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English Teachers' Perception on Assessment Changes in the Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 7 Padang

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This researchers are interested in conducting research aims to reveal the perceptions of English teachers at SMAN 7 Padang regarding changes in assessment that have occurred in the Merdeka curriculum. This research uses mixed methods to collect, analyze, and integrate quantitative and qualitative data in one study. From the analysis data, it is concluded that English teachers have a positive perception of assessment changes in the Merdeka curriculum. The results of the research show that assessments in the Merdeka curriculum, namely diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment are effective assessments to help teachers recognize, monitor, and measure students' abilities and understanding of the material so that teachers can identify and evaluate difficulties that arise.—faced by each student. This is because the implementation of the three assessments in the Merdeka curriculum is by their respective functions, such as the
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INTRODUCTION

Improving the superior quality of education certainly cannot be separated from the role of the government. The administration has made several attempts. The government has announced a programme to create a new curriculum as one of its initiatives to raise the standard of education. The curriculum is a set of plans and



arrangements concerning the objectives, content, learning resources, and techniques used as instructions for organising learning activities to meet certain educational goals, according to UU No. 20 of 2003 article 1 paragraph 19. The Merdeka curriculum was introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in the beginning of 2022.

The Indonesian educational system previously employed the 2013 curriculum (henceforth referred to as K13). K13 is defined as a set of planning and regulation components that comprise lesson content, objectives, and resources, along with instructions on how to apply them as a framework for structuring learning activities. This is according to the Ministry of Education and Culture. The K13 was created with comprehension, sufficient skills, and character education as its main goals. After obtaining instructional materials, K13 encourages students to observe, inquire, reason, and share what they have learned. But following the pandemic and the advancement of society, the Indonesian government implemented the Merdeka curriculum in the country's educational system. According to Nurwiatin (2022), the Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that emphasises fundamental knowledge, character development, and student competences while also fostering children's interests and abilities at a young age. Of course, modifications to the curriculum also involve adjustments to the implementation process, one of which being assessment.

Assessment is a cycle in which data from assessments is used to inform the design of learning. According to Abidin (2016), the evaluation yields feedback that can be utilised to enhance learning programmes and detect and minimise faults that need to be improved. The evaluation methodology used in the Merdeka curriculum and the prior K13 curriculum differs fundamentally. Teachers use formative and summative assessments in K–13 to track students' progress towards learning objectives and identify areas where students' learning outcomes need to be continuously improved. In the meantime, formative assessments and the utilisation of assessment data to tailor instruction to the level of student success are emphasised in the Merdeka curriculum. In the meanwhile, the K13's assessment component is broken down into evaluations of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. Regarding the Merdeka curriculum, attitudes, knowledge, and skills are not assessed separately (Kemdikbud, 2022; Susilo, 2022).

English is one among the subjects that must be nationalised in K13. English, however, no longer has the KKM value that must be met and is not required as a subject in the high school Merdeka curriculum. As a result, the perspective will emerge from modifications in the assessment's application. According to Akbar (2015), perception is a broad or global understanding of an object from multiple understandable perspectives. In this case, the teacher's perception might be defined as an opinion that forms following encounters with situations that require modification.

The Merdeka curriculum has been the subject of extensive investigation by several researchers. A study conducted by Ibrahim et al. (2022) examines the preparedness and limitations faced by Movers School Teachers when implementing the Merdeka Curriculum prototype curriculum. This paper talks about the challenges encountered throughout the autonomous curriculum's implementation. Shadri et al. (2023) did a study that centres on the viewpoint of teachers on assessment within the context of independent curriculum. The poll asks about teachers' opinions on the new

curriculum, namely the autonomous curriculum. Furthermore, research has been done on the following subjects: Yulianto (2022) and Sarul and Prastowo (2022) examined the implementation of the learning assessment model in the independent learning curriculum and the analysis of the implementation of the independent curriculum assessment in English subjects at elementary schools. The analysis of the Merdeka curriculum's assessment's implementation is also covered in this paper. Few studies, nevertheless, have looked at high school English instructors' opinions of the assessments used in the Merdeka curriculum. As a result, academics are interested in finding out how English teachers feel about the way assessments are included into the Merdeka curriculum. In addition, researchers hope to shed light on the challenges teachers face when integrating assessments into the stand-alone curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a combination of methods. The process of gathering, evaluating, and combining quantitative and qualitative data into a single research is known as a mixed methods design (Creswell, 2012). Finding out what English instructors think about the use of assessment in the Merdeka curriculum is the aim of this study. The viewpoints of English teachers were explained using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The population under investigation for this study was the five English teachers at SMA Negeri 7 Padang. Purposive sampling is used in the sample selection process to better match the sample to the goals and objectives of the study, improving the study's accuracy and confidence in its data and findings. As a result, only three of the five English teachers who have used assessments from the Merdeka curriculum have samples, as the curriculum has only been used in classes X and XI at SMAN 7 Padang.

The instruments used in this research were questionnaires and interviews. In making the questionnaire, the contents were adapted from the journal. Closed questions were used in this research. Closed questions are used to obtain answers from target respondents who can answer research questions precisely and clearly. The model used by researchers is a Likert scale. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with class X and XI English teachers to determine English teachers' perceptions of the implementation of assessment in the Merdeka curriculum. The form of the question uses semi-structured questions where respondents can answer according to the questions given.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

1.1 Questionnaire

At SMAN 7 Padang, questionnaires were given to the English teachers. Three indicators—diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments—are included in the distributed questionnaire. The table below displays the findings.

Table 1 Perception on Diagnostic Assessment

	Responses						
Items	Statements	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)	Mean	Category
1	Each semester, I administer diagnostic tests to my students				3	4.00	Very Positive
2	I employ a variety of diagnostic tools, including written exams and in-class observations.				3	4.00	Very Positive
3	My ability to assess pupils' comprehension of learning knowledge is aided by their diagnostic assessment.			2	1	3.33	Very Positive
4	I may learn more about each kid's psychological, emotional, and social state thanks to student diagnostic assessments.				3	4.00	Very Positive
5	My ability to gather and place pupils in the most appropriate learning environment for them is aided by their diagnostic assessments.			1	2	3.67	Very Positive
6	I had no trouble creating the first learning exam.			1	2	3.67	Very Positive
7	I have no issue rating the findings of student diagnostic assessments.				3	4.00	Very Positive
8	I organise and design lessons based on student conditions and characteristics as well as competencies.				3	4.00	Very Positive
Total					3.83	Very Positive	

Table 1 displays the average score for each of the eight statements. Items 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 have the greatest average score of 4.00, while items 5 and 6 have the lowest average score of 3.33. From the highest average score to the lowest average score, every item in the diagnostic assessment indication falls into the highly good group. With an average score of 3.83, every item falls into the extremely positive category. This indicates that all respondents or English teachers at SMA Negeri 7 Padang concur that teachers' diagnostic assessments of pupils aid in placing students in the most appropriate learning environments based on their individual skills. The table results also show that teachers do not have any difficulties, either in designing or compiling initial learning tests or in scoring students' diagnostic assessment results.

Table 2. Perception on Formative Assessment

		Responses					
Items	Statements	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Category
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		
9	I administer formative evaluations to students on every subject of study.				3	4.00	Very Positive

10	I employ a variety of formative assessment methods, including quick assessments, group discussions, project assignments, and student portfolios.		2	1	3.33	Very Positive
11	I create formative assessments for my students based on the curriculum and learning goals.		1	2	3.67	Very Positive
12	Students' formative exams enable me to keep an eye on their comprehension, spot any problems, and offer more assistance as necessary.		1	2	3.67	Very Positive
13	Students can improve their comprehension of particular learning areas and repair errors with the use of formative evaluations.		1	2	3.67	Very Positive
14	Creating formative test questions for students comes easily to me.			3	4.00	Very Positive
15	I have no issue grading the results of students' formative assessments.			3	4.00	Very Positive
Total					3.76	Very Positive

Items 9 through 15 have the greatest average score (4.00), while items 11 through 13 have the lowest average score (3.33). The items with the highest average score of 3.67 are 11 through 13. From the highest average score to the lowest average score, all items in the formative assessment indicators fall into the extremely favorable group. With an average score of 3.76, every item falls into the extremely positive category. This indicates that every respondent and every English instructor at SMA Negeri 7 Padang agrees that formative assessments are an important tool for teachers to check students' knowledge, identify challenges, and offer further help when needed. Besides that, formative tests also help students correct mistakes and improve their understanding of certain learning topics. So that students can improve their learning outcomes even better. The table results also show that teachers do not have any difficulties, either in designing or compiling students' formative test questions or in scoring students' formative assessment results.

Table 3. Analysis Summative Assessment

		R	Responses				
Items	Statements	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)	Mean	Category
16	Every semester, at the conclusion, I administer summative evaluations to my students.			2	1	3.33	Very Positive
17	I employ a variety of summative assessments, including written exams, projects, and presentations.			1	2	3.67	Very Positive
18	I design summative assessments for students based on the curriculum and learning goals.				3	4.00	Very Positive

	Responses						
Items	Statements	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)	Mean	Category
19	Summative evaluation of pupils facilitates my judgement of their overall academic performance.			1	2	3.67	Very Positive
20	My understanding of students' talents in relation to their colleagues in the group is aided by their summative assessments.				3	4.00	Very Positive
21	Students' abilities can be measured and their motivation to keep improving can be encouraged through summative assessments.			2	1	3.33	Very Positive
22	Creating summative test questions for students comes naturally to me.			1	2	3.67	Very Positive
23	I have no problem assigning grades to students' summative assessments.				3	4.00	Very Positive
Total						3.70	Very Positive

Table 3 shows that, out of the eight statements, items 18, 20, and 23 have the greatest average score of 4.00, while items 17 through 22 have the lowest average score of 3.33. Next in line are items 17 through 22 with an average score of 3.67. From the highest average score to the lowest average score, every item in the summative evaluation indication falls into the highly good group. With an average score of 3.70, every item falls into the extremely positive category. This means that all respondents or English teachers at SMA Negeri 7 Padang agree that the summative tests carried out by teachers on students help teachers evaluate overall student achievement. Summative tests also help teachers determine the position of students' abilities compared to their friends in the group. Summative assessment can help students to measure their abilities and can increase student motivation to continue improving their abilities. The table results also show that teachers do not have any difficulties, either in designing or compiling students' summative test questions or in scoring students' summative assessment results.

Table 4.5 English Teachers' Perceptions on assessment changes in the Merdeka curriculum

No	Indicators	Mean	Category
1	Diagnostic Assessment	3.83	Very Positive
2	Formative Assessment	3.76	Very Positive
3	Summative Assessment	3.70	Very Positive
	Total	3.76	Very Positive

Numerous conclusions can be made from this data. To start, table 4.5 shows that instructors' judgments of the three indicators are highest for diagnostic assessment when compared to the other indicators. This emphasizes how crucial the diagnostic evaluation is to the effective adoption of new evaluations in the classroom that are part of the Merdeka curriculum. Additionally, analysis reveals that the diagnostic

evaluation is a crucial examination that should not be overlooked. This does not lessen the significance of formative and summative evaluations. A diagnostic assessment, on the other hand, is a preliminary evaluation that students do for teachers in order to ascertain each student's ability prior to instruction. Thus, in order to ensure that the learning objectives are met, diagnostic evaluation guides the teacher's actions in selecting learning strategies.

1.2 Interview

The next data collection technique that the researchers used was interviews. Researchers will interview 3 English teachers who have implemented face-to-face assessments in the Merdeka Curriculum. The following are some of the findings found during the interviews conducted

English teachers' perceptions toward the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum assessment

a. Benefits

Drawing from the data from the questionnaire and the results of the interviews, it is possible to conclude that teachers view the changes in assessment in the English language learning Merdeka curriculum in a very positive light. This is because, as will be shown below, teachers have experienced a number of advantages from including the new evaluation into the English classrooms that follow the Merdeka curriculum.

First, the benefits obtained from diagnostic assessment. Diagnostic assessment helps teachers identify the abilities of each student. This is because each student has different abilities in understanding the material that will be taught by the teacher. "...karena ada beberapa siswa yg sudah belajar dari les di luar, makanya guru memastikan pemahaman siswa sudah sejauh mana sebelum diajarkan...(guru 3)". This shows that students have different social, environmental, and educational backgrounds. Diagnostic tests also help teachers group students based on student learning styles, such as visual, audio, or kinesthetic. By knowing each student's various learning styles, teachers can determine learning strategies that will be applied later to each student. As a result, it's critical to conduct a diagnostic evaluation to determine the unique needs and characteristics of every kid.

The advantages of formative evaluation come in second. The teacher completes formative assessments for each learning unit.. Formative assessment helps teachers measure the abilities of each student after being given learning material. Teachers can see developments in students' abilities by comparing the results of diagnostic tests with formative tests. "...kalau nilai yang didapat siswa dari formative test lebih bagus dari hasil diagnostic test, berarti barangkali strategi pembelajaran yang diterapkan guru sudah tepat. Namun apabila banyak siswa yang nilai formative test lebih rendah dari diagnostic testnya, berarti menjadi evaluasi bagi guru untuk mengganti strategi pembelajarannya...(guru 2)". The results of this formative assessment will greatly influence whether the learning strategies that the teacher has implemented in teaching are appropriate or not. If the learning strategy that the teacher has implemented is not appropriate, then the teacher can replace or add other learning strategies to improve student learning outcomes. Apart from teachers, formative assessment can also help students to correct mistakes and increase their understanding of learning topics that they do not yet understand.

And finally, the advantages of summative evaluation. The instructor administers a summative evaluation at the conclusion of the term. Summative assessments might be given as speeches, projects, or tasks. There will be several levels of questioning in the summative exam, starting with Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and going down to Middle Order Thinking Skills (MOTS) and Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). This is determined by each student's abilities based on the results of the formative and diagnostic assessments that have been given. The questions in the summative assessment are a combination of questions from each learning material that has been taught. "...guru dapat melihat dibagian mana siswa unggul atau pada materi apa. Sehingga nantinya dapat diupgrade kemampuan yang dipunya dari siswa tersebut...(guru 1)". This can help teachers determine the strengths of each student. Besides that, summative assessment can help students measure their abilities and can increase student motivation to continue improving their abilities. b. Challenges

Despite the many benefits of implementing the new assessment in the Merdeka curriculum in English language learning, teachers still experience several obstacles in implementing it. First, students who don't bring cell phones. Each student has a different economic background. In this case, it is not uncommon for students not to bring a cell phone because the only cell phone their family owns is their parents' cell phone. To get around this, schools can facilitate students who do not have cell phones with computer facilities owned by the school. However, if a large number of students do not have cell phones, then this will be an obstacle for the school if the computers provided are not sufficient.

Second, students who are not serious in answering questions. "...Cuma yang saya temukan adalah karena mereka tidak sungguh-sungguh menjawabnya. Nah sehingga tidak terukur kemampuan yang mereka milik...(guru 2)". Problems like this are what teachers worry about. Students are not serious in answering the questions given or students even copy answers from friends who they think are smart. So in this case, teachers cannot determine students' abilities accurately. This will also cause the learning strategy implemented by the teacher to be inappropriate because the teacher misunderstood the student's abilities.

Then, the internet network is unstable. In implementing this new assessment, of course, various learning models and questions will be designed according to the abilities of each student. The learning model and questions offered can be in the form of learning videos from the internet, questions accessed from Google Forms, word walls, or quizzes. Some of the learning models and questions offered are accessed using the internet. This is an obstacle for students and teachers if the internet network used is unstable. So, it will take quite a long time to overcome this.

Finally, when preparing a summative assessment, teachers are required to prepare questions with a variety of questions "...jadi kita perlu sama merancang soalnya itu sedemikian rupa, sehingga soal tersebut memang menarik bagi siswa untuk dikerjakan, dan itu yang diusahakan memang sesuai dengan apa yang mereka pelajari...(guru 1)". This means that it takes quite a long time for the teacher to prepare a summative assessment because of the differences in abilities each student has.

c. Support

In implementing the assessment changes that occur in the Merdeka curriculum, teachers need support from fellow teachers, the school and the government. This support is very important for teachers considering that this assessment is still new for teachers. "...sekolah selalu memfasilitasi guru untuk berdiskusi, untuk saling berbagi pengalaman, untuk saling sharing, tentang bagaimana cara menyusun assessment tersebut...(guru 1)". Such simple discussions are very helpful for teachers to continue to increase their information regarding the assessment. Apart from teacher discussions, teachers also need support from the government in implementing the assessment. "...ada bimbingan dari kepala sekolah, webinar-webinar, di pmm juga ada. Ada semuanya lengkap di pelatihan mandiri (PMM) dalam bentuk web dapat dari google dan kementrian dalam aplikasi. Daftar aplikasi baru banyak materi mengenai penilaian diagnostik, formatif, sumatif. KGBN (kelompok guru berkelas nasional), ini secara online...(guru 2)".

Apart from support from fellow teachers and the government, support from the school also has an important role in implementing assessment changes in the Merdeka curriculum. Schools can provide further training, workshops, or other professional development aimed at improving teachers' understanding and skills in using new assessments. Apart from that, supervision and supervision from the school can also help teachers identify and overcome challenges that may arise during the implementation process. With support from various parties, it is hoped that teachers will be more confident and effective in implementing assessments to the demands of the Merdeka curriculum.

Discussion

1.1 How are English teachers' perceptions toward the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum assessment?

This study yielded a number of conclusions, one of them being that students' talents may be measured and recognized by teachers and staff thanks to the Merdeka exam. in order to enhance or optimize each student's potential. These results correspond to those of Budiono and Hatip (2023), who discovered that the Merdeka curriculum's assessment component helps teachers gauge each student's aptitude. The three types of assessments included in the Merdeka curriculum are formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments.

Each of the three assessments in the Merdeka curriculum has a function that can assist teachers and students in enhancing students' learning capacities and enthusiasm during the learning process, according to the questionnaire data and the results of the interviews. Teachers believe that raising students' excitement for learning and reaching learning objectives is another advantage of integrating the new evaluation into the Independent Curriculum. The following criteria are used to measure this success: (1) the learning process, in which students can demonstrate their understanding of the material by responding orally to questions from the teacher during a discussion or in writing on an assignment; (2) the results of formative and summative assessments, which are evaluations conducted both during and at the conclusion of the learning process; (3) learning outcomes created by students that are appropriate and meet learning objectives; (4) appropriate and meet learning objectives; and (5) student

motivation in learning English. This is consistent with research by Sarul & Prastowo (2022), who discovered that applying the various tests outlined in the Merdeka curriculum at SDN 07 Kaliwining Rambipuji generated positive feedback. The Merdeka curriculum assessment was implemented, and respondents all agreed that this improved student performance and learning outcomes.

In addition to the many advantages that come with the Merdeka curriculum, instructors require assistance from other educators, the school, and the government in order to execute the assessment improvements. This assertion aligns with Wuwur's research findings from 2023, which suggest that education requires adequate methods and support from relevant parties. Developing the skills and knowledge of educators and other staff members, gaining more community and parental support, enhancing infrastructure and facilities, bolstering oversight and monitoring, fostering collaboration among stakeholders in the educational system, and promoting involvement in the teacher mobilizer program are a few actions that can be taken. According to Sinulingga's research (2022), a Merdeka curriculum's implementation needs to be backed and linked with strong institutional finances, a wealth of resources, and policymakers' backing and direction.

Apart from support from fellow teachers and the government, support from the school also has an important role in implementing assessment changes in the Merdeka curriculum. Schools can provide further training, workshops, or other professional development aimed at improving teachers' understanding and skills in using new assessments. Apart from that, supervision and supervision from the school can also help teachers identify and overcome challenges that may arise during the implementation process. With support from various parties, it is hoped that teachers will be more confident and effective in implementing assessments to the demands of the Merdeka curriculum.

Although the new assessment in the English language learning Merdeka curriculum has numerous advantages, there are also certain challenges that teachers face when putting it into practice. The results of this study by the findings of Zulaiha et al. (2022) found that students still need more facilities, such as a computer/PC and a stable internet network to access materials and lesson questions. The lack of infrastructure and facilities that can support the learning process causes the learning atmosphere to be boring, which hinders the realization of learning activities that should be engaging and enjoyable. This study looks at the infrastructure and facilities that prevent the Merdeka curriculum assessment from being implemented, such as the hardware computers and other personal computers that still need to be provided and a reliable internet connection for accessing resources and lesson plans. Students who don't take the questions seriously or who even replicate the answers of their brilliant peers provide the second challenge. Thus, in this instance, the teacher is unable to appropriately assess the students' proficiency. Because the teacher misjudges the pupils' abilities, this will also lead the learning approach that the teacher uses to be incorrect.

An additional challenge identified in this investigation stems from Nurcahyono's research (2022), which suggests that student diversity in the classroom is associated with various aspects of student performance, including comprehension, critical thinking, skills, learning style, confidence, and focus. Because every student

has a varied set of talents, teachers require a considerable amount of time to prepare for summative examinations. The Merdeka curriculum takes individual student personalities into account, particularly when it comes to assessment.

Schools and Merdeka curriculum policymakers must support and facilitate instructors in light of some of the challenges teachers have encountered when adopting new assessments in the curriculum.

Some of them are that schools must equip computer facilities for students who do not bring cell phones to support the learning process. Apart from providing facilities in the form of computers and the like, what is no less important must be provided by schools is a stable internet network. Some students may indeed have a personal internet network, but there must be times when the internet network is in an unstable condition. Therefore, it is necessary for the school to also provide a stable internet network to facilitate students in accessing materials that use the internet network. Third, before the teacher gives the test, the teacher is expected to convey to students that the purpose of the test is to measure students' abilities. This is a form of anticipation from the teacher so that students do not cheat when taking the test. So that the results obtained from the test will be valid according to the ability of the students who answer the test. Furthermore, for the solution "teachers need quite a long time in preparing summative assessments because of the different abilities of each student". This might be discussed with other teachers so that they can help each other and exchange ideas in preparing summative test questions.

The teachers also mentioned that the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum have slightly different assessments. The Merdeka curriculum assessment is preferable to the 2013 curriculum assessment due to these beneficial differences. The remaining abilities in the 2013 curriculum are still equivalent to the KKM benchmark because the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) are still present. In contrast, the assessment provided by the Merdeka curriculum leans more toward the student, where education more fully honors each student's potential, so that educators can work to enhance and capitalize on each student's unique talents.

The conventional paradigm of learning assessment, which tended to examine student learning outcomes and activities apart from the learning process, has given way to a new paradigm in the field (Yulianto, 2022). In conclusion, the teachers stated that because of the advantages, the Merdeka curriculum's evaluation for English language learners should be used consistently. It is anticipated that decision-makers like the government can get over the challenges the instructors face and offer answers. As a result, Merdeka curriculum assessment may be implemented as best it can, particularly in the area of English language acquisition.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to find out how English teachers at SMAN 7 Padang feel about modifications to the assessment component of the Merdeka curriculum. The researcher came to the conclusion that teachers had a favorable opinion of the assessment modifications made to the Merdeka curriculum based on the data analysis and conclusions. Accordingly, every category in the Merdeka curriculum evaluation plays a crucial part in assisting teachers and students in determining each other's proficiency levels in certain English lesson materials. According to the

research's findings, the diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments included in the Merdeka curriculum are useful tools for assisting teachers in identifying, tracking, and measuring their students' skills and comprehension of the subject matter. This allows teachers to assess any challenges that may arise encountered by every pupil. This is because the implementation of the three assessments in the Merdeka curriculum follows their respective functions, such as the diagnostic assessment given by the teacher at the beginning of each semester, the formative assessment given by the teacher on each learning topic, and the summative assessment given by the teacher given by the teacher at the end of each semester. Even though there are many benefits, teachers still experience several obstacles that must be overcome with government assistance.

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