



Challenges Faced by English Student Teachers on Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka During the Teaching Practicum Program

Lisa Kurnia Ningsih¹ and Aryuliva Adnan²

^{1,2}Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia

Email: lisakurnianingsih00@gmail.com

Article History

Submitted: 2023-04-12

Accepted: 2023-05-21

Published: 2023-05-21

Keywords:

Student teachers, challenges, teaching practicum program, Kurikulum Merdeka

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out the challenges faced by English student teachers on implementing Kurikulum Merdeka during teaching practicum program. This study used qualitative research using interview methods with 13 student teachers who were in teaching practicum program. The results showed that student teachers who had been interviewed showed clear and convincing evidence about the challenges that they faced on implementing Kurikulum Merdeka during teaching practicum program. According to the student teachers, they faced challenges on implementing Kurikulum Merdeka because Kurikulum Merdeka is new for them. When they learned micro teaching they only focused on the Kurikulum 2013, but it turned out that when they were in the field they had to teach based on the Kurikulum Merdeka. Almost all the respondent faced challenges in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka such as, challenges in designing teaching modules, challenges in class management, challenges in learning projects, and doing assessments based on Kurikulum Merdeka.

©2023 The Author(s) Publish by Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris FBS UNP. This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

How to Cite: Ningsih, L. K., & Adnan, A. (2023). Challenges Faced by English Student Teachers on Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka During the Teaching Practicum Program. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 12. (2): pp. 435-440, DOI: [10.24036/jelt.v12i2.122686](https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v12i2.122686)

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic worsened the education sector through a learning crisis (Learning Loss). According to Andriani (2021), the pandemic period it had forced 1.7 billion students to undergo learning that is done indirectly and encounters various difficulties and losses in learning. Learning loss results in a loss of sensitivity of communication between teachers and students in collaborating actively in a learning process. The problems and dilemmas that must be passed and addressed require various strategic policies and solutions. To overcome learning loss, the education unit needs a learning recovery policy with curriculum implementation. In response to the learning crisis, Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*Kemendikbudristek*) Nadiem Anwar Makarim launched Merdeka Learning Episode Fifteenth: Kurikulum Merdeka (KM) and the Merdeka Teaching Platform,

The concept of KM, a new curriculum, faces various educational challenges. One of them is the readiness of educators. According to Mulyasa (2021), in KM policy, it is necessary to self-reflect to answer the challenges of education following the times. Curriculum changes should be accompanied by teacher readiness in implementing the curriculum. Indarwati (2021) states that several changes in teaching modules make it difficult for teachers to develop teaching modules due to internal and external factors. The external factor is the teachers are used to being fixated on teacher's books and student's books, then teachers are required to be creative and innovative in developing teaching modules. Meanwhile, the internal factor is lack understanding of KM in developing principles and procedures for developing teaching modules, so that teachers have difficulties in developing integrated teaching modules.

In addition, Suhandi et al. (2022) discuss teachers' challenges of Kurikulum Merdeka. The result shows that KM affects the role of teachers and requires teachers to instill some self-competence in developing learning with KM. The implementation of KM in schools is inseparable from various challenges. In dealing with KM policy, teachers must have competencies in designing teaching modules that can offset the burden of KM. In addition, Maulida (2022) states that in designing teaching modules, the teacher must first conduct a diagnostic assessment by categorizing students' conditions from a psychological and cognitive perspective. This demand becomes a challenge for the teacher to design learning according to the characteristic of students. Many teachers still have not been able to develop a good teaching module in KM (YouTube Vox Populi Institute Indonesia, May 8, 2022).

There is a study that has been done by other researcher about the challenges in Kurikulum Merdeka. The study was conducted by (Fieka, 2022) entitled *Implementation of Independent Curriculum and its challenges*. According to the researcher finding, the objective of the research examines Independent curriculum and its challenges. Independent curriculum as an additional option in the education recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic requires cooperation of all stakeholders in order to have a significant impact. Some of the independent curriculum challenges include readiness of competencies, skills, mindset of educators as education implementers, readiness of infrastructure, as well as facilities and infrastructure. Based on the discussion above, the researcher intends to conduct research on the challenges faced by student teachers on implementing Kurikulum Merdeka.

Those challenges are not only faced by the teacher but also by university students who join teaching practicum programs as temporary teachers at the chosen school. Those students are majoring in education in higher education, also called student teachers. Student teachers from the English Education program of Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) also participate in implementing KM during their teaching practicum program. Student teachers who are in the teaching practicum program in the period of July-December 2022 never learn about KM. KM had not been implemented in the previous semester when they studied Micro-Teaching. Some of them in the teaching practicum program teach based on KM, so it becomes a challenge for them.

METHOD

To complete this research, researchers used qualitative methods. According Creswell (2012), a qualitative research is a study to investigate and understand the meaning individuals or group assume to be a social or a human problem and also explore the information from participants, and the result was in the form of words. There were 13 informants in this study who were English student teachers of the English Language Education Program at the Universitas Negeri Padang who were in teaching practicum program and teaching based on Kurikulum Merdeka.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

From the results of the interview, it was found that English student teachers faced challenges on implementing Kurikulum Merdeka. When they learned micro teaching they only focused on the Kurikulum 2013, but it turned out that when they were in the field they had to teach based on the Kurikulum Merdeka. Almost all the respondent faced challenges in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka such as challenges in designing teaching modules, challenges in class management, challenges in learning projects, and doing assessments based on Kurikulum Merdeka.

Discussion

Based on the statements of 13 student teachers as the research subject, the researcher found several challenges that student teachers faced in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka during the teaching practicum program. Based on the findings, the challenges can be classified follows:

1. Challenges in designing teaching modules based on Kurikulum Merdeka

Student teachers faced challenges in designing teaching modules based on Kurikulum Merdeka Because this teaching module is something new than before. The finding is reinforced by the results found by Maulida (2022), where teachers can still not develop teaching modules to the fullest because many teachers still do not understand the techniques for compiling and developing teaching modules in this curriculum. Student teachers do not understand how to translate CP into learning objectives, not able to compile ATP (flow of learning objectives) from TP. So, the material provided does not refer to essential material but still refers to the previous curriculum. Thus, the preparation process takes a little longer because this teaching module's format differs from the lesson plans developed in the 2013 Curriculum. In addition, teachers still cannot maximize it because many teachers still experience difficulties in understanding related to the preparation of teaching modules.

In designing teaching modules, student teachers—lack of reference sources on the Kurikulum Merdeka. The finding resonated with Damawisware et al. (2022), revealing that Student teachers' difficulties in developing teaching modules are illustrated by the difficulty in finding sources and adapting materials, media, and facilities at school.

2. Challenges in class management based on Kurikulum Merdeka

Student teachers had limited initial knowledge about Kurikulum Merdeka such as faced challenges in applying differentiated learning. Challenges in implementing differentiated learning are not only caused by the student teacher's understanding and skills but also by the diversity of students. Student differences in the class are related to the level of student understanding, students' thinking skills, student skills, and learning styles. Student teachers faced challenges in determining the appropriate learning model and assessment to use. and also the limitations of teacher references regarding learning models that can accommodate differentiated learning. Student teachers faced challenges finding various reference sources for examples of differentiated learning. Limited facilities and infrastructure owned by schools also challenge student teachers.

Kurikulum Merdeka required educators to implement Differentiated learning. The concept of differentiation learning is excellent and ideal, but it is a challenge for teachers to be creative. With that learning, students' potential is developed according to their needs, characteristics, and level of achievement. But to achieve learning that by that concept, the teacher must strive to become a reliable facilitator. The student teachers must know the various characteristics of students. The student teacher's knowledge of the conditions of student diversity is the basis for designing learning. So that in accordance with the state of the variety of these students, Student teachers must develop diagnostic and formative assessments at the beginning of learning. A diagnostic assessment is carried out to determine the diversity of students. The formative assessment at the beginning of learning determines students' achievement levels. Student teachers need to use multi-method, multimedia, and multi-source. Applying various methods, media, and learning resources can accommodate multiple learning outcomes for students, both visual, auditory, and kinesthetic styles. So it's all a challenge for student teachers as novice teachers. Moreover, the finding above was supported by Fazi et al. (2022) indicating that one of the learning concepts of Kurikulum Merdeka that are considered adequate is differentiated learning. The teacher needs to understand these students' individual characteristics so that they can adjust to these particular characteristics in teaching. .

3. Challenges in learning project based on Kurikulum Merdeka

One of the characteristics of Kurikulum Merdeka is project-based learning, in which every school must apply the Pancasila student profile or P5. Then this becomes a challenge for teachers to implement Kurikulum Merdeka, where this activity, the teacher designs a project that students will complete. The teachers also have a hard time handling the student. Many students also choose not to come to school even though this project is an essential part of learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka. For students with high enthusiasm and interest in learning and sufficient understanding, this curriculum is an excellent opportunity to gain knowledge in other fields so that they have broad knowledge and experience. However, students who lack motivation will feel burdened by this curriculum. Students will feel

uncomfortable and may not even want to complete cross-subject assignments. Its application in schools is less practical and has not gone well because many students are not focused on their projects. And in its implementation, student teachers teach not according to their subject matter, so they must have broad insights not only limited to their subjects but must be demanded to be innovative and creative in implementing project-based learning in class.

The student teacher still can not understand the P5 properly. Because sometimes, when teaching a project the student teachers do not teach in accordance with the subject matter. The result was foreshadowed with Angga et al., (2022) revealing that in project activities students are involved, teachers work together because project material usually crosses material from various subjects. meanwhile the format for this project assessment also does not yet exist, only information related to project training. The implementation of P5 accompanied by learning modules is considered to be difficult due to the lack of understanding that teachers get from the training and workshops they have attended.

4. Challenges in doing assessment based on Kurikulum Merdeka

The challenge for the formative and summative assessment in Kurikulum Merdeka is that one material requires speaking, listening, and reading value, so each material must have value. The teaching modules in the Kurikulum Merdeka can be made in 1 a week and includes formative assessments and summative assessments designed by the student teacher. So there will be a lot of values in each material that will be processed. As for formative, it's a daily value, and students receive reports once in two months. So the challenge is that a lot of data must be processed. Student teachers also do not understand how to do formative assessments in Kurikulum Merdeka. Student teachers are not used to doing formative, summative, and diagnostics assessments.

The teacher should carry out an assessment at the beginning of each new material to be learned. This is due to the teacher's paradigm that they only need a preliminary assessment at the beginning of the school year, where the results can be used throughout the school year. Nurcahyono, N. A., & Putra, J. D. (2022) stated that the challenges is conducting a diagnostic assessment only at the beginning of the learning year. The second challenges, reflecting on learning to understand self-strengths and areas that still need to be developed by students. The teacher still hasn't reflected on this because the teacher has not been able to identify, translate and conclude the implementation of the learning that has been done. In addition, the teacher is also not used to doing this at the end of each lesson. The third challenges is conducting a formative assessment of each existing form of assessment. Teachers do not understand how to do formative assessment.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on student teachers' challenges in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka during their teaching practicum program. Student teachers who have been interviewed show clear and convincing evidence about their challenges in

implementing Kurikulum Merdeka. According to the student teachers, they faced challenges implementing Kurikulum Merdeka because Kurikulum Merdeka is new to them. When they learned micro-teaching, they only focused on the Kurikulum 2013, but it turned out that they had to teach based on the Kurikulum Merdeka when they were in the field. Almost all the respondent faced challenges in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka, such as challenges in designing teaching modules, challenges in class management, challenges in learning projects, and doing assessments based on Kurikulum Merdeka.

REFERENCES

- Andriani, W., Subandowo, M., Karyono, H., & Gunawan, W. (2021, August). Learning loss dalam pembelajaran daring di masa pandemi corona. In *Seminar Nasional Teknologi Pembelajaran* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 484-501).
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Research design: A qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. London: Sage Publications
- Faiz, A., Pratama, A., & Kurniawaty, I. (2022). Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi dalam Program Guru Penggerak pada Modul 2.1. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(2), 2846-2853.
- Indarwati, N. (2021). Pelaksanaan Workshop untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Guru dalam Membimbing Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler Tulis dan Baca Puisi Kepada Siswa Melalui Teknik Asosiasi dan Fantasi. *JIRA: Jurnal Inovasi Dan Riset Akademik*, 2(6), 782–791. <https://doi.org/10.47387/jira.v2i6.160>. *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA*, 7(3), 1075–1090. <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v7i3.127>
- Leke-ateh, B. A., Assan, T., E., & Debeila, J. (2013). Teaching Practice for 21th Century: Challenges and Prospects for Teacher Education in the NorthWest Province, South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 37 (3): 279-29
- Suhandi, A. M., & Robi'ah, F. (2022). Guru dan Tantangan Kurikulum Baru: Analisis Peran Guru dalam Kebijakan Kurikulum Baru. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(4), 5936-5945.
- YouTube Vox Populi Institute Indonesia. Ngobrol Pintar Seputar Kebijakan Edukasi entitled “Kupas Tuntas Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka”, May 8, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyFx2Xb2XLuZs8E1ZDMA7A>