Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Innovation and Its Application in Education Units

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Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan salah satu inovasi di bidang kurikulum yaitu kurikulum mandiri yang merupakan kebijakan merdeka belajar episode kelima belas. Metode yang digunakan penulis adalah penelitian kepustakaan terhadap berbagai kajian yang berkaitan dengan kurikulum mandiri. Kurikulum ini diterapkan sebagai bentuk respon pemerintah dalam hal ini kememdikbudristek terhadap kondisi pandemi yang mengakibatkan hilangnya kondisi pembelajaran atau sebagai kurikulum pemulihan. Strategi penerapan kurikulum mandiri yang diterapkan pemerintah tidak dilakukan secara masiv, melainkan disesuaikan dengan kesiapan dan kondisi masing-masing satuan pendidikan. Pada tahun ajaran 2022/2023, Pemerintah memberikan pilihan bagi seluruh satuan pendidikan dalam melaksanakan kurikulum, yaitu kurikulum mandiri, kurikulum darurat/penyederhanaan atau kurikulum 2013. Target uji coba kurikulum mandiri ini sebanyak 2500 sekolah mengemudi yang tersebar di 34 provinsi. Tes terbatas yang dilakukan pada sekolah bertujuan untuk mendapatkan umpan balik sebagai materi perbaikan kurikulum. Hasil yang diperoleh antara lain menunjukkan bahwa sekolah secara fleksibel dan kreatif dapat diberikan keleluasaan untuk merancang dan melaksanakan pembelajaran sesuai dengan kemampuan siswa. Perubahan kurikulum ini akan berhasil jika didukung oleh perubahan pola pikir pendidik dan tenaga kependidikan serta pemangku kepentingan pendidikan lainnya.

Kata Kunci: *Merdeka Belajar, inovasi kurikulum*

Abstract

This article aims to describe one of the innovations in the field of curriculum, namely the independent curriculum which is the policy of independent learning episode fifteenth episode. The method used by the author is library research on various studies related to the independent curriculum. This curriculum is applied as a form of government response in this case kememdikbudristek to pandemic conditions that result in loss learning conditions or as a recovery curriculum. The strategy for implementing the independent curriculum implemented by the government is not carried out in a masiv basis, but is adjusted to the readiness and conditions of each educational unit. In the 2022/2023 school year, the Government provides options for all educational units in implementing the curriculum, namely the independent curriculum, the emergency /simplified curriculum or the 2013 curriculum. The target of piloting this independent curriculum is as many as 2500 driving schools spread across 34 provinces. Limited tests conducted on driving schools aim to get feedback as curriculum improvement material. The results obtained include showing that schools flexibly and creatively can be given the flexibility to design and carry out learning in accordance with students' abilities. This curriculum change will be successful if supported by changes in the mindset of educators and education personnel and other educational stakeholders.

Keywords: *Merdeka Belajar, Innovation Curriculum*

Introduction

The phenomenon of learning loss does not only occur in our country. Almost all countries in the world are feeling the suffering caused by school closures due to the pandemic (Piwko, 2021). To catch up, each country issued a policy to respond to the Covid-19 crisis. Of course, each country can adjust its own policies. However, the policies taken certainly consider data and needs, because if the government takes the wrong policy, the education catastrophe due to Covid-19

becomes a real threat (Meliani, Alawi, et al., 2021). Alvarez conducted a study on learning loss due to the Katrina disaster, revealing the importance of policymaking so that the curriculum can adapt and be flexible by changing the content of learning and learning time (Mayasari et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, O'Conor and Takashi argue that the use of a more flexible curriculum by adjusting to the current conditions of students will be able to help catch up. Reflecting on previous research on learning loss and curriculum, Harmey and Moss argue that the curriculum must be made as flexible as possible so that it can accommodate the needs of educational units and learners due to school closures (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). Overcoming the learning crisis in Indonesia needs to be carried out various holistic and integrated efforts. As one of these efforts, especially in dealing with the burden of overcrowded curricula, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) has made a Merdeka curriculum policy (Meke et al., 2022).

The development of this curriculum begins with the implementation of an emergency curriculum during a pandemic, namely through curriculum simplification that leads students to focus on essential competencies. The evaluation results show that the use of emergency curriculum is able to significantly reduce indications of learning loss during the pandemic, both for literacy and numeracy achievements (Arifin & Muslim, 2020). In subsequent developments, the independent curriculum also focuses on achieving contextual learning that adapts to the needs and development of students (Laga et al., 2021).

Simplification and improvement of the curriculum is certainly needed as a result of learning loss and learning gaps due to the pandemic, the teaching system that will change due to the implementation of online learning, and adjustments to the latest developments in the situation and needs (Susilawati, 2021). The use of a more flexible curriculum by refining and adjusting to the latest conditions and needs, has proven effective in boosting the learning outcomes of students. Of course, in its implementation, the implementation of the curriculum must be accompanied by a support system to facilitate its achievement (Sintiawati et al., 2022).

Method

This type of research is a type of literature study research with a descriptive method. The purpose is to describe the findings of the literature taken from articles, reports, web, youtube steaming related to the topics discussed. The lack of literature discussing research topics is the reason researchers take references from the web and youtube from the channels of policymakers. The data analysis technique used takes from the Sugiyono data analysis technique (Sugiyono, 2015). Among them, data collection is related to topics similar to this article, the collected data is then reduced to produce data that is in line with the research questions, then the data is presented (display data), then the data that has been presented can be drawn conclusions.

Result

The OECD (Potrafke, 2017) conducts studies on the process of curriculum redesigning in several countries and synthesizes the principles of curriculum design that are considered effective and encourage a systematic and accountable process. The OECD divides these principles into four groups according to the scope in which they need to be applied: (1) related to the design of curriculum or achievement standards in each discipline, there are three principles that need to be considered, namely: focus, accuracy, and coherence; (2) in designing a curriculum that applies to all disciplines, the principles that need to be met are the ability to transfer competencies, interdisciplinary, and electives; (3) in designing curriculum policies at a more macro level the principles held are authenticity or authenticity, flexibility, and alignment; and (4) related to the work process of curriculum design, the principles that need to be held are engagement, student empowerment or independence, and teacher empowerment or independence. These principles are one of the references in determining the principles used throughout the design of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum (Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020).

Principles of Independent Curriculum Development

The main foundation for the design of the Merdeka Curriculum is the philosophy of Merdeka Belajar which also underlies other educational policies, as stated in the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture for 2020-2024 (Permendikbud Number 22 of 2020) (Rusli Baharuddin, 2021). The Minister of Education and Culture indicates that Merdeka Belajar encourages paradigm shifts, including paradigms related to curriculum and learning. In support of this effort Permendikbud Nomor 22 Tahun 2020 said, "the curriculum formed by the Free Learning Policy will be flexible in character, based on competence, focusing on character development and soft skills, and accommodating to the needs of the world".

The philosophy of Freedom of Learning initiated by the Father of Education Ki Hajar Dewantara is also an important foundation in formulating the principles of curriculum design. According to Dewantara, independence is the goal of education as well as a principle that underlies the strategy to achieve this goal. Independence as a learning goal, achieved through the development of ethics, as he wrote. The goal combines cognitive abilities (mind), socio-emotional intelligence (feelings), willingness to learn, behave, and take action (disposition or affective) to make changes (Fuadi & Aswita, 2021).

Ethics leads to the development of the ability to become lifelong learners who have the ability to self-regulate their learning direction. Ki Hajar Dewantara's vision is increasingly relevant and increasingly urgent to be achieved by indonesia's young generation today. To produce a curriculum that is in line with the National Education Goals and the educational vision of the nation's founders, the principles that become the handle in the curriculum design process are as follows: (1) Simple, easy to understand and implement; (2) Focus on the competence and character of all learners; (3) Flexible; (4) Aligned; (5) Work together; and (6) Pay attention to the results of the study and feedback (Sherly et al., 2020).

The first working principle of curriculum design is simple. That is, the curriculum design needs to be easy to understand and implement. Curriculum design or other educational innovations become simpler for educators if the changes are not too far away than the previous ones. However, if the change is large enough, it can be simplified by providing gradual implementation support so that the level of difficulty is not too great for educators. The main points of concern with reference to this principle are (a) Continuing pre-arranged policies and good practices, (b) Diverse support and assistance for implementing the curriculum, and (c) A logical and clear design. The curriculum design is quite simple to be understood easily, especially by the main stakeholders, namely teachers. Clarity, complexity, and practicality of an innovation are part of the factors that determine the success of educational change (Mulyana et al., 2022).

In line with the simple principle where policies and good practices are continued, the Merdeka Curriculum also continues the ideals of previous curricula to focus on developing competencies and character (Musthafa & Meliani, 2021). The term "focus" means to focus attention on less subject matter or content in order to learn more in depth and quality. His implications for this independent curriculum are (1)

Reducing curriculum material or content, (2) Learning is student-centered, (3) All students need to achieve minimum competencies, and (4) Strengthening literacy and numeracy. Flexibility is related to the autonomy and independence of teachers and learners in controlling the learning process. This flexible principle is in accordance with the mandate in Government Regulation No. 4 of 2022 concerning Amendments to Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards (Sulistiyani et al., 2021).

In Article 37, it is stated that the Ministry of Education and Culture only establishes the basic framework of the curriculum and curriculum structure, while the education unit has the authority to develop the curriculum. A flexible curriculum will provide flexibility for educational units and educators to adapt, increase the richness of subject matter, and align the curriculum with the characteristics of students, the vision and mission of the education unit, and local culture and wisdom. This kind of flexibility is needed so that the curriculum learned by students is always relevant to environmental dynamics, contemporary issues, and the learning needs of students (Faiz & Purwati, 2021).

Alignment is related to three things: 1) alignment between the curriculum, the learning process (pedagogy), and assessment; 2) alignment between the curriculum and the teacher governance and competency system; and 3) alignment with policies relating to individual learning from early childhood to college. These three things make the curriculum design need to be viewed systemically and involve cross-units in the government bureaucratic system in the work process (Anwar, 2021). This principle of mutual cooperation is mainly related to the process of curriculum design and development. Since the beginning of curriculum design was carried out at the end of 2019, several LPTK academics and universities have been involved in reflecting on the 2013 Curriculum and formulating ideas for curriculum changes so that they can be more flexible, focus on competence and character, and in line with the changes in the world that are so dynamic (Meke et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in the process of curriculum design starting from the basic framework and curriculum structure, Learning Outcomes, to the development of various teaching tools, various parties are involved. The experts involved in the design of this curriculum are a combination of academics and practitioners including teachers. One of the important commitments in curriculum design is the accuracy and validity of

decisions made in various aspects (Supriani et al., 2022). This means that the curriculum needs to be designed based on valid data so that the quality can be accounted for. Contemporary research results in various global contexts provide inspiration on policies and practices that can be adapted for the Indonesian context (Meliani, Fatah Natsir, et al., 2021).

Curriculum Structure

As stated in the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 56 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the context of Learning Recovery. The change in the status of subjects is one of the efforts to strengthen the development of competencies that are important for every student to have in the present and future. Along with this goal, this change is also carried out as an effort to improve learning harmony between one level and the next. With the adjustment of subject status, the development of competencies of each student is expected to be more optimal (Sudaryantp, Widayati, et al., 2021).

English is increasingly encouraged to start being taught since elementary school, as it has been started since previous curricula. This is driven by three things: (1) English as a need for all Indonesian children, (2) harmony of the English curriculum, and (3) equitable distribution of learning quality. To be able to communicate across cultures and between nations and play an active role as a world community, English skills are a basic need that all Indonesian children need to have (Kodrat, 2021).

Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam dan Sosial (IPAS) at the elementary level, it is a subject aimed at building basic science literacy skills. This content is the foundation for preparing students to learn more complex natural sciences and social sciences at the junior high school level. When studying the surrounding environment, students at the elementary level see natural and social phenomena as an integrated phenomenon, and they begin to practice getting used to observing or observing, exploring, and carrying out activities that encourage other inquiry skills that are very important to be the foundation before they learn more specific concepts and topics in science and social studies subjects that they will study at the junior high school level. Science and social studies subjects are made into one into Natural and Social Sciences (IPAS) because the basis of these two subjects is the development of inquiry skills or also known as scientific thinking skills (Sherly et al., 2020).

Informatics subjects at the junior high school level are mandatory which were previously elective subjects in the 2013 Curriculum. The main consideration is because digital literacy, which is widely studied through informatics subjects, is an important need today. In addition, Informatics teaches skills that are not only relevant for users of computers and digital technology, but also computational thinking skills that build problem solving skills, logical thinking, systematic, processing and using data, as well as system thinking skills. Local content can be developed in more diverse forms, not necessarily into one stand-alone subject. In the 2013 Curriculum, local content is one subject (Siregar et al., 2020).

The policy was changed in the Merdeka Curriculum, where local content can be taught in three ways that can be chosen by the education unit, namely integrating local content into existing subjects, integrating local content into projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, or developing special subjects for local content as is the case in the 2013 Curriculum. This option is given to education units and/or local governments so that they can consider the needs of students. This exemption of local load settings according to the flexible principle (Indarta et al., 2022).

Unlike the 2013 Curriculum which regulates the number of class hours per week, the Merdeka Curriculum sets a target of class hours accumulated in one year. This is done for flexibility for the education unit to arrange the schedule of learning activities more flexibly. For example, currently some schools use a learning system in semester units, but some use a wulan chess system and blocks with different time spans. This difference more or less affects the number of study days per year. A reduction or change in the number of study hours also occurs as a result of a catastrophic situation that is forced to stop learning activities for some time (Widiyono et al., 2021).

The policy of developing an operational curriculum in this education unit has actually been initiated in the 2006 Curriculum which is also known as the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP). Thus, the policy on the development of operational curricula in the Merdeka Curriculum is a continuation of existing policies. The size of the Indonesian state with a variety of cultural and environmental contexts is one of the main reasons for the importance of contextualizing the curriculum at the education unit level. In this very diverse context, a centralized curriculum is not only ineffective, but also naturally unworkable. The education unit and educators will always make

adjustments to the situation they are facing (Nona et al., 2021).

The curriculum structure in the Merdeka Curriculum is divided into two main activities, namely: (1) intracurricular learning activities which are routine and scheduled activities based on structured lesson content, and (2) learning activities through projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. The novelty in the division of these two activities refers to the principle of focusing on the competence and character of the learners through two things. First, to strengthen character education, learning that is fully oriented towards fundamental competencies and character needs to be part of the curriculum structure in order to get the full attention of both educators and students. Second, a project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students that provides opportunities for students to explore contemporary issues such as environmental/global warming issues and sustainable lifestyles, diversity and tolerance, physical and mental health including self-welfare (wellbeing), and so on (Rodiyah, 2021).

However, these issues are not taught as separate subjects and increase the learning load, but rather as an interdisciplinary learning unit, without being tied to the Learning Outcomes of the subject or the material being studied in the subject. This project also does not increase class hours. The total class hours taken by students are the same as the 2013 Curriculum. The difference is that the project in the Merdeka Curriculum takes about 20 to 30% of the total class hours per year. Thus, although competence and character are strengthened, the content of the lesson or content does not increase, in accordance with the principles of curriculum design (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020).

The project of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students does not replace the project-based learning approach that has been implemented by some teachers. These projects can be subject-based or as an integrated unit of study of two or more subjects. Teachers can still continue inquiry learning that supports the strengthening and development of these competencies (Asyari, 2019). This project is designed as an effort to strengthen the development of the profile of Pancasila students with its six dimensions: faith, piety in God Almighty and noble character, independence, global diversity, cooperation, critical reasoning, and creativity. Especially for learning aimed at strengthening the profile of Pancasila students, it is directed to be in the form of projects, not lectures / one-way lectures,

and not regularly scheduled in the list of subjects as well as subjects (intracurricular) (Saptono, 2011).

The project of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students is a significant novelty in the Merdeka Curriculum because previously project-based learning was not regulated by the government but relied on teacher initiatives to use this approach. Project-based learning design is not a simple and easy thing to do. Therefore, the government needs to assist education units through training, mentoring, providing guidance that teachers can use to facilitate this learning, and also concrete examples of how projects are designed and assessed. Providing choice related to subjects to educational units and learners is one of the recommended strategies to avoid curriculum overcrowding and is in line with the principle of flexibility (Arifin & Muslim, 2020).

In the Merdeka Curriculum, providing a choice of subjects also reflects the spirit of Merdeka Belajar which provides greater flexibility and autonomy to educational units and students. This choice also further strengthens the authority of the education unit to develop an operational curriculum that is in accordance with the context, characteristics, and learning needs of students (Arifin, 2012) In the Independent Curriculum, several subjects are required at all levels and types of education, while some subjects, especially in SMA / MA, can be options tailored to individual interests, talents, and aspirations The selection of subjects in SMA / MA class XI and XII is regulated by group of disciplines. In the Merdeka Curriculum, HIGH SCHOOL / MA students determine the choice of subjects in four discipline groups: MIPA, SOCIAL STUDIES, Language, and Prakarya & Vocational. This group continues the specialization system that has been carried out for a long time in the Indonesian education system (Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020).

Changes in Curriculum Structure According to Levels and Types of Education, namely: (1) In PAUD, strengthening learning through play activities and strengthening the basics of literacy, especially to build interest and love of reading; (2) In elementary schools, strengthening the foundation of literacy and numeracy as well as the ability to think in inquiry by integrating natural sciences and social sciences into one subject, called IPAS (Natural and Social Sciences). English is increasingly encouraged to begin to be taught at the elementary level; (3) In junior high schools, strengthening digital technology competencies including systemic and computational thinking skills through required Informatics subjects; (4) In high school,

specialization is not in the form of a partitioned program or tracking system but rather the selection of subjects starting from class XI; (5) In SMK, the curriculum structure is simpler with two subject groups, namely General and Vocational (Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020).

Fieldwork practice is a compulsory subject for at least 1 semester. Students can choose subjects outside of their program of expertise; (6) In SLB, strengthening learning that is adjusted to the characteristics of students to strengthen life skills and independence; and (6) In PKBM, learning units use the competency credit unit system (SKK). The curriculum structure of equality education consists of general group subjects and empowerment and skills groups based on pancasila student profiles (Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020).

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes (Capaian Pembelajaran) are the minimum competencies that learners must achieve for each subject. Cp is designed with reference to the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) and Content Standards, as the Core Competencies and Basic Competencies (KI-KD) in the 2013 Curriculum were designed. Learning Outcomes is an update of KI and KD, which is designed to continue to strengthen learning that focuses on competency development. The 2013 curriculum and even the previous national curriculum has been aimed at competency-based, so this curriculum continues this effort. In CP, an increasingly strengthened strategy to achieve these goals is to reduce the scope of the material and change the procedures for preparing achievements that emphasize flexibility in learning (Sintiawati et al., 2022).

Content reduction. The consequence of competency-oriented learning is the need for a reduction in subject matter or subject matter. Constructive learning. Constructivism theory emphasizes the importance of a learning process that places students as active actors of learning (students as agents), not as passive recipients of information from their teachers (students as recipients). Phase Usage. Another difference between KI/KD in the 2013 Curriculum and CP in the Merdeka Curriculum is the time span allocated to achieve the targeted competencies. While KI-KD is set per year, CP is designed on a phase-based basis. One Phase has a different time span, namely: (1) Foundation Phase achieved at the end of ECCE, (2) Phase A is generally for grades I to II elementary school / equivalent, (3) Phase B is generally for grades III to IV elementary school / equivalent, (4) Phase C is generally for grades V to VI

elementary school / equivalent, (5) Phase D is generally for grades VII to IX junior high school / equivalent, (6) Phase E for class X SMA/equivalent, and (7) Phase F for class XI to XII SMA/equivalent (Fuadi & Aswita, 2021).

By using Phase, a competency achievement target is achieved not necessarily in one year but several years, except in class X at the high school level / equivalent. This exception is made because the curriculum structure at the high school level / equivalent is divided into two, namely class X where students follow all subjects, and classes XI-XII where students choose subjects according to their respective interests, talents, and aspirations. Differentiated learning according to the stage of student achievement indicates that the policies and practices of staying in the classroom or not moving up the grade are expected to be abandoned. The class stay policy empirically does not improve their academic performance (Fuadi & Aswita, 2021).

Another significant change from KI-KD to CP is the format of writing the competencies to be achieved as well as the targeted time span to learn them. CP is written in different methods, in which understanding, attitudes or dispositions towards learning and character development, as well as observed or measurable skills are written as a series. CP is delivered in the form of paragraphs/narratives to describe the set of key concepts and skills targeted to be achieved by learners, which are demonstrated by real performance (Direktorat Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020).

Learning flexibility, to strengthen competence, learning needs to provide opportunities for students to relate the concepts or theories they learn to the environment or life around them. Thus, flexibility is very important for the education unit to be able to develop learning that provides opportunities for learners to make connections between the concepts learned and the local situation, while determining the learning speed of each concept (Meliani et al., 2014).

Merdeka Curriculum Implementation Strategy

Curriculum design design cannot be separated from the implementation strategy. Both are equally important, even the summary literature review conducted by the OECD shows that from time to time changes in curriculum design are not very significant even though many countries claim that they are reforming the curriculum to overcome diverse crises (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017). Stephen Ball (2005), an education policy expert, explained that curriculum changes continue to be made not because the previous curriculum was ineffective, but because the implementation strategy was not carefully prepared.

Using the ecological systems theory framework that Bronfenbrenner developed and adapted by the OECD, the roles of stakeholders of different levels become easier to identify (Potrafke, 2017).

Although curriculum implementation occurs at the microsystem level (implementation by educators in their classrooms) and mesosistem level (implementation at the education unit level), the community and central and local governments have a very important role to support the curriculum implementation process. Curriculum implementation is essentially a learning process where educators and education unit leaders interpret this new policy, interpret it, and decide how they will actually use it. This process does not occur in a vacuum in educational units, but the factors that exist in the exosystems (governments, communities and educational organizations) and macrosystems (cultural, public or general public factors, mass media) also influence the process of meaning and application of the curriculum (Supriani et al., 2022).

The Ministry of Education and Culture developed an implementation strategy for the Independent Curriculum by considering the complexity of the systemic context. By realizing this complexity, coupled with the covid-19 pandemic situation that has not yet ended, and adhering to the principles of curriculum design, there are three key things that underlie the implementation strategy of the Merdeka Curriculum, namely: (1) the independent curriculum is an option, (2) the implementation of the curriculum is a learning process, and (3) support needs to be given to educational units and educators as needed both in terms of the existing situation and in terms of time. The curriculum is an essential aspect of learning and can be seen as an axis for other educational policy policies (Arifin & Muslim, 2020).

Therefore, the support that needs to be provided by the government is not only limited to technical support (for example educator training, educational unit infrastructure), but also adjustments to other policies related to the Merdeka Curriculum. The results of studies have consistently shown that readiness is the most important thing for educational units to innovate and make changes, but the main readiness in implementing a new policy is not in the aspect of infrastructure but in other things that are much cheaper, but require effort and time to prepare, namely leadership that is open to novelty, a culture of mutual trust, collaborative, as well as encouraging teachers to continue learning and dare to take risks, as well as

collaborative relationships between educators and parents/families of learners (Arifin & Muslim, 2020).

So that the choice to use the Merdeka Curriculum in accordance with the readiness of the education unit is not a policy that enlarges the gap in the quality of education. On the other hand, the implementation strategy according to the stage of readiness of the education unit (implementation at the right level) is a policy that pays attention to the situation, conditions, and needs of the education unit to restore learning and improve the quality of learning and educational services for students (Sintiawati et al., 2022).

There are 3 key principles that underlie the implementation strategy of the Independent Curriculum in the context of learning recovery. First, the Merdeka Curriculum is an option, so that education units can make decisions on whether they will apply it as an effort to restore learning or not. Second, the implementation of the curriculum is a learning process, so that just as students learn according to the stage of achieving their competencies, educational units and educators also implement the curriculum according to their readiness stage. Thus, the form of implementation of the curriculum does not have to be uniform for all educational units. Third, assistance and support for curriculum implementation is carried out comprehensively, as is the ecological system adapted from Bronfenbrenner's theory so that interventions are carried out to influence factors that are directly and indirectly related to curriculum implementation (Fuadi & Aswita, 2021).

Limited test of the Application of the Independent Curriculum

The limited application of the Independent Curriculum is aimed at three things. First, as part of the process of improving the curriculum so that it has the most optimal impact in reducing the risk of learning loss and improving the quality of education in Indonesia in the future. Second, to produce good practices for teachers and principals who are experienced in adopting curricula that can then be applied to other schools. Third, the limited and gradual approach to curriculum adaptation is also aimed at providing space for regions to prepare human resources during the adoption phase to provide strengthening of the curriculum that will be used in the future (Faiz & Purwati, 2021).

The Merdeka curriculum has been implemented on a limited basis in the Driving School Program and the Smk Center of Excellence. The limited implementation has targeted various levels, such as: SLB, PAUD, SD,

SMP, SMA, and SMK both private and public. In terms of geographical conditions, this curriculum can also be implemented by schools in underdeveloped and urban areas. The findings from the study show a number of good practices occur both in schools with adequate facilities and infrastructure and in schools that have a number of limitations. In the good practice carried out by the education unit, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages teachers to always provide learning strategies that are in favor of students (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020).

Basically, there is no curriculum that suits the needs of all teachers and students in Indonesia. However, flexibility in terms of teaching and developing learning strategies contained in the curriculum provides space for teachers to provide contextual learning in favor of students. A flexible curriculum and honing creativity can improve student learning outcomes. In the future, this curriculum can also answer the challenges of the times that continue to develop because teachers can flexibly change learning strategies according to the needs of students and the times (Rodiyah, 2021).

Some of the obstacles faced by the education unit in implementing this curriculum include, from the HR aspect, namely the incomplete understanding of learning the new paradigm, learning outcomes, the flow of learning objectives, and teaching modules, so that the implementation of learning has not been effective, has difficulty developing differentiated learning strategies, lack of understanding of conducting diagnostic assessments, and also a lack of understanding of IT. Meanwhile, from the aspect of facilities and infrastructure, including teaching materials that are very limited because source books are not yet available, guidelines in the preparation of teaching modules are not / not yet available in full, insufficient time because in a short time span schools must be ready to implement the curriculum, and the availability of internet networks and IT support devices is still very limited (Widiyono et al., 2021).

The suggestion from the education unit (driving school) that is the target of this independent curriculum is the need for support for facilities and infrastructure that support the learning process, the number of students is limited to one rombel so that it is not as much as before, intensive assistance for teachers to have the same perception in implementing the curriculum, Assistance is carried out directly by resource persons who master the curriculum at the relevant level, in addition, please immediately provide modules for each material, level and type of education on the independent teaching platform issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Siregar et al., 2020).

Conclusions

The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the innovations carried out in an effort to respond to the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic which has an impact on declining the quality of education in Indonesia, so that this curriculum is applied in the context of learning recovery in Indonesia. The change in the independent curriculum from the previous curriculum is quite basic, which includes the curriculum structure, the basic framework of the curriculum, learning outcomes and teaching modules. This change is a challenge for educators in implementing effective learning for their students.

The strategy of implementing an independent curriculum is not carried out massively to all educational units, but adjusts to the readiness and conditions of their respective schools so that the implementation of the curriculum can run effectively, because the key to the success of the curriculum is not in the content or supporting means but in the mindset of the teachers. The main readiness in implementing a new policy is not in the aspect of infrastructure but in other things that are much cheaper, but requires effort and time to prepare it, namely leadership that is open to novelty, a work culture that trusts each other, collaborative, and encourages teachers to continue to learn and dare to take risks, and also a collaborative relationship between educators and parents/families of students.

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