



PREPARATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

This article relates to the preparation for the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at SDN 158 Palembang. The research type is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data collection methods include interviews, observations, and documentary studies. The data analysis technique involves stages of data collection, data presentation, verification, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data is examined through triangulation consisting of time, method, and source triangulation. Based on the results and discussions, the preparation for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SDN 158 Palembang indicates that the school has prepared itself to implement the curriculum in accordance with government regulations. The preparation involves understanding and readiness related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Educators undergo education and training to understand and be familiar with the preparation and implementation processes of the Merdeka Curriculum. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is considered an initiative that provides more creativity and flexibility to teachers and schools in designing and implementing the curriculum. Several preparation steps have been taken, including understanding the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum, identifying potential and needs involving all stakeholders, training for teachers, adjusting learning programs, as well as curriculum planning and development. These preparation stages are designed to assist educators and educational units in setting goals for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The readiness of each educator and educational unit can vary, so these implementation stages are designed so that each educator can confidently try to apply the Merdeka Curriculum. This confidence refers to the belief that educators have the ability to continue learning and improve their skills, not only in implementing the curriculum but also in the overall education process. The ability to continue learning is considered a crucial asset for educators.

Keywords: *Preparation, Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini berkaitan dengan persiapan implementasi kurikulum Merdeka di SDN 158 Palembang. Jenis penelitian adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Metode pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi dan studi dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data melalui tahapan pengumpulan data, penyajian data, verifikasi dan penarikan kesimpulan. Teknik pemeriksaan keabsahan data melalui triangulasi yang terdiri dari triangulasi waktu, metode dan sumber. Berdasarkan hasil dan pembahasan bahwa persiapan implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di SDN 158 Palembang menunjukkan bahwa sekolah telah mempersiapkan diri untuk menjalankan kurikulum tersebut sesuai dengan regulasi pemerintah. Persiapan melibatkan pemahaman dan kesiapan terkait implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka. Tenaga pendidik menjalani pendidikan dan pelatihan untuk memahami serta mengenal proses persiapan dan pelaksanaan Kurikulum Merdeka. Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka dianggap sebagai inisiatif yang memberikan lebih banyak kreativitas dan fleksibilitas kepada guru dan sekolah dalam merancang serta melaksanakan kurikulum. Beberapa langkah persiapan telah dilakukan, termasuk pemahaman konsep Kurikulum Merdeka, identifikasi potensi dan kebutuhan dengan melibatkan semua stakeholder, pelatihan bagi guru, penyesuaian program pembelajaran, serta perencanaan dan pengembangan kurikulum. Tahapan persiapan ini didesain untuk membantu pendidik dan satuan pendidikan menetapkan tujuan implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka. Kesiapan setiap pendidik dan satuan pendidikan dapat beragam, sehingga tahapan implementasi ini dirancang agar setiap pendidik dapat dengan percaya diri mencoba menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka. Keyakinan ini merujuk pada pandangan bahwa pendidik memiliki kemampuan untuk terus belajar dan meningkatkan keterampilan mereka, tidak hanya dalam penerapan kurikulum, tetapi juga dalam proses pendidikan secara keseluruhan. Kemampuan untuk terus belajar dianggap sebagai modal penting bagi pendidik.

Kata Kunci: Persiapan, Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is still the main role in developing human resources. Education serves to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life (Zainuri, Adil, et al., 2023). In education, the process of implementing changes in educational policies, including the curriculum, is a time-consuming learning process. Therefore, the Government provides opportunities for educators and educational units to implement the Merdeka Curriculum according to their respective levels of readiness.

Every program, activity or something else that is planned always ends with an evaluation (Ibrahim et al., 2023). As in an educational process, educational institutions need to prepare how the educational process can take place properly.

Education units also need to learn to implement the Merdeka Curriculum according to their level of readiness, and gradually improve skills in its utilization.

Curriculum renewal and educational progress go hand in hand in Indonesia, where the curriculum is evaluated at every stage of its development. Many assume that the curriculum changes with the change of policy makers. At least 10 revisions have occurred in curriculum development in Indonesia since the beginning of the change, as society continues to encourage innovation in this area (Sigit Priatmoko Wiku Aji Sugiri, 2020).

Education has an important function in producing high-caliber human resources for the progress of the country. Therefore, every country is always looking for the best education system to implement. Several initiatives have been taken, including curriculum changes, in Indonesia. There are several modifications made to the history curriculum in Indonesia.

In implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, teachers are faced with various challenges, especially regarding their readiness to carry out the concepts contained in the curriculum. Some teachers may show a pessimistic attitude and feel unprepared for change, considering the curriculum as a government project that tends to change every time there is a change of Minister of Education.

To overcome this challenge, the steps that need to be taken are to thoroughly socialize the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum implementation policy. In addition, it is necessary to make massive efforts to strengthen the growth mindset for teachers. Education about growth mindset will help teachers develop the belief that success, including in the learning process, can be achieved through belief, willingness to try, and consistent effort (Wahidah, 2021), including readiness for KM implementation.

Various growth mindset patterns that can be formed in teachers in implementing KM, for example, dare to face challenges in KM, intend to persist when it is difficult, want to try various things that are required in KM, can accept criticism as input, view the strengths and successes of others as inspiration to develop.

The challenges faced in curriculum implementation are not seen as a problem but as a way to grow. Challenges will be seen not from the size of the problem but will be seen from a variety of different perspectives (Senge, 2016). The government aims to improve the quality of education by modifying policies in this area. This goal is in line with the government's moral mandate as stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution.

In the era of the Fifth Industrial Revolution, students must graduate from school with the ability to collaborate and communicate as well as think critically, creatively and innovatively. The main challenge is the inadequacy of some teachers in introducing students to the digital world. Although many accurate learning resources can be accessed digitally, some teachers are still reluctant to utilize them. Digital literacy, including an understanding of technologies such as Coding,

Artificial Intelligence, and engineering principles, is key in facing this sophisticated era. (Riswanto, 2021)

Humans have now entered the technological era, but the problem is that there are still many teachers who are not technologically literate. Even though technological literacy is very important, it can even be said that mastery of technology by teachers and students is one of the keys to successful education because technology can facilitate and accelerate the transfer of knowledge between teachers and students and function as a learning communication tool.

Human literacy takes the form of communication, design and humanities knowledge. How can teachers and students accomplish these tasks (Yamin, 2020). One of the reasons why the learning process fails is the lack of communication between teachers and students. Teachers need to be proficient in various subject areas, but they also need to understand the psychological makeup of their students by becoming human literacy experts, expanding their knowledge of humanities, and maintaining good lines of communication with their students.

Teachers want to help students catch up in class, but they spend time on administrative tasks that don't seem very useful. Teachers are aware that students' potential cannot be determined by test scores, but rather by data driven by various parties. The overcrowded curriculum prevents teachers from taking their students outside the classroom to learn from the outside world. Teachers are frustrated that children's success in the real world is not determined by their ability to memorize, but by their ability to create and collaborate.

Teachers recognize that each student has unique needs, but bureaucratically, uniformity is always better than diversity. Teachers want their students to be inspired, but they lack the courage to be creative (Hamalik, 2010). Several important issues were raised by Nadiem Makarim in the implementation of Merdeka Belajar. First, this idea answers the problems faced by teachers in their daily work as educators. Second, teachers feel less burdened and have more freedom to evaluate student learning, free from heavy administrative tasks, and free from threats and coercion. Third, this idea helps clarify the boundaries that exist in educational institutions, from the learning process to teacher administration, new student admissions, and assessments such as USBN-UN. Fourth, this idea recognizes that educators are frontline workers who must foster a positive learning environment by implementing educational policies that assist educators and students in shaping the country's future (Suhartono, 2021).

The purpose of Merdeka Belajar is to rebuild the education system so that it can advance the nation and keep up with the times. This idea reaffirms that education is basically an effort to liberate and humanize humans. In Merdeka Belajar, educators and students become learning subjects, working together to find the truth.

In the implementation process, good preparation is needed so that the objectives can be achieved optimally, with careful planning and preparation, it will

become a guide in the implementation process in the field. The independent curriculum requires a good system including technology and the internet that supports the educational process. Thus, educational institutions, teachers, and students can carry out preparations in the implementation process.

From a conceptual point of view, Merdeka Belajar is not a new idea in modern education. This concept has been used by educators, activists in the field of education, and certain schools (Sulistiyawati, 2020). The Father of National Education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, has also introduced the concept of Merdeka Belajar. The deep meaning of Merdeka Belajar philosophy lies in its teachings about enthusiasm and educating children to become humans who are mentally, cognitively, and physically independent.

The idea behind Merdeka Belajar is to give students the flexibility to understand subject matter and solve problems according to their aptitude. It is no longer about flattening students' abilities, but more like playing a game and leveling up through challenges. Students can be encouraged by Merdeka Belajar to use the abilities they have acquired in various contexts. It is hoped that Merdeka Belajar can produce knowledge that goes beyond the scope of information. In this concept, the teacher's role is as a mentor, and problem-solving skills are highly expected. Meanwhile, the evaluation carried out emphasizes the process of struggle rather than grades.

The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the development of learners' potential, provides freedom in the selection and development of learning materials, and encourages creativity and innovation. Preparation for the implementation of this curriculum is key in ensuring the smooth implementation and achievement of the expected educational goals.

Common learning problems are usually related to the traditional teaching methods used by educators. It takes very little time to bore students with this pattern. Therefore, this can have an impact on hindering the learning process and the achievement of learning objectives itself. If educators can adapt their methods of presenting material in a creative way, learning can be good, effective, efficient and interesting. Teachers should use these issues to produce interesting and creative lessons, one of which is learning media.

Based on a conversation with a teacher at SDN 158 Palembang in November 2023 regarding the "Merdeka Belajar" learning curriculum policy, the Principal said that since the start of the new school year in July 2022, some classes have not implemented the Merdeka curriculum, and some classes have implemented the independent learning curriculum policy. The learning process starts with teacher readiness and continues with school infrastructure and facilities. At SDN 158 Palembang, there are 17 teachers and 210 students. As the "Merdeka Belajar" learning system is a new policy, implementation challenges are inevitable. Teachers, in particular, have a number of issues that need to be resolved as they play an important role in education and learning. In addition, the author also conducted interviews with grade 2 educators that, before implementing or

implementing the independent curriculum policy, educators first receive briefings such as training with the hope that educators have the readiness to implement independent learning in their classes, but in its implementation there are still problems faced, such as the availability of books, media that support the learning process of independent learning.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This article research will examine how the preparation for the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at SDN 158 Palembang. The object of this research is located at Jl. Rawajaya Pahlawan Village, Kec. Kemuning, Palembang City, South Sumatra, with a postal code of 30126. Based on the title that the researcher took, this research is qualitative.

Research using a qualitative approach produces descriptive data, namely data presented using words to describe the object being observed or studied. The researcher is the main tool in qualitative research. Data collection methods through interviews, observation and documentation studies.

Participants will be interviewed in depth to collect data. A pre-prepared interview guide will be used for face-to-face interviews. Interview subjects will include the development of vision and mission statements, planning learning activities in Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, understanding of the concept of Merdeka's previous curriculum, and challenges with Merdeka Belajar Learning System.

To find journals that are relevant and appropriate to the research content, research data is collected through book searches and Google Scholar. Information collected from observations and interviews will also go through thematic analysis. The process of coding, classifying, and identifying emerging themes from the data will be part of the thematic analysis. These themes will be used to explain the steps involved in preparing to introduce Merdeka curriculum and to answer research questions.

The data analysis technique goes through the stages of data collection, data presentation, verification and drawing conclusions. Meanwhile, the data checking technique in this study uses triangulation or a combination, namely time triangulation, method triangulation and technique triangulation.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The Merdeka Curriculum is an educational approach that gives educators and schools greater autonomy in curriculum planning and implementation. The following actions can be taken before implementing the Merdeka Curriculum:

Understanding the Independent Curriculum Concept

One of the important areas to pay attention to in education management is curriculum management. This curriculum management is related to efforts to implement the management function, starting from the planning process, organizing, implementing effective learning to evaluating the learning process (Zainuri, Yunita, et al., 2023). In this case, curriculum management is an important activity to be carried out properly and with good management it will make it easier for educators, education personnel, and students to carry out learning activities.

To implement an independent curriculum in schools, schools must ensure that the curriculum implemented is in accordance with the basic principles of the independent curriculum. In addition, schools must also ensure that the learning process is in accordance with the independent curriculum, using innovative methods and facilitating students to think critically and creatively.

In addition to providing adequate access to infrastructure and facilities for students, schools must also ensure that the teaching and learning process is supervised by qualified teaching staff. Government Regulation No. 19/2005 on National Education Standards was used to implement the introduction of a self-paced curriculum in Indonesian schools. The self-contained curriculum incorporates a number of elements, including cognitive, affective and psychomotor elements.

Based on the results of the interview with the principal, in implementing the independent curriculum, educational institutions must be able to prepare themselves so that the implementation process can run well. In the independent curriculum, the process must be able to provide students with the ability to recognize, appreciate, and utilize the potential of themselves and their environment is a component of their cognitive development. Tolerance, empathy, and concern for others and the environment are examples of affective qualities. Meanwhile, the psychomotor component includes students' ability to think critically, inventively, and creatively as well as their proficiency in communication.

The implementation of the independent curriculum in schools in Indonesia must be carried out in accordance with the principles of the independent curriculum and these principles must be incorporated into the learning process. These principles include a constructivist approach, cooperative learning integrated learning, student-centered learning, open learning, and goal-directed learning (Farhana, 2022). Thus, students are expected to understand, appreciate, and utilize the potential of themselves and their environment, as well as be able to think critically, creatively, and innovatively and have effective communication skills. In addition, the implementation of the independent curriculum is also carried out by developing an attitude of tolerance.

According to one of the teachers at SDN 158 Palembang, the Merdeka Curriculum is one of the initiative programs of the Minister of Education and Culture. In its implementation, teachers must be able to prepare themselves and

follow the existing rules and guidelines, the aim is to create a learning environment that is in accordance with existing circumstances and apply the concept of independence of learning in accordance with existing rules and is also fun in the process.

The purpose of independent learning is to create a positive environment for parents, teachers and students. Self-directed learning is an educational process that needs to foster a positive environment. Establishing the philosophical foundation, social context and purpose of curriculum use is an important component of the curriculum development concept. The curriculum is expected to prepare students for the future so that the development of the times can be adapted by them. The needs of the times, society, and the potential of students should be considered when creating a curriculum. The curriculum itself is very dynamic by definition.

In the implementation of independent learning, there must be a good preparation stage to produce higher quality education and produce students who are not only proficient in memorization, but also have sharp analytical skills, good reasoning, and a thorough understanding of learning to develop themselves. In the process of preparation and implementation teachers should be encouraged to think creatively when implementing the curriculum in the classroom. This has the potential to foster a positive view of learning in students.

To make learning fun for both teachers and students, self-directed learning gives teachers and students more freedom to choose the structure of the curriculum (Fauzi, 2022), as education in Indonesia has so far emphasized knowledge over skills, the self-directed learning system also emphasizes aspects of character development that are in line with Indonesian values.

To embrace change and progress in this country and create an education system that can evolve with the times, self-directed learning is offered as the way forward. In other words, returning education to its original purpose of liberating people from oppression or humanizing people.

The subjects in the learning system fall under the idea of self-directed learning between instructors and students. This shows that instead of serving as a source of truth for students, teachers and students work together to pursue the truth. This suggests that the teacher's role in the classroom is to explore students' truth, their capacity for critical thinking, and their ability to see the world and its phenomena, not to impose or homogenize their own version of reality. The potential of technological advancement and the internet is the driving force behind educational freedom as it has the ability to compromise an inflexible or illiberal educational system.

Before the process of implementing an independent curriculum, the planning that must be done by educators and schools must spend a lot of time on administrative tasks. As a result, educational institutions, instructors and students

can use the freedom to innovate and learn independently and creatively (Magfiroh, 2022).

Based on the results of interviews with the head teacher of class II that teachers must teach children to learn freely if we want them to be able to learn and answer life's challenges. Teachers and students should have the freedom to choose the best balance between curriculum requirements, student needs and local circumstances for learning to be meaningful. Students are allowed to choose useful learning objectives, efficient teaching strategies, and to honestly discuss their reflections with their teachers.

In addition to enabling students to reach their full potential, the self-paced learning curriculum gives educational institutions the flexibility to manage the curriculum based on local autonomy. With the implementation of the self-paced learning curriculum, all designs and lesson plans are made more concise by containing essential components so that teachers have plenty of time to evaluate learning. On the other hand, lesson plans are criticized for their detailed and rigid structure, which forces teachers to follow the stages of learning that have been made, resulting in teachers spending more time on administrative matters.

The three features of Merdeka Curriculum-learning in core subjects, a more flexible curriculum structure, and project-based learning to build soft skills and character that fit the profile of Pancasila students-are intended to revitalize education. In addition, the goal of the independent curriculum is to create breakthroughs that will become boundaries across scientific fields. Constructivist learning theory is relevant to the idea of independent learning.

According to the constructivist perspective, children construct their knowledge through their interaction with the things and experiences they encounter. The emphasis in this process is on everyone's activity in acquiring knowledge (Afviansyah, 2022). It is expected that students are always involved and able to find the best way to learn. Teachers create an environment where students can build knowledge by acting as friends, mediators, and facilitators. Critical, high-quality, expressive, transformative, effective, varied, progressive, actual, and factual learning are the hallmarks of independent learning. Students who receive an education with an emphasis on independence are usually brave, creative, optimistic and eager to try new things. They have a strong desire to learn and compare the pleasure of reading to the pleasure of eating.

Teachers need to be proficient in various technologies as the idea of "freedom to learn" is closely related to digitization. To run digital-based learning that is in line with the demands of the times, digital expertise is a must. Understanding that people and times are always changing is a valuable tool for educators who want to shift the education paradigm.

In the implementation of an independent curriculum, parents' participation must also be open to accepting changes in learning. Report cards are still a concern, but parents must realize that children need to learn skills as well as knowledge.

Today, the importance of knowledge and skills are one in the same to ensure that the nation's next generation has a bright future (Marisa, 2021).

Providing opportunities for students to learn freely, comfortably, and stress-free is reflected in Merdeka Belajar. This idea gives more consideration to students' innate talents rather than pressuring them to pursue subjects outside their interests and expertise. The growth and development of each student should be guided by their unique potential and skills.

Applying the principle of learning independence is essential to prevent students from being assigned tasks or materials that are beyond their capabilities. Giving a load that exceeds one's capacity is considered abhorrent and goes against the spirit of freedom of learning. Astute educators will ensure that learners' freedom of choice is fulfilled, thus encouraging free learning in schools, which can be referred to as a liberating environment.

The Minister of Education and Culture claims that Merdeka Belajar deviates from the goal of higher quality educational output and produces students who are not only proficient in memorization, but also have sharp analytical skills, good reasoning, and a thorough understanding of learning to develop themselves. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture's interpretation of Merdeka Belajar, curriculum implementation should be fun and encourage teachers to think creatively. This has the potential to foster a positive view of learning.

Based on the results of observations in the field in class II related to the independent curriculum, there are still many teachers who do not understand the independent curriculum, including preparations for implementing the independent curriculum. There are still many teachers who do not fully understand what the Merdeka curriculum is and the Merdeka learning system, the flow of the Merdeka curriculum shows its difference from the previous curriculum. The 2013 curriculum follows a flow that starts from management and administration, then is further explained by teachers to education units, teachers, parents, and students who must meet the UN, KKM, and predetermined standards.

In contrast, the independent curriculum follows a different path, starting with the prioritization of students' rights and needs, followed by the role of parents who accompany their children to school, teachers who guide students based on their needs and abilities, educational units that provide learning support resources based on students' interests and talents, and finally students who are managed according to management or administration.

The teacher with the initials (A) also explained that there is still a lot to consider before implementing the Merdeka curriculum, Merdeka Curriculum believes that schools must first socialize and generalize according to student characteristics, which are reflected in the curriculum and learning resources.

Schools support and create an environment where students can pursue their own interests. Students' conditions are taken into consideration when creating learning resources and materials. This means that various learning resources,

including the internet and the surrounding environment, can be used to complement what teachers teach in class. To support their students' learning activities, teachers facilitate learning on their behalf.

Teachers must be able to recognize and understand the needs of their students, communicate effectively, be proficient in digital tools, be able to run a classroom effectively, and be able to apply innovative teaching methods to earn the title of "Fun Teacher" in the world of education. personalized instruction techniques. Project-based learning emphasizes skills and character development over knowledge in Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers are responsible for encouraging student creativity and activity.

Teachers face challenges when practicing Merdeka Curriculum. Assessment is used to evaluate student learning. Assessment results are not used to determine learning objectives or student graduation requirements. Nevertheless, this evaluation serves as a reflection tool, if the results are not satisfactory, the results will be used to improve previous learning experiences.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion related to the preparation for the implementation of the independent curriculum at SDN 158 Palembang, that the school has prepared itself for the implementation of the independent curriculum based on the regulations set by the government. Preparations made by schools include studying and preparing matters related to the implementation of the independent curriculum, educators are carried out education and training to understand and know about the preparation and implementation process of the independent curriculum.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is an initiative that can provide more creativity and flexibility to teachers and schools in designing and implementing the curriculum. Some preparatory steps that can help implement the Merdeka Curriculum are that schools already understand the concept of an independent curriculum, identify potential and needs by involving all stakeholders, conduct training for teachers, adjust to learning programs, make plans and develop curriculum. This stage is designed to assist educators and education units in setting goals for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The readiness of each educator and education unit may vary, therefore this stage of implementation is arranged so that every educator can confidently try to apply the Merdeka Curriculum. This confidence refers to the belief that educators can continue to learn and improve their skills to provide the best in curriculum implementation, and more importantly, in the education process. The ability to continue learning is considered an important asset for educators.

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