



Cultivating Critical Thinkers: Independent Curriculum Strategies to Enhance Critical Thinking Skills in Elementary Students

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Abstract

Students are required to have critical thinking skills in order to be able to implement their knowledge. However, in reality, many students still have low critical thinking skills. Many students are less enthusiastic about asking, answering, and expressing their opinions. This research aims to describe strategies for building critical thinking skills in elementary school students through an independent curriculum. This type of research is qualitative with a descriptive design. Data collection techniques include interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis uses interactive analysis techniques with three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results are: strategies of the headmaster, teachers, and students of Teaching Campus 6 to build students' critical thinking skills, including designing extracurriculars, differentiated learning, literacy habits, morning numeracy, and P5 activities. After implementing these various strategies over a period of two years, students' critical thinking abilities can improve, and even their' character can improve.

Keywords: critical thinking, independent curriculum, learning activity

1. Introduction

The existence of education in a country plays an important role (Anjarwati et al., 2022; Cahyaningsih & Assidik, 2021;

Utami et al., 2023). Education must continue to experience change and improvement. One component of education is the

curriculum. The curriculum is a series of learning activity plans that students must follow. The plan contains various programs and activities that support the learning process, so that changes emerge in terms of students' attitudes, cognitive abilities, and skills. To adapt to the needs and developments of the times, the curriculum is dynamic and continues to go through an evaluation process. In its design, the curriculum must consider several factors, namely students' opinions, needs, experiences, and interests. In 2021 the Government of the Republic of Indonesia through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) carried out curriculum reform at the primary and secondary education levels (Herlandy et al., 2024). The Independent curriculum uses a scientific approach so that students are able to explore themselves and their environment. The scientific approach is realized by learning to prioritize logic, facts, data, and realistic phenomena (Sayekti, 2019). With a scientific approach, it is hoped that students will be able to improve their critical thinking skills, solve problems, be motivated to learn, and have positive character (Wicaksono, 2020). The curriculum in Indonesia has gone through several revisions both in terms of name and system, starting with the first curriculum in 1947 with the name Learning Plan and continuing to develop until now it has become the Independent Curriculum, which was first implemented in 2021, with the first implementation at the

Driving School as one of the big Freedom to Learn programs from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Aprima & Sari, 2022).

In the independent curriculum, there are six dimensions of character that students are expected to possess. These dimensions include faith in God and noble character, independence, mutual cooperation, diversity, critical thinking, and creative thinking, which is called the Pancasila student profile, commonly referred to as the Pancasila Student Profile (Jamaludin et al., 2022). The formation of the Pancasila Student Profile is one of the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Culture to restore student character due to the drastic decline in student manners caused by learning loss that occurred for approximately 2 years. It is hoped that the Pancasila Student Profile can be an interpretation of students who learn throughout their lives so that they can be competent and have behavior in accordance with the Pancasila values embedded in them. The dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile are prepared as a guide for teachers, school headmaster, and education personnel in designing learning, programs, and activities for students. This design seeks to create students who have the six characteristics of the Pancasila Student Profile. The Pancasila student profile is a character that is implemented in everyday life and instilled through school culture, learning, and extracurricular activities. According to

(Hartoyo, 2022), with the Pancasi-la Student Profile, students not only learn theoretical knowledge but also implement this knowledge in the surrounding environment.

In implementing knowledge, students are required to be able to use their understanding of their learning results. Students must observe, study, and resolve issues or problems that occur around them. Appropriate learning can encourage students to analyze and evaluate what they are learning to gain meaningful learning experiences. In accordance with Piaget's theory as written (Haryanti, 2017) the level of cognitive abilities of elementary school-age students is at the concrete operational stage so that they are able to think through real objects or problems around them. In the process of solving problems, the ability to think critically and deeply is needed. Therefore, critical thinking skills are important for students to have because they are part of cognitive development. This ability will help students adapt to the rapid advances of the times. The existence of various innovations and information requires students to have critical thinking skills. However, in reality, there are still many students who have low critical thinking skills.

This is supported by data from the 2018 Indonesian PISA National Report, which was issued directly by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The results of the 2018 Pro-

gram for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, which was attended by 15-year-old students from 78 different countries, Indonesia got 371 points in reading ability, 379 points in numeracy, and 396 points in science ability, while the average PISA score was 487. With these points, Indonesia was ranked 6th from the bottom. PISA is a study that aims to evaluate the education systems of various countries in the world that run under the auspices of the OECD, which is an international economic and development organization. The scores obtained by Indonesia show that students' critical thinking abilities in solving problems are still less than optimal. It was explained by (Yuanita & Yuniarita, 2018) that students who have low thinking abilities are characterized by a lack of ability to analyze problems and draw conclusions.

Apart from that, Putri et al. (2020) also explained that the ability to think critically is a fundamental ability because it functions in various aspects of life. Therefore, it is very important to instill critical thinking skills in children from an early age. If students are used to implementing analytical skills in everyday life, then they will be able to solve the problems they face effectively and efficiently. The ability to think critically aims to create a person who is sensitive to a problem and is able to act as a problem solver both for himself and for others. With the implementation of the independent curriculum, students should be

able to develop critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is the ability to think beyond rote activities, for example, conveying conclusions from information that has been obtained (Wicaksono, 2020).

Based on this phenomenon, concrete steps need to be taken to improve critical thinking skills. Therefore, it is important to carry out this research to provide solutions to the phenomena that occur. This research focuses on one dimension of the Pancasila student profile, namely critical thinking. This research aims to describe the strategies used by schools to build students' critical thinking skills through an independent curriculum.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative type with a descriptive design. According to (Sugiyono, 2013), qualitative research is a naturalistic research method because the research is carried out in natural conditions (natural settings). The researcher used qualitative research because this research aims to describe the reality regarding strategies for building students' critical thinking skills through the Independent Curriculum. According to Moleong in 2000, descriptive research is research that aims to describe natural phenomena or human engineering in the field. Descriptive research design aims to create a factual, systematic, and accurate depiction of facts and a particular population or area. The research was carried out at SD Negeri 2 Bendan, which is located at Bendan Village,

Banyudono District, Boyolali Regency. Subjects in this research included school headmaster, fourth-grade and fifth-grade teachers, and students at Teaching Campus 6. The research was conducted from August to November 2023.

Researchers play a major role in the entire research process, starting from planning, data collection, data analysis, and formulating conclusions. Data collection was carried out using three techniques, (1) semi-structured interviews, by preparing questions first, but it also does not rule out the possibility that unplanned questions will arise. This aims to ensure that the topic of conversation in the interview can be goal-directed and obtain in-depth information; (2) non-participant observation: the researcher is not directly involved in the daily activities of the object being observed (Sugiyono, 2013). Researchers only act as observers and collect data without contributing to activities in the field; (3) documentation: researchers investigate written objects such as important documents, regulations, meeting minutes, programme plans, activity plans, and so on Arikunto in 2002 to explore research data in the form of documents related to strategies for building students' critical thinking skills.

Credibility standards determine the validity of the data. Researchers tested the validity of the data using data triangulation. Researchers used the triangulation method, namely checking data by comparing the results of observations, interviews,

and documents. Meanwhile, data analysis using interactive analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

3. **Result and Discussion**

Socialization of the Independent Curriculum Based on field notes and interviews carried out by researchers with the headmaster of SD Negeri 2 Bendan, it can be seen that the socialization of the independent curriculum is an activity to introduce the independent curriculum model to supervisors, headmasters, and teachers. Socialization is carried out so that education stakeholders can get a detailed picture of the Independent curriculum before it is implemented in their respective schools. As explained by (Ramadan & Imam Tabroni, 2020), the independent curriculum needs to be socialized regularly so that it can be implemented well. Interviews were conducted by researchers with the headmaster of SD Negeri 2 Bendan regarding the socialization of the independent curriculum. In this research, informants were divided into: headmaster (informant 1), fourth grade teacher (informant 2), fifth grade teacher (informant 3) and campus student teaching 6 (informant 4).

The following is an interview between the researcher and headmaster.

Interviewer: "How is the socialisation of the independent curriculum implemented at SD Negeri 2 Bendan?"

Informan 1 : "Socialisation is usually carried out during semester holidays and takes

place at schools that have been appointed by the department, he teachers who took part were first, second, fourth, and fifth grade teachers" (NP, 19/10/2023).

Teachers who took part in the socialization included first, second, fourth, and fifth-grade teachers. The socialization was carried out before entering the new school year or semester break. This is done so as not to interfere with the effectiveness of student learning. Socialization was held at the sub-district level, inviting resource persons consisting of main resource persons, representatives of supervisors, and representatives of driving teachers. Schools that the school coordinator has chosen are where socialization takes place. After the headmaster and teachers of classes first, second, fourth, and fifth-grade participated in the socialization, the results of the socialization were conveyed to the teachers and staff at the school through meetings so that all teachers and staff could get the same information.

a. **Implementation of the Independent Curriculum**

The first, second, fourth, and fifth-grade have implemented the independent curriculum starting with the first implementation in 2021, with the driving school as the pioneer implementer. Classes I and IV are in their second year of implementation, while second and fifth-grade are still in their first year. Furthermore, the question regarding the implementation of the

independent curriculum was still answered by the headmaster

Interviewer : "Are there any activities and habits in implementing the independent curriculum at SD Negeri 2 Bendan?"

Informant 1 : "Habituation includes ceremonies, literacy, numeracy, Friday morning activities, and traditional games" (NP, 19/10/2023).

To successfully implement the Independent Curriculum, SD Negeri 2 Bendan has designed activities and habits. The activity currently being implemented is the Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students (P5). To make P5 an enjoyable and worthwhile activity for students, homeroom teachers developed it. Habits implemented include flag ceremonies, morning literacy, morning numeracy, religious Fridays, and healthy, clean, traditional games.

Then there was an interview with the fourth-grade teacher regarding the differences between the 13th and independent curriculums.

Interviewer : "In your opinion, are the 13 curriculum and the independent curriculum different?"

Informant 2 : "Yes, of course it's different; in the 13 curriculums, students are required to have good grades, whereas in the independent curriculum, students get the opportunity to learn according to their abilities" (SS, 20/10/2023).

The implementation of the independent curriculum is different from curriculum 13. Curriculum 13 only focuses on students' academic abilities, whereas the independent curriculum prioritizes meaningful learning and student character. The independent curriculum uses differentiated learning that is tailored to students' abilities and readiness, so that it becomes meaningful learning. With differentiated learning, students can gain meaningful understanding, namely understanding that can be applied in everyday life. This is in line with the opinion of (Sulistiyosari et al., 2022) which states that differentiated learning can be used as an alternative to create an interesting learning atmosphere and can meet students' learning needs.

Fourth grades teacher explained that there were activities and habits designed to implement the independent curriculum.

Interviewer : "Are there activities and habits in implementing the independent curriculum?"

Informant 2 : "The activities in fourth grade are that students use used goods to make them into crafts for habituation, namely praying, singing national songs, memorising Pancasila, the proclamation, and the Constitution. Learning is also carried out by focusing on students' abilities without forcing completion scores" (SS, 10/20/2023).

Fourth grade students carried out many activities, including making pencil boxes from cardboard, window decora-

tions from plastic cups, and classroom decorations from plastic plates. Activities carried out by teachers include making crafts using used items, such as pencil boxes from cardboard, window decorations from plastic cups, and classroom decorations from plastic plates. Meanwhile, habituation includes praying before learning begins, singing the national song, memorizing Pancasila, reading the text of the Proclamation, and memorizing the 1945 Constitution in stages. The implementation of the independent curriculum in teaching and learning activities must be carried out in a fun way and produce meaningful learning. Using varied learning methods is very important because the curriculum is student-centered, so students must be active, not just sit and listen. Student center learning methods include Problem Based Learning, Project Based Learning, Discovery Learning, Visual, Audio-Visual, and various games. This is supported by a statement from (Pertwi et al., 2022) that student-centered learning requires students to be active so that they can hone their creative and critical thinking skills.

Similar to fourth-grade, fifth grade has carried out various activities in the P5 program. The homeroom teacher of fifth grade explained that

Informant 3 : "Fifth grade has made many P5 projects, the theme is entrepreneurship, and students make healthy and nutritious snacks. The foods that have been made include ice kul-kul, fruit salad, jasuke, and lotis" (EC, 25/10/2023).

Fifth grade has carried out various activities in the P5 program. In the odd semester, the theme P5 is "Entrepreneurship". This theme is realized through the activity of making healthy food with classmates using quality ingredients. Foods that have been made include ice kul-kul, fruit salad, jasuke, and lotis. Apart from implementing the P5 program, there are other activities, namely making handicrafts to decorate the classroom and reading corner. The habit applied in fifth-grade is the habit of reading for 15 minutes. After reading, students are asked to retell the contents of the story and are given a short quiz. For numeration using the habit of memorizing multiplications, students must routinely deposit their memorized multiplications with the teacher.

b. Students' Critical Thinking Ability

Researchers asked the headmaster and fourth and fifth grade's teachers about students' critical thinking abilities, and they gave consistent answers. The first answer was given by the headmaster.

Interviewer : "How are your students' critical thinking abilities?"

Informant 1 : "If you look at it as a whole, our students don't have very high levels of critical thinking because parents don't fully support them" (NP, 19/10/2023).

Informant 2 : "In fourth grade, there are still many students who have difficulty focusing and want to continue playing, but there are also those who are active" (SS, 20/10/2023).

Informant 3: "Only a few students think critically, there are still many who have difficulty solving HOTS questions" (ES, 25/10/2023).

The critical thinking abilities of SD Negeri 2 Bendan students as a whole are still not very high. The headmaster and homeroom teacher said that students still had difficulty answering HOTS questions. There are still many students who are less enthusiastic about asking, answering, and expressing their opinions. Students' critical thinking abilities are not only focused on academic abilities but also on students' ability to solve problems around them.

Fourth grade, students' critical thinking abilities are still not evenly distributed. There are students who are active and enthusiastic about learning, but there are also some students who are lazy and easily distracted by things around them. Meanwhile, most fifth grade students still have low critical thinking skills, and they also have difficulty solving HOTS questions.

c. Strategies for Building Students' Critical Thinking Abilities

To build students' low critical thinking skills, the headmaster said there were many extracurricular activities.

Interviewer : "Is there a strategies to improve your students' critical thinking skills?"

Informant 1 : "Because our students' critical thinking skills still need to be improved, the school has planned various extracurricular activities, including dancing, scouts, drumband, pantomime,

and painting. Everything is carried out according to their respective schedules" (NP, 19/10/2023).

From the interview and table 1, the following points can be explained:

1) Scout Extracurriculars

Scout extracurriculars are held every Tuesday after learning hours end, lasting two class hours. Scouting is mandatory for students in fourth and fifth grade. Outside scout leaders train the students, and teachers are present. Through scout activities, students can develop various soft skills and critical thinking abilities. Because students are required to be able to become leaders for themselves and their team members to solve various puzzles and problems they encounter, As explained by (Amreta & Pd, 2018) that through scout activities, students' soft skills can be improved, for example, when participating in camp activities.

2) Dance Extracurricular

The dance extracurricular is held every Wednesday after learning is finished and lasts for two class hours. Dance extracurriculars feature professional coaches. With dance extracurriculars, students can develop their talents and hone their critical thinking skills because they are required to memorise choreography and synchronise it with instruments. Apart from that, it can foster cooperation skills and self-confidence because dance must be performed in

groups. In line with research from (Arisyanto et al., 2018) that extracurricular dance can encourage students to be able to work together, be disciplined, control emotions, and think critically.

3) Drumband Extracurricular

The drumband extracurricular is held every Thursday after class ends, lasting 2 hours of class. The school brings in professional trainers to train students. In drumband activities, there is character education, including discipline, cooperation, critical thinking, and self-confidence, because students have to combine the sounds of various musical instruments to make a beautiful melody (Kurniawan, 2018). Through drumband, it is hoped that students can hone critical thinking skills and develop soft skills. This activity requires students to memorise the beats and songs and then harmonise them.

4) Painting Extracurricular

The painting extracurricular is held every Saturday for two class hours after the learning activities end. As with other extracurricular activities, painting also provides competent trainers. Through painting activities, it is hoped that students will be

able to develop their critical thinking skills because they must be able to choose the right colours and use them to create beautiful gradations and paintings. In accordance with the explanation (Fitria Kautsari Azizah & Lu'luil Maknun, 2022), painting can stimulate students' desire to learn, express emotions, realise imagination, improve critical thinking, and hone patience and precision to produce a beautiful painting.

5) Pantomime Extracurricular

The pantomime extracurricular is held for 2 class hours on Saturdays after learning ends. In extracurricular pantomime, students are taught by competent trainers. Through pantomime, students are expected to be able to hone critical thinking skills and build self-confidence because they must be able to create a story only through movement and musical instruments. In accordance with research from (Wati & Wardana, 2021) that students who have strengths in the field of mime can develop their talents; they become more active in learning, easily accept material, and are able to provide responses during learning.

Table 1. Extracurriculars schedule

Extracurricular and Teacher	Day and Time	Participant
Scout extracurricular by Scoutmaster	Tuesday	Fourth and fifth grade (must be followed)

Extracurricular and Teacher	Day and Time	Participant
	12.30-14.00 PM (after school)	
Dance extracurricular by dance trainer	Wednesday 12.30-14.00 PM (after school)	Students who take part in the extracurricular
Drumband extracurricular by drumband trainer	Thursday 12.30-14.00 PM (after school)	Students who take part in the extracurricular
Painting extracurricular by painter	Saturday 12.30-14.00 PM (after school)	Students who take part in the extracurricular
Pantomime extracurricular by mime trainer	Saturday 12.30-14.00 PM (after school)	Students who take part in the extracurricular

Fourth and fifth grade's teachers and students at Teaching Campus 6 have their own strategies. This was conveyed directly to the researcher during the interview.

Interviewer: "Are there any strategies to improve students' critical thinking skills that are implemented in class?"

Informant 2: "Yes, fourth grade uses differentiated learning so that students don't get bored with learning. There are also P5 activities and math guessing, which is usually done before school" (SS, 10/20/2023).

Informant 3: "Yes, I deliver learning using different methods, sometimes using videos with LCD, sometimes with games outside the classroom or inside the classroom too. Then there are P5 activities with various projects; before the lesson, I ask you to read for 15 minutes, after that, there is a quiz." The numeration activity involves memorising multiplication. I give students cards to deposit the memorization little by little" (ES, 10/25/2023).

Informant 4: "Yes, we have extra hours after school specifically for students who have learning obstacles, focused on

teaching reading and arithmetic" (YB, 28/10/2023).

From the interview, the following points can be explained:

a) Differentiated Learning

Differentiated learning aims to enable students to receive knowledge according to their abilities. The teacher acts as a facilitator who designs fun and meaningful learning. This is realised by using varied learning methods, using games, and learning outside the classroom. This learning can be a bridge to building students' critical and creative thinking abilities. In line with research from (Avandra & Desyandri, 2023) that there is an increase in critical thinking through differentiated learning because students are fully involved in learning, thereby forming experiences that suit their learning abilities.

b) Carry out P5 activities

Through P5 activities, students can explore and realise the project given by the

teacher. The existence of P5 aims to hone students' abilities in solving problems, making decisions, and using reasoning (Annisa et al., 2023). P5 activities are designed to provide meaningful and enjoyable learning. Apart from that, they can also hone critical thinking, mutual cooperation, and creative skills because they will work together to complete the projects they are undertaking.

c) Numeracy quiz

The numeracy quiz is carried out by giving questions orally to students before returning home from school. Students who can answer questions more than twice can go home first. Questions cover mathematics subject matter that has been studied. This method has been proven to be able to improve students' numeracy skills. Students can enthusiastically accept the quiz method because they prefer the game method to just answering questions. This game can build students' confidence in conveying their answers; besides that, it can also improve students' understanding, learning outcomes, mathematical reasoning, and communication (Putri & Hermawan, 2023).

d) Reading for 15 minutes before learning starts

Reading for 15 minutes before class with various activities, such as reading aloud, relay reading, and listening to fairy tales. After finishing reading, students are given a quiz in the form of short questions regarding the content of the story they

have read. Students can be asked to briefly retell the contents of the story. This activity is able to hone students' critical thinking skills in understanding reading. Research results (Septiani et al., 2020) show that reading for 15 minutes can bring changes to students, such as increasing motivation, being able to differentiate between types of books, and being able to understand the content of reading.

e) Memorise multiplication

Students are given a card to bring every time they submit memorization to the teacher, who will sign it to check each student's progress. By mastering multiplication, students' critical thinking abilities will increase, and it will be easier to solve HOTS questions. The explanation from (Riananda et al., 2019) emphasises that, apart from being useful in learning, this ability is also very useful in everyday life. Multiplication plays a big role in students' lives; therefore, students are required to master this ability.

f) Additional hours

Additional hours are held for students who have low literacy and numeracy skills. Additional hours are held for 1 hour of lessons after school. Teaching Campus 6 students request student data from homeroom teachers who will have the opportunity to attend extra hours. Parents of students will be given information that their children are working extra hours, so they will be home

later than usual. This is supported by research results (Jediut et al., 2020) showing that providing additional hours is very effective in developing reading and numeracy skills. It is characterised by an increase in student learning outcomes after additional hours are implemented within a certain period of time.

d. Student's Antusias

Below is data from observations made by researchers regarding students' enthusiasm for carrying out the activities and habits described previously.

From the observation data, it can be seen that the majority of students have high enthusiasm for participating in all activities and training. Almost all students

who took part in the activities and habituation were cheerful when the activities started. Even before entering the schedule, the students had reminded their teachers that soon there would be activities and habituation. Students also brought the tools or materials requested by the teacher properly; only a small number of students did not bring them because they forgot. Students become increasingly enthusiastic about asking, answering, and conveying their opinions during activities and familiarization. Students' ability to solve problems also increases; students are able to analyse and draw conclusions, even though sometimes they have to be helped by the teacher.

Table 2. Observation result

Indicators	Question	
	Yes	No
Students are enthusiastic about participating in activities	P	
Students are able to participate in activities well	P	
Students bring activity equipment	P	
Students follow the activity rules well	P	
Students are eager to ask questions, answer and convey their opinions	P	
Students are able to solve problems presented by the teacher	P	

e. Faced and Efforts to Overcome The Obstacles

To find out the obstacles faced in carrying out activities and habits, researchers gathered information from informants.

Interviewer: "Are there any obstacles to implementing the strategy?"

Informant 1: "Of course there are, such as parents not supporting their children, so their children's abilities are also less than optimal; our school is also inclusive, so there are students with special needs who cannot be

equated with regular students” (NP, 20/10/2023).

Informant 2: “Yes, some students are difficult to focus on; sometimes they are too lazy to pay attention, so I provide motivation and understanding. Sometimes, when carrying out P5, students often forget to bring materials or tools, so my parents give me information via the WhatsApp group” (SS, 10/20/2023).

Informant 3: “Yes, during P5, there were lots of dangerous tools such as knives and stoves; therefore, I chose food made with simple tools.” (ES, 25/10/2023).

Informant 4: “Yes, if we teach a lot of students who don't pay attention and play alone, then we ask the teacher how to keep the class conducive.” (YB, 28/10/2023).

From the interview, the following points can be explained:

1) Parents are Less Supportive

There are some parents who do not fully support school activities. The fact that many students still do not receive enough attention from their parents is evidence of this. Students only learn at school, while they don't study at home because their parents don't accompany them. To overcome this, the school always communicates with the committee and students' parents so that a harmonious and communicative relationship is established.

There are students with special needs SD Negeri 2 Bendan is an inclusive school; there are at least 10 students with special

needs spread across various classes. These students experience learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. Efforts made by the school include holding additional classes after school to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic for these students.

2) Students Do Not Bring Tools and Materials During P5 Activities

During P5 activities, students often forget to bring materials or tools assigned by the teacher. Therefore, teachers must always communicate with students' parents regarding the activities that will be carried out so that parents can help students prepare from home.

3) Dangerous Tools During P5 Activities

Making crafts or food cannot be separated from sharp and dangerous tools for students. Therefore, to minimise unwanted incidents, teachers choose craft or food projects that are simple and easy to make so that activities remain safe.

4) Students are Less Enthusiastic and Passive

When carrying out an activity, there are bound to be students who are enthusiastic and who are less enthusiastic. So, teachers must provide understanding, convey goals, and motivate students before starting the activity so that students know the benefits of the activity.

5) Students do not pay attention to Instructor

When students teach in class, there are still students who don't pay attention. Students are easily distracted by things around them, such as playing alone, drawing, and telling stories with friends. To overcome this, students asked the teacher for advice on how to make the class conducive.

4. Conclusion

After conducting research, SD Negeri 2 Bendan used the findings to develop strategies for enhancing students' thinking abilities through an independent curriculum. This strategy takes the form of extra-curriculars and various activities. Extra-curricular activities include scouting, dance, drumband, painting, and pantomime. There are also activities in the form of differentiated learning, P5 activities, numeracy quizzes, reading 15 minutes before learning, memorising multiplication, and additional hours. There are differences in the condition of students' critical thinking abilities before and after this activity. Before these various activities, the majority of students had low critical thinking skills, they were only passive and not enthusiastic. However, after implementing extracurricular activities and various activities over a period of two years, students' conditions have changed significantly. Literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving abilities have increased, as evidenced by the increasing number of students who are active in learning, and students' interest in

participating in activities has also increased.

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