THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF TEACHERS IN DETERMINING CORE SOCIOLOGY MATERIALS TO CREATE MEANINGFUL LEARNING

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Abstract	This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to examine the strategic role of teachers in determining meaningful and contextual Sociology subject matter in the Solo Raya and Central Java regions. Research data was obtained through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of learning planning and implementation documents. The research population is all active Sociology teachers who are members of the Sociology Teacher Conference (MGMP) of Greater Solo and Central Java, while the sample includes 13 teachers from four public and private high schools in Surakarta City, Sukoharjo Regency, Sragen Regency, and one aliyah madrasah in Surakarta. Data collection techniques include passive observation of the learning process from March 4-28, 2025, in-depth interviews with teachers, MGMP heads, and two students from each school, and document collection in the form of lesson plans, teaching modules, syllabi, and other teaching materials. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawn, and continuous verification. The results of the study showed that teachers applied three main strategies in the selection of essential materials, namely the relationship with students' social lives, continuity between materials, and strengthening literacy and numeracy. These findings confirm that teachers' autonomy and pedagogical capacity greatly determine the success of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in meaningful Sociology learning, so systemic support, continuous training, and collaboration between teachers through MGMP are needed.
Keywords	Role of Teachers, Sociology Subject Matter, Meaningful Learning, Independent Curriculum, Material Selection Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Sociology education at the secondary school level has an important role in shaping the critical and social awareness of students. However, in its implementation, Sociology learning is often still textual and separate from the social reality of students. The general national curriculum has not fully provided space for teachers to adapt the material to the local context. This causes the Sociology material to become less relevant and lose meaning for students who live in cultural and social diversity such as in the Solo Raya and Central Java regions. In the concept of *Pedagogical Content Knowledge*, teachers need to master the content, pedagogy, and understanding of student characteristics to create meaningful learning (Yadav & Berges, 2019). If teachers only deliver material based on textbooks without adapting the local context, then the learning process will become passive and less reflective. Meaningful learning requires the involvement of students in understanding the social conditions around them. Therefore, the role of teachers in determining strategic subject matter is very important. This research is motivated by the need to dig deeper into the strategic role of teachers in compiling contextual Sociology subject matter.

Sociology teachers in Solo Raya and Central Java began to develop a more contextual approach in choosing subject matter. They try to identify social issues that are close to students' lives, such as urbanization, local culture, structural poverty, and identity-based social conflicts. This process is carried out through social observation, informal interviews with students, and analysis of developing local dynamics. This approach is in line with *the theory of Contextual Teaching and Learning* which states that learning becomes more effective if students can relate the material to their real experiences (Yildiz & Baltaci, 2016). Teachers act as a bridge between the academic world and the social reality of students. Thus, the subject matter is not presented as isolated information, but as a tool of social analysis. This helps students understand social phenomena with a reflective and critical approach. Teachers also insert local values such as cultural wisdom, social solidarity, and community participation in learning. This identification process becomes the foundation for creating meaningful and contextual learning.

Although the enthusiasm to adapt the material is quite high, Sociology teachers in Solo Raya and Central Java face various challenges in their practice. One of the main challenges is the limited local reference sources that can be systematically integrated into the Sociology curriculum. Most of the teaching materials are still centralistic and do not reflect the complexity of the social reality of the region. In addition, the high administrative burden and pressure to complete the national

syllabus often make it difficult for teachers to develop the material creatively. *The pedagogy of the Oppressed* emphasizes the importance of liberating education, which is only possible if teachers have autonomy and critical awareness in designing learning (Kandemir et al., 2020). In this context, teachers are trapped in a repetitive learning pattern and lack of innovation. The limitations of professional training related to the development of local curriculum are also a significant obstacle. Support from local governments and higher education institutions to develop local modules is still very limited. As a result, teachers must struggle independently to create relevant and meaningful material.

The role of teachers in designing contextual Sociology subject matter has been proven to be able to improve students' understanding of social issues that develop in their environment. When students learn about social phenomena they experience or witness firsthand, they find it easier to understand and respond critically. This is in accordance with *the theory of Meaningful Learning* which states that information will be easier to absorb if it is associated with the knowledge that students already have (Clarke & Roche, 2018). Such learning allows students not only to memorize concepts, but also to be able to relate concepts to real life. Students' emotional and cognitive engagement increases when learning feels relevant to their lives. In the Solo Raya and Central Java regions, issues such as palace culture, inter-ethnic relations, and changes in work patterns in the community became interesting topics of discussion in the classroom. Teachers who are able to design locality-based learning will create transformative learning spaces. Students are not only recipients of information, but also active interpreters of social realities. This is the expected form of involvement in meaningful Sociology learning.

Learning connected to locality provides a new dimension in the development of the Sociology curriculum. Solo Raya and Central Java have rich social and cultural complexity, which can be used as an authentic source of learning. However, so far, the local aspect has often only been a complement, not the core of learning. By elevating local realities as the subject matter, students will have a sense of ownership of the material they are studying. *Multicultural Education* states that education should reflect the diversity and experiences of students so that they feel valued and engaged (Arias et al., 2021). Sociology teachers who are responsive to local contexts will be able to foster social empathy and community solidarity among students. Subject matter such as social inequality, local traditions, and contemporary social practices become more meaningful when discussed in the context of student residence. The integration of these local values can also

strengthen students' cultural identities as part of a vibrant society. Thus, Sociology education can be a means to build bridges between local values and global challenges.

In the research area, Sociology teachers implement adaptive and participatory strategies in designing subject matter by involving students in identifying important local issues, using case studies, and conducting social projects aligned with the Student-Centered Learning approach. Collaboration with local communities, social institutions, NGOs, and community leaders enriches materials with authentic experiences and local narratives, fostering students' critical awareness of surrounding social issues and positioning Sociology as both a cognitive and social empowerment tool. This research examines the strategic role of teachers in creating meaningful, locality-based learning through innovative and flexible curriculum development, emphasizing the need to enhance teacher capacity, autonomy, and support in developing contextual teaching materials. Grounded in the principles of Critical Pedagogy, the study highlights teachers as agents of change and offers findings that can inform teacher training, curriculum revision, and reflective practices to improve the quality of contextual Sociology education (Karina et al., 2024; Junsay, 2016).

Research shows that the role of teachers in the development of sociology materials has a major influence on the achievement of meaningful learning, especially in the context of high schools in urban areas (Apiati et al., 2024). The integration of local wisdom in the sociology subject matter is able to increase the relevance of the material to students' social reality (Fairuzzabadi et al., 2023). The importance of professional training for sociology teachers in compiling adaptive and contextual materials, which has an impact on increasing student participation (Fatmawati & Sofia, 2024). A curriculum that is too general is a challenge for teachers in creating meaningful learning, so it is necessary to have flexibility in the role of teachers in choosing local sociological topics (McTighe & Brown, 2020). Teachers' involvement in mapping social issues in the school environment strengthens the connection between the material and students' real experiences, but is still limited to thematic approaches without in-depth analysis of the local context (Mawaddah, 2018).

The five previous studies have not specifically highlighted how teachers in the Solo Raya and Central Java regions strategically determine local and contextual sociological subjects in creating meaningful learning. In addition, most of the previous research focuses are still focused on aspects of curriculum integration or the use of learning media, rather than on the teacher's decision-making process in determining core materials that are relevant to local social dynamics. This research presents novelty by focusing on teachers' pedagogical strategies in aligning sociological content with

the socio-cultural needs and characteristics of students in Solo Raya and Central Java. Another novelty lies in the analysis of the role of teachers as autonomous curriculum agents, who are able to bridge national education policies with local contextual needs, through an approach based on social mapping of their respective regions. This study also included variables of student involvement in local social issues as a result of the choice of subject matter by teachers.

From research Mulia & Suwarno (2016) The gap is the lack of exploration of certain areas and student involvement in local issues as a measure of meaning. This research answers by focusing on the involvement of Solo Raya students in surrounding social issues through contextual materials. Touching on local wisdom, the gap is that the teacher's strategy in adjusting the subject matter has not been analyzed, which in this study is described in depth (Zuhairoh et al., 2024). Apiati et al. (2024) emphasize training, but not looking directly at the process of selecting materials by teachers, which is the focus of this research. Ahmetya et al. (2023) Points out the importance of teacher flexibility, but does not elaborate on how teachers decide the relevance of the topic to local conditions. This research provides a tactical and strategic overview of the actions of teachers in the local context. Hamidah et al. (2025) studied teachers' involvement in social issues, while this study goes further by linking such involvement to its effect on the quality of meaningful learning. Thus, this research has novelty in terms of location, variable focus, and strengthening the role of teachers in the design of contextual subject matter.

This research departs from the urgency of the strategic role of teachers in determining the subject matter of Sociology that is able to create meaningful learning, especially in the context of the Independent Curriculum policy, which provides flexibility for educators to design learning according to the needs of students and the local context. In the Solo Raya and Central Java regions that have distinctive social, cultural, and sociological dynamics, teachers are required not only to be curriculum implementers but also learning agents who are able to map social issues and transform them into relevant sociological material. This is in line with the view Estari (2020) in sociocultural theory that emphasizes the importance of social context in the learning process, where teachers act as mediators between students' knowledge and social experiences. The government, through Permendikbudristek No. 12 of 2024 concerning the Independent Curriculum, underlines the importance of strengthening the role of teachers in differentiating materials and approaching contextual project-based learning. However, in practice, there is still a gap between curriculum freedom and teachers' ability to select sociology subject matter that is contextual and according to

students' needs. This research emphasizes the need to strengthen teachers' pedagogical capacity in designing core sociological materials that not only reflect the objectives of the curriculum but also are responsive to local social realities. Thus, this study contributes to enriching the discourse of the role of teachers as the main actors in the implementation of an adaptive and meaningful curriculum.

Based on the background that has been described, the purpose of this study is to examine in depth the strategic role of teachers in determining the subject matter of Sociology in order to create meaningful learning, especially in the Solo Raya and Central Java regions, which have complex and dynamic socio-cultural characteristics. This research seeks to answer how teachers identify, select, and design subject matter that suits the local needs of students, as well as the challenges faced in relating Sociology material with actual social reality. From the theoretical side, this research contributes to strengthening the study of meaningful learning in Sociology education by adding the perspective of the role of teachers as curators of locality-based materials, as well as enriching the discourse of social and sociocultural constructivism theory in education. Meanwhile, from the pragmatic side, the results of this research are expected to provide practical recommendations for teachers, curriculum developers, and education policy makers in designing Sociology learning strategies that are relevant, contextual, and student-centered, so as to increase student involvement and understanding of social issues both at the local and national levels.

METHOD

Research Methods

This research is a qualitative research with a case study approach that focuses on "The Strategic Role of Teachers in Determining Sociology Subject Matter to Create Meaningful Learning in Solo Raya and Central Java". The case study approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the practices, experiences, and considerations of Sociology teachers in compiling and applying contextual and meaningful learning subject matter (Education et al., 2018).

Research data

The data of this research is in the form of narration of in-depth interview results, notes of the results of observation of the learning process, and learning planning and implementation documents prepared by teachers (Allsop, 2019; Portelance & Bers, 2015). The data sources consist of active Sociology teachers who are members of the Solo Raya and Central Java Sociology Subject Teachers' Conference (MGMP), as well as students who participate in learning at their schools.

Data collection techniques

1. The observation was carried out to directly observe the Sociology learning process in the classroom, starting on *March 4, 2025*, and ending on March 28, 2025, in four public and private schools spread across the Solo Raya area and its surroundings. This observation is carried out in a passive participatory manner without intervention in the course of learning (Fernández et al., 2019; Morgan et al., 2017).

2. Interviews were conducted in depth with ten Sociology teachers from districts/cities in the Solo Raya area and three other representatives from the Central Java region, and were complemented by interviews with the head of MGMP and two students from each school as complementary informants.

3. Documentation in the form of Learning Implementation Plans (RPP), teaching modules, syllabus, and other teaching materials used by teachers to design and implement Sociology subject matter. This document is an important data to see the extent to which teachers' planning reflects the selection of contextual and meaningful materials (Weintrop, 2018).

Data analysis

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, through four main stages, including data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawn, and verification (Saleh & Hermansyah, 2024).

1. Data reduction is carried out by sorting and filtering raw data from observations, interviews, and documentation to focus on information relevant to the research objective, namely, how teachers design strategic subject matter.

2. The presentation of data was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives, category tables, and direct quotes from participants, to show the patterns of teachers' practices in selecting and relating the material to the local social context.

3. Data analysis was carried out critically on teachers' practices in choosing subject matter, associated with meaningful learning theory, social constructivism, and contextual education. The researchers also triangulated the theory and compared the findings with previous relevant studies to strengthen the validity of the results.

4. Verification is carried out on an ongoing basis to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the data, and the conclusions drawn are reflectively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This is part of the research results, which contain findings from the field related to "The Strategic Role of Teachers in Determining Sociology Subject Matter to Create Meaningful Learning in Solo Raya and Central Java". Presented in the form of tables, diagrams, and descriptions of each unit of finding:

Table 1. Teachers' Strategies in Determining Sociology Subject Matter

No	Teacher Strategy	Frequency Found	Percentage (%)
1.	Tailor the material to local issues	23 teachers	71,8
2.	Collaboration between MGMP teachers	19 teachers	59,3
3.	Integration of local wisdom	15 teachers	46,8
4.	Analysis of student needs	25 teachers	78,1
5.	Post-teaching discussions and reflections	17 teachers	53,1

Most of the Sociology teachers in Solo Raya and Central Java stated that they made adjustments to the subject matter according to the local social conditions of students. This is done to create more contextual and meaningful learning. In addition, most teachers are active in the MGMP forum to compile subject matter that is appropriate to social challenges in their respective regions. Some teachers also integrate the values and practices of local wisdom, such as the culture of mutual cooperation and traditional traditions in learning. The student needs analysis approach is the main basis for material adjustments. Some teachers conducted reflective discussions as an evaluative strategy for the effectiveness of the material that had been applied.

Teachers face several major challenges in compiling contextual subject matter. The biggest challenge is the rigidity of the national curriculum structure that limits the space for exploration of local materials. In addition, the limitation of contextual learning resources causes teachers to have to search for or compile additional materials on their own. The social gap between schools also affects the relevance of the material because each school has a different student character. Limited learning time and administrative pressure in fulfilling documents are also technical obstacles faced by teachers in determining and developing meaningful subject matter.

From the quantitative data obtained through the student questionnaire, most felt that learning became more enjoy able and easy to understand when the Sociology material was associated with the social reality around them. Students tend to be more active and reflective if the material contains real issues such as local poverty, adolescent culture, and social conflicts in society. On the other hand, students stated that learning that only emphasized memorization without any

connection to daily life made them disinterested and bored quickly. This shows that the choice of subject matter by teachers has a significant effect on student engagement and understanding.

In practice, teachers make various innovations to connect the subject of Sociology with local issues. The most common strategy is the use of case studies that are close to students' daily lives, such as the issue of waste, poverty, or adolescent conflict. Some teachers also involve students in direct observation of the community to observe social phenomena. In addition, community-based mini-projects such as social reporting are becoming a method used to encourage active and contextual learning. Group discussions based on local topics are also an effective favorite technique to increase students' curiosity.

This research aims to identify and understand the strategic role of teachers in determining the subject matter of Sociology in order to create meaningful learning in the Solo Raya and Central Java regions. With a descriptive-qualitative approach and data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and the distribution of questionnaires to teachers and students, a number of significant findings were obtained that reflect real dynamics in learning practices in the field. The main focus of this research is to describe how Sociology teachers select, adjust, and develop the subject matter by considering the socio-cultural context of students, the challenges they face, and the impact felt by students on the learning carried out. The findings are presented systematically through tables, diagrams, and graphs, which are then elaborated in the form of a narrative to provide a complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The presentation of data in this section aims to provide empirical evidence of teachers' active involvement in compiling teaching materials that are not only in accordance with the curriculum but also relevant to local needs and actual social issues. Thus, the results of this research are expected to be an important contribution to the development of contextual, reflective, and transformative Sociology learning practices at the secondary school level.

Table 2. The Strategic Role of Teachers in Determining Sociology Subject Matter to Create Meaningful Learning in Solo Raya and Central Java

No.	School Name	The Role of the Teacher	Concept of Essential Materials	Scope of Material	Material Selection Strategy
1.	SMA Negeri 1 Surakarta	Facilitator, Innovator	Social Inequality and Social Mobility	Social structure, social dynamics, conflict, and	Relate the material to actual issues, such as local economic

				social integration	inequality
2.	SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sukoharjo	Social Value Mediators and Contextualization	Values and Norms in Social Life	Socialization, social deviance, social control	Selection based on student experience and real cases in the surrounding community
3.	MAN 1 Surakarta	Community-Based Social Project Steering	Social Change and Globalization	Factors driving and inhibiting change, the impact of globalization	Integrate the material with student project activities, such as village observations or field interviews
4.	SMA Negeri 2 Sragen	Bridging Theories-Local Contexts	Social and Family Institutions	Function of institutions, role of family, education, and religion	Vote based on student involvement in family life and indigenous local roles
5.	SMA IT Nur Hidayah Surakarta	Strengthening Religious Values in Society	Social Interaction and Tolerance	Interaction processes, forms of interaction, acculturation, and assimilation	Strategi tematik dengan penguatan moderasi beragama dan Thematic strategies with strengthening religious moderation and a

1. SMA Negeri 1 Surakarta

Sociology teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Surakarta play a strategic role as facilitators who actively explore the potential of students through a local thematic approach. Teachers choose essential material concepts in the form of *social inequality* and *social mobility* because they are considered closest to the reality of student life in a large city that is socio-economically diverse. The scope of the material is focused on social structures, stratification, and conflicts that occur in urban society. In the material selection strategy, teachers carefully map social phenomena that are currently of public concern in the Solo area, such as income gaps, educated unemployment, and shifts in social roles. This is done

so that students not only understand the concept, but also be able to criticize the social phenomena they face daily. Materials are selected through discussions with peers and reflections from students' learning experiences. Learning is designed to encourage students to observe the surrounding environment and discuss it in classroom forums. Teachers also often direct students to create mini-projects on social stratification in their respective environments. As a result, students show a high interest in the material because it is relevant to their lives.

2. SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Sukoharjo

In this school, teachers take on the role of guardians of social and moral values and direct relevant learning experiences. The subject matter chosen by the teacher focuses on *the values* and *social norms* that grow in the Sukoharjo community, which is still very thick with the local culture. Teachers adjust the scope of the material so that it is not only theoretical, but also touches on the real practice of social values in students' daily lives. The strategies used involve students in identifying forms of social deviance around them and examining how social norms respond to them. In practice, teachers encourage students to observe the environment in which they live and record various forms of non-compliance with social norms. Students were then invited to present the results of the observations in class discussions. Teachers also facilitate debate forums between student groups so that they can voice critical views on how society solves social problems. This approach makes sociological material more alive and meaningful because it comes into direct contact with the local context they experience.

3. MAN 1 Surakarta

Teachers at MAN 1 Surakarta play the role of community project-based learning experience designers. The subject matter that is considered strategic to be taught is *social change* and *globalization*, which is considered very relevant to the social dynamics in developing urban society. The scope of the material is directed at the impact of social change on the family, economy, and local culture. Teachers choose strategies that allow students to understand the material through field activities such as interviews with community leaders or visits to areas affected by development. The teacher encourages students to observe the phenomenon of value shifts in their respective communities, then process the results of observations into reports and presentations. The learning process is arranged so that students are actively involved in compiling field data and relating it to the material discussed. In class, discussions often discuss changes in adolescent lifestyles, the role of social media, and the flow of modernization that enters society. Teachers also open up a space for reflection so

that students can evaluate changes in grades in their own families. This contextual learning has been proven to make students better understand the social consequences of global change.

4. SMA Negeri 2 Sragen

Sociology teachers at SMA Negeri 2 Sragen play the role of a liaison between theory and local social reality. The material considered essential is social *institutions*, with a primary focus on the role of *the family* and *religion*. The scope of the material is tailored to the lives of students who come from the family backgrounds of farmers, laborers, and small traders. Teachers use learning strategies based on students' personal experiences, such as telling stories about their family structure or religious activity routines. The material was delivered with an exploratory approach, where students were asked to create a family tree and map social roles in their homes. Teachers also provide a space for students to share stories about their experiences in extended families living in the same house or intergenerational relationships typical in the village. This approach makes the material more personal and easy to understand because students can see how it relates directly to their lives. Teachers use local media such as family photos, videos of village social activities, and folklore as an introduction to class discussions. This strategy is able to build a connection between sociology material and the life values that students live every day.

5. SMA IT Nur Hidayah Surakarta

In this school, sociology teachers play the role of integrating social and religious values in learning. The main material raised was *social interaction* and *tolerance*, which are the main concerns in the formation of students' character in Islamic-based schools. The scope of the material is developed to reach social issues related to relationships between individuals and groups in a pluralistic society. Teachers use learning strategies based on real case studies that occur in the student environment, such as conflicts between friends, differences of opinion on social media, and issues of tolerance between religions. In class, teachers often show video recordings or true stories that are relevant to students' social lives, then invite them to discuss the solutions and lessons of the event. Teachers also ask students to write personal reflections on their social experiences related to diversity. This strategy makes students more aware of the importance of respecting differences and developing an open attitude in interacting. This contextual material allows students not only to understand the concept of social interaction cognitively but also to internalize the underlying social values.

The results of the study show that teaching Sociology subjects is a fun thing for teachers. Not only because the material in Sociology is diverse and very contextual in daily life, but also because teaching students at a high school age presents its own challenges for them. The material in Sociology is very close to daily social life, so that teachers do not find it difficult to relate real examples in providing an understanding of the concepts being taught in learning. However, in learning practice, the various methods and techniques applied by teachers are not all considered strategic and suitable by students in making it easier for them to absorb learning materials.

The order of learning methods that students disliked was group discussions (22.8%), making resumes (19.1%), making simple research (17.3%), role-playing (15.4%), making mind maps (14.8%), and lectures (9.9%). This percentage figure shows that the discussion method is the least preferred method by students. Meanwhile, the data further explained the methods that students considered suitable for learning, namely lectures (52.5%), discussions by discussing a topic (17.3%), making mind maps and resumes (15.4%), simple group research (11.7%), and the rest was simple individual research.

The majority of students' learning styles are auditory, who prefer the teacher's lecture method as a method that is suitable for learning. This method is also considered by students as a fun method to learn sociology material, especially material that contains sociological concepts or theories. The breadth of the scope of learning outcomes makes the sociology material so broad and abundant that it takes time in the delivery process. Some materials are considered difficult for students to understand and do not become a significant basis for the sustainability of the material in the next level of learning outcomes. The following is a matrix of teachers' understanding related to essential material in Sociology.

Table 3. Essential Material Concepts

Informant	Essential Material Concepts
Teacher of SMA Negeri 2 Sukoharjo	Materials that equip students to socially relate in society
Teacher of SMA Al-Islam 1 Surakarta	Core material/subject matter
Teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali	Important material, not to be missed in learning
Teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Karanganyar	Prerequisite material because it relates to the next material in the next phase
Teacher of SMA Negeri 3 Surakarta	Meaningful material for learners

The use of the right method and the density of material summarized in the sociological learning outcomes in phases E and F requires teachers to have certain strategies, one of which is the

selection of essential materials. However, it is undeniable that the research data also shows that Sociology teachers sometimes experience confusion when it comes to determining essential material. There are concerns that if you determine the material yourself, the material taught will not be the same as that taught by teachers in other schools, which has an impact on students' learning outcomes measured through summative assessments. Therefore, the majority of Sociology teachers determine learning materials through agreements formed in the MGMP (subject teacher deliberation), both at the Regency/City level and agreements within the Foundation. This agreement is important to achieve material standards in sociological learning outcomes so that the indicators in the relative summative assessment will be the same in each school. In the context of the independent curriculum, it is broken down in the following table:

Table 4. Scope of High School Sociology Material

Class X	**Functions of Sociology, Self-Identity, Social Action, Social Relations, Role of Social Institutions, Simple Social Research**
Class XI	Social Groups, Social Problems, Principles of Equality in Social Differences, Social Conflict and Violence, Social Integration
Class XII	Social Change, Impact of Globalization, Social Inequality, Community Empowerment Based on Local Wisdom

Source: Independent Curriculum Competency Achievement

The learning outcomes listed in the table above enable teachers to manage learning so that the material received by students can be well organized. Teachers then apply strategies so that the material is in harmony with the learning outcomes set out in the competencies of the independent curriculum, namely by choosing essential materials. Through the table above, it is also recorded that the materials in the Sociology learning outcomes are prerequisites for each other. This means that the material in class X will strengthen students' understanding of the next class material. Furthermore, when determining essential materials, teachers must also have certain considerations so that learning outcomes can still be achieved. The results of the research that have been carried out show several strategies carried out by teachers, as illustrated in the following chart.
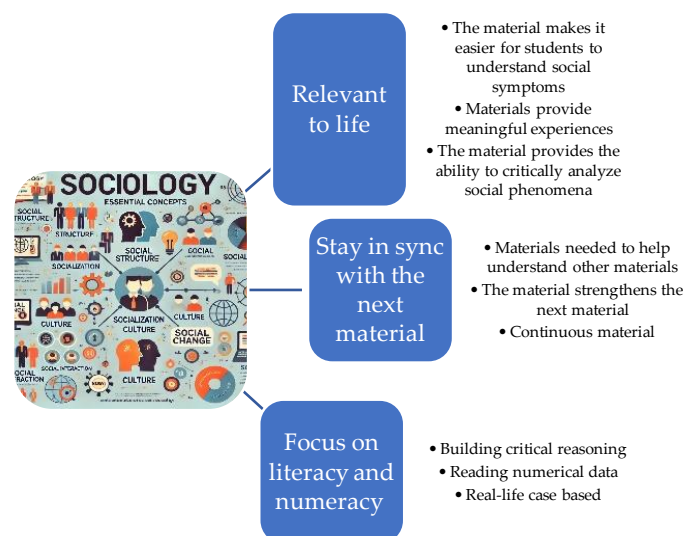
Figure 1. Diagram of the Strategy Chart for the Selection of Essential Materials in Sociology

The chart above explains that the selection of essential materials contains a variety of considerations. Relevance to students' lives is one of the considerations, in addition to synchronizing one material with another and focusing on improving literacy and numeracy skills. Meaningful learning allows the three strategies applied in the selection of essential Sociology materials to be carried out and achieve learning competencies.

What kind of material is considered essential by Sociology teachers to teach students? The majority of informants, who are none other than Sociology teachers, responded that essential material is material that includes core concepts that help students understand society, social phenomena, and structures that affect the lives of individuals and groups. This means that essential materials are sought to be materials that help students in living in society because the materials in sociology are clearly related to social phenomena in society.

Discussion

The results of the study show that teaching Sociology subjects provides a pleasant experience for teachers. This is due to the contextual nature of the Sociology material and its close connection to daily life, making it easier for teachers to provide real examples. Meaningful learning occurs when the subject matter is connected to the social experience of the learner, and in this case, Sociology becomes the ideal forum for it. (Fung, 2017). The challenges in teaching high school students also create their own dynamics that require teachers' creativity in developing learning strategies. Teachers find it helpful to have actual material because students can directly relate it to their social environment. Students build their understanding based on concrete experiences (Kotsopoulos et al.,

2017). Therefore, students' active involvement in social contexts is important in the learning of Sociology. However, the findings also show that there is a discrepancy between the methods used by teachers and students' learning preferences. This shows that even though the material is contextual, the delivery approach still needs adjustments to be effective.

Students' preferences for learning methods provide an important picture for teachers to adjust their learning approach. Most students like the lecture method, while the group discussion method is the least preferred method. This may be contrary to modern pedagogical trends that encourage collaborative and active participation-based learning (Yadav et al., 2016). Students who tend to have an auditory learning style feel more comfortable when the teacher explains directly than when they work in a group. Students' learning styles greatly affect how they absorb information, so the teaching approach should be adjusted (Dileklii, 2017). Therefore, although the discussion method is considered constructive, its effectiveness must be considered based on the characteristics of the learner. Adapting learning methods that take into account students' learning styles will provide opportunities to achieve optimal learning outcomes. These findings reinforce the importance of differentiated instruction approaches to accommodate diverse students (Irianti & Wijaya, 2019). Teachers need to balance an active approach with students' learning preferences.

In terms of the selection of essential materials, Sociology teachers have diverse views, but focus on the idea that the material must be relevant to the social life of students. This concept is in line with learning theory, which emphasizes that new material will be easier to understand if it is associated with the knowledge structure that students already have (Afriansyah et al., 2024). In this context, essential material is considered an important foundation for building advanced understanding. Teachers interpret essential material as the core of learning that is not only important academically, but also socially. The relationship between the material and the students' social experience makes the material easier to digest and apply. This reflects the importance of contextual teaching and learning (Haryoto & Narimo, 2013). That way, essential material is not only theoretical, but also applicable in students' daily lives. The goal is for students not only to remember concepts, but also to be able to use them in responding to social realities.

Although teachers understand the importance of essential material, the reality is that they often experience confusion in determining the material. This is due to the fear of material inequality between schools, which has an impact on summative assessments. The success of education is not only in cognition but also in the equalization of values and standards (Witness et al., 2014). This

uncertainty is overcome by the existence of the MGMP forum, which is a means of collaboration between teachers to agree on material that is considered essential. The deliberation function in the MGMP allows teachers to have a uniform basis in compiling materials and lesson plans. This is in accordance with the concept of a community of practice, where teachers as practitioners share best practices for the sake of improving professionalism (Dagienė & Stupurienė, 2016). The standardization of essential materials through MGMP also helps achieve the goals of the national curriculum more consistently. The agreement in MGMP is a form of guaranteeing equality in learning.

The change of the curriculum to an independent curriculum requires teachers to be more selective in choosing materials, especially essential materials that are in accordance with the Learning Outcomes (CP). This curriculum emphasizes the flexibility of teachers in developing learning, but at the same time demands high pedagogical skills. The success of curriculum implementation depends on the capacity of teachers to understand and adapt learning to the needs of students (McTighe & Brown, 2020). However, teachers with a non-sociology background experience challenges in understanding the relationship between materials. This is in line with the assertion that non-linear teachers have difficulty in compiling the conceptual framework of sociology in its entirety (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important that teacher training is carried out on an ongoing basis to improve their understanding of essential materials. Without adequate understanding, teachers will have difficulty delivering material systematically. The discontinuity of the order of the material is also a concern, especially in the textbooks used.

One of the strategies used by teachers in choosing essential materials is to pay attention to the relationship between materials from class to class. The material in class X is the basis for understanding the material in classes XI and XII. This is in accordance with the concept *of spiral curriculum* that was introduced, namely, the material is taught gradually and repeatedly with an increased level of complexity (Anggraini et al., 2019). If this connection is not considered, then the learning process will become intermittent, and students will lose the learning context. This strategy also helps in creating continuity and progressivity of learning. That way, each material taught will complement the others and form a comprehensive understanding. Teachers need to ensure that the material being taught is an important prerequisite for the next material. This will ensure that students understand not only the social fragments but the entire social system as a whole. This strategy also prevents misconceptions in students.

The second strategy used by teachers in determining essential material is its relationship with students' real lives. Material that is relevant to current social conditions is easier for students to understand and accept. Messages will be received optimally if they have a strong meaning and connection with the reality of the recipient (Hazlina et al., 2024). In this case, sociological material related to actual social problems, such as social inequality, violence, and social change, is important to teach. Teachers feel that materials like this can awaken students' social awareness and encourage them to become active and responsible citizens. The knowledge gained is also applicable and encourages the formation of social character. Therefore, relevance is an important indicator in choosing essential materials. Relevant material will have a long-term effect on student engagement in society.

The third strategy that emerged from this study was attention to students' literacy and numeracy in the selection of materials. The government, through AKM, emphasizes the importance of strengthening this basic competency in all subjects, including Sociology. AKM assesses students' ability to understand reading and use numbers in a real context (Hasanah et al., 2023). Sociology teachers view that strengthening numeracy skills in Sociology can be done through learning social data, simple statistics, and graph interpretation. This not only improves students' understanding of concepts but also helps them think logically and systematically. Sociology is not only about social concepts, but also the analysis of social data that demands basic numeracy skills. Therefore, material that supports the reinforcement of numeracy becomes part of the essential material. This strengthening is expected to improve student learning outcomes as a whole and be relevant to future needs.

Meaningful learning is the key to implementing the above strategies. Meaningful learning occurs when new information is systematically linked to existing knowledge structures (An et al., 2013). Teachers are required to create an active, authentic, and reflective learning atmosphere so that students not only memorize, but also understand and apply concepts. This concept of meaningful learning is strengthened by Novitasari (2025) which emphasizes the importance of students' emotional and cognitive involvement in learning. In Sociology, this means that students must be given space to analyze and reflect on the social phenomena around them. Essential material should encourage critical thinking, empathy, and problem-solving skills. In this way, learning becomes not only academically meaningful but also socially and personally meaningful. This is a challenge as well as an opportunity for teachers in designing sociology learning.

With these findings, it can be concluded that the selection of essential materials by Sociology teachers is not a simple process, but a strategic process that considers the social context, student needs, material relevance, and curriculum demands. Teachers no longer only play the role of delivering material, but also as learning designers who facilitate the growth of students' social understanding. The strategies that teachers carry out to choose essential materials show awareness of the importance of creating meaningful, contextual, and student-centered learning. This process also shows the challenges of implementing the independent curriculum in the field, especially for teachers with non-sociology backgrounds. Therefore, systemic support, ongoing training, and collaboration between teachers through MGMP are needed. It is hoped that Sociology learning can become more adaptive to the development of the times and the needs of students. That way, Sociology education can play an active role in producing a generation that is critical, caring, and able to live in the midst of the complexity of modern society.

CONCLUSION

Changes in the curriculum require Sociology teachers to adapt to determine the right material and in accordance with the achievement of learning competencies. The breadth of material coverage and the many other inhibiting factors make teachers to implement a strategy for selecting essential materials. The three strategies developed by teachers include choosing materials that are appropriate and relevant to the social life of the community, choosing materials by considering the relationship between materials in each learning outcome, and choosing materials based on considerations of improving students' numeracy literacy skills. This research is expected to be able to contribute to Sociology teachers by providing a meaningful learning context for students to prepare students to become lifelong learners.

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