the interview in the school principal’s room would be more comfortable since there would not be a lot of distraction.

Another way to express politeness was to humble oneself down in a way that might be interpreted as being less assertive in the Western culture (Noel, 2008). As an illustration, after the classroom observations, I had interviews with the sixth grade teachers (Pak Lantip and Pak Kukuh). Pak Kukuh thought that I spent more time interviewing him. It was probably true since the people around him, such as the head of seksi kurikulum, the staff of UPT and the school principal, always addressed him most of the time when I had questions related to the teaching and learning activities of the sixth graders of Rimpang Elementary School. Meanwhile, since Pak Kukuh did not teach the sixth graders anymore, and realizing that this might place him in a difficult position, I asked what he felt. He then explained that sometimes he did not feel comfortable when people came to Rimpang Elementary School to ask about the teaching and learning
processes. He was always the first person to meet, although at the time I had the interview, he was no longer the sixth grade teacher anymore. He explained that this was the reason why he sometimes avoided me when he noticed me talking to the school principal. He also did not try to get involved in any discussion even when the school principal, Pak Lantip, he, and I were together. He mentioned that if Pak Lantip could explain, then, he had been his representative.

As in any typical Javanese culture, direct criticism among education staff in Rimpang Elementary School seemed to be equally avoided. Pak Kukuh explained that if there was a teacher who tended to be absent most of the time, the other teachers usually would try to diffuse the situation by saying that those who were absent might have a good reason. Another example was when Pak Kukuh said,

Seperti terlihat disini, ada beberapa guru yang tetap saja ngobrol di dalam ruangan sementara ada juga yang lain yang mengajar. Kalau jenengan pergi ke SD Pacar, suasannya mungkin berbeda. Disana kepala sekolahnya disiplin dan juga tahu tentang pendidikan.

which, in my translation, means that “as I can see there, there were some teachers who kept talking in the common room, while some others were teaching. This situation was completely different from SD Pacar (another school near Rimpang Elementary School). The school principal there was very disciplined and knew about education.” Meanwhile, when I talked to the school principal, he indicated that he preferred to give examples to teachers rather than reminding them directly. He argued that giving examples would be
more effective rather than giving criticism. It is seen that in this context, teachers take the position as the leader, *ing ngarsa sung tuladha*, meaning that when a teacher becomes a leader, the teacher becomes the role model for the students (cf. Rifai, 2011).

*Teacher-students’ communication.* Teacher-students’ communication was also influenced by Javanese tradition. From an early age, students were trained to be polite to the foreigners and to those in authority. They greeted their teachers and guests by kissing their right hand. It is important to notice that in Javanese tradition, receiving or delivering things using the left hand will be considered to be impolite. I had some left-handed friends who said that although they might do most things with their left hand, they never used their left hand to deliver and receive things from others, or even shake hands with others. Also, the most important thing to recognize that kissing others’ hands, like teachers or someone older that us, was rarely practiced elsewhere, but this traditional greeting was still applicable in Rimpang Elementary School. It indicated that the older Javanese traditions were still relevant in Rimpang Elementary School (cf. Embree, 1934).

In addition to the way that students showed respect to their teachers, the students tried to develop their way to communicate with their teachers similar to the relationship between children and their parents. It was reported that the students would ask the teacher to help the students who they noticed to be relatively left behind from the others. They said:
Tolong Pak, Putri itu susah diberitahu tentang operasi hitung pecahan. Pak Guru agar lebih banyak membimbing dia (Sekilas potret Rimpang Elementary School, 2009; p. 4)

which, in my interpretation means that one of the students requested the teacher to pay special attention to a student named Putri who they noticed was falling behind in fractions. The student specifically asked that the teacher to spend more time with Putri.

On another occasion, there was a student picnic. At that time, the students wanted to buy a plastic ball for playing. Without any hesitation, the students asked the teacher whether the teacher could buy one for them. In the Javanese culture, students will never ask others, especially teachers to do or buy things for them if they do not share a close relationship. It would be considered as impolite, or even embarrassing.

According to teachers, the children-parents relationship was also similar to the teacher-students relationship. At one time, one of the teachers noticed that one of the students stole something from the school. Based on the teacher’s analysis, this student stole because they lacked of this item. Instead of punishing the student, the teacher tried to talk to the student about the case. According to the teacher, he adopted this approach because he did not want to make this student feel excluded from his friends, and the teacher also did not want to create fear in the students. The teacher explained that giving inappropriate punishment would never change the bad attitudes of the students. In the teacher’s understanding, children needed to be guided and supported without being given punishment that might cause the children to take revenge.
Students’ communication. Students in Rimpang Elementary School seemed to know each other well. The students were also aware of the conditions of the class. They could always recognize the students who were absent. They even knew what was happening to those who were absent. Once, two students were absent. When Pak Kukuh asked what was happening about these two students, they could explain.

The students also cared about the other students’ progress. They appeared to be unhappy to be the only best. Pak Kukuh said that once there was a left behind student and instead of leaving this student by herself, another student suggested that Pak Kukuh be willing to give extra guidance to this student. I also saw a similar scene when I had a classroom observation. At that time, there was a student who was very shy to talk. She spoke so softly that even the student sitting next to her could not catch what she was saying. A student who was sitting next to her and two other students who were sitting in front of her encouraged her to speak louder and told her not to be afraid of speaking up.

Teacher-parents/community communication. Situated in the middle of the rural society, the school staff, especially the teachers in Rimpang Elementary School tried to build good communication with the society. They attended rituals and ceremonies held by the community. Once, there was a time that one of the school neighbors held a wedding party. Although none of the family of the neighbor was directly related to the school, this family invited all the school staff to attend the party. This family also sent some punjungan (food and dessert) to the school. The school staff much appreciated the invitation. On another occasion, there was a funeral nearby. In the same way as with the
wedding ceremony, the school staff attended the funeral. Moreover, the school staff, in
turn, went to the house of the grieving without leaving their responsibility of teaching.

The society around Rimpang Elementary School appeared to recognize the
teachers although they did not have any family members who went to the school. As mentioned above, when there was a picnic for the students, the sixth grade students and the teacher walked together to the picnic ground. On the way to the location, the villagers greeted the teacher along the way. They said, “Pinarak, Pak Guru?” meaning that the villagers offered to the teacher to drop by their house. They called the teacher, Pak Guru, instead of mentioning his name. In old Javanese, such a way of calling a teacher was to show that they respected the teacher. In addition, although it was not serious to offer that the teacher drop by, it indicated that the communities tried to be polite to the teacher.

When I was among them, they also greeted me Bu Guru, in the same way as they greeted the sixth grade teacher. Pak Guru is used to address male teachers, and Bu Guru is used to address female teachers. One of the villagers asked me whether I was a new teacher in that school.

School-Level Curriculum: Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)

The second core category generated from data analysis is School-Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, KTSP). This core category is divided into three categories to describe KTSP. They are Defining KTSP, KTSP development in Rimpang Elementary School, and The implementation of the KTSP at Rimpang Elementary School. Responding to the research questions of “What do members of the
school body, especially the head of the curriculum section (seksi kurikulum), the staff member for the Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT), the school principal and the classroom teachers understand about the School-Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, KTSP)?”, the first category describes focus differences in understanding KTSP in different levels in the hierarchy of the education department.

As an attempt to respond to “What do the members of the school body, especially the school principal and the classroom teachers do to extend the national standards to develop KTSP?”, the KTSP development in Rimpang Elementary Schools illustrates Rimpang Elementary School’s effort and challenges in developing KTSP as suggested by the government. The implementation of KTSP at Rimpang Elementary Schools discusses the efforts and challenges of the sixth grade classroom teachers of Rimpang Elementary School in implementing KTSP as suggested by the government. Further explanations of these categories are presented in the following sections.

**Defining KTSP.** Although the KTSP at school is generated from government guidelines, each member of the school body appeared to have a slightly different focus. Based on the guidelines of the KTSP development (Panduan penyusunan KTSP jenjang pendidikan dasar dan menengah) (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan, 2006), KTSP is defined as:

Kurikulum operasional yang disusun oleh dan dilaksanakan di masing-masing satuan pendidikan. KTSP terdiri dari tujuan tingkat satuan pendidikan, struktur
This, in translation, means that KTSP is an operational curriculum to be developed and implemented at the school level, by a single school. This school-level curriculum, the KTSP, consists of school goals and objectives, the structure and the content of the curriculum, an academic calendar, and school syllabi.

From the definition provided by the government, it can be understood that a curriculum is not the same as a syllabus. The government provides further explanation about what is meant by a curriculum and a syllabus in this context. A curriculum is defined as a set of plans and an organization of the goals, objectives, learning contents and strategies, which are used as educational guidelines. Meanwhile, a syllabus is defined as learning plans of a particular course. It covers competency standards, basic competencies, learning materials, learning activities, indicators, learning evaluation, time allotment, and learning sources (Badan standar nasional pendidikan, 2006).

Although the members of school body, including the kepala seksi kurikulum, staff member of the Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT), school principal and teachers had the opportunity to receive the government documents, each of these individuals seemed to view the concept of KTSP differently. Bu Candra, the head of seksi kurikulum, classified KTSP into two different categories. The first is what was called Dokumen 1 and the other is Dokumen 2. Dokumen 1 is considered to be the skeleton of the whole the education program in a particular school. It can be seen as the
school curriculum in general, which consists of school vision and mission, curriculum rationale, and curriculum development principles. *Dokumen 2* is considered to be the learning program consisting of syllabi and lesson plans.

The staff member of the UPT, Pak Waskita, and the head of *seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD*, Bu Candra, tended to focus KTSP more on *Dokumen 1*. Emphasizing the decentralization in education principles, Pak Waskita revealed that KTSP became the responsibility of each individual school. The UPT merely monitored whether the school curriculum developed at the school level was in accordance with the national standards. In a similar manner, the school principal, Pak Tarjo, explained that the ability of the school to interpret the national standards was contingent upon the capability of the individual school. He mentioned that in Rimpang Elementary School, for example, fishery could be offered as one of the eclectic courses since fishing was common in the area. However, this course was not yet offered. Pak Tarjo implicitly said that there was no teacher who was capable enough to teach about fishery. Yet, he directly explained that for that reason, *Pendidikan kesejahteraan keluarga (PKK, Home economics and health)* was given and not fishery.

Differing from the emphasis of KTSP by Pak Waskita, Pak Tarjo and the sixth grade teachers, like Pak Lantip, understood KTSP in terms of the scope of syllabi and lesson plans. Pak Lantip explained that KTSP differed greatly from the previous curricula that he had previously learned and implemented. He mentioned that in terms of the learning materials, there was also not much changed. One of the major changes involved
the change of the names of some courses. Also, the academic system was changed from the quarter into the semester system. Another change was on the material presentation. Some materials, which were given at the sixth grade, were now given to the fifth.

**KTSP development in Rimpang Elementary School.** In order to study the transition processes needed to respond to the national standards for KTSP in Rimpang Elementary School, there are a number of government documents that needed to be considered. They are, among others, Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia nomor 20 tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (Indonesian Education Acts, 2003), Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia nomor 19 tahun 2005 tentang Standar Pendidikan Nasional (Government regulations, 2005), and Panduan Penyusunan Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan jenjang Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah (guidelines of KTSP for elementary and high school development).

In the Undang-Undang Pendidikan 2003, it is listed that standar pendidikan nasional (national education standards) have now become the guidelines of the curriculum development. Meanwhile, the standar pendidikan nasional is defined as the minimum criteria of the Indonesian education system (Peraturan pemerintah, 2005). These minimum criteria cover standar kompetensi lulusan (graduate competency standards), standar isi (curriculum content standards), standar proses (learning process standards), standar pendidik dan tenaga kependidikan (educators and education staff standards), standar sarana dan prasarana (school facility standards), standar pengelolaan (school management standards, standar pembiayaan (school finance
standards), and *standar evaluasi* (learning evaluation standards) (Peraturan pemerintah, 2005). Since this section focuses on curriculum transfer from the national education standards into KTSP, this section will not present all, but only the related standards which involve learning content standards.

In the learning content standards, it is listed that the learning content standards cover the basic structure of a curriculum, learning load, KTSP, and the academic calendar (Pasal 5). It is explained further that the basic structure of the curriculum should contain moral and religion education, civic and personality courses, science and technology courses, esthetic courses, and sports and health courses. Those courses should be taught holistically so that each group of courses will help better develop the students’ understanding. The curriculum and the syllabus related to those courses should focus on the development of students’ reading, writing, calculating, and communicating skills (Pasal 6).

In relation to the KTSP development, the government emphasizes that the development of the KTSP should be based on the guidelines provided by the *Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan* (BSNP, National Education Standard Board) (Peraturan Pemerintah, 2005 pasal 16). In the guidelines provided by the BSNP, it is said that the development of the curriculum should be based on the relevance of the curriculum with the *satuan pendidikan* (the school itself in a broad sense), which is coordinated and supervised by the *dinas pendidikan* (education department) at the related region and province (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan, 2006). It is the school and the school
committee who are responsible for the development of the KTSP and the syllabi. The development of the KTSP should refer to the *standar isi* and *standar kompetensi lulusan* (Peraturan Pemerintah nomor 19 tahun 2005, pasal 17 ayat 2 dan 4).

Based on the academic manuscript of KTSP development (BSNP, 2007), there are eight characteristics that should be considered by individual schools in developing KTSP. First, there should be teachers’ participation. Second, there should be the exploration of all of the curriculum components and activities. Third, there should be professional development. Fourth, it should be selective, adaptive, and creative. Fifth, it should be a dynamic and continuous development process. Sixth, it should focus on the needs of the learners. Seventh, it should consider the socio-cultural condition and the development level of the community and eighth, it should consider the school supports in relation to the curriculum implementation (p. 33).

The government also provides steps and procedures to be considered by individual schools in developing the syllabus in the KTSP. The first step is identifying the competency standards and the basic competencies. It is suggested that before the KTSP is developed, it is necessary for the curriculum designers (teachers in this context) to consider the competency standards and the basic competencies based on the *Standar Isi*. These competencies are then organized based on the concept of the courses and the level of their difficulties. It is emphasized that teachers are required to consider the connection between the topics in the courses, and the connection and correlation among courses (BSNP, 2006, p. 22).
The second step of the syllabus development suggested by the government is the identification of the learning materials necessary to achieve the basic competencies. It is suggested that in determining the learning materials, teachers should consider the students’ potential, the connection between the learning materials and the students’ surroundings, the students’ physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual conditions, the use of the materials by the students, the depth and the breadth of the materials, as well as any time constraints (BSNP, 2006, pp. 22-23).

The third step of the syllabus development suggested by the government is developing learning activities. In this step, teachers are encouraged to consider students’ learning experience. Consideration of students’ learning experience should be directed to the students’ cognitive and affective developments as listed in the basic competencies that should be achieved by the students (BSNP, 2006, pp. 23-27).

In relation to the government regulation about the transfer of the standar pendidikan nasional into KTSP, Bu Candra, the head of seksi kurikulum, mentioned that the adoption of KTSP in the related regency was because of the implementation of the Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional nomor 22 tahun 2006 (the regulation of the Ministry of Education no 22, 2006). Further, she explained that de jure, the school had the authority to develop the KTSP. However, since KTSP was considered to be relatively new, as listed in the regulations, the government allowed schools to develop the KTSP in groups in the form of a school cluster. Each cluster might consist of five to eight schools.
In organizing the cluster, Bu Candra added groups of teacher called *kelompok kerja guru* (KKG, teachers’ work group) who worked together.

According to Bu Candra, it had been anticipated that in a cluster, a different school might have different capabilities. It was in the cluster that a relatively good school had the responsibility to assist the other schools in the cluster. The relatively good school in the cluster would usually be selected as the core school in the cluster. This cluster was considered to be one of the efforts to develop Indonesian teachers’ proficiencies. In the cluster, teachers got a chance to share and discuss not only the KTSP, but also problems and experiences. They usually met once every two weeks on Saturdays, at about ten o’clock in the morning. The schedule for the school cluster meetings was set up at the beginning of the academic year, so that it would not become a distraction for the school calendar.

In a more detailed explanation, Bu Candra indicated that since an elementary school teacher was a classroom teacher, the meetings in the cluster might be varied. On a particular time, there would be a general meeting, meaning that all teachers gathered together in the meeting. However, on another occasion, the meeting would be based on the grade that the teachers taught. She added that since the religion and sports teachers were not classroom teachers, usually they would create a different type of group.

As seen in Appendix A, the hierarchal level just below the *seksi kurikulum* is the UPT. The UPT is responsible for the elementary schools in *kecamatan*. When I went to the UPT Panjala, the head of the UPT assigned one of his staff to meet and talk to me.
From my interview with the UPT staff, Pak Waskita, I got information that each school in the UPT, which consisted of dewan guru (teacher boards) and the school committee, in fact, had the responsibility to extend the national education standards. The UPT functioned to evaluate whether or not the KTSP developed by the individual school was eligible to be submitted to the dinas pendidikan at the kabupaten. Without the approval from the UPT, and the dinas pendidikan, the schools would not be allowed to conduct teaching and learning activities.

Even though the sound, well-planned KTSP evaluation effort was led by the UPT, Pak Waskita did not explain much about its appropriateness. When I tried to clarify the meaning of appropriateness he mentioned, he only revealed that each school had its own uniqueness. He added that the decision would be dependent on the consideration by the UPT. Instead of explaining further what was meant by the consideration, Pak Waskita said that to determine the eligibility of a KTSP proposed by an individual school, the staff of the UPT said that the school needed to include the syllabus, lesson plans, and academic calendar. The school also needed to provide information about the number of the certified teachers.

In relation to the school clusters suggested by Bu Candra, Pak Waskita explained that there were twenty elementary schools in Panjala. These schools were divided into four clusters. Each cluster might have different school programs. However, different from Bu Candra, who emphasized that the clusters focused on the KTSP development and the professional development, Pak Waskita indicated that one of the programs done in the
cluster was developing the mid-term tests for school exam and determining the passing grade of the final test. Although Pak Waskita discussed the school tests, he did not reveal much about the KTSP development.

Pak Tarjo, the school principal, had a different strategy in expanding the national education standards into the KTSP. As explained, in designing a KTSP, Pak Tarjo tried to involve the school committee, consisting of teachers, community leaders and *tokoh masyarakat, pengurus masyarakat, kepala dukuh* (community leaders) and other lay people who were noted to be closely connected with education and schooling. This school committee was determined by a school meeting (students’ parents and the school staff).

According to Pak Tarjo, the community leaders were usually elected from retired teachers around the school area. Being asked whether the students’ parents got involved in the development of the KTSP, Pak Tarjo said that he expected that the committee that had been elected represented the students’ parents. He added that the representatives of the students’ parents were usually selected from those who had relatively higher formal education. It was not yet clear whether those who had higher formal education would be able to represent the voice of the students’ parents in general. The fact was when I attended the students’ parents meeting held at the end of the quarter, they were all at about the same level, which was reflected by their appearance and the way they talked and reacted.
For the students’ parents meeting, some students’ parents came late, and those who came late tended to sit where they could mingle with other students’ parents. They did not care whether or not there was an empty chair. Some spaces were left empty and some others were more crowded. I noticed that in the crowded rows, two people sometimes occupied one chair. It was relatively easy to notice whether or not the parents had the experience of going out of the village. Those who had been out of the village wore more fashionable clothes, and those who had not, wore relatively simple fashions. Even the color and the style of the parents’ clothing reflected this difference and were sometimes inappropriate for them. For example, there was a women wearing light pink hijab with ornaments on it, combined with a light blue suit. Another was wearing high-heeled sandals, while attending a meeting at the school located on the slope of a hill. The school was obviously difficult to be reached by a woman wearing such high-heeled sandals. I assumed that it was a typical effort for them to be seen modern (cf. Soedjatmika, 2008).

In that meeting, a classroom teacher discussed the additional school funding needed by the school to prepare the students for the national exam. Being influenced by the Javanese culture, the classroom teacher did not mention directly the amount of the money each student’s parent should collect. He only indicated that the amount would be dependent on how much money the students’ parents wanted to donate which caused some confusion. The woman with the high-heeled sandals who was sitting in the front of the row asked the classroom teacher directly how much money each should pay. She
added that how much money they should pay would not be a problem for her since it would be for the sake of her children. From the way she asked the teacher, I noticed that that woman was not originally from that village. Her accent was apparently not Javanese, the local language of the people around Rimpang Elementary School. All of these attendees then became silent.

A few minutes later, after finally engaging in the negotiation, the classroom teacher indicated the amount of money that should be collected, and then left the room. From the back row of the classroom, I heard a few of the students’ parents talking in groups, questioning the functions of the funding. What they questioned was the issue of free public education. Some others argued that the school funding offered by the government did not include the funding for the UASBN registration that required the students to take pictures. Fifty thousand rupiahs (about $5) would not be much to pay for learning materials for the extra courses given to the students, students’ pictures for the UASBN registration, and for students’ certificates. They even compared the case by mentioning that in the city, the students’ parents would be asked to collect more money for the preparation of the UASBN.

On the way to the teachers’ common room after the students’ parents meeting, Pak Kukuh compared the differences between the city and rural schools in Indonesia, especially in Yogyakarta. Rhetorically, he mentioned how the city and rural schools had been so very different. He indicated that asking students’ parents to collect money is a serious issue. Most of the students’ parents were not really aware of the school issues. He
added that sometimes the students’ parents argued among themselves about the fee for
the UASBN preparation. This scenario gave an indication about what kind of students’
parents’ representatives would be elected to be the members of the school committee.

Considering the background of the students’ parents, it is understandable that
although Pak Tarjo, the school principal said that in developing the KTSP at the school
level, the school tried to involve the school committee, still the school developed most of
the plans. He explained that the teachers and the school staff made the first KTSP plan.
This plan was then offered to the school committee in a meeting. Based on the results of
meeting, the KTSP plan was adjusted by the school committee. The adjusted KTSP was
developed further by the classroom teachers in the form of syllabi and lesson plans.
Finally, the syllabi and the lesson plans were implemented by the teachers. This situation
confirmed the challenges of developing institutional curriculum indicated by Oliva

In relation to the rules and the regulations of the development of syllabi and
lesson plans at individual schools, Bu Candra, the head of seksi kurikulum explained that
since KTSP was known to be relatively new, some teachers appeared to have difficulties
in developing the KTSP. She added that for that reason, the government, as it is listed in
Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional, allowed schools to work in groups called
kelompok kerja guru (teachers’ work group). Further, she stated that the kelompok kerja
guru might be developed in an intra school fashion consisting of teachers in the same
school, or among schools in the same cluster. Based on Bu Candra’s explanation, it is
obscure what she meant by KTSP, whether it is *Dokumen 1* or *Dokumen 2*, or both. In fact, if KTSP for her was *Dokumen 1*, developing in the cluster might be problematic since schools in the cluster might be unique in that they had different needs and sources. Meanwhile, *Dokumen 2* should be generated from *Dokumen 1*.

Bu Candra’s rationale to suggest that classroom teachers develop syllabi and lesson plans in the *kelompok kerja guru* did not entirely reach the sixth grade classroom teachers in Rimpang Elementary School. Without revealing his reference to the *kelompok kerja guru* or other governments’ rules or regulation in developing syllabi and lesson plans, Pak Lantip, the current sixth grade teacher of Rimpang Elementary School, stated that as a teacher, all he could do was just follow the government’s decision and policies. He mentioned that in order to meet the standards determined by the government, which, according to him, was not an easy thing to do in a school condition such as Rimpang Elementary School, what he did was give the students extra lessons. In other words, Pak Lantip developed his syllabi in such a way to meet the national standards.

Regarding the lesson unit plans developed by an individual teacher, Pak Lantip stated that each teacher might have a different interpretation. He said that it became difficult to judge whether the lesson unit plans that had been developed by teachers were correct or incorrect. He did not reveal whether the correctness and the incorrectness that he mentioned in this context was related to the concept of lesson unit plans’ appropriateness as seen from the rules, regulations, and guidelines provided by the government.
When asked for clarification, Pak Lantip explained that in developing his lesson unit plans, he first identified the *kompetensi dasar*. From the *kompetensi dasar*, then, he recognized the indicators of the *kompetensi dasar*. After recognizing the indicators, he determined the learning objectives. He said that next, based on the learning objectives he generated the appropriate teaching methods for his classroom instruction. He added that in determining the teaching methods, he usually considered the school’s and the students’ conditions as well as the learning objectives.

Unlike Pak Lantip, Pak Kukuh, the previous sixth grade teacher of Rimpang Elementary School, pointed out slightly different challenges in the development of his lesson unit plans. He explained that printed copies of the lesson unit plans were definitely needed for the sake of the administrative responsibilities. However, referring to the academic calendar provided by the government without revealing detailed themes and topics to cover, Pak Kukuh stated that in *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* (PKN, Civic Education) he found it difficult to distribute the learning materials in a semester appropriately based on the learning principles suggested by the government. He mentioned that ideally, learning should have been emphasized more in the educational process. However, the time and material constraints had already forced teachers to emphasize more the cognitive aspects of learning. Pak Kukuh added that in such a condition, it had been difficult for him to teach for understanding. His explanation indicated that the overloaded materials made him teach his students for the material delivery completion instead of for understanding.
Different from Pak Lantip, without explicitly mentioning the steps of generating the KTSP into its syllabi and lesson unit plans, Pak Kukuh said that in fact, the current curriculum (KTSP) had been very helpful and detailed compared with Kurikulum 1994. Further, he indicated that there had been thorough examples and guidelines on how to develop the KTSP and on how to generate the KTSP into the syllabi and the lesson unit plans, including learning indicators and learning materials.

In relation to the correctness and the appropriateness of the syllabi and the lesson unit plans, Pak Kukuh said that for him, a lesson unit plan would be considered good if other teachers who did not develop the plan could implement it in their teaching. He added that, for example, if for a specific reason, a teacher who designed the lesson plan could not implement it, another teacher should have been able to implement it as it had been planned. Based on that argument, he indicated that a good lesson plan was one that was complete and clear not only for the person who designed it, but also for others.

Another challenge that was not revealed by Pak Lantip, but was revealed by Pak Kukuh, was the material organizations. According to Pak Kukuh, the implementation of KTSP allowed teachers to reorganize the learning materials. Comparing the learning condition in the city and rural schools, Pak Kukuh stated that in teaching social education, a particular material might be thought easy for the rural school students, but difficult for the city school students, and vice versa. In such a condition, he would reorganize the materials from the material that might be thought to be easier for his
students and proceed to a more complicated one. He added that by doing so, the
indicators would be covered as much as possible, as suggested by the government.

**The implementation of the KTSP at Rimpang Elementary School.** The
implementation of the KTSP at Rimpang Elementary School can be associated with the
instructional implementation as discussed in Chapter 2, in which curriculum and
instruction merge together in a classroom setting (see Figure 1). This section is an
attempt to explain how KTSP has been implemented in Rimpang Elementary School.
Referring to Figure 1, the concept of KTSP and KTSP implementation can be treated as
the outer circle of the figure, and the classroom implementation of KTSP as the inner
circle of the figure.

In an academic manuscript of KTSP (Pusat kurikulum, Badan penelitian dan
pengembangan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007), there are three different models
of curriculum implementation addressed: fidelity, mutual adaptive, and enactment
models. In the fidelity model, the curriculum implementation should be precise, as it has
been designed. In the mutual adaptive model, the implementation of the curriculum is
adjusted based on the conditions, situations, and needs of the learners, in this context, the
students. Using this model, the design of the standards only covers the main learning
components; therefore, teachers are required to extend the standards. In the enactment
model, the teachers are required to design and implement the curriculum based on the
students’ conditions, including the developmental needs of students, schools and
communities. Referring to the three different models of curriculum implementation and
considering the conditions of Indonesian education presently, the government suggested the combination of the mutual adaptive and enactment model for current curriculum implementation (Pusat kurikulum, Badan penelitian dan pengembangan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007).

In relation to the goal of elementary education, the *Naskah akademik* (Pusat kurikulum, Badan penelitian dan pengembangan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007) lists that the aims of elementary education are to provide students with a basic foundation of students’ personal development so that the students are able to equip themselves with life skills needed for their future life. It is also stated that education is seen as the essence of life since it can contribute to both personal development and community development. Based on that rationale, it is emphasized that the mission of elementary education is to allow all human beings to achieve maturity and to be responsible with their personal life.

It is also mentioned in the *Naskah akademik* (Pusat kurikulum, Badan penelitian dan pengembangan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007) that the mission of elementary Indonesian education will be better achieved by adopting the four fundamental principles of learning suggested by the UNESCO. Those four fundamental principles are about learning to know, to do, to be and living together. Based on UNESCO, the first principle is about providing the students with the cognitive tools required to better comprehend the world and its complexities and providing an appropriate and adequate foundation for future learning. The second is about providing
the skills that enable individuals to effectively participate in the global economy and society. The third is about providing students with the self-analytical and social skills to enable individuals to develop to their fullest psycho-social potential, affectively as well as physically, and to become an all-around complete person. The fourth is about exposing individuals to the values that support human rights, democratic principles, intercultural understanding and respect, and global peace at all levels of society and human relationships to enable individuals and societies coexist in harmony (UNESCO, 1999).

Regardless of its reference to the four principles of learning suggested by the UNESCO, the Naskah akademik (Pusat kurikulum, Badan penelitian dan pengembangan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007) provides limited explanation of the four principles of learning suggested by the UNESCO in an Indonesian context. In learning to know, for example, the word know is translated into mengetahui. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, mengetahui does not include the idea of memahami (comprehend or understand), which, in fact, is covered in the idea of learning to know (cf. Indonesian education before the colonization). Similar to the idea of learning to know, the idea of learning to do is also not thoroughly explained either. It is said that:

Belajar bekerja (learning to do) juga pilar pendidikan yang harus dipelajari oleh peserta didik pendidikan dasar. Disamping belajar bekerja melakukan suatu pekerjaan secara lebih umum perlu pula menguasai kemampuan yang memungkinkan orang mampu menghadapi berbagai situasi yang sering tidak
dapat diduga sebelumnya, dan bekerja dalam tim. (Pusat kurikulum, Badan penelitian dan pengembangan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007, p. 8)

Being analyzed linguistically, it is difficult to translate this passage in English, since the word to do in English is translated into bekerja in Indonesian. In my understanding, the word to do in in this context has the sense of the ability to do something, while bekerja is not directly related to the ability to do something, but is more closely related to the ability to earn money. In addition, the second sentence in the quotation does not include the subject of who needs to belajar bekerja melakukan suatu pekerjaan (to learn working).

A similar problem appears in the interpretation and translation of the concept of learning to be. Without further explanation, the academic manuscript of KTSP (Pusat kurikulum, Badan penelitian dan pengembangan, Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007) lists “Pilar berikutnya yang harus dipelajari peserta didik pendidikan dasar adalah belajar menjadi diri sendiri (learning to be)” (p. 8). It is not clear what is meant by menjadi diri sendiri (to be oneself) in this context. It is important to note that it is indicated in Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 (Indonesian Constitution, 1945) that the aim of Indonesian education is to educate the students to become manusia yang utuh (become an all-around complete person) and not only to educate the students to menjadi diri sendiri. Based on Indonesian philosophy, which is also known as filsafat nusantara, an all-around person is a person who has fully represented God’s will (Driyarkara, 2006; Mulyono,
To my understanding, the idea of menjadi diri sendiri only, without being utuh drops the existence of God.

The same as the interpretations of the other ideas, in relation to the concept of learning to live together, it is explained that schools are expected to prepare the students to get along with others. Further, it is said that understanding others’ history, tradition, and spiritual values will help students to prepare themselves for living in groups within communities. Unfortunately, it is not stated that at the same time, the students also need to develop an understanding of the students’ personal history, tradition, and spiritual values (Pusat kurikulum, 2007).

At the same time, the government seems to realize that some poor schools by definition of the government in Indonesia might not be able to be treated the same as other schools in general. For that reason, the government published Pedoman pengembangan model KTSP SD sosial ekonomi rendah (the guidelines to develop a model of KTSP for relatively poor elementary schools) (Departemen pendidikan nasional, badan penelitian dan pengembangan pusat kurikulum, Jakarta, 2008). This pedoman is a specific document provided by the government, which is specifically addressed to elementary schools in remote areas, like Rimpang Elementary School. The pedoman lists that

Ada beberapa faktor lain yang menghambat peserta didik dari keluarga dengan kondisi sosial ekonomi rendah untuk bersekolah, yaitu waktu, lokasi, faktor
This statement could be translated as there are some other factors that might become obstacles for the students from relatively low socio-economic backgrounds. Those factors are related to time, school location, psychology, culture, learning processes, life values, and the involvement of the local government.

It is necessary to question why the document uses the word *faktor lain yang menghambat* (disadvantages) rather than uses the word *tantangan* (challenges). In relation to the time constraints for the students to go to school, for example, the government assumes that in a relatively poor society, children are sometimes required to help their parents earn money. The document does not reveal that in some particular communities, like in many Indonesian community before the colonization as seen in the stories in *wayang* (shadow puppets), which were known to provide guidance in life besides its function as entertainment, it is possible that children are involved in the parents’ work as the parents’ effort to prepare their children for their future.

Another example involves the school location. The government appears to assume that a school location that is relatively far away from students’ houses will require the students to spend more money for transportation. It is stated in the document that the schools are sometimes located in less supportive areas for teaching and learning activities. It is not clear what is meant by less supportive areas for teaching and learning activities. The document does not provide other alternatives so that these drawbacks
might be seen from different angles. In Indonesia before the colonization, it was indicated that schools, in the form of *padepokan/patapan* and *pesantren*, were developed in areas that were relatively far away from the center of activities, or sometimes in settlements.

Similar to the time and school location factors, in relation to the psychological factor, the *pedoman* lists that the students of the relatively poor families (by definition of the government) tend to have low self-motivation and lack of competition. It is also noted that such parents are less aware of the importance of education for their children. In relation to the culture of the students in the schools of relatively poor areas as defined by the government, the *pedoman* states that with relatively low formal education backgrounds, the communities in such kinds of schools tend to less empower their children to be more civilized and educated. The document does not explain further what is meant by civilized and educated society. The sections that follow discuss how Rimpang Elementary School has tried to deal with these kinds of rules and regulations suggested by the government and the negative impressions labeled by the government.

**Identifying the students’ challenges.** In the *Pedoman pengembangan model KTSP SD sosial ekonomi rendah* (the guidelines to develop a model of KTSP for relatively poor elementary schools) (Departemen pendidikan nasional, badan penelitian dan pengembangan pusat kurikulum, Jakarta, 2003), it is assumed that in the low socio-economic society, the students have the additional challenge to continue their formal education because they have to help their parents earn money or they have to take their parents’ roles in taking care of the household chores. In fact, in Rimpang Elementary
School, this challenge appears to be partly true. In a classroom teachers’ briefing, before
the classroom teachers met the students’ parents, the school principal informed them of
important points that each teacher had to deliver to the students’ parents. In that briefing,
the school principal mentioned that the greatest challenges for the students to use their
time studying at home was the sinetron or operas on TV that are usually performed from
6-10 PM and the play station. The school principal did not address anything related to the
students’ activities helping their parents in earning money.

I was convinced about this fact when I attended students’ picnic. On the way to
the picnic ground, I talked with some of the students. When I asked about their daily
activities, none of them mentioned that they had children’s daily responsibilities helping
their parents doing household chores as I did when I was a child. Instead, their parents
did the laundry, cleaned the house, and washed their dishes, while the students just
offered little help. Some of them even mentioned that they helped with nothing.

Concerning the school location, it is said that the school location was sometimes
far away from the settlement requiring the students to spend more money for
transportation, and at times, the school location was less supportive in allowing the
students to study at school (Departemen pendidikan nasional, badan penelitian dan
pengembangan pusat kurikulum, Jakarta, 2003). In the context of Rimpang Elementary
School, although transportation was rarely found, it was not considered to be a serious
problem for the students. As described previously, there was at least one school in each
desa (village) although the number of the students tended to be below the standard
number of the students required by the government. In relation to the latter, it seemed to be true that the school condition was noticed to be less conducive for the students to learn. For example, next to the sixth grade classroom, there was a cow in a cage. I was not sure who owned the cow. Near the cage, there was also a path in which through the classroom window, the students could see people pass by and become distracted.

Concerning the psychological factors, it is assumed that the students from low socio-economic levels of society often tend to have low self-esteem and motivation. It is noticed that these students frequently get little to no support from their parents. Since most of the students’ parents also come from low socio-economic society and have little formal education backgrounds, they cannot recognize the importance of schooling (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pusat Kurikulum, Jakarta, 2003). This dilemma appears to be the situation in Rimpang Elementary School. In an interview, Pak Kukuh said that the students in Rimpang Elementary School were not the same as the students in the city. They were not confident enough to talk in front of people. Also, they were even hesitant to talk to their teachers. They were not confident to talk in front of the class either. Pak Kukuh added that if this continuously happened, the students would have problems when they faced the UASBN since in the UASBN, the teachers who monitored the test would be teachers from different schools who the students had probably never met before.

Slightly different from what Pak Kukuh said, Pak Lantip indicated that the psychological problems which the students usually had often were caused by the
students’ family backgrounds. He said that the students with these kinds of challenges usually tried to get attention from the people around them. They sometimes became the troublemakers in the class, or sometimes they became very passive in the classroom learning activities.

Despite the absence of further explanation related to culture in terms of its learning objectives that said that education is expected to teach the students to be more *berbudaya* (civilized) and *berpendidikan* (educated) (Departemen pendidikan nasional, badan penelitian dan pengembangan pusat kurikulum, Jakarta, 2003), there is one point that should be noticed about the situation in Rimpang Elementary School. In an interview, Pak Kukuh indicated that language barriers appeared to become a cultural challenge in Rimpang Elementary School. He stated that students sometimes found it difficult to choose appropriate words for academic communication, and as a consequence, even some of the students from the upper classes, including teachers, labeled them incompetent. According to him, this stigmatic labeling often discouraged the students from learning (cf. MacLeod, 2009).

**Identifying learning goals and objectives.** Often times, different teachers adopt different approaches to articulate their learning goals and objectives (cf. Joyce, Marsha & Calhoun, 2009; Philips and Soltis, 2009). This variety also happened in Rimpang Elementary School. As mentioned previously, the current sixth grade elementary school teacher in Rimpang Elementary School was relatively new. The previous teacher was sometimes asked to teach the sixth graders, especially when the current teacher was asked
to attend a teacher training session, at UPT or even at the kabupaten or another province. On that occasion, I had a chance to both observe and interview both teachers so that I could study both the similarities and the differences of these two teachers.

In articulating the learning goals and objectives, Pak Lantip, the current sixth grade teacher of Rimpang Elementary School, tended to be precise according to what is listed in the standar kompetensi lulusan. When I had an interview after the classroom observation, Pak Lantip explained that the topic of the teaching at that time was fractions. He mentioned that the topic was listed as one of the topics that he should cover in his teaching. He added that the purpose of the teaching was that by the end of meeting, the students were expected to be able to sum fractions. He indicated that while he was teaching, as I observed, sometimes he needed to change the plan that he had already designed. The reason for the teaching adjustment while he was in the classroom, he said, was influenced by the condition of the students at that moment. Pointing out a particular event that happened while he was teaching, he mentioned that sometimes he felt that he needed to review the materials that the students should have mastered before.

Unlike Pak Lantip, Pak Kukuh seemed to consider more the students learning. He indicated not only the formal, but also the hidden learning objectives that the students should cover. When he taught the sixth graders (at that time Pak Lantip had to attend a teacher training session at the kabupaten), Pak Kukuh decided to make a review on the topic of magnetic fields. When I asked why he chose that topic, Pak Kukuh explained that most students had problems with this topic. Asking the students to do an experiment,
Pak Kukuh explained that the purpose of his teaching was to stimulate the students’ curiosity. While the topic was, in fact, listed on the *standar isi* and *standar kompetensi lulusan*, it was not stated that the purpose of the learning was to stimulate students’ curiosity.

Since the sixth grade elementary school was not the class Pak Kukuh usually was supposed to teach, I tried to get a chance to observe the class that he, in fact, taught – the fifth graders. In teaching the fifth grade class, Pak Kukuh had the same approach in articulating his learning goals and objectives. In that observation, I got a chance to watch him teaching the Indonesian language. At that time, the theme of learning was reading a poem. Pak Kukuh indicated that the learning objectives suggested by the *standar isi* and *standar kompetensi lulusan* was that by the end of the meeting, the students were expected to be able to read the poem loudly, clearly, and appropriately, based on the principles of reading a poem. However, as Pak Kukuh explicitly said, he explored the learning objectives suggested by the government. He explained that he emphasized the students’ ability to communicate with people around them. He mentioned that the students were sometimes less confident to talk to people who they thought had authority. They even hesitated to talk to their teachers. Also, they had less vocabulary than they were supposed to have. According to him, by learning to read a poem, Pak Kukuh said, the students would become more confident to talk.

**Learning Process.** There are two categories to describe the learning process in the classroom. They cover material presentation and classroom power relationship.
Material presentation includes the efforts and challenges of the sixth grade teachers in Rimpang Elementary schools in presenting learning materials in the classroom. Classroom power relationship discusses the efforts and challenges of the sixth grade teachers in Rimpang Elementary School in encouraging the students to get involved in the learning process in the classroom. Detailed descriptions about these categories are presented in the following.

*Material presentation.* The different philosophies of schooling, of teaching and of learning appeared to influence the way Pak Lantip and Pak Kukuh presented the materials in their instructional approach (cf. Joyce, Marsha & Calhoun, 2009). In delivering the learning materials to the students, Pak Lantip seemed to follow the traditional way of teaching. He greeted the students and began the learning by directly mentioning the topic that the students were going to study that day. He did not even consider the bridging principle that might help the students activate their background knowledge. While explaining the topic that the students were going to study about that day, he was drawing a square on the blackboard, facing the blackboard without looking at the students. In that lesson, he used a shading square to explain fractions, the topic of the material that the students were learning at that time.

When the students had difficulty with the discussion, Pak Lantip made a review by asking the students to recall the materials that the students learned in the fifth grade. At the same time, he was explaining what a fraction was composed of. The way he was explaining was like the way traditionally an adult talks to a child. Pak Lantip mentioned
the first syllable, and the students continued the rest. I was unsure that when the students finished either the word or the sentence Pak Lantip indicated that they really understood it since I also noticed that some students were busy playing with their pens, books, or small stuff on their table.

After reviewing, Pak Lantip wrote ten fraction problems on the blackboard and asked the students to solve them. The problems were about asking the students to indicate equations of the fractions without any context that might help the students imagine how a fraction might be used in daily life. At first, Pak Lantip began walking around the class observing the students’ work. However, he finally stopped at the first or second row. Then, after a few minutes, Pak Lantip wrote, by himself, the answers on the blackboard and, at the same time, as he had done before, he mentioned the first syllable of the answers and asked the students to finish the rest.

In proceeding to the next subtopic in a particular lesson, Pak Lantip seemed to be very direct. After he finished writing the answers of the review of fraction problems, Pak Lantip immediately introduced the sub topic that he intended to explain. He specifically said, “pokok bahasan berikutnya adalah mengurutkan bilangan pecahan dari yang kecil,” which could be translated into “the next subtopic that they were about to discuss was making the fractions in order from the smallest to the biggest values.” He seemed to ignore what the students were doing. I noticed that some students, mostly male, who were sitting in the back rows, were walking around without paying attention to what Pak
Lantip was saying. Some others, who were sitting together, three at one desk, were busy drawing.

As he did before, after explaining the concept of organizing fractions from the smallest to the biggest value, Pak Lantip wrote some other fraction problems on the board. The difference was that at that time, Pak Lantip did not say anything while he was writing the problems on the board. Then, after some time, Pak Lantip wrote the solutions on the board, and similar to what happened in the previous session, the students parroted his words for the answers without noticing that the students had become reluctant in repeating what Pak Lantip was saying.

In the closing, without using any words that summarized today’s learning, Pak Lantip gave students some fraction problems as students’ homework. He wrote the problems on the board and asked the students to copy those problems in their books. As indicated in the previous section, when the classroom teacher could not come, it was possible for a teacher from another class to replace the teacher in the related class. I observed Pak Kukuh teaching the sixth grade students when he had to replace Pak Lantip since Pak Lantip had to attend teacher-training sessions in Kabupaten. As mentioned earlier, the topic of his lesson on that day was magnetic fields. To open the lesson, Pak Kukuh told the students about his experience losing his motorcycle key. He stated that since then, he kept a magnetic tool in his pocket and let the key appear outside his pocket. He added that since he started using the magnet, he never lost his key anymore. He then introduced to the students how the magnetic tool worked.
Then, instead of lecturing, Pak Kukuh created workgroups for an experiment. He divided the class into four groups and asked the students in each group to select a leader. He then invited the leaders of the group to come closer to him. He gave these leaders a set of materials for the experiment and the instructions to do experiment. These leaders were assigned to explain the instruction given by the teacher and to be responsible for the materials for the experiment. After giving the explanation, Pak Kukuh asked the students to go back to their group.

While the students were doing the experiment, Pak Kukuh went around the class looking at how the students did the experiment and cooperated in the group. After a while, he asked the students in each group to draw, on a piece of paper, the results of the experiment. When the students finished drawing the results of the experiment, Pak Kukuh asked the students to go around the class looking at the results of the experiment of the other groups. Pak Kukuh then asked the students to create their own statements based on what they saw in the experiment. A student in each group was then asked to read their outloud statement for the class.

As feedback, Pak Kukuh summarized the statement generated from the students’ sentences. He also instructed the students to collect the materials that had been used for the experiment step by step, saying the following:

Angkat kertas, ambil magnet, buka plastik, masukkan serbuk kedalam plastik kumpulkan di meja Pak Guru.
This could be translated as “take the paper, take the magnetic powder; open the plastic bag; put the magnet into the plastic bag; place it on the teacher’s desk.” It is significant to note that at that time, the students placed magnetic powder on a piece of paper for the experiment and placed a piece of nail in the middle of the powder.

After the leaders collected the materials for the experiment and put them back on the teacher’s desk, Pak Kukuh evaluated what the students had done. He indicated why some groups did not succeed in doing the experiment and what the students had done when the other students were reading. He also identified a student that he thought to be a good model for the other students. This student had written the statements of the other groups before the teacher had asked her to do so. Pak Kukuh said that it was a good example of learning initiative. To end the lesson, Pak Kukuh drew an example of the results of his experiment. Without neglecting the students, while the students were doing the experiment, Pak Kukuh also did his own experiment.

Since Pak Kukuh was not the permanent teacher for the sixth graders, I was curious about the way Pak Kukuh taught so I decided to observe the class that Pak Kukuh was supposed to teach – the fifth grade students. At that time, the topic of the lesson was reading a poem. Slightly different from the way Pak Kukuh taught the sixth graders, Pak Kukuh began the class by directly introducing the topic of the study. He specifically said that today’s lesson would be reading a poem. Then, instead of writing the poem on the board by himself, he dictated to the students, and asked the students to write in their books. He told the students to write the poem neatly and clearly so that later, they and
others could read their notes. He explained that dictating to the students would be much better since the students would practice writing while he could save time and at the same time, he could still communicate with the students.

In dictating to the students, Pak Kukuh divided the poem into stanzas. After dictating one stanza, he asked the students to read after him and at the same time, he asked the students to double-check their handwriting. Each time he finished reading each stanza, he discussed with the students the content of the poem and at the same time, he also gave feedback about how the poem should be read. After the discussion of the whole poem, Pak Kukuh gave time to the students to practice reading the poem by themselves. Then, he asked the students to volunteer to read in front of the class. The rest of the students were expected to listen to the students who read the poem and were asked to give feedback to the volunteers.

After discussing the poem, Pak Kukuh explained that the language being used in the poem was not the same as ordinary language that people used in their daily communication. To make his explanation clear for his students, Pak Kukuh provided another example of a poem that he created spontaneously. Then, to end the class, Pak Kukuh asked the students to write a poem. This assignment was considered to be students’ homework.

**Classroom power relationship.** The success of the presentation of the learning materials appears to be difficult to be separated from the ability of the teacher in developing the classroom power relationship. In this context, the classroom power
relationship refers to Manke’s (1997) definition. It is defined as the structure of relationship which is developed by the teachers and the students in order to allow the students to participate in learning. It includes the organization of time and space by the teacher and the directness of the instruction by the teachers. The organization of time covers the time distribution of when the teacher and the students get the chance to speak. The organization of the space covers the seat arrangement in the classroom so that it might facilitate classroom communication. The directness of the instruction discusses how explicitly the teachers give instruction to the students. Without taking into account such considerations, materials presentation may not be effective. For those reasons, the following sections describe the classroom power relationship in Rimpang Elementary School, especially the sixth grade of Rimpang Elementary School, which was developed by different teachers – Pak Lantip and Pak Kukuh.

As noted, when he was about to present the principles of fractions, Pak Lantip noticed that his students appeared to be confused. For that reason, Pak Lantip reviewed the materials on fractions that the students learned when they were in their fifth grade (Pak Lantip was sure about the topic although he was new in Rimpang Elementary School since the topic was listed in the Standar Isi). Unfortunately, in reviewing the materials on fractions, Pak Lantip seemed to pay less attention to his surroundings – his students and their seating arrangement. In the classroom, there were sixteen two-student desks, consisting of four rows, four desks in each row. Meanwhile, there were only sixteen students in the class. On the second row from the front, three students were sitting
together at a two-student desk, while there were some empty desks. The other two kept talking to each other and once in a while, they disturbed the other students who seemed to try to pay attention to the teacher. Surprisingly, this student did not move to another desk.

Although once Pak Lantip asked “ngantuk?” (are you sleepy?) addressed to a student who was sleepy, sitting at the back row, Pak Lantip seemed to neglect some students. Some students were laying their heads on the tables. Others were leaning their heads on the wall. There were also some students who were talking and whispering to their neighbors, and there was even a student reading a magazine. All of these antics were happening in the back rows. Instead of saying something to these students, he continued explaining without trying to get the students’ attention.

While the students were working on fractions problems, Pak Lantip often wandered around the classroom to ensure that the students could solve the problems. Unfortunately, he seemed to focus his attention more on the students who were sitting in the front rows. Before Pak Lantip finished looking at all the students’ works, Pak Lantip stopped his action and stood in front of the class as some students came individually to him asking questions about the solution. They impatiently waited for their turn while Pak Lantip continuously explained to the students one by one. Some others, who were not patient enough to line up, shouted from their seats, asking questions. They seemed to get Pak Lantip’s attention. I questioned why Pak Lantip did not stop explaining to the students individually and bring the explanation to the whole class.
Another scene that was important to note was the appropriateness of the frequency of one-to-one teacher-student communication. At that time, there was a female student who was about Pak Lantip’s height standing next to him, asking a question. In the Javanese context, such a kind of communication should be avoided since it might be considered to be impolite. While the degree of impoliteness in this culture is considered to be relative, I did not notice that Pak Lantip had developed sufficient trust to make the students and the society comfortable enough to see this. I did not notice any indication that Pak Lantip tried to develop a teacher-student’s relationship like a parents-children relationship.

After some time, regardless of the number of the students who were still lining up asking questions, Pak Lantip asked whether the students had finished doing the fraction problems. I noticed that some of the other students who were in their seats seemed to be busy doing other things. Probably, this situation became the reason why Pak Lantip asked the question of the whole class. It was so unique that regardless of those students who said that they had not finished working on the fraction problems, Pak Lantip proceeded to the next activities. He provided by himself the solutions to the problems on the board although once in a while, he asked the solutions from the students, expecting a verbal response. He did not even face the students while asking the answers of the fraction problems.

Being asked to clarify his actions in the classroom, Pak Lantip explained that he did that purposefully. He assumed that allowing the students to be relaxed would help
students learn. According to him, this was especially true because Mathematics was considered to be difficult by most of the students. Meanwhile, he realized that sometimes the students became so relaxed that they were not serious about learning. To handle this situation, Pak Lantip explained that he would directly remind the students by asking them to be quiet and then would go back to the discussion.

Another weakness of the teacher-student relationship that was developed by Pak Lantip also appeared when there was a student who left the class for a while and came back to the classroom, passing by where Pak Lantip was standing, without saying anything to him. In Javanese culture, leaving and joining the group as well as passing by someone who was in higher authority without permission would be considered as impolite. Regardless of this value, Pak Lantip did not remind the student about this impropriety.

In addition to the explanation previously given, Pak Lantip overall seemed to be permissive with the students. There was a time when Pak Lantip was about to give more fractions problems and students’ homework. At that time, some students bargained the number of the problems by saying “satu saja, Pak,” which means asking for only one more. Instead of giving one, Pak Lantip gave them two, by saying “dah dua saja,” which means giving them two. A similar case also happened when a student was standing up from his seat, looking out of the window and who went back to his seat when he heard the students from the next classroom were leaving for the break. At that time, Pak Lantip did not give any response to this student.
Unlike Pak Lantip, Pak Kukuh appeared to be more aware of how to win the students’ attention. When he was about to teach magnetic fields to the sixth grade students, Pak Kukuh began the lesson by telling a personal story about the loss of his motorcycle key, which was connected with the topic that he was about to teach to his students. Then, he proceeded to the content of the lesson. Although he did not directly develop the classroom discourse, such a strategy helped the students to activate their background knowledge by connecting the topic that the students were about to learn with their daily lives.

Meanwhile, when Pak Kukuh asked the students to work in groups for the experiments and then presented the results of the experiments to the class, Pak Kukuh tried to engage the students in the process of learning. By asking the students to work in groups, Pak Kukuh gave more time to the students to communicate among the students and also with him. As Pak Kukuh came to each group, he began to focus on helping and observing the students in the group. This approach made the class more manageable, his attention to the students became more effective, and his help to the students became more intensive.

Although activating the students’ background knowledge by making the connection between the daily life experience and the materials about to be learned did not emerge when Pak Kukuh was teaching reading a poem to the fifth grade students, Pak Kukuh appeared to use the scaffolding principles in presenting the materials. He began with dictating the poem to the students before he gave an example to them on how to read
it. The dictation part offered two benefits – according to Pak Kukuh, it might help the students practice writing and at the same time, it saved the school expenditure for the learning materials. Meanwhile, the activities to ask the students to repeat reading after him was intended to provide the students with a model of reading a poem before the students were able to develop their own models of reading a poem, using gestures based on their own interpretation. At the same time, by asking the students to repeat after him in reading the poem and by asking the students to read the poem using their own style, Pak Kukuh gave the students a chance to individually get involved in the process of learning.

In addition to the space and time organization, Pak Kukuh used special language to communicate with his students. As seen in asking the leader of the group to return the materials for the experiment to the teacher’s desk, Pak Kukuh gave one instruction at a time. He said to the students, in the Indonesian language, to take the paper, take the magnetic powder, open the plastic bag, put the magnetic powder in the plastic bag, and return it to the teacher’s desk step by step.

A similar case happened when Pak Kukuh taught reading a poem to the fifth grade students. For example, Pak Kukuh addressed himself *pak guru* as he said “Pak Guru ulangi ya . . .,” which could be translated into “I repeat.” In a normal conversation, addressing himself as *pak guru* would be considered odd in Javanese culture, since it is usually others who mention the listeners’ title. However, such an expression is normal to use when an adult is teaching a child about the polite use of language. Another good example also appeared in the way Pak Kukuh dictated to his students. He dictated to the
students syllable by syllable. In addition, he explicitly asked the students to leave one blank space as the students were writing the dictation. Also, Pak Kukuh explicitly asked the students to stop writing and put their pen on the table when Pak Kukuh was explaining a word or a sentence that was deemed to be new for his students.

If Pak Kukuh felt that he needed to embed living values related to the word or sentence that he had just finished dictating, Pak Kukuh would stop dictating and would explain the living values generated from the related word or sentence. For example, one of the stanzas in the poem told about how the author appreciated her/his teacher by saying:

Tawamu

Gertakmu

Adalah ilmu

This phrase could be interpreted that the teachers’ joking manner and gentle reminder are informative for her/him. It seemed to be awkward that a teacher’s joking manner and gentle reminder could be considered as a learning experience for the students. For this reason, Pak Kukuh explained:

canda, dalam gertakan harus terkandung il…mu..Bukan gertakan yang menakut
nakuti, bukan gertakan yang mengancam, dan bercanda yang tidak enak.

This conversation could be interpreted that he advised the students to be aware that in the
classroom, it is acceptable for teachers to use humor and kindness towards the students as
long as these contained knowledge, which probably would encourage the students to
learn.

Providing the students with feedback seemed to be another strategy used by Pak
Kukuh to develop the classroom power relationship. In teaching magnetic fields to the
sixth grade students, for example, after each group finished reading the results of their
experiment, Pak Kukuh gave feedback to the students. He pointed out both the strengths
and the weaknesses of the students, and at the same time, together with the students, he
identified what had been done in the learning activities, what should have been done and
what should not have been done. The same strategy was also implemented when he
taught reading a poem to the fifth graders. After some students finished volunteering
reading the poem in front of the class, he indicated that the readers should read the poem
loudly and clearly. He demanded that the other students should also pay attention to those
who were reading by saying:

coba ini lho kebiasaannya ketika temannya membaca puisi anak anak malah sibuk
sendiri tidak memperhatikan.
This admonishment could be translated into “look at this. It has been a habit that when someone is reading a poem, the others keep themselves busy, without paying attention to the reader.”

Although Pak Kukuh gave the learning feedback to the whole class, he sometimes became personal in addressing the reward and feedback, without becoming unfair to the other students. For example, after the magnetic fields experiment, he noticed that there was a student who had written the results of the experiment read by each group before he assigned them to do so. Pak Kukuh indicated that this was good. For that reason, he promoted her as a good example for the other students. When a student was reading the result of his group experiment softly so that the other students hardly could hear what he was saying, Pak Kukuh told this student that, in fact, he was reading for the whole class, and was not reading for himself, or his group only.

Varying learning activities also became another consideration for Pak Kukuh. As seen in his teaching to both the sixth and the fifth graders, he tended to begin the learning activities from classroom instruction, group instruction, and individual instruction respectively, and then went back to the classroom instruction. In teaching magnetic fields, he provided the information addressed to the whole class. He then divided the class into groups and the representative of each group was assigned to report the results of the experiment to the whole class before Pak Kukuh gave general feedback addressed to the whole class.
When using the same approach, Pak Kukuh dictated to the class about the poem. After dictating the poem to the students, Pak Kukuh asked the students to practice individually reading the poem. In order not to disturb the other students while they were practicing reading the poem individually, Pak Kukuh asked the students to find a comfortable spot in the classroom. Then, Pak Kukuh asked the students to volunteer to read the poem in front of the class. After giving feedback to the volunteers and to the other students, Pak Kukuh concluded the lesson by summarizing what was a poem, how the language of the poem might be different from the ordinary language, and how to read a poem. To end the lesson, Pak Kukuh asked the students to write their own poem as the students’ homework.

**National Examination: Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional (UASBN)**

As noted earlier, the government indicated that at the national level, there is a set of standards that should be considered by individual schools. Among those standards, *standar kompetensi lulusan* (graduate competency standards), *standar evaluasi* (evaluation standards) and *standar proses* (learning process standards) are closely related to the definition of UASBN. However, since the *standar kompetensi* and *standar evaluasi* are closely related to each other, they will not be discussed separately. The *standar proses*, which is related to the curriculum implementation, has been presented in the previous section. To holistically describe how the *standar kompetensi* and *standar evaluasi*, which are related to the National Examination (*Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional, UASBN*) had an impact on the teaching practices in Rimpang Elementary
School, Defining UASBN, Validity issues of the UASBN, The Interpretation of and responses to UASBN, and the impact of the UASBN on the teaching practices in Rimpang Elementary School were selected as the categories.

**Defining UASBN.** In order to understand UASBN, it is necessary first to understand the learning evaluations in the Indonesian education system. For this reason, this section briefly presents the types of learning evaluation system in Indonesian education, and the relationship between the different types of learning evaluations with the UASBN.

According to the *Undang-Undang Pendidikan Nasional* (Undang-undang pendidikan Republik Indonesia no 20 tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional), education evaluation is defined as a set of activities whose functions are to control the qualities of Indonesian education. It is said that educators, especially teachers, become the main actors in monitoring students’ learning process and progress. This learning evaluation is considered to be an effort to give feedback and evaluate the students’ learning (Pasal 58).

The *Undang-Undang* also mentioned that the students’ evaluation, schools’ evaluation, and the education program evaluation are conducted periodically, holistically, and systematically by an independent institution, which might consist of community and professional organizations. This institution has the authority to develop the learning measurement (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No 20 tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, Pasal 58-59). This regulation is further explained in the *Peraturan*.
Based on the *Peraturan Pemerintah*, learning evaluations at elementary and secondary education levels should be conducted by three different organizations at three different stages: by the educators or teachers, by the education units/schools, and by the Indonesian government. The learning evaluation by teachers is meant to monitor the students’ learning process and progress in the form of daily evaluation, mid-term evaluation, final evaluation, and *ulangan kenaikan kelas* (a test to determine whether a student can go to the next learning level). This evaluation covers five different scopes of knowledge: *agama dan akhlak mulia* (religions and moral education), *kewarganegaraan* (civic education), *ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi* (natural science and technology education), *estetika* (esthetics education), and *jasmani, olah raga dan kesehatan* (sports and health education).

While the learning evaluations by the teachers focus on the daily achievement, the learning evaluations by the school are meant to measure the students’ achievement based on the *standar kompetensi lulusan* in all five scopes of knowledge; and the learning evaluations by the government are intended to measure the students’ achievement on the *ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi* (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia nomor 19 tahun 2005 tentang Standar Pendidikan Nasional, Pasal 63-64; Lampiran peraturan...
menteri pendidikan nasional no 20 tahun 2007 tanggal 11 Juni 2007 tentang standar penilaian pendidikan, butir 8).

The learning evaluations conducted by the government are sometimes recognized as UASBN. UASBN is defined as the national examination, which is integrated into the school evaluations. Although it states in the *Peraturan Pemerintah* that the learning evaluations conducted by the government are intended to measure the students’ learning achievement on *ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi* course, it is explicitly said that the UASBN is directed to measure the students’ achievement on *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language), *Matematika* (Mathematics) and *Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam* (Natural Science) courses (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 74 tahun 2009 tentang Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional Sekolah Dasar/Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/Sekolah Dasar Luar Biasa tahun pelajaran 2009/2010).

It is important to note that in order for a student to be able to attend the UASBN, a student is required to achieve the grade of at least the same or higher than the benchmarks that are set by the BSNP on the other four groups of knowledge but not *ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi* (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia nomor 19 tahun 2005 tentang Standar Pendidikan Nasional, pasal 65, ayat 5). Unfortunately, the measure of the students’ achievement on the four groups of knowledge is based on the teachers’ subjective observation of the students’ change in behavior and students’ daily evaluations (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia nomor 19 tahun 2005 tentang Standar...
Pendidikan Nasional, pasal 64, ayat 1-6). Meanwhile, the *standar kompetensi lulusan* in those scopes of knowledge seems difficult to observe and accurately measure.

In order to measure the students’ achievement on the *akhlak mulia* and *kepribadian* groups of courses, for example, it is said that religion teachers should make use of the information from other teachers on whether or not the students’ attitudes reflect their beliefs in God. Further, the *standar kompetensi lulusan* explicitly says that in Muslim education, for example, it is said that one of the indicators that the students’ will pass these standards if the students are able to:

menyebutkan, menghafal, membaca dan mengartikan surat pendek dalam Al-quran, mulai surat Al-fatihah sampai surat Al-‘Alaq (Standar kompetensi lulusan mata pelajaran pendidikan Agama Islam, butir 1).

This passage could be interpreted as the students’ ability to mention, memorize, read, and interpret short verses listed in the Qur-an, from the writing of Al-fatihah to Al-‘Alaq. To my understanding, the students’ ability to mention, to memorize, to read, and to interpret verses listed in the Qur-an does not guarantee that the students believe in God. In Christian education, for example, one of the signs that the students can be said to believe in God is their ability to understand the love of God for them (Standar kompetensi lulusan mata pelajaran pendidikan Agama Kristen, butir 1). This statement makes me question how teachers could measure or observe whether or not the students understand the love of God in their life with the *standar kompetensi lulusan*. 
A similar learning evaluation challenge also arises in the evaluation of students’ character. In number seven of the Standar Kompetensi Lulusan Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan, for example, it is said that the students are able to understand the government system from the local government to the national government. My question is how the teachers measure whether the elementary students can understand the government system from the local to the national level. The only difference between pendidikan akhlak mulia and pendidikan kewarganegaraan is on the evaluators. While the evaluation of the students’ achievement on akhlak mulia is done by religion teachers, the evaluation of the students’ achievement on kepribadian (personality) is done by the teachers of pendidikan kewarganegaraan (civics education) (Lampiran Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional nomor 20 tahun 2007 tanggal 11 Juni 2007 tentang Standar Penilaian Pendidikan).

Another important aspect related to the UASBN is that the results of the UASBN are used to determine the students’ graduation and the students’ possibility to continue a higher formal education (Lampiran Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional nomor 20 tahun 2007 tanggal 11 Juni 2007 tentang Standar Penilaian Pendidikan, Mekanisme dan Prosedur Penilaian, butir 15), and also to map the quality of the related school as well as to identify the guidance and assistance that the government should provide to the related schools in order to increase their quality of education (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 74 Tahun 2009 tentang Ujian Akhir Berstandar Nasional (UASBN), pasal 4). Considering the nature of the UASBN, it is necessary to study the validity of the
UASBN at a glance, before studying the ways of how the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal and the sixth grade teachers interpret the importance of the UASBN.

**The validity issues of the UASBN.** Considering that the validity and the reliability issues of the UASBN are not the major issue of this study, and also considering the limited time of the study, although the validity issues of UASBN are closely related to the UASBN, only a brief overview is presented. The study of the validity and the reliability of the UASBN in this study will examine only the government documents and the interviews with the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal and the sixth grade teachers.

To begin with, it is necessary to consider the coverage of the UASBN. As listed in the Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional nomor 74 tahun 2009 tentang UASBN pelajaran 2009/ 2010, the courses being tested cover Indonesian language, Mathematics, and Natural Science (pasal 7). Meanwhile, in the Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia nomor 19 tahun 2009 tentang Standar Pendidikan Nasional, it is said that there are five different groups of courses offered to the students. In other words, what is nationally tested does not cover all the materials that are taught to the students.

In addition, it is necessary to note that the Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional about the UASBN is revised annually. In the Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional nomor 74 tahun 2009 tentang UASBN tahun pelajaran 2009/ 2010 and Kisi-kisi Soal UASBN tahun pelajaran 2009/ 2010 (blueprint of the UASBN the academic year of 2009/ 2010) pasal 8, it is explicitly stated that the Standar Kompetensi Lulusan UASBN
is a mix of the materials based on 2004 curriculum and the current curriculum (2006 curriculum/ KTSP). However, the 2009/2010 blueprint does not reflect this statement. For example, in the *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan* of the Indonesian language teaching, it is stated that there are four skills to cover: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the blueprint says that in the UASBN, there are two skills to cover: reading and writing. The same case also happens in the teaching of Mathematics, in which a learning competency appears on the blueprint although it does not appear in the 2004 curriculum, while it is said that the content of the UASBN is considered to be the intersection between 2004 and 2006 curriculum. In addition to the explanation previously provided, it is important to note that 2004 curriculum was implemented in a relatively short period of time, in relatively limited areas (Berita Indonesia, 2006).

Another issue related to the validity of the UASBN is the development of the test items. Based on *Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional nomor 74 tahun 2009 tentang UASBN tahun pelajaran 2009/2010* and *kisi-kisi soal UASBN*, it is explicitly stated that the test items for the UASBN consist of 25% of the government test items, which are developed by the BSNP team, and the other 75% are determined by the professional institution at the province level (pasal 10, ayat 1). However, the selection of the test developers at the province level seems to be invalid. Although the presentation of the national and the local items are about 1:3, the latter is not represented by the test developers.
To illustrate, in Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY, the Special Province of Yogyakarta), there are five regions, and the regency where Rimpang Elementary School is located is considered to be one of the regencies in DIY. Meanwhile, in this regency, there are seventeen *kecamatan*, which consists of more than five hundred schools. Each *kabupaten* is required to send only one representative for each course. When I asked about the criteria for selecting the representatives, Bu Candra, the head of *Seksi Kurikulum*, only explained very briefly that the education department in the regency would select teachers who were noted to be competent in their subjects. She did not reveal any further clarification for what was meant by being competent in this context.

The statement by Bu Candra appeared to support the statement given by Pak Tarjo, the school principal. Pak Tarjo said that at the regional level, usually there were teams of teachers from different schools who were assigned to develop the school tests for the other courses except those which are nationally tested. The teachers were usually those who are considered to be most capable in their school. In other words, the school principal determined and selected who was considered to be most capable. The same applies to the statements said by Bu Candra, it was not yet clear what he meant by competent teachers in this context.

The form of the test also becomes another validity issue. The former sixth grade teacher in Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Kukuh, indicated that the multiple test items that usually appeared in the UASBN tended to measure the students’ cognitive ability while in fact, based on the goals of the Indonesian education, education should not only
be directed at the cognitive development of the students, but also their affective ability. As an illustration, Indonesian Language section contained forty-five items, in which about 51% items asked about knowledge, 33% of it asked about comprehension, and the rest of them asked about application and analysis. The math section contains forty items, in which 60% of the items asked about knowledge and the rest of them asked about comprehension. The same case also happened in science section, in which from forty test items, 70%, asked about knowledge and the rest asked about comprehension. The common verbs appearing in the blueprints were menentukan (determine), menulis (write), menyusun (arrange), mendeskripsikan (describe), menyelesaikan (solve), and menjelaskan (explain) (Lampiran Peraturan Menteri tentang kisi-kisi soal UASBN, 2008/2009).

In addition, sometimes the test developers provided the tests with the answer keys. The availability of the answer keys provided by the government sometimes became a distraction since the ability of the students to explore their knowledge would not be reflected in these answer keys. In relation to the weaknesses of the form of the UASBN and the answer keys provided by the government, Pak Kukuh added that in the multiple test items as in the UASBN, the students sometimes could not answer the questions not because of their inability to answer the questions, but sometimes because of their limited background knowledge, or, because the test had been too subjective. In relation to the latter, the former sixth grade teacher in Rimpang Elementary School said that once, in an Indonesian language test, a question appeared to be related to an Indonesian tale entitled Malin Kundang. In the society, it has been labeled that Malin Kundang is considered to
be a prodigal son. However, deconstructing the story with the students, the teacher indicated that *Malin Kundang* could be considered to be good as well as bad. When such a case appeared in the test item, the students failed to answer the question correctly since the question was about whether or not *Malin Kundang* was a good son.

**The interpretation of and responses to the UASBN.** The head of Seksi Kurikulum in the regency, Bu Candra, and the school principal Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Tarjo, generally had positive impressions about the UASBN. Bu Candra, for example, stated that the implementation of the UASBN was positive for it maintained the quality of the decentralization of education, which was currently being implemented in Indonesia. She added that the implementation of the UASBN would encourage schools in remote areas to perform better. In a rhetorical question, she questioned what the quality of Indonesian would be if each school might have been allowed to design its own learning evaluation. She stated that without the UASBN, better schools would become better, and worse schools would get worse.

Regardless of the positive impression about the UASBN, Bu Candra offered her criticism about the UASBN. She emphasized that the UASBN should not be used as a single measurement for the students’ achievement since students’ learning was not merely about cognitive achievement. She said:

*Bisa saja toh mbak anak yang pintar karena kondisi baru sakit baru kesehatannya tidak fit, itu kan berpengaruh. Tapi kalau kita melihat yang namanya hasil itu*
In my interpretation, she indicated that there would be a possibility that the UASBN would not be valid, for example, if the students’ failure was caused by the temporary condition of the students who were taking the test, such as a students’ illness. Bu Candra emphasized that learning results should be measured from teachers’ observation, as well as the results of the evaluation of the students’ attitude.

Pak Tarjo confirmed Bu Candra’s statement. Pak Tarjo agreed that the UASBN became one of the requirements to determine whether the students passed from their elementary education. He also said that another parameter for the students to graduate from the elementary schools was that the results of students’ *ujian sekolah kepribadian* (character evaluation), which covers at least students’ neatness and politeness, should be at least C, which is the average grade. It is important to note that the grading system of the character evaluation uses alphabets, ranging from A to E, in which A is the best (Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Standar Penilaian Pendidikan, 2005). According to the school principal, it was the government who determined the indicators for the *ujian sekolah kepribadian*.

Pak Tarjo added that regardless of the standards which were determined by the government, the decentralization of education, which was currently implemented, had allowed schools to determine the benchmarks for their students to graduate from their elementary school. Pak Tarjo revealed that in determining the benchmark, he usually
referred to the results of the school exam from the previous year. However, similar to Bu Candra, Pak Tarjo also offered a contradictory thought. He explained that since UASBN became one of the parameters to determine whether the students graduated from their elementary school, it was necessary to encourage the students to learn for the UASBN. Unfortunately, the school principal did not reveal what kind of encouragement was given to the students except that extra courses were given to the students after the school hours.

Unlike Bu Candra and Pak Tarjo, the sixth grade teachers, Pak Kukuh and Pak Lantip, were more direct in expressing their impression about UASBN. Their critiques were mostly related to the form of the UASBN. Pak Kukuh, for example, claimed that the multiple test items tended to be geared only to the students’ cognitive development. Meanwhile, the answer keys, which were usually provided, sometimes limited the students’ creativity. In addition, the failure of the students in doing the test sometimes was caused by the students’ background knowledge.

Slightly different from Pak Kukuh, although relatively disagreeing with the UASBN, in a typical Javanese way of expressing disappointment, Pak Lantip said:

Ya kalau saya ya tidak hanya kognitif saja tetapi juga afektif. Juga tidak sekedar mungkin tidak hanya apa ya dilihat dari hasil nilai saja tetapi juga dari sisi afektif siswa, ketrampilan siswa juga lebih baik.

This statement, in my interpretation, means that evaluation should not only be about the cognitive aspect of learning, but should also be about the affective aspect of learning. It is not merely about the students’ grade but also the students’ skills. Pak Lantip also
criticized that in UASBN, there were only three courses being tested, namely Indonesian Language, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences. He suggested that for that reason, it is necessary for the school to wisely consider other aspects of learning to determine students’ benchmarks.

**The impact of the UASBN on the teaching practices in Rimpang Elementary School.** As indicated in Chapter Two, there is a possibility for a standardized test to influence the model of teaching and learning. A standardized test might direct teachers to teach to the test rather than to teach for the learning itself. In order to study how the understanding of UASBN has influenced the learning and teaching practices in Rimpang Elementary School, it is necessary to study how the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal and the teachers had responded to the UASBN. The discussion on how the UASBN has influenced the teaching and learning practices in Rimpang Elementary School is presented in the following sections.

The head of seksi kurikulum, Bu Candra, explained that there were two strategies that she proposed to schools to prepare the students to face the UASBN: the systematic and the drilling strategies. She clarified that what was meant by systematic strategy was that she encouraged schools, especially teachers, to get access to the standar kompetensi lulusan. These standar kompetensi lulusan were then embedded in the school curriculum (KTSP) in the form of kompetensi dasar kurikulum. As the standar kompetensi lulusan were presented in the KTSP in the form of kompetensi dasar kurikulum, Bu Candra expected that eventually, students, beginning from their first grade of elementary school,
could master the required standards by the time of their elementary school graduation. She assumed that by doing so, the competencies that should be covered by the students would not be accumulated at the sixth grade of elementary school, but would be distributed evenly along with their study at the elementary school level.

Unlike in the systematic strategy, in the drilling strategy, according Bu Candra, the sixth grade teachers were expected to get access to the blueprints of the UASBN. Bu Candra explained that it had been a public secret that in the middle of the academic year, the national government published these blueprints. She expected that teachers would generate these blueprints into learning indicators. These indicators then became the teachers’ guidelines to develop test items. She expected that one indicator was transferred into at least six test items. These test items would be considered as the pools and were used to train the students to prepare for the UASBN.

In addition to the strategies to prepare the students for the UASBN suggested by Bu Candra, the *dinas pendidikan* and the UPTs offered UASBN try-out practice. Bu Candra explained that until the time of the interview, the *dinas pendidikan* offered the try-out once and the UPTs were varied. The try-out offered by the UPTs was varied, depending on the policy of each UPT in the *kabupaten*. According to her, the results of the try-out could be used as learning feedback.

To prepare the students for the UASBN, the school principal of Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Tarjo allowed teachers to use relevant strategies. The only consideration said by Pak Tarjo was that since Pak Lantip was relatively new to Rimpang
Elementary School, the school principal assigned Pak Kukuh, the previous sixth grade teacher, to help Pak Lantip give extra lessons to the sixth grade students. For this reason, this study involved recommendations from both Pak Lantip and Pak Kukuh, as the sixth grade teachers.

Pak Lantip indicated that in order to prepare the students for the UASBN, he provided the students with extra lessons. Pak Lantip added that in these extra lessons, he gave the students sets of exercises that he compiled from the previous UASBN. When I tried to clarify whether he gave these kinds of drilling during the regular learning hours, Pak Lantip explained that he usually classified materials that were used for regular learning activities. However, after being asked about the time constraints for the students to learn, he implicitly said that he sometimes used these kinds of drilling during the learning hours, especially when he intended to evaluate the students’ learning.

Differing from what Pak Lantip said, when I asked what Pak Kukuh did to prepare the students for the UASBN, Pak Kukuh quickly said that he provided the students with extra lessons. He explained further that in the extra lessons, he reviewed the materials that he noticed commonly appeared in the UASBN, and that the students probably had not mastered yet. In the extra lessons, he added, he also explored the students’ strategies to do the UASBN by drilling them with various exercises that he developed in addition to the materials that he compiled from different sources.

In addition to the extra lessons, Pak Kukuh explained that he focused on students’ learning processes. For this reason, he proposed experiential learning. He indicated that
experiential learning would be able to help students memorize their learning. Moreover, experiential learning would encourage the students to become better, confident, and thorough students. In his point of view, if the students had these values, they would not be nervous when they had to take the UASBN. It is important to note that in the UASBN, teachers from different schools monitor the students. Meeting with strangers in such a condition sometimes made the students nervous. As a result, the students sometimes failed to do well on the test.

**Emerging Themes**

There are two other findings that need to be considered. The first is related to the local education department (the *Dinas Pendidikan Nasional* and the *UPT*) and the national government’s responses towards the progress of Rimpang Elementary School and the second is the government’s programs related to the teachers’ professional development. The second is related to the teachers’ professional development. In relation to the government’s response to the progress of schools in the regency in general, the head of *seksi kurikulum*, Bu Candra, indicated that so far, no rewards and punishment had been implemented to any schools. She said that the *Dinas Pendidikan Nasional* in the regency continuously maintained the development of the schools. The schools that were noticed to be falling behind would receive extra guidance from the *Dinas* while the schools which were considered to be good would be maintained. However, the head of *seksi kurikulum* did not explain further what she meant by extra guidance and maintenance.
The statement of the head of seksi kurikulum, Bu Candra, appeared to be supported by the school principal of Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Tarjo. Pak Tarjo indicated that Rimpang Elementary School received nothing regardless of its achievement. A certificate was given to the school only after the school principal asked. There was no extra or special guidance given to the school either. The school principal added that the school received sets of computers and LCD, but they were given to the school cluster in which Rimpang Elementary School belonged and the education quality control team (Lembaga Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan, LPMP) in the province visited the school only once.

In relation to the teachers’ professional development, the government suggests teachers’ certification (Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, 2003). This certification involves the Education Department (Dinas Pendidikan) at the national level to the kabupaten level and the teacher-training institutes (Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan, LPTK), which includes universities appointed by the government (Petunjuk teknis pelaksanaan sertifikasi, 2010).

An interview with a head of an LPTK indicated that the certification criteria by the LPTK were based on whether the candidates fulfill the requirements, including the candidates’ certificates of education, training, achievements, and leadership. He added that those who did not pass the requirement should attend training given by the LPTK in order to be certified. He also explained that the training materials, assessments and evaluations, which covered pedagogical, professional, and social competence (Rambu-
rambu pelaksanaan pendidikan dan latihan profesi guru, 2010), were determined by the national government.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Implications and Suggestions

There are three sections presented in this chapter: Summary, Conclusion, and Implications and Recommendations. The Summary contains direct responses to the research questions. The Conclusion discusses the responses of the main research question. The last section presents implications of these findings and recommendations for curriculum developers and for further research.

Summary

There is a single research question guiding this study: What factors explain the unusual UASBN performance of a relatively poor elementary school in rural Indonesia? From this single question, four sub-questions were generated. A summary of findings that followed from each sub-question is provided in the following sections.

School-Level Curriculum: (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, KTSP).
What does the school body, especially the head of the curriculum section (kepala seksi kurikulum), the staff member of the Technical Implementation Unit (Unit Pelaksana Teknis, UPT), the school principal, and the classroom teachers, understand about the School-Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, KTSP)?

Results indicated that the national government presented the national curriculum in the form of education standards. In relation to the KTSP development, the study revealed that the head of the seksi kurikulum, the staff member of the UPT, the school principal and the classroom teachers, were mandated to work together to expand the national standards so that those standards could be implemented in the individual school
(Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan, 2006; Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan, 2007; *Organisasi dan tata kerja penjaminan mutu pendidikan*, 2007; *Naskah akademik: Kajian kebijakan kurikulum SD*, 2007; *Naskah akademik: Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan jenjang pendidikan dasar dan menengah*, 2007; *Undang-Undang tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*, 2003). However, based on the interviews, the units that were expected to work together placed different emphasis on the standards.

In relation to the understanding of the KTSP, the head of *seksi kurikulum* conceptually embraced the idea of *Dokumen 1* and *Dokumen 2* that were supposed to be included in the KTSP. While theoretically *Dokumen 2* should be generated from *Dokumen 1*, the head of *seksi kurikulum* did not reveal clear distinction between these concepts. Meanwhile, despite his jobs and responsibilities to check the individual school reports, including the appropriateness of the KTSP of each school in *kecamatan*, the staff member of UPT did not refer to any of these documents in his understanding about KTSP. He simply mentioned that he checked for the completion of the elements in the document, such as the rationale of the KTSP at the school level, the school vision and mission, the local content courses (*muatan lokal*) offered in individual schools, the academic calendar, and the examples of syllabi and lesson unit plans without indicating that KTSP at the school level (*Dokumen 1*), syllabi and lesson unit plans (*Dokumen 2*) should be relevant.

Becoming more pragmatic, without using the terms *Dokumen 1* and *Dokumen 2* as indicated by the head of *seksi kurikulum*, he used the term *kurikulum sekolah* to refer
to *Dokumen 1* and *kurikulum* for *Dokumen 2*. For classroom teachers, the term *kurikulum* is defined as lists of topics and materials to be delivered in the classroom, which should be extended in lesson plans. The classroom teachers did not indicate that these lists of topics and materials as well as their organizations should be generated from *kurikulum sekolah* by the school principal, regardless of the professional development training they had attended.

**KTSP development and implementation.** What does the school body, especially the school principal and the classroom teachers, do to extend the national standards into the KTSP?

To make the standards more operational, the unit in the higher level in the hierarchy allowed the unit in the lower level to take policies to make the national standards became more operational and applicable. However, the unit in the lower level in the hierarchy could not fully recognize the rationales given by the unit in the higher level in hierarchy. As seen, in relation to the KTSP development, the national government provided some recommendations on developing the KTSP with some exception due to the condition of a particular school (*Pedoman pengembangan model KTSP SD sosial ekonomi rendah, 2008*).

Stressing the obstacles that the schools in *kabupaten* might face, the head of *seksi kurikulum* took this exception to adjust the national government policies in developing KTSP. While emphasizing the steps of curriculum development suggested by the government, she also introduced the idea of school clusters (*gugus*) and teachers’
working group (kelompok kerja guru), in which schools and teachers in the same clusters work together to develop the KTSP since according to the head of seksi kurikulum, the KTSP was newly implemented. However, her rationale about the significance of the gugus and the kelompok kerja guru did not get strong emphasis from either the staff member of the UPT or the school principal and classroom teachers.

Similar inconsistency happened at the school level. Considering the limited human resources in Rimpang Elementary School, the school principal adjusted the policy in developing KTSP. The school principal did not strictly involve stakeholders in the KTSP development process as suggested by the government considering that the community was not well informed about curriculum development process (cf. the weaknesses of institutional curriculum decision making by Oliva (2009) as discussed in Chapter 2). The national government, however, rarely recognized this challenge (cf. Pedoman pengembangan model KTSP SD sosial ekonomi rendah, 2008).

**National Examination: Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional (UASBN).**

What does the school body, especially the kepala seksi kurikulum, the staff member of the UPT, the school principal, and the classroom teachers understand about the National Examination (Ulangan Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional, UASBN)?

The Undang-Undang Pendidikan Nasional (2003) and the Peraturan Pemerintah tentang Standar Pendidikan (2005) explicitly indicated that the UASBN is not the only measure of Indonesian education. While the findings indicated that as a measure, the UASBN was lacking in its validity, the interviews with the head of seksi kurikulum, the
school principal and the sixth grade teachers revealed that they tended to treat the UASBN as if it were the only measure of academic success.

**The impact of UASBN on the teaching practices Rimpang Elementary School.** How does understanding about the UASBN by members of the school body, especially the head of seksi kurikulum, the school principal and the classroom teachers influence teaching practices?

The school principal and the teachers’ responses to the UASBN seemed to strengthen the perspectives of adopting the UASBN as the only learning measure. The school principal in Rimpang Elementary School encouraged his teachers to provide extra lessons to their students in addition to the try-out programs proposed by the department of education at the kabupaten level and at the UPT level. The sixth grade teachers of Rimpang Elementary School, Pak Lantip and Pak Kukuh agreed with these programs.

Yet, they implemented the program proposed by the school principal in different ways. Pak Lantip stated that in order to prepare the students for the UASBN, he drilled the students with a set of exercises that he compiled from the previous National Exams. He sometimes also gave the students these drills during regular learning hours regardless of the students’ learning background and challenges, which is, in fact, not recommended by the government.

Like Pak Lantip, Pak Kukuh also drilled the sixth grade students with exercises during the extra lessons. However, during the drill session, he introduced the students to strategies to take the UASBN. He also reviewed the materials that the students did not
master yet, if he noticed that the materials commonly appeared in the UASBN. Different from Pak Lantip, during the regular teaching and learning hours, Pak Kukuh provided the students with experiential learning. In addition to the teaching methods that he adopted, Pak Kukuh tried to build teacher-student communication in a manner that the students would trust and appreciate him. Also, he reorganized the materials in order to deal with the students’ problems related to the standards.

The implications of the responses to the sub-research questions. The responses to the sub-research questions can be summarized in Figure 2. The figure provides a representation of the categories as they interrelate in a curriculum transfer process. The squares in the figure represent the entities written inside the squares. For example, the biggest square on the top of the figure represents the national government. The squares inside the biggest square represent the curriculum policy makers and the curriculum designers. In other words, there are two different groups in the national government level that are assigned to make the curriculum policy and to design the curriculum evaluation. The arrows in the figure signify the movement of ideas and document policies to the next stage of the curriculum process. The arrows that go out of the figure signify the ideas and document policies that are left out of the process, and the dashed parallelogram indicates Rimpang Elementary School.
Participation in the curriculum transfer process begins at the school in which the school principal, the school committee, the classroom teachers and the students become part of it. As seen, the school principal’s ideas and policies were transferred to the school committee. In the context of Rimpang Elementary School, the school committee in fact consists of the school principal, teachers, school staff, community leaders and representatives of students’ parents.

From a different direction, as seen in the biggest square on top of Figure 2, the ideas of curriculum policy makers were transferred to the curriculum evaluation
designers. In the counter clockwise movements of the curriculum policy makers, the ideas, documents and policies created by the curriculum makers were transmitted to the head of seksi kurikulum and from the head of seksi kurikulum, then, were transferred to the UPT and to the school principal. However, those ideas, documents and policies were treated differently in every single step in the transfer process. Occasionally, the school ideas, documents and policies were not transferred back to the UPT and to the head of seksi kurikulum for double check, but went directly to the government. The national government’s ideas, documents and policies sometimes did not go through the head of seksi kurikulum or UPT, but went directly to the individual school staff. For example, the sixth grade teachers in Rimpang Elementary School often referred to the national standards in developing their learning activities rather than directly referring to Dokumen 1 of the KTSP. The meaning shift along the movement of ideas appeared to be the cause of inconsistency between the KTSP and the UASBN.

**Conclusion**

This conclusion is aimed at responding to the main research question of: What factors explain the unusual UASBN performance of a relatively poor elementary school?

From the findings, as seen in Figure 2, it appears that the teachers’ performances had a significant role in the students’ achievement of high scores in the 2008 to 2010 UASBN. However, instead of validating the academic achievement of students in Rimpang Elementary School as seen in the UASBN, the responses of the sub-research questions revealed inconsistency between the curriculum and the test.
As seen, there were definite discontinuities of concepts and ideas in the curriculum transfer process from the national government to the school level. Some of the ideas proposed by the national government to the district were left out. The same case also happened to the transfer from the district to the UPT. At the school level, instead of generating the ideas directly from the UPT, Rimpon Elementary School appeared to generate them directly from the national government with less recognition of the ideas generated from either the education department in the district or the UPT level. For example, the terms of reference of KTPS, such as *curriculum*, *KTSP*, *syllabi*, *lesson plans* were not recognized the same way along the various levels in the hierarchy.

Not only at the levels of the hierarchy, the concept discontinuities also happened in the concept transfer from the curriculum policy makers to the curriculum evaluation designers. As seen, there were discontinuities in what the students should master and what should appear in the UASBN. For example, in the Indonesian language test, there were four skills the students should master (*Standar isi, 2006*). However, there were only two skills tested (*Kisi-kisi soal UASBN 2009/ 2010, 2009*).

**Implications and Suggestions**

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are addressed to the curriculum developers and toward future research. For the curriculum designers, especially those who are directly involved in curriculum development, it is necessary to equip themselves with the knowledge of curriculum, especially development and evaluation so that they can interpret and smoothly transfer the ideas of the curriculum.
The knowledge of curriculum development involving the philosophy of education and the philosophy of learning will give the curriculum designers insight to what students need to learn, and how students could better learn (cf. English, 2009; Oliva, 2009). Meanwhile the knowledge curriculum evaluation, in which various learning measures are widely discussed, will help the curriculum designers determine the appropriate learning measures.

Hall (1980) stated that in the communication exchange, the message delivered could be perceived differently, depending on which part of the messages is important to either the sender or the receiver. At the same time, both parties, the sender and the receiver, probably encode and decode the meaning differently. It is in this meaning making process that a further message might change. In other words, it is possible that the message from the source of information will definitely change by the time the messages reach the destination. Therefore, it is necessary to pin down terms of reference in any kind of communication to minimize misunderstanding and any discrepancy between the encoded and the decoded.

The above illustration could serve to explain the phenomena identified in this research study. As seen in Chapter 4, while the national government emphasized *Dokumen 1* and *Dokumen 2* in KTSP, the head of *seksi kurikulum* received both, but placed more emphasis on *Dokumen 1*. Meanwhile, the staff member of UPT also emphasized *Dokumen 1* and tended to neglect *Dokumen 2*. Unlike the head of seksi kurikulum and the staff member of UPT, since the school principal relied more on
Dokumen 2, while at the same time he had to understand Dokumen 1, he emphasized Dokumen 2 more than Dokumen 1. For the classroom teachers, since they dealt with Dokumen 2 more, when asked about their curriculum understanding, they referred to Dokumen 2 more, and tended to neglect Dokumen 1. They appeared to be unaware of the significance of Dokumen 1. The same case also happened in understanding the UASBN. While the Education Acts 2003 stated that the UASBN is one of the education measures, the education personnel took it as if the UASBN is the only measure of academic performance. Making matters worse, as seen in, as a measure, the UASBN is lacking in test validity. Since National Standards, KTSP and UASBN are parts of National Education System, there should have been an ongoing discussion to reconcile them.

Professional development for educators and education administrators, including school principals and teachers needs to equip them with strategies to implement theories and ideas into practice. No less important is the inclusion of pedagogical theories within the development and implementation of the curriculum.

In relation to further research, as seen in every single step of the curriculum transfer process, there are often messages left out and at times, some added. It would be helpful if the process of meaning making at every single step could be clearly mapped. This clarity will contribute to the identification of appropriate materials for the curriculum training programs and the identification of the training methods appropriate to the trainees. In addition to the mapping, a specific study of test development will also be
important since the results of further study could respond to questions about the validity of the existing National Tests.

In addition, studies related to education documents are needed, especially how education policies are transferred and put into practice, and how academic success is perceived and measured. These answers would provide a fuller picture of the Indonesian Education System. Another significantly needed study is related to teachers’ leadership. In the case of Rimpang Elementary School, the school principal and the two of the sixth grade teachers had different teacher education history, although all of them had graduated from the same level of education, the S-1 program of teacher education.

No less important is further study about other rural elementary schools in Indonesia. This study was conducted in a small rural area of Indonesia, which is different from other rural areas within Indonesia. This difference may also be related to difference in phenomena. Also, as in any qualitative studies, the interpretation of this study is influenced by the personal opinions of the researcher (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). Although this study might offer new insight to understand the recent phenomena of the curriculum implementation in Indonesia, studies in a similar field in either the same location or in different rural schools in Indonesia are further recommended. These researches would serve to provide better perspective before other studies are authorized to cope with various challenges and opportunities for innovation in curriculum development.
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Appendix A: Organization Structure of the Office of National Education
My free translation:

Organization Structure of the Office of National Education

1. Head of the National Education Department
2. Secretary of the National Education Department
3. Planning and Development Division
4. Staffing Division
5. Facilities and Infrastructure Division
6. Kindergarten and Elementary School Education Division
7. Junior High School Education Division
8. Senior High School Education Division
9. Informal Education Division
10. Youth and Sports Division
11. School Administration and Facilities Section
12. Community Education Section
13. Youth Section
14. Curriculum Section
15. Pre-School Section
16. Sports Section
17. Educators Enhancement Sections
18. Implementation and Technical Unit
Appendix B: List of Topics for Interviews

Pre-Observation interviews

1. Initial Interview
   a. Perspectives of schooling
   b. Description of School-Level Curriculum in the district/ sub-district in relation to National Standards
   c. Description of School-Level Curriculum development
      i. Membership of curriculum designers
      ii. The roles of each member
      iii. Steps and procedures to develop the curriculum
   d. Description of School-Level Curriculum implementation
      i. Lesson Unit/ Lesson Meeting Plan
      ii. Curriculum evaluation
   e. National testing
      i. Interviewee’s opinion
      ii. Actions taken to prepare students for the test
   f. Lists of school noted to be good
      i. Description
      ii. Criteria
   g. Lists of school noted to be worse
      i. Description
ii. Criteria

h. Consequences of being good or “bad” schools

2. Interview with the principal/ teachers
   a. Perspectives of schooling
   b. Description of SLC in relation to National Standards
   c. Description of SLC development in the related school
      i. Membership of curriculum designers
      ii. The roles of each member
      iii. Steps and procedures to develop the curriculum
   d. Description of SLC implementation
      i. Lesson unit plan
      ii. Teaching and learning method
      iii. Instruction evaluation
   e. National testing
      i. Opinion
      ii. Actions taken to prepare students for the test
   f. School noted to be good/ bad
      i. Description
      ii. Criteria
   g. Consequences of being good or “bad” schools
3. Parents
   a. Perspectives of schooling
   b. Understanding about good schools
   c. Understanding about successful education
   d. Expectations towards their children
   e. Supporting children for schooling
   f. Reasons for sending children to the selected school

4. Students
   a. Perspectives of schooling
   b. Understanding about good schools
   c. Understanding about successful education
   d. Their effort to be successful students
   e. Family supports for their education
   f. Their feeling towards the selected schools
      i. Teachers
      ii. Learning and teaching methods
      iii. Learning and teaching materials
      iv. Facilities
Post Observation interview

Teachers

1. Feeling about the teaching
2. Challenges
3. Dealing with the challenges
4. Evaluating the instruction
Appendix C: Initial Coding

Interviewee: the head of the curriculum for kindergarten and elementary school education

Date: October 14, 2010

Question: Kalau pendidikan SD di Gunungkidul sendiri bagaimana dari segi kurikulumnya? How is the education in Gunungkidul seen from the curriculum point of view

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Codes</th>
<th>Initial narrative to be coded</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>defining KTSP as the curriculum used in</td>
<td>Untuk pendidikan di sd untuk kurikulumnya menggunakan kurikulum KTSP sama dengan jenjang yang</td>
<td>For elementary schools we have a curriculum called KTSP this is the same as the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elementary school</td>
<td>lain</td>
<td>curriculum listed in Permendiknas no 22 th 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the education acts as the operational</td>
<td>sesuai dengan permendiknas no 22 th 2006 jadi semua jenjang menggunakan kurikulum tingkat</td>
<td>22 th 2996 so all formal education level use KTSP in which the curriculum is not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guidelines</td>
<td>satuan pendidikan yang</td>
<td>developed by the central government this is not the same as the centralization that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining KTSP as an operational curriculum</td>
<td>kurikulum itu merupakan kurikulum operasional sehingga kurikulum itu tidak</td>
<td>we had before in which the region was just the receiver now the national government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicating that KTSP is more decentralized</td>
<td>di produk dari pusat tidak bersifat</td>
<td>only provides the content standards and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compared with the</td>
<td>sentralisasi seperti dulu daerah kan tinggal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>previous curriculum</td>
<td>Indicating that national standards only provides content standards</td>
<td>Indicating that KTSP development is the school responsibility indicating that each schools might have different KTSP</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>diberi ya mbak ya tapi kalau sekarang nasional itu hanya memberikan isi standar isinya saja standar isinya saja kemudian yang berhak diberikan hak untuk mengembangkan menyusun, membuat merencanakan sekolah2 sesuai dengan kemampuan keadaaan kondisi sekolah yang bersangkutan. Sehingga pengembangan ini antara sekolah yang satu dengan sekolah yang lain bisa berbeda meskipun berdekatan karena pengembangannya sendiri-sendiri meskipun secara esensinya yang pokok dari nasnya kan sudah ada ada garis besar kan kebutuhan daerah kan tidak hanya itu saja jadi pengembangannya sesuai dengan kebutuhan2 global ke depan e kondisi masyarakat lingkungan dan sebagainya</td>
<td>then the schools have the rights and responsibilities to elaborate the national standards based on the school needs so the elaboration in each school might be different although the schools might be located in relatively close areas because the schools might also develop it independently although in general the main ideas are possibly similar the most important thing to consider is that the national standards are the same because there have been rules, regulations, and standards so the development of the curriculum should be adjusted based on the global condition and the school surroundings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix D: Focused Coding**

**Interviewee:** the head of the curriculum for kindergarten and elementary school education

**Date:** October 14, 2010

**Question:** *Kalau pendidikan SD di Gunungkidul sendiri bagaimana dari segi kurikulumnya?* How is the education in Gunungkidul seen from the curriculum point of view?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of codes</th>
<th>Initial narratives to be coded</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining KTSP as an operational curriculum</td>
<td>Untuk pendidikan di sd untuk kurikulumnya menggunakan kurikulum KTSP sama dengan jenjang yang lain sesuai dengan permendiknas no 22 th 2006 jadi semua jenjang menggunakan kurikulum tingkat satuan pendidikan yang kurikulum itu merupakan kurikulum operasional sehingga kurikulum itu tidak di produk dari pusat tidak bersifat</td>
<td>For elementary schools we have a curriculum called KTSP this is the same as the curriculum listed in Permendiknas no 22 th 2006 so all formal education level use KTSP in which the curriculum is not developed by the central government this is not the same as the centralization that we had before in which the region was just the receiver now the national government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicating the coverage of national standards</td>
<td>Indicating KTSP development as the school responsibility</td>
<td>Emphasizing the relationship between KTSP and the national standards</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only provides the content standards and then the schools have the rights and responsibilities to elaborate the national curriculum based on the school needs so the elaboration in each school might be different although the schools might be located in relatively close area because the schools might also develop it independently although in general the main ideas are possibly similar the most important thing to consider is that the national standards are the same because there has been rules, regulations, and standards so the development of the curriculum should be adjusted based on the global condition and the school surroundings.</td>
<td>sentralisasi seperti dulu daerah kan tinggal diberi ya mbak ya tapi kalau sekarang nasional itu hanya memberikan isi standar isinya saja standar isinya saja kemudian yang berhak diberikan hak untuk mengembangkan menyusun, membuat merencanakan sekolah2 sesuai dengan kemampuan keadaan kondisi sekolah yang bersangkutan. Sehingga pengembangan ini antara sekolah yang satu dengan sekolah yang lain bisa berbeda meskipun berdekatan karena pengembangannya sendiri-sendiri meskipun secara esensinya yang pokok dari nasnya kan sudah ada ada garis besar kan kebutuhan daerah kan tidak hanya itu saja jadi pengembangannya sesuai dengan kebutuhan2 global ke depan e kondisi masyarakat lingkungan dan sebagainya.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Axial Coding

KTSP according to the head of *seksi kurikulum Tk dan SD*

- an operational curriculum
- contains *Dokumen 1* and *Dokumen 2*

KTSP according to the school principal

- *kurikulum sekolah*
- syllabi and lesson plans
Appendix F: Theoretical Coding

Context:
KTSP: its interpretation, development, implementation and evaluation
Appendix G: Memo-writing

kurikulum itu tidak di produk dari pusat tidak bersifat sentralisasi seperti dulu daerah kan tinggal diberi ya mbak ya tapi kalau sekarang nasional itu hanya memberikan isi standar isinya saja standar isinya saja.

KTSP is not developed by the central government this is not the same as the centralization that we had before in which the region was just the receiver now the national government only provides the content standards.

In the statement above, the head of seksi kurikulum pendidikan TK dan SD emphasizes that the KTSP is locally developed. She is also contrasting the previous curriculum and the current curriculum, KTSP. By bringing up this issue, it is implicitly said that she considers the curriculum has significantly changed. She emphasizes that in the previous curriculum, the local government is only the passive receiver, or the curriculum implementer, who was not required to adjust or adapt the national standards. She indicates that in the current curriculum, the central government only provides the content standards and the curriculum elaboration becomes the responsibility of the school.

Notes:

The underlined words and phrases require further development. Samples that provide this information is needed. Generating samples to elaborate categories based on the emerging theory are an example of theoretical sampling in Grounded Theory.
Appendix H: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2. research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Project Title: School-Level Curriculum: Learning from a Rural School in Indonesia

Primary Investigator: Eny Winarti

Co-Investigator(s):

Advisor: Ginger Weade (if applicable)

Department: Teacher Education

Robin Stack, CIP, Human Subjects Research Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance

Date 08/05/2010

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved (as an amendment) prior to implementation.