

## A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO GEOGRAPHY LEARNING IN SCHOOL

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### Abstract

This study aims to find out how to apply a contextual approach to geography learning in schools. This research is qualitative research with descriptive analysis technique with literature study. This literature study aims to determine how contextual learning is applied in learning geography in schools. The author collects data and information related to the contextual approach in geography learning, sourced from research journals, both national and international, supporting books, newspapers, and magazines. Based on the results of the discussion in this literature study, it can be concluded that the contextual approach is very suitable to be applied in geography learning because geography learning is possible to be designed with contextual learning. After all, it deals with various physical and social phenomena around the student's environment. In its application, the contextual approach includes seven components such as constructivism, questioning, inquiry, learning community, modelling, reflection, and authentic assessment. There are several benefits of applying a contextual approach in geography learning. It can increase learning motivation, student understanding, critical thinking skills, and learning outcomes.

Keywords: contextual approach, geography learning, school.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Contextual teaching and learning (CTL) is based on research conducted by John Dewey. The foundation of thinking (philosophy) in contextual learning is constructivism, that knowledge is built by humans tiny by little whose results are expanded through a limited context. Constructivism philosophy, which views reality as having multiple dimensions, is interactive and requires interpretation based on social experience. "Reality is multilayer, interactive and a shared social experience interpretation by individuals" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

The contextual model is a learning concept that assumes that children will learn better if the environment is created scientifically, meaning that learning will be more meaningful if children "work" and "experience" for themselves what they learn, not just "knowing it". Learning is not just an activity of transferring knowledge from the teacher to students, but how students are able to interpret what is learned. Therefore, learning strategies are more important than just results. In this case, students need to understand what learning means, what are the benefits, in what status they are, and how to achieve it. They realize that what they learn will be helpful in their later life. Thus, they will learn to be more enthusiastic and full of awareness.

The contextual teaching and learning approach is a learning concept that helps teachers relate the material being taught to real-world situations and encourages students to connect their knowledge and its application in everyday life (Nurhadi & Senduk, 2003). As Rahman, Budijanto, & Susilo (2016) argue, providing illustrations different from environmental conditions will make it difficult for students to relate them to their daily lives. The contextual approach will take place naturally in student work and experience activities, not a transfer of knowledge from teacher to student. The contextual approach is more important in learning so that the expected results are more meaningful for children to solve problems, think critically and draw generalizations..

Contextual learning approach theory focuses on multi aspects of the learning environment, including classrooms, science laboratories, computer laboratories, workplaces, and other places (e.g. river fields and others). Contextual learning encourages teachers to select and design a learning environment that links various forms of social, cultural, physical, and psychological experiences in achieving learning outcomes. In the learning process with a contextual approach, the teacher's task is to help students achieve their goals; the teacher manages the class as a team that works together to find knowledge and skills for students that are obtained from the process of finding themselves not from what the teacher says. Thus, students learn starting with the knowledge, experience, and daily context they have, which are associated with the concepts of the subjects studied in class. It is then possible to apply them in their daily lives.

One application of the contextual approach is in learning geography at school. Learning Geography serves to foster and improve students' ability to master Geography material rationally. Mastery of Geography material students owns expected to have a positive attitude and be responsive to their environment. Aspects of fostering mastery of the elements of geography can be done in schools, for example, recognizing the location of an area, the shape of the earth's surface, natural resources and others. On the other hand, students as practitioners of Geography are also a significant factor. They are the next generation of the nation who will connect with the natural environment. In order to apply Geography knowledge correctly, the quality of students' mastery of Geography material must be improved. Thus, they can positively affect the natural environment (Syofniati, 2019).

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mengungkap bagaimana pendekatan kontekstual diterapkan dalam pembelajaran geografi di sekolah sehingga siswa tidak hanya sekedar hafal teori tetapi dapat menguasai materi geografi secara rasional.

## **II. RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is qualitative research with descriptive analysis technique with library research. This research tries to describe existing phenomena, which are happening now or in the past. In conducting data collection, the author collects data and information related to the contextual approach in geography learning, which is sourced from research journals, both national and international, supporting books, newspapers, and magazines. A literature review has several objectives: to inform readers of the results of other studies that are closely related to the research conducted at that time, link the research with the existing literature, and fill gaps in previous studies. Moreover, literature review contains reviews, summaries, and thoughts of the author on several library sources (articles, books, slides, information from the internet, image and graphic data, etc.) about the topics discussed. This literature study aims to know how contextual learning is applied in geography learning in schools.

## **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Geography is a science that studies the similarities and differences between natural phenomena and life on earth (geosphere) in the context of space and territory and human interaction with their physical environment. Social Knowledge Learning Geography is a set of

events carried out by teachers to understand various phenomena. Nature and life on earth and the interaction between humans and their environment (Supriyanto, 2007). Therefore, the contextual approach is one approach that is suitable to be applied in learning geography in schools.

Learning geography is essentially related to the spatial aspects of the earth's surface (geosphere) and geographical factors, the natural environment and human life; therefore, the scope of learning geography include: 1) the natural environment, which is a resource for human life. 2) The spread of humanity with its variations of life. c) The spatial interaction of human beings with the natural environment that variations the characteristics of places on the earth's surface. d) Regional unit, a combination of land, water, and the air above it.

Contextual teaching and learning, which is influenced by the philosophy of constructivism, is a learning concept that links the material being taught with students' real-world situations and encourages students to make connections between their knowledge and its application in their daily lives. The application of a contextual approach in teaching involves seven principal components, namely; constructivism, questioning, inquiry, learning community, modelling, reflection, and authentic assessment) (Hidayat, 2012).

The explanation of the seven components above include:

#### 1. Constructivism

This component is the basis for thinking about the CTL approach. Constructivism learning emphasizes the development of one's understanding actively, creatively and productively based on previous knowledge and from meaningful learning experiences. Knowledge is not a set of facts, concepts, and rules ready to be put into practice but must first be constructed and give meaning through experience. Therefore, students need to be accustomed to solving problems, finding something useful for themselves, and developing ideas that exist in themselves. The principles of constructivism that teachers must possess are as follows: 1) The learning process is more critical than learning outcomes. 2) meaningful and relevant information to students' real life is more critical than verbalising information. 3) Students get the widest opportunity to find and apply their own ideas. 4) Students are given the freedom to apply their strategies in learning. 5) Students' knowledge grows and develops through their own experiences. 6) Students' experience will develop deeper and more robust when tested with new experiences. 7) Student experience can be built by assimilation (new knowledge is built from existing knowledge) or accommodation (modification of existing knowledge structures to adapt to the presence of new experiences).

The components of constructivism that teachers in geography learning can apply include:

- 1) The teacher allows students to find their ideas.
- 2) The teacher searches for and uses students' questions and ideas to guide the lesson.
- 3) The teacher uses students' thoughts, experiences, and interests to direct learning.
- 4) The teacher uses alternative sources of information, both in the form of written materials and expert materials.
- 5) The teacher looks for students' ideas before presenting his opinion.
- 6) The teacher encourages students to carry out their analysis activities, collecting objective evidence to support their ideas
- 7) Involve students in finding information that can be applied to solve problems in real life.
- 8) The teacher provides sufficient time to reflect, analyze, respect and use all the ideas put forward by students.
- 9) The teacher encourages students to develop cooperation, information seeking and student activities due to the learning process.

- 10) The teacher seeks students to state the causes of an event and encourages students to predict the consequences.
- 11) The teacher makes students challenged with their conceptions and ideas
- 12) Using local sources (humans, objects) as sources of information that can be used in problem-solving.
- 13) Using problems identified by students and their impact.

## 2. Asking

Asking questions in CTL learning is seen as a teacher's effort to encourage students to know something, direct students to obtain information, and know the development of students' thinking abilities. On the other hand, the reality shows that acquiring one's knowledge always begins with asking questions. Therefore, the principle that teachers need to pay attention to in learning is related to the questioning component: 1) Information gathering is more effective if done through asking questions. 2) Confirmation of what students already know is more effective through question and answer. 3) To increase or strengthen understanding more effectively, it is carried out through both group and class discussions. 4) For teachers, asking students can encourage, guide and assess students' thinking skills. 5) In productive learning, questioning activities are helpful for: digging up information, checking student understanding, generating student responses, knowing the level of student curiosity, knowing what students know, focusing students' attention as desired by the teacher, generating more questions for themselves. Students, and refresh student knowledge.

## 3. Inquiry

The discover component is a core activity of CTL. This activity begins with observing the phenomenon, followed by meaningful activities to produce findings obtained by students themselves. Thus the knowledge and skills acquired by students are not the results of remembering a set of facts but the results of finding out for themselves from the facts they face. The principles that teachers can hold when applying the inquiry component in learning are as follows: 1) Knowledge and skills will be remembered longer if students find them on their own. 2) Information obtained by students will be more stable if it is followed by evidence or data found by students themselves. 3) The inquiry cycle is observation, asking questions, making assumptions, collecting data, and making inferences. 4) Steps of inquiry activities; formulate the problem; observe or make observations; analyze and present the results in writing, pictures, reports, charts, tables, and other works; communicate or present the results to other parties (readers, classmates, teachers, other audiences).

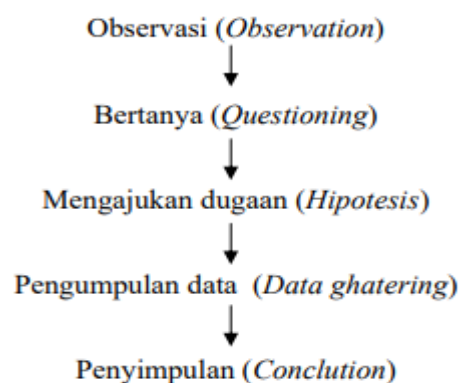


Figure 1. Inquiry Cycle in a contextual approach

#### 4. Learning society

This component suggests that learning outcomes should be obtained from the collaboration with others. Learning outcomes can be obtained by sharing between friends, between groups, and between those who know and those who do not know, both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, learning packaged in group discussions with heterogeneous members and varying numbers greatly supports the components of the learning community. Teachers can consider the principles when implementing learning that concentrates on the learning community component: 1) Basically, learning outcomes are obtained from collaboration or sharing with other parties. 2) Sharing occurs when there are parties who give and receive information from each other. 3) Sharing occurs when there is two-way or multi-way communication. 4) A learning community occurs when each party involved is aware that their knowledge, experience, and skills are beneficial to others. 5) Students involved in the learning community can be a source of learning.

#### 5. Modeling

This component of the CTL approach suggests that learning specific skills and knowledge is followed by a model that students can imitate. The model in question can be given examples, such as how to operate something, show the work, and show an appearance. This kind of learning method will be understood by students more quickly than just telling stories or giving explanations to students without being shown the model or example. The principles of modelling components that teachers can pay attention to when carrying out learning are as follows: 1) Knowledge and skills are obtained steadily if some models or examples can be imitated. 2) Models or examples can be obtained directly from competent people or experts. 3) Models or examples can be in the form of how to operate something, examples of works, or appearance models.

#### 6. Reflection

The component that is the essential part of learning with the CTL approach is the recollection of the knowledge that has just been learned. By thinking about what has just been learned, studying, and responding to all events, activities, or experiences that occur in learning, even providing input or suggestions if needed. Students will realize that the newly acquired knowledge is enrichment or even a revision of the knowledge that has been learned – previously owned. This kind of awareness is essential to instil in students to be open to new knowledge. Therefore, teachers need to pay attention to the basic principles in implementing the reflection component: 1) Contemplation of a newly acquired knowledge is an enrichment of previous knowledge. 2) Contemplation responds to events, activities, or newly acquired knowledge. 3) Reflection can be in the form of conveying an assessment of the newly received knowledge, making short notes, discussing with colleagues or performing.

#### 7. Actual assessment

The component that is a unique feature of the contextual approach is collecting various data that can provide an overview or information about the development of students' learning experiences. This description of the development of student experiences needs to be known by the teacher at all times in order to ensure whether or not the student learning process is correct. Thus, authentic assessment is directed at observing, analyzing, and interpreting the data that has been collected when or in the student learning process, not solely on learning outcomes. In connection with this, the basic principles that need to be a teacher's attention when applying the components of

authentic assessment in learning are as follows: 1) Authentic assessment is not to judge students but to know the development of students' learning experiences. 2) Assessment is carried out comprehensively and balanced between process and result assessment. 3) Teachers become constructive evaluators who can reflect on how students learn, how students relate what they know to various contexts, and how they progress in various learning contexts. 4) Authentic assessment provides students with opportunities to develop self-assessment and peer assessment.

The application of a contextual approach in the Geography learning process can be seen from three parts: learning planning, the learning process, and the teacher's learning evaluation system, which refers to the contextual approach.

### 1. Lesson Planning

Before the contextual approach is applied in the geography learning process, preparations are needed so that the learning process, learning evaluation and feedback can be carried out by the essential competencies that have been determined so that learning objectives are achieved. Preparations that must be done by teachers such as syllabus, lesson plans, teaching media, learning resources, and assessments.

### 2. Learning Process

The contextual learning process carried out can be seen from the learning methods, learning media, sources of learning materials, and the characteristics of contextual learning, including the seven components mentioned above. That involves constructivism (constructivism), asking (questioning), finding (inquiry), learning community (learning community), modelling (modelling), reflection, and actual assessment (authentic assessment).

### 3. Evaluation system

To measure students' cognitive abilities can be done with a test technique. The test technique is carried out by the teacher using the type of daily test bill, which is carried out after the geography learning material is completed. The teacher's form of instrument in the daily test can use a written test in the form of an essay question. In addition, the teacher can also give individual assignments and quizzes in each meeting. Assessment can be done using non-test techniques to measure students' psychomotor abilities. The assessment is carried out by giving assignments to students, for example, observing the environmental conditions around the student's residence and describing existing population problems. In addition, the teacher can also give assignments to make clippings related to the geography material being taught, such as activities related to the economic activities of the Indonesian population.

The benefits of applying a contextual approach in geography learning include the results of research conducted by Syofniati (2019) that increasing student understanding can be done by applying contextual learning. This is because students are directly connected to the actual conditions in their environment. In addition, the field of study of geography can be designed with contextual learning because it deals with various physical and social phenomena around the student's environment. Based on the study results, the contextual approach to learning geography can significantly increase the activity and learning outcomes of class XI IPS 4 students in SMA Negeri 4 Pekanbaru. Furthermore, the results of research by Latief (2014) stated a significant effect of contextual learning on learning outcomes which was indicated by a change in the value of learning outcomes that were better than the value of previous learning outcomes in grade VII students SMPN 4 Padalarang.

Besides improving understanding and learning outcomes, a contextual approach in geography learning can also improve students' critical thinking skills. This is like the results of research conducted by Astuti, Astawa, & Suryadi (2013) that contextual teaching and learning (CTL) implemented in geography learning and combined with geography learning

characteristics positively influences increasing students' critical thinking skills in geography learning. The characteristics of geography learning include indoor and outdoor, using maps and spatial studies can be raised well through contextual teaching and learning (CTL). Learning geography using contextual teaching and learning (CTL) can be done indoors (in class) by presenting real-world situations through learning media such as portraits/real pictures related to atmospheric materials, videos, slides, and maps. It to increase students' understanding of atmospheric materials. With the help of map media such as climate classification maps and general maps in geography learning, students get an overview of the distribution of different atmospheric phenomena in each space of the earth's surface. They can examine problems by paying attention to spatial aspects. After being treated with contextual teaching and learning (CTL), the observations showed that students began to study various problems and raise real problems in the environment. Students become trained to solve real problems related to atmospheric material so that in every learning process, they can respond critically and propose various alternative answers using their language.

The results of research by Akbar (2018) show that from the recapitulation data on the activity of students in discussions, the CTL method can increase motivation. It is shown through students' activeness in discussions; it can be seen from the number of relatively active students from the first cycle to the second cycle. Students' learning achievement from the first to the second cycle has increased, and classically with the application of the contextual teaching and learning method (CTL), it meets the increase in competency standards. The recapitulation of observational data on contextual learning in general shows that students' responses have increased, all of which tend to agree and agree.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion in this literature study, it can be said that the contextual approach is very suitable to be applied in geography learning. Because geography learning is very supportive to be designed with contextual learning, it deals with various physical and social phenomena around the student's environment. In its application, the contextual approach includes seven components such as constructivism, questioning, inquiry, learning, modelling, reflection, and authentic assessment. There are several benefits of applying a contextual approach in learning geography. It can increase learning motivation, student understanding, critical thinking skills, and learning outcomes.

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