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The Implicit Curriculum in Competency-Based Education through Policy and Curriculum Text Analysis

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Abstract. This study examines the implicit curriculum carried by competency-based education policy and curriculum texts. Its purpose is to identify what such texts teach beyond their explicit statements, by reading what they presuppose about learners, teachers, knowledge and the purposes of schooling. The study uses critical policy and curriculum text analysis, combining a discourse analytic reading of textual form with the conceptual lenses of the hidden curriculum, the implicit curriculum and the null curriculum. The principal case is Indonesia, namely the regulation that established the Kurikulum Merdeka as the national curriculum, the official learning outcomes for each phase of schooling, and the decree governing the Pancasila Learner Profile projects. These texts are read against three international competency frameworks, the OECD Learning Compass 2030, the European Union key competences framework and the general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. The analysis finds a shared implicit curriculum across otherwise different systems. Competency texts teach that learning counts when it can be demonstrated and measured, that the good learner is a self-managing and entrepreneurial subject responsible for his or her own outcomes, that knowledge matters mainly as a resource for performance, and that aims which resist specification in advance, including subjectification and slow cultural formation, fall into a new null curriculum. Assessment regimes are the main carrier of these lessons, and teachers are repositioned as designers and auditors of evidence rather than as custodians of knowledge. The novelty of the study lies in treating competency frameworks themselves as curriculum texts with an implicit curriculum, and in deriving concrete drafting tests that allow policy writers to audit the implicit lessons of outcome statements before enactment.

Keywords: implicit curriculum; hidden curriculum; competency-based education; Kurikulum Merdeka; curriculum policy; text analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Every curriculum teaches more than it says. When Philip Jackson studied the daily life of elementary classrooms, he argued that children must master not only the official syllabus but also the institutional facts of crowds, praise and power, learning to wait, to compete for scarce approval and to accept evaluation as a normal condition of life [1]. Eisner widened the point into a general theory of curriculum. Schools teach three curricula at once, the explicit curriculum of stated aims, the implicit curriculum of the values and dispositions conveyed by the way schooling is organised, and the null curriculum of what schools teach by leaving things out [2]. The implicit curriculum is therefore not an

accident of weak implementation. It is a property of educational arrangements themselves, and Portelli showed that it always carries a normative charge, because what is learned implicitly is learned as if it were natural and beyond argument [3]. Cornbleth added that the hidden curriculum is not a fixed deposit but is continually reconstructed in the interaction between official texts and lived practice [4].

This paper turns that classic insight onto a class of texts that curriculum studies has rarely treated as curriculum in its own right, namely competency frameworks and the policy documents that mandate them. Since the 1990s, competency-based education has become the dominant grammar of curriculum reform across the world. Systems as different as Indonesia, Australia and the member states of the European Union now state the purposes of schooling as lists of competencies, capabilities or learning outcomes that learners are expected to demonstrate at defined points. The explicit message of these texts is usually emancipatory. They promise flexibility, relevance, learner agency and freedom from an overloaded content syllabus. Yet if Eisner is right, these texts also teach implicitly, through their vocabulary, their syntax, their ordering of what counts as learning and their silences. A policy text is never a neutral container. As Apple demonstrated, curriculum is a selective tradition, a selection from the knowledge and values of a society that presents itself as official knowledge while quietly encoding relations of power [5]. Giroux and Penna made the same argument for the classroom level, showing how the dynamics of the hidden curriculum reproduce wider social relations precisely because they operate below the threshold of explicit debate [6]. Work on higher education has since confirmed that official documents, quality regimes and assessment architectures form a hidden curriculum for institutions as much as for students [7].

The analytical tools for such a reading already exist in policy sociology. Ball proposed that policy should be studied simultaneously as text and as discourse. As text, a policy is an encoding that readers decode in context, so its meanings are never fully controlled by its authors. As discourse, policy sets the limits of what can be said and thought about education, and who may speak with authority [8]. Fairclough supplied the linguistic machinery for this dual reading, distinguishing genres, discourses and styles, and showing how texts represent the social world, enact social relations and constitute identities at the same time [9]. Studies of policy enactment then demonstrated that teachers and school leaders do not implement texts mechanically but translate them, and are in turn repositioned by them as particular kinds of professional subject [10]. What has been less examined is the prior question. Before enactment begins, what does the competency text itself teach? What model of the learner, of knowledge and of the teacher is built into its form, such that enactment can only vary within limits the text has already set?

Indonesia offers an exceptionally clear case for this question. In 2024 the Kurikulum Merdeka, first introduced as an option for post pandemic recovery, was established as the national curriculum for early childhood, primary and secondary education [11]. Its architecture is thoroughly competency based. Learning is specified through Capaian Pembelajaran, learning outcomes formulated for developmental phases rather than school years [12], and its graduate profile, the Pancasila Learner Profile, is developed through dedicated projects whose competencies and themes are set by regulation [13]. The reform presents itself in the language of freedom, since merdeka means free or independent, and of relief from content overload. Precisely because its explicit rhetoric is so strongly emancipatory, it is a revealing test of whether an implicit curriculum of measurement and self-management can travel inside a text that announces liberation.

The study therefore asks three questions. First, what do competency-based policy and curriculum texts explicitly say, and what do they implicitly teach about learning, knowledge and the educated person? Second, through which textual and institutional mechanisms, above all assessment, is that implicit curriculum carried and stabilised? Third, how are teachers positioned by these texts, and what follows for the drafting of curriculum policy? The argument developed below is that competency texts across Indonesia and the international frameworks share a remarkably consistent implicit curriculum. They teach that learning is real when it is demonstrable, that the learner is an entrepreneur of the self, that knowledge is a resource for performance rather than an end, and that whatever cannot be specified in advance as an outcome is quietly demoted. Recognising this is not an argument against competencies as such. It is an argument that policy writers should learn to read, and to audit, the implicit curriculum of their own texts.

METHODS

The study uses critical policy and curriculum text analysis, a form of document analysis that treats policy texts as both textual artefacts and discursive interventions [8], [9]. The corpus was assembled purposively. The principal case consists of three Indonesian instruments that together define the competency architecture of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The first is Ministerial Regulation Number 12 of 2024 of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, which defines the curriculum, establishes its framework and structure, and defines learning outcomes as the competencies learners must attain at the end of each phase [11]. The second is Decree Number 032/H/KR/2024 of the Head of the Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency, which contains the learning outcomes themselves for every subject and phase, from the foundation phase of early childhood education to the final phases of senior secondary and vocational schooling [12]. The third is the companion decree on the competencies and themes of the projects for strengthening the Pancasila Learner Profile, which operationalises the six dimensions of the graduate profile, namely faith and noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical reasoning and creativity [13].

The Indonesian corpus is read against three international competency frameworks chosen because they represent the main global variants of the genre. The OECD Learning Compass 2030 states the aims of education through core foundations, transformative competencies, student agency and an anticipation, action and reflection cycle [14]. The Council of the European Union Recommendation of 22 May 2018 defines eight key competences for lifelong learning, each specified through knowledge, skills and attitudes [15]. The Australian Curriculum, in its ninth version, organises schooling through learning areas combined with seven general capabilities, including literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding, each elaborated in learning continua [16]. These frameworks were selected because Indonesian reform discourse explicitly participates in the same global conversation about twenty first century competencies, and because comparing texts from different political traditions helps separate what belongs to competency as a textual form from what belongs to a particular national culture.

The analysis proceeded in three passes over the corpus. The first pass was descriptive and mapped the explicit curriculum of each text, its stated aims, its organising categories and its definitions of competence. The second pass was discourse analytic, following

Fairclough in attending to vocabulary, verb forms, modality and textual structure [9]. Particular attention was paid to performance verbs, to the grammatical position of the learner, who appears overwhelmingly as the subject who demonstrates, applies and produces, and to what each text systematically does not say. The third pass was conceptual, reading the findings through the categories of the explicit, implicit and null curriculum [2], through Bernstein's account of how knowledge is recontextualised into pedagogic discourse [17], and through the critical literature on competence and outcomes. Claims about implicit teaching are therefore grounded in identifiable textual features rather than in speculation about authors' intentions, and each finding below is tied to features that recur across at least two of the corpora. The study is limited to texts. It does not observe classrooms, and it makes no claim about what Indonesian teachers and students actually do, which the enactment literature rightly insists is a separate question [10].

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Explicit Curriculum of Competency Texts and Its Promises

Read at face value, the corpus speaks a consistent and attractive language. The Indonesian regulation defines the Kurikulum Merdeka as a curriculum that gives flexibility and focuses on essential material in order to develop learners as lifelong learners with Pancasila character [11]. Outcomes are set for phases spanning two or three years rather than for single grades, which loosens the lockstep of annual coverage and formally permits teachers to sequence learning according to their students [12]. The graduate profile is stated in the language of virtue and national identity, and its six dimensions include faith, character and mutual cooperation alongside critical reasoning and creativity [13]. The international frameworks are equally generous in explicit intent. The OECD places well-being at the destination of its compass and defines transformative competencies as creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility [14]. The European framework insists that its eight key competences are equally important and that each contributes to a successful life in society, not only to employability [15]. The Australian capabilities are presented as supports for accessing disciplinary learning rather than as replacements for it [16].

These explicit promises descend from a coherent reform tradition. Spady, the most influential theorist of outcome-based education, argued that a system should be organised backwards from clear, culminating demonstrations of learning, on the premise that all students can succeed if time and support are treated as the variables and achievement as the constant [18]. Competency frameworks generalise that premise. They respond to real defects of content syllabuses, which can degenerate into coverage, memorisation and the inequity of time based progression. They also carry a democratic promise, because an outcome stated publicly is in principle available to every learner, whereas the tacit expectations of a traditional curriculum favour children who arrive already knowing the rules. Any honest analysis must register this explicit curriculum before turning to what accompanies it, because the implicit curriculum of a text is powerful precisely when the explicit curriculum is sincerely meant. The critical question is not whether the authors of these texts believe their promises. It is what else the texts teach while keeping them.

2. Measurability Bias: Learning That Counts Is Learning That Can Be Shown

The first and deepest implicit lesson of the corpus is that learning counts when it can be demonstrated. The outcome statement is a grammatical technology. Across the Indonesian learning outcomes, the OECD constructs and the Australian continua, the canonical sentence has the learner as subject, a performance verb as predicate and an observable product or behaviour as object. Learners analyse, design, produce, present, evaluate and demonstrate. What cannot be cast in this form tends not to appear, and what appears in weaker forms, such as appreciating, wondering or dwelling with a text, is progressively rewritten until it becomes observable. This is not a stylistic quirk. It is the textual expression of the founding assumption of the competence movement, and its critics identified the assumption early. Hyland argued that the competence model inherited from behavioural objectives reduces professional and human capability to atomised, observable performances, stripping competence of its social, moral and intellectual dimensions [19]. Wolf showed, in her analysis of competence-based assessment, that the claim to have specified outcomes in advance rests on assumptions about the transparency of criteria that assessment practice cannot sustain, because criteria are always interpreted and because much valuable learning is holistic rather than additive [20].

Later scholarship systematised the objection. Mulder's review of conceptions of professional competence distinguishes behavioural and functional approaches, in which competence is a list of demonstrable tasks, from integrated and holistic approaches, in which competence is an situated capability that cannot be decomposed without loss, and shows that policy frameworks gravitate towards the decomposable versions because those are the versions that can be administered [21]. Eraut similarly warned that professional knowledge is largely tacit and relational, so that an outcomes register records the visible surface of practice while its substance escapes specification [22]. The Indonesian texts illustrate the gravitational pull clearly. The learning outcomes for each subject are organised by elements and stated as end of phase capabilities, a structure that is genuinely more flexible than annual content lists, yet the accompanying assessment guidance and the phase architecture still require attainment to be evidenced and reported, so flexibility of route coexists with fixity of destination [11], [12].

The implicit lesson reaches students as an epistemology. If every legitimate aim of schooling must be statable as a demonstrable outcome, then learning that is slow, private, receptive or resistant to display comes to seem like a lesser kind of learning, or like no learning at all. Biesta named the underlying shift as the displacement of the question of purpose by the culture of measurement, in which systems come to value what they can measure rather than measure what they value [23]. The point applies with special force to texts, because a framework does not need to forbid unmeasurable aims. It only needs to provide no grammatical home for them. Silence in a specification is a stronger teacher than prohibition, since what is prohibited can be debated, while what is merely unsayable in the official grammar fades from planning, from reporting and eventually from professional imagination.

3. The Self-Managing Learner and the Entrepreneurial Subject

The second implicit lesson concerns the kind of person the texts are quietly forming. The learner of the competency text is active, choosing, monitoring and improving. The OECD framework makes the figure explicit in its central concept of student agency, exercised through the anticipation, action and reflection cycle, within which learners set goals, act responsibly and evaluate themselves [14]. The European framework includes, as one of its

eight competences, personal, social and learning to learn competence, defined through self-regulation, resilience and the management of one's own learning and career [15]. The Pancasila Learner Profile includes independence, whose elements are self-awareness and self-regulation, and describes the independent learner as one who is responsible for his or her own learning process and results [13]. None of this is objectionable as an aim. Self-regulation is a genuine educational good. The implicit curriculum begins where the figure of the self-managing learner becomes the only figure available, so that success and failure are grammatically attributed to the quality of a learner's self-management.

Read through the governmentality literature, this is a recognisable technology of the self. Rose showed how advanced liberal societies govern through freedom, forming enterprising subjects who understand their lives as projects to be optimised through choice, calculation and self-improvement [24]. Competency texts translate that rationality into pedagogy. The learner becomes an entrepreneur of his or her own human capital, assembling a portfolio of demonstrated competencies, anticipating the demands of a changing labour market and accepting personal responsibility for remaining employable. The Indonesian texts carry a distinctive local inflection of the same figure. The profile joins independence and creativity to faith, character and mutual cooperation [13], so the entrepreneurial subject is moralised and collectivised, asked to be self-reliant in the service of the nation rather than of the self alone. The hybrid is instructive. It shows that the implicit curriculum of competency is not a simple import. National texts recontextualise the global figure, in Bernstein's sense, relocating it within a local regulative discourse of religion and nation [17]. But recontextualisation modifies the content of the ideal learner without disturbing the underlying form, which is a subject who governs the self in alignment with outcomes specified elsewhere.

Two consequences follow. First, structural conditions recede from view. If the competent learner is by definition one who anticipates, acts and reflects, then persistent failure reads implicitly as a deficit of agency, although it may be a deficit of books, of teachers, of nutrition or of time. Rizvi and Lingard warn that globalising education policy systematically favours such individualising explanations, because its preferred policy subjects are mobile, choosing and responsible [25]. Second, the collectivist and spiritual aims of the Indonesian profile are placed under strain by the very mechanism meant to deliver them. Mutual cooperation and noble character, when rendered as elements with observable indicators, are repositioned as individual attainments to be evidenced in projects and rubrics. A virtue that exists only in relation to others is thereby taught, implicitly, as a property of the self-managing individual. The text does not intend this lesson. Its grammar teaches it anyway.

4. Knowledge in the Service of Performance and the New Null Curriculum

The third implicit lesson concerns knowledge. In competency texts, knowledge rarely appears as something to be contemplated, inherited or argued with. It appears as a component of competence, listed alongside skills and attitudes as a resource to be mobilised in performance. The European framework defines each key competence as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to context [15], and the OECD distinguishes disciplinary, interdisciplinary, epistemic and procedural knowledge as foundations for its transformative competencies [14]. The Indonesian learning outcomes retain strong subject structures, yet even there knowledge is framed through the elements of each subject as material for the capabilities stated at the end of each phase [12]. Bernstein's sociology explains what is at stake in such framings. When knowledge is

recontextualised from the disciplines into outcome statements, its internal structure, the vertical discourse through which concepts build systematically on one another, is weakened, and classification between domains becomes blurred in favour of generic capabilities [17]. Moore and Young argued that this is the characteristic epistemology of contemporary curriculum policy, a technical instrumentalism in which knowledge is valued for its use and the question of what knowledge is most worth teaching is displaced by the question of what learners will be able to do [26].

Young's later work pressed the conclusion that curriculum theory must recover the learner's entitlement to powerful knowledge, knowledge that takes learners beyond their experience and gives them the means to think the otherwise [27], [28]. Wheelahan's social realist analysis of competency-based training supplied the equity edge of the argument. Because outcome statements specify performances in context, they tend to confine learners, and disproportionately working class learners, to the local and the routine, while access to the generative principles of the disciplines is reserved for those whose curricula still teach knowledge in its own right [29]. The Indonesian case complicates the claim without defeating it. The Kurikulum Merdeka was a response to an overloaded syllabus and a learning crisis, and its reduction of essential material was intended to create space for depth [11]. Yet the implicit hierarchy remains legible in the texts. Subjects survive, but their legitimacy is now argued in the language of contribution to competencies and profile dimensions. A subject that cannot narrate its contribution fluently risks marginalisation, whatever its intrinsic claim on the curriculum.

What is displaced in this settlement constitutes the new null curriculum. Eisner insisted that schools teach by what they omit, and that the null curriculum has two dimensions, the subjects and topics not taught and the intellectual processes not exercised [2]. Flinders, Noddings and Thornton elaborated the point, arguing that omissions are rarely decided openly and therefore escape the public scrutiny applied to inclusions [30]. In the competency corpus, the omissions are structural rather than topical. Slow reading of difficult texts, memorisation as a form of internalisation, intellectual risk without a pre-specified destination, contemplative and aesthetic experience, and what Biesta calls subjectification, the emergence of the learner as a subject rather than as a bearer of outcomes, all lack a secure textual home [23]. They are not forbidden. They are simply not required, not evidenced and not reported, and in a system organised around outcomes, what is not required tends over time not to happen. The null curriculum of competency-based education is thus a curriculum of everything education is for, beyond the production of demonstrable capability.

5. Assessment as the Carrier of the Implicit Curriculum

If the implicit curriculum has a principal carrier, it is assessment. Outcome statements are promises, but assessment decides which promises are kept. Ball's account of performativity describes the mechanism at the level of the system. Performativity is a mode of regulation that works through judgements, comparisons and displays, and it re-forms the professional subject who must continually produce evidence of performance [31]. Competency frameworks are performativity's natural textual partner, because they supply the indicators against which performances can be judged, compared and displayed. The global dimension reinforces the national one. Grek showed how the OECD governs European education by numbers, as comparative data reshape what national systems take their problems to be [32], and Ozga documented the shift in England from regulation by inspection to governing by data, in which schools internalise the evaluative gaze [33].

Sellar and Lingard traced how the OECD's epistemological and infrastructural governance, above all through PISA, extends the reach of measurement into domains of learning that systems then feel obliged to specify and evidence [34], [35].

The textual analysis confirms this at the level of the document. In the Indonesian corpus, the learning outcomes decree cannot be read apart from the assessment regime it presupposes. Outcomes are stated for the end of phases, schools derive learning objectives and sequences from them, and attainment is documented in reporting formats that translate the phase outcomes into judgements about individual learners [12]. The Pancasila projects are assessed with rubrics keyed to the elements and sub elements of each dimension, so that even character formation enters the evidentiary order [13]. The Australian continua make the same logic unusually visible, since each general capability is elaborated into levels with indicators, inviting teachers to locate learners on a scale for capabilities such as ethical understanding [16]. None of this is conspiratorial. Evidencing learning is a legitimate public demand, and criterion referenced reporting can be fairer than norm referenced ranking. Wolf's caution is the precise one. Competence-based assessment claims a transparency it cannot deliver, because judgements about holistic performance cannot be reduced to checklists without remainder, and the attempt to do so silently changes what is taught towards what is checkable [20].

Research on students' experience of assessment explains why this carrier is so effective. Sambell and McDowell showed that students construct the hidden curriculum largely from assessment, reading the real rules of the game from what is actually rewarded rather than from official statements of aims, and reconstructing those messages individually and strategically [36]. Transfer the finding to a competency system and the implication is direct. Learners will learn the implicit curriculum of demonstrability not from the preamble of the framework, where well-being and character are celebrated, but from the rubric, the portfolio requirement and the report format. Teachers, who read the same signals, learn the corresponding lesson about their own work. Assessment is therefore the place where the implicit curriculum of a text becomes the lived curriculum of a school, and where reform of the text alone, without reform of the evidentiary regime, will predictably fail.

6. The Teacher in the Text: Designer, Facilitator, Auditor

The final finding concerns the teacher. Competency texts speak warmly about teachers. The Indonesian regulation grants schools and teachers flexibility to develop operational curricula and to adapt learning to context, and the phase structure is designed to return sequencing decisions to them [11], [12]. The OECD framework speaks of teachers as co-agents in learning [14]. Yet the textual position actually constructed for the teacher is narrower and more ambivalent. Three roles recur. The teacher is a designer who must derive objectives, sequences and instruments from outcomes specified by the state, an exercise in backwards planning that is technically demanding and heavily documented. The teacher is a facilitator who arranges experiences through which learners demonstrate outcomes, a role that backgrounds the teacher as a knower whose own relationship to subject matter might itself be educational. And the teacher is an auditor who must generate, moderate and store evidence that outcomes have been attained, for learners, for the school and for the reporting system.

The enactment literature shows that real teachers resist, translate and sometimes subvert such positionings, working as policy actors with their own commitments [10]. Ball's

earlier work on global policy networks adds that the space within which they do so is increasingly structured by commercial and philanthropic actors who trade in competency products, platforms and data services [37]. The textual point stands independently of these negotiations. In the corpus, teacher judgement is trusted rhetorically and bounded procedurally. Flexibility applies to routes, sequences and examples. It does not apply to destinations, which are fixed in the outcomes, nor to the evidentiary forms through which arrival must be shown. Bernstein's language captures the settlement exactly. The framing of pacing and sequencing is weakened, which teachers experience as freedom, while the evaluative rules, which condense the whole pedagogic discourse, remain strongly framed by the centre [17]. Teachers are thus taught their own implicit curriculum. Professionalism comes to mean skilled alignment, and the teacher who asks whether an outcome is worth attaining has no textual standing from which to ask it, because the text recognises questions about means and leaves no procedural space for questions about ends.

This positioning has a distributional consequence that policy rarely acknowledges. Deriving assessable objectives from phase outcomes, building rubrics for profile dimensions and documenting evidence for every learner is labour intensive intellectual work. Where it is supported, it can deepen teacher professionalism. Where it is not, the implicit curriculum for teachers is performative compliance, the production of documents that display alignment. The same framework therefore teaches opposite lessons in well resourced and poorly resourced schools, deepening the very inequities the explicit curriculum promises to reduce. A text analysis cannot observe this divergence, but it can locate its source, which is the gap between the discretion the texts celebrate and the accountability machinery they install.

7. Implications for Curriculum Design and Policy Drafting

The findings support a constructive conclusion. If competency texts inevitably carry an implicit curriculum, then drafting them is an ethical and political act that should be performed knowingly. Five drafting tests follow from the analysis. First, a purpose test. Drawing on Biesta's distinction among qualification, socialisation and subjectification [23], drafters should require every framework to state, in prose and not only in outcome form, what it intends in each of the three domains, and should treat any domain that cannot be stated as a warning sign rather than as an omission to be tidied away. Second, a grammar test. Outcome statements should be audited for their verbs and objects, and frameworks should deliberately retain a proportion of aims stated in non performative language, including aims of encounter, understanding and appreciation, protected from conversion into indicators. Third, a null curriculum test. Following Eisner [2] and Flinders and his colleagues [30], drafting processes should include an explicit omissions review, asking what the framework leaves out, which intellectual processes it fails to exercise and who bears the cost of those absences.

Fourth, an assessment test. Because assessment carries the implicit curriculum [36], no outcome should be adopted without asking what evidence of it would look like and whether that evidence would corrupt the aim, in the sense that Wolf identified, by substituting the checkable for the valuable [20]. Aims that would be corrupted by evidencing should be governed by professional trust and deliberative accountability instead. Fifth, a teacher test. Frameworks should state not only what teachers may vary but also what they may question, creating textual standing for professional dissent about ends and not only about means, and should cost the documentation labour they impose,

especially for schools with the fewest resources. These tests do not dismantle competency-based education. They discipline it, returning to the text the questions of purpose, knowledge and professional judgement that its grammar tends to suppress [26], [27], [25]. Applied to the Indonesian case, they suggest that the Kurikulum Merdeka's own emancipatory rhetoric should be taken seriously as a drafting resource. A curriculum named for freedom should be required, by its own standard, to leave some learning free from prior specification.

CONCLUSION

This study has read competency-based policy and curriculum texts as curricula in their own right and has identified the implicit curriculum they share across Indonesia and three international frameworks. Explicitly, the texts promise flexibility, agency, character and well-being. Implicitly, they teach that learning counts when it can be demonstrated, that the good learner is a self-managing entrepreneur of the self, that knowledge is a resource for performance, and that aims resistant to specification, including subjectification and slow cultural formation, constitute a new null curriculum. Assessment regimes carry these lessons into practice, and teachers are positioned as designers and auditors of evidence whose discretion extends to means but not to ends. The contribution of the study is twofold. Conceptually, it extends hidden and implicit curriculum theory from classrooms and institutions to the genre of the competency framework itself. Practically, it converts the critique into five drafting tests, covering purpose, grammar, omissions, assessment and teacher standing, through which policy writers can audit the implicit lessons of outcome statements before those lessons are enacted on millions of learners. Competency frameworks will continue to organise the world's curricula. The task is not to abolish them but to write them with open eyes, so that what they teach implicitly is chosen, debated and owned, rather than absorbed in silence.

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