OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATED CULTURAL ETHICS AND VALUES IN CURRICULA AND INSTRUCTIONS: LESSON LEARNT FROM INDONESIA

Achmad Ridwan dan Yuli Rahmawati
Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract
This paper portrays the opportunities and challenges of cultural ethics and values integration in curricula and instructions in Indonesia. Indonesia with more than 17,000 islands and 300 ethnic groups which speak more than 250 dialects is leading to the diversity both geographical, cultural practices, values and beliefs. Therefore, Indonesia is facing the challenges in implementing the educational policy to represent the differences, including the policy for current curricula of 2013 curriculum. The current curricula was started in 2013 and has been widely implemented in 2016. The curricula is emphasizing ethics and values learning for developing students’ character as holistic individual, not only knowledge and skills. As Indonesia holds standard based education system, the National Standard of Education guides the curriculum development in order to achieve the graduate competences. The standard of graduate competences focusing on holistic graduate profile of spiritual and social attitudes, knowledge, and skills in facing global competitiveness, including 21st century skills without ignoring their cultural identity. The process of these changes have several impacts on education in Indonesia, including challenging in developing curricula structure, curricula integration, teachers and students shifting paradigm, teacher competences, teaching and learning process, assessments, and facilities. In the instruction, teachers play important role in implementing the curricula as the important shifting of their curriculum images and paradigm to transformative and empowering teaching. In addition, it also influences the teacher education programs in preparing and empowering the student teachers in transforming their teaching paradigms. The Indonesia government has been spending enormous budget for implementing 2013 curriculum including the teacher training and facilities, therefore it is important to conduct strategies to achieve the aims of 2013 curriculum, especially in teaching and learning process.

Keywords: cultural ethics and values, Indonesia curricula, teacher competences, curriculum images, curriculum integration, transformative education

Background
Indonesia consists of more than 17,000 islands, with around 6000 of them inhabited, and has five major islands (Java, Sumatera, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Irian Jaya islands). Indonesia is one of the most populous countries in the world with 224 million, with 40% lives on Java, the smallest of the five major islands. Indonesia also has 300 ethnic groups that speak more than 250 dialects, with Bahasa Indonesia as the national language. These ethnic groups have different cultures which influence the way they think and behave. Currently, Indonesia students grow up with different
cultures which influence the set of values and beliefs, including in their learning. The process of
globalisation and cross cultural interactions among ethnic groups in Indonesia creates different
cultural identities and loss their first cultural identity. In teaching and learning, western knowledge
dominant in every level of curriculum and students learning which lead to students disconnected
to their cultural background which could lead to students’ disengagement in learning. The board
range of diversity influences the educational practices and values which influence the
implementation of standard based education as the educational system in Indonesia. In addition,
there are five principles of Pancasila that influences the society values and practices which are
belief in the one and only God, civilised humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by
the wisdom of deliberations among representatives, and social justice for all the people of
Indonesia. These five principles plays important role as guiding for unity Indonesia. In education,
these five principle is one of the basic concepts in civic education and should be integrated the
education system.

Indonesia holds standard based education system which consist of 8 national education standards
of graduates competences, content, process, assessment, educators and supporting staff, financial,
and management standards (Government Law 20/2003). These standards guide the educational
process in all educational types and level in Indonesia including formal and non-formal education.
These different types of schools is managed by the ministry of education and culture and the
ministry of higher education. In relation of standard based education system, curricula framework
is developed based the standards of graduate competences, content, process, and evaluation
standards. Throughout the curricula changes in Indonesia, the current curricula which is Curricula
2013 was developed based on the principles of competences based. The curriculum 2013 is
different from previous curricula, not only on curriculum structure, but also on the focusing
outcomes. Curriculum 2013 puts attitude on the higher priority than skill competencies and
knowledge. These changes have several impacts on education in Indonesia such as the teaching
approaches, assessment, and students learning.

Teachers should put more emphasise the developing students’ competences of 21st century skills.
Therefore the student-centred and active learning highly started implemented in the classrooms.
Indonesia teachers and students are facing the challenges in implementing these changes which
they have to transform their paradigm from teacher as controller to teacher as facilitator. They also
have to shift the focus their teaching and learning process from only on knowledge development
to soft skills development, including cultural ethics and values. This paper portrays the Indonesia
opportunities and challenges of integration cultural ethics and values in curricula and instructions
focusing on the foundation concepts of curricula images and transformative learning which should
be integrated in teaching and learning

Cultural Ethics and Values
The concept of culture, from the language of cultura, was first developed in the 17th and 18th
centuries and focused on the cultivation of human lives. This was followed in the mid-19th century
by the emergence of culture as social development (Schech & Haggis, 2000). The concepts of
culture have emerged from different perspectives, including anthropology, linguistics, and psychology. According to Begaye (2007), from an anthropologist perspective (Clifford Geertz) culture is a system of symbolic forms of expression for people to communicate, to perpetuate, and to develop their knowledge and attitudes toward life. Meanwhile, from a linguist perspective (Edward Sapir), culture is social science utilisation which embodies in human life both material and spiritual aspect. In a psychological perspective, Wierzbicka (2005, p. 580) defines culture as “ways of living, speaking, thinking and feeling widely shared in a particular society”. Cobb and Hodge (2011, p. 181) also point out that “culture as a way of life that is characteristic of a bounded community...[which] passed on from one generation to the next”. Within these perspectives, culture consists of behaviours, values, beliefs, knowledge, and practices that are embedded through interactions to become local or traditional cultures.

In deeper perspectives of culture, Sewell, (1999, p. 39) argued that culture has two fundamental concepts, (1) “A theoretically defined category or as an aspect of social life that must be abstracted out from the complex reality of human existence”, and (2) “a concrete and bounded world of beliefs and practices”. Bocock, as cited in Schech and Haggis (2000, p. 16), defined culture in five terms based on the history of the term emergence: (1) cultivating land, crops, animals, (2) cultivation of mind, arts, civilisation, (3) process of social development, (4) meaning, values, ways of life, and (5) practices in producing meaning. Tobin and Roth (2007, p. 3) proposed that another way of understanding culture is as a dialectical approach, both “a system of structurally related symbols and artefacts and a system of patterned actions (i.e., practices)”. Drawing on these theoretical perspectives, the concept of culture used focuses on the values, beliefs, practices, and related symbols of a culture which have been shaping holistic individual in education system.

In this paper, the culture not only on the practices, but also ethics and values. The ethics and values when the students engage with others and situations which lead them to make and solve the problems. In education, we can develop multicultural classrooms by embrace culturally responsive teaching by integrated cultural ethics and values through the pedagogy that acknowledges, respects, responds to, builds on, and understand the differences. Cultural competence entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, developing certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills, that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching (Diller and Moule, 2005). Aikenhead (2000) points out students’ stages of learning as: rote learning, in-depth meaning making, and learning as a cultural phenomenon. Teachers who only focus on students’ achievement to pass the assessments and curriculum will result in students’ simply swallow learning. On the other hand, according to Solomon (1987) as cited in Aikenhead (2000), meaning making learning should include a social constructivist approach to gaining knowledge. This means a focus on students’ engagement in the enculturation process of their own science culture with Western science, (only).

Research has shown that no one teaching strategy will consistently engage all learners. The key is helping students relate lesson content to their own backgrounds. Its challenging for both teachers
and students in understanding of: (1) their own biological and physical world, (2) their community, (3) another culture’s ways, and (4) norms, beliefs, values and conventions of Western science. According to the research, teaching that ignores student norms of behavior and communication provokes student resistance, while teaching that is responsive prompts student involvement (Olneck 1995). Being a teacher is not simply a matter of transferring knowledge and skills but about touching the hearts of students and empowering young generations to participate in building a better future for the world. Teaching consists of activities that help students’ learning including activities carried out both inside and beyond the classroom, and also include cultural competence such as broad cultural competences, relational sensitivity, communication skills, and a combination of rigor and imagination fundamental to effective practice (Ball & Forzani, 2009). Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Curriculum 2013 integrates the concept of character education within education in Indonesia which involves cultural ethics and values. This curriculum will shape Indonesia students as holistic individuals, not only being knowledgably, but also emotional and character developed. On 2013 curriculum, core competences will be achieved by indicators competences of each subject. In education process, curriculum cannot be separated from teaching and assessment. These three aspects will be connected each other which influence teaching practices and students learning. In the diverse range of cultural values and ethics in Indonesia, there are 18 national characters should be integrated in education process which can be categorized in the values of spirituality, nationality, cultural awareness, humanity, and environment. In this context, teachers have the opportunity to shape their teaching in the classroom for meaningful learning for the students, especially in integrating cultural values and ethics.

Integration the cultural ethics and values in standardized education system needs to be concerned in Indonesia. The outcome of character education which is emphasized in the curricula should be integrated in teaching and learning. The problem is not in the useful of knowledge but how to help young people to find the self and social meaning by using the knowledge. Therefore, teacher should give the integration of learning experiences for the students which concern on the knowledge of the contemporary context of problems, interests, issues, and concerns. In this paper, the discussion focusing on teachers as the central of implementing curricula and instructions in the classroom, therefore in discussion bellow describes the importance of teachers’ shifting on their curriculum images and transformative values which influences their perspectives of curricula as the guidelines for their instructions.

Curricula: Curriculum Images and Shifting Paradigm
Smith (1984) provides several possibilities of curriculum definition which could be a means, an end, or a product of teaching and learning, however, he states simply the definition of curriculum is a document which states what it is that you want the students to learn. Meanwhile Haberman (1992, p. 11) provides different features of curricula which are, “what’s in the textbooks, what the
Grundy (1987, p.5) points out that “curriculum” is often written and spoken about in an idealistic sense as if there is a perfect ‘idea’ (eidos) of a curriculum of which all individual curricula are more or less imperfect limitations”. “Curriculum is quite often defined as a product - a document which includes details about goals, objectives, content, teaching techniques, evaluation and assessment, and resources [which are issued by government]” (Marsh, 2000, p.66). Grundy (1987, p. 5) also points out that “curriculum is a cultural reproduction, it is not an abstract concept which is outside or prior to human experience”. According to Holdzkom (1992, p. 13), curriculum is defined “as the goals, expectations, and ends for which schooling is supported …will include resources (fiscal and otherwise), statements of purpose or activity, and accountability structures”.

However, it’s important to realise that curriculum can express “the desires of a hegemonic power structure, forcing teachers and learners to conform to rigidly controlled conditions” (Baptis, 2002, p. 27). Even though “curriculum is often portrayed as a formal and technical process…[it could] involve intense give and take, sharing of ideas, questions about philosophy, and so on by professional teachers” (Beane & Lipka, 1986, p. 199), they need to shift their paradigms from standardized tests to facilitating student inquiry (Magestro & Stanford-Blair as cited in Henderson & Kesson, 2004). Even though it is difficult to shift one’s paradigm, but everyone could and should try to do so.

In addition, in the context of Indonesia system, curriculum is influenced by several factors, including politics, the economy, and social, and culture issues, including religion. In politics, the policy forces students to be people who could fulfil societal needs, not to express their individuality. Those who are considered the “curriculum experts” (Apple, 1997) are a powerful group but are they really experts? It is clear that politics is very powerful factor which influences the curriculum. According to Mitchell and Boyd (2001, p. 60) “Globalization, we argue, is fundamentally changing the parameters of political deliberation throughout the industrialized world, raising the stakes for education policy and changing the ground rules for its adoption and implementation”. Meanwhile, in economics, in Indonesia, jobs in science and technology fields such as doctors and engineers are most appreciated, which means they are given high status (Fensham, 1988). The power of society’s influence is evidenced by the way that certain subjects are “elite and important fields” (Fensham, 1988, p. 7). It also influences parents to force their children to choose science and engineering in higher education. The influence of social, culture, and religion also shaped the curriculum practices, including the cultural ethics and values which are embedded in curricula.

Curriculum metaphors by Schubert (1986) and Pinar (1975) is important to be reflected by teachers in the way integrated cultural ethics and values in their instructions. Schubert describes curriculum through eight metaphors which are: as content or subject matter, program of planned activities, learning outcomes, cultural reproduction, experience, discrete tasks and concepts, agenda for social reconstruction, and currere. Some of these curriculum images contradict each other, such as cultural reproduction and social reconstruction. On the other hand, experience and
currere are related each other. For example, learners reconceptualise their experiences into the learning process. These experiences are supposed to be their guide to develop their own future as individuals, who are professionals and have social agency. Furthermore, Pinar explores curriculum as currere which is the relationship between knowledge, self-understanding, and social reconstruction (Pinar, 1975). Currere focuses on reconceptualising one’s life experience related to social reconstruction. However, both Shubert’s and Pinar’s work have a close relationship with each other in several metaphors: curriculum as learning outcomes, as cultural reproduction, as experience, as an agenda for social reconstruction, and as currere.

In the image of curricula as currere, teachers could help students to reconceptualise their experiences into the learning process to not only understand the subject matter, but also reflect on their experience to develop their own future as individuals, professionals and social agents. In this context of cultural ethics and values, students to reflect, reconceptualise, explore and transform their personal experiences (Doll, 2002; Schubert 1986; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004; Print, 1993; Lovat & Smith, 1993) in understanding their cultural values and ethics. According to Schubert (1986, p. 32), curriculum should provide “the knowledge and values that guides the students to improve society and cultural institutions, beliefs, and activities that support it”. Through this metaphor, teachers could stimulate students to think and create their perfect world related to the lesson topic, such as an environmentally friendly world as ethically behave which encourages them to think creatively and critically. They could imagine and assess critically their contribution and others’ contribution, such as government and society. Furthermore, another example of an environmental topic is the government policy on ‘a free car day’. Teachers could empower their students to give their opinion on a controversial issue between environmentalists and socialists.

Nijhuis, Segers and Gijselaers (2004), teachers and students need to be involved in creating the subject matter, cultural reproduction and discrete tasks and concepts. Educational practitioners such as teachers and students could give valuable information of the curriculum practice in the classroom (Lovat & Smith, 1990; Grundy, 1987). Therefore, it will be powerful to decline the power of experts who determine the content of the curriculum (Apple, 1997). There is growing evidence that the ways in which curriculum and teaching are becoming more tightly controlled may fly in the face of successful practices. “Rather than standardised, test based, factual curricula organized around totally discrete subjects, with rigid time schedules and standardized teaching models, other things such as variable time periods, interdisciplinary approaches, greater teacher input and varied teaching styles, and closer attention to linking the curriculum to students’ patterns of learning and to their communities, are being called for” (Apple, 1988, p. 23).

In the context of our teaching experiences in science/chemistry learning, the ideas of visions of curriculum, community, and science by Brickhouse and Kittleson (2006) which concern on employ science not only to understand the natural world but also to understand the cultural values, diversity, social justice and eco-justice. As chemistry teacher educators shift this paradigm of our students’ teachers’ view of being teachers are challenging. They should realise that the school should not separates children from the community and local knowledge, it’s important to realize
that teaching process should concern on teaching the local knowledge. Teaching should become responsive with the ecological and local cultures to help students become socially aware, reflective, and transformational (Graham, 2007). In the integration process, teaching local knowledge should not ignore students’ understanding on broader issues of science which related to communities. This will bring education process to sustain the community which involves the human relationship, spirituality and nature.

In one of national character of the value of democracy, we refer to Longbottom and Butler (1999) statement that democracy provides the best mechanism for promoting rational change in society which allows all citizens to express their humanity by making choices about their own lives and their stand point in influencing the direction of society. The idea of democracy involves the intelligent collaborative participation in the society to create individuals who are empathy on others’ welfare, diverse group of young people, (2) never insult the intelligence and capacity of young people, (3) threat students with dignity, (4) value of knowledge and experience of young people, (5) engage the important knowledge and organise those into meaningful experiences for young people, (6) not serve exclusive interests, (7) give opportunity to be criticised by young people to construct new meaning, (8) be reasonable and achievable, (9) stimulate young people to imagine the better world and how to make it, (10) serve the best interest of young people and democracy. According to Apple & Bean (1995) as cited in Bencze (2000), citizens in democracies diverse curricula which encourage the individuals to create the “meaning making” which requires them to construct their own knowledge. Refers to this idea, teacher should give my learners’ right to create their own thoughts and actions through the independent investigations and innovations, such as project on certain topics which related to their interests. Therefore, this idea could encourage individuals to be active citizens in the society (Kennedy, 2007).

**Instructions: Being transformative educators**

According to Mezirow and Taylor (2009, p.22), “transformative learning may be defined as learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change”. Merizow and Taylor (2009) also point out three core elements that frame a transformative approach to teaching: individual experience, critical reflection, and dialogue. We proposed three dimensions to the theory of transformative learning: (1) constructivism as a referent, (2) empowering teacher-student relationships, and (3) dialectical thinking. Taylor’s (2013) article on transformative education for science educators also has powerful guidelines for transformative teaching based on five ways of knowing to be involved in transformative learning:

- **Cultural-Self Knowing** (self-realisation) involves coming to understand our culturally situated selves, in particular how the (mostly invisible) premises underpinning our worldview – our shared values, beliefs, ideals, emotionality, spirituality – give rise to our cultural identities and govern our habituated ways of being in, making sense of, and relating to our social and natural worlds.
• **Relational Knowing** (opening to difference) involves learning to connect empathically and compassionately with our true (nonegoic) selves, our local community, the culturally different other, and the natural world.

• **Critical Knowing** (political astuteness) involves coming to understand how and why (political, institutional, economic) power has structured historically our social realities by creating seemingly natural categories of class, race, gender, vocation, intelligence, etc., and how this mostly invisible power governs (especially distorts) our lifeworlds, our relationships with others, and our relationship with the natural world.

• **Visionary and Ethical Knowing** (over the horizon thinking) involves us in creative, inspirational and discursive processes of idealising, imagining, poeticising, romanticising, meditating on and negotiating a collective vision of what a better world could be like and, importantly, what a better world should be like.

• **Knowing in Action** (making a difference) involves consciously developing our capacity to help make the world a better place, committing to making a difference, and taking action locally while thinking globally.

In these concepts, transformative learning is powerful and holistic and creates different views on being teachers.

Firstly, in constructivism as referent, Tobin and Tippins (1993) that proposes the notion of constructivism as ‘a referent’, based on an idea developed by Wheatley (1991. Constructivism as a referent, as opposed to a totalising framework (or ideology), helps toanalyse the ‘learning potential’ in different situations, even within teacher-centred or large classrooms (Tobin & Tippins, 1993). Tobin and Tippins (1993) identified several basic principles as guidance for science teachers to apply constructivism in different situations. Learners need opportunities to make sense of science through “an existing conceptual structure” which involves dialectical practice in both content and process. Driver, et al. (1994) pointed out, there are no simple rules of teaching. Therefore, teachers need to be realise that the essential role is to become a mediator, in order to introduce the students to the cultural process of the learning process. The teacher’s role as mediator of learning involves two critical components: (1) monitoring students’ learning and (2) providing constraints to guide students’ thinking in productive directions. This doesn’t mean that students don’t have opportunities to explore their own understanding, but carefully crafted pedagogical constraints will help them develop in-depth understanding.

Secondly, in empowering teacher and students interaction, Taylor and Williams (1992, p. 4) pointed on Habermas’s work, “there is the idea of the ideal speech situation as an environment for empowerment and an opportunity for truth, justice and freedom-ideals which constitute the cornerstones of his societal model of the good life”. Communicative relationships need to be valued in order to achieve those goals [which] will create achieving mutual and reciprocal understanding (Taylor, 1996). This emancipatory ethic could be shaped by establishing a communicative classroom environment and critical discourse opportunities. An emancipatory ethic promotes students’ engagement through critical discourse which involves: (1) teacher-students negotiating to control the learning experiences (planning, assessment, etc), and (2)
students’ having opportunities to express a critical voice and equality to learn (Taylor, 1992). However, the critical discourse can also be a “two-edged sword, it might negatively affect the learning of those who find comfort in the realms of objectivist epistemology. The students who most likely resist change and prefer to be passive learners and. Moreover, students who were once familiar with the ‘normal’ teaching and learning situation, where the teacher is in control and students are passive receivers, as a result, could behave uncontrollably.

Thirdly, in dialectical thinking, Basseches (2005, p. 51) defines dialectical thinking as “any thinking that looks for and recognises instances of dialectic and that reflects this orientation in the way in which it engages inquiry”. Thus dialectical thinkers view existence and knowledge dialectically. Dialectical thinking is a challenging thinking process as stated by Wong (2006, p. 250); “dialectical thinking is a kind of higher psychological process in the Vygotskian sense”. Dialectical thinking becomes a bridge to understand the different views within teachers’ professional practice between the objectivism and constructivism metaphors. On the metaphor of constructivism, there are concepts of making sense, constructing knowledge, and building ideas which need to be dealt with subject matter and assessment in Indonesia education system.

In the context of integrating cultural ethics and values, being transformative educators who employ (1) constructivism as a referent, (2) empowering teacher-student relationships, and (3) dialectical thinking could help the teachers in facing the challenges and opportunities in standard-based education system in Indonesia. However, as discussion above, teachers need to shift and enrich their paradigms in teaching and learning for creating meaningful and empowering learning experiences for the students.

Closing Notes

The developing national character as representing cultural ethics and values in Indonesia is powerful for shaping young generation in facing globalization. In the education which is strongly influenced by the technical interest, the metaphor of ‘school as market’ represents schools that focus only on producing students who can pass the examination. Several challenges on students view their role as simply memorizing the curriculum content for examination which constrains the teachers to view the curriculum as a metal chain that is very strict and inflexible. In the challenges that are difficult to be controlled such as education system, management, and facilities, teachers play important roles in integration cultural ethics and values. It’s important to realise that students need to understand their culture as well as implement its ethics and values to be active citizens. To be active citizenship, the students should have ability to engage with the social change and active solidarity. Students need to be engaged with social problem and encourage them to arguing and thinking critically with different perspectives.

References


