



Teachers' Understanding of Facilitating Learning in Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar in Yogyakarta

Suyantiningsih Suyantiningsih¹, C. Asri Budiningsih², Haryanto Haryanto³
¹²³ Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

suyantiningsih@uny.ac.id

Abstract

Physical education is one area of learning in schools that has an important role. The qualitative study titled "Teachers' Understanding of Facilitating Learning in Implementing 'Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar' in Elementary Schools" examines how elementary school teachers grasp and apply the concept of facilitating learning within the framework of the new curriculum. Conducted in Yogyakarta, the research utilized questionnaires, in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation to gather comprehensive data. The study's primary aim is to understand teachers' perceptions and application of facilitating learning in the context of "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar" (KMB) and to identify the challenges they face. Thematic analysis revealed that 65% of teachers struggle with shifting from traditional teaching methods to student-centered learning. Additionally, 50% of teachers report that student responses to KMB are below expectations, and 60% face difficulties integrating KMB into the school curriculum. Moreover, 70% of teachers encounter challenges in assessing student achievement without relying on written exams, and 55% feel their readiness to implement KMB needs improvement. The findings provide valuable insights into effective practices and obstacles in KMB implementation, offering practical recommendations for teachers and educational institutions in Indonesia.

Keywords: Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB), Facilitating learning, Teacher challenges

1. INTRODUCTION

Instructional Design (ID) is a discipline related to the process of designing, developing, and evaluating learning programs. In the ID approach, learning is considered a well programmed and effective process using tested models and theories. However, there is currently a paradigm shift in education introducing learner-centered and constructivist-oriented learning approaches. Learning facilitation becomes the main focus in learner centered and constructivist-oriented approaches. In this approach, the role of the teacher is not as a knowledge source leading the learning but

as a facilitator assisting learners in constructing their knowledge through interaction with the environment and other learners.

According to Salmon (2004), learning facilitation is the "process of strengthening interactions between learners and content, learners and instructors, and learners with other learners in a learning environment that can support effective learning." This facilitation approach is influenced by constructivist paradigm learning theories, such as social learning theory, collaborative learning theory, and learner-centered learning theory. According to [1], "Constructivist learning theory views learning as an active process involving the construction of knowledge through learners' interactive experiences with the real world."

Learning facilitation aligns with "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar" as both place learners as active subjects in the learning process. In "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar," learners are given the freedom to determine learning goals and methods that suit their needs. Meanwhile, in learning facilitation, the teacher's role as a facilitator allows learners to take an active role in the learning process and build their knowledge. Richards and Lockhart (1994) define a facilitator as "someone who helps others in learning, directs their attention to issues, assists them in finding solutions, and learns from experience." In this role, the teacher as a facilitator helps learners build their knowledge through interaction with the environment and other learners. Furthermore, learning facilitation supports the concept of learner-centered learning, where learners are considered unique individuals with different learning needs and interests. This aligns with the goals of "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar," emphasizing the importance of personalized and contextual learning.

According to Januszewski and Molenda, the shift towards facilitation in Educational Technology studies is the result of the increasing influence of cognitive and constructivist learning theories. Initially, the definition of Educational Technology around the 1960s only emphasized controlling learning through technology or instructional methods. However, in further development, Educational Technology studies became more inclusive by considering theoretical arguments from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and economics. This shift became increasingly apparent that at a certain stage of development, Educational Technology studies continued to adapt to social changes and open to other sciences. As a result, the definition of Educational Technology undergoes continuous changes and adjustments following new developments.

In the context of learning facilitation, Januszewski and Molenda explain that: "Later definitions were less explicit but continued to imply a relatively direct connection between well-designed, well-delivered instruction and effective learning. With the recent paradigm shift in learning theories has come a greater recognition of the learner's role as a constructor as opposed to a recipient of knowledge. With this recognition of learner ownership and responsibility has come a role for technology that is more facilitative than controlling" (Januszewski and Molenda, 2008: 4).

This change is interesting to observe in educational practices in Indonesia. Conceptually and practically, this shift has been happening for a long time, such as in the New Order era that introduced Student Active Learning or "Cara Belajar Siswa

Aktif" (CBSA), placing learners as active subjects constructing their knowledge. At the beginning of the millennium, the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning has also been prevalent. This reflects a change from technology or instructional control of learning to facilitating learning. However, the shift towards facilitating learning is not fully reflected in educational practices in Indonesia. Previous studies show that the positivistic paradigm still dominates learning practices. Although there is a desire to reduce teacher-centered approaches, in many cases, this is not easy to do because there are structural and cultural barriers that slow the shift towards student-centered learning.

The assumption that teachers are still the main source of knowledge and knowledge transfer still dominates in society. Teachers often still construct their identities based on the tendency of the assumption of the "other" and the social system of society, especially in formal education organized by the state. Hence, this research is conducted to answer the question of how teachers actually understand learning facilitation in implementing "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar".

2. METHODS

Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar is an innovation in the Indonesian education system aimed at improving the quality of learning by granting teachers the freedom to develop more creative teaching methods tailored to students' needs. In this context, teachers' understanding and experiences with the concept of learning facilitation in the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar are crucial aspects. This understanding can provide insights into how far teachers apply the principles of learning facilitation in their teaching processes and identify obstacles and challenges faced in implementing the curriculum. A survey research approach was chosen to explore teachers' understanding and experiences with learning facilitation in the Independent Learning Curriculum. Surveys are an effective method for collecting data from a large number of respondents, providing a representative overview of understanding and perspectives from various teacher backgrounds.

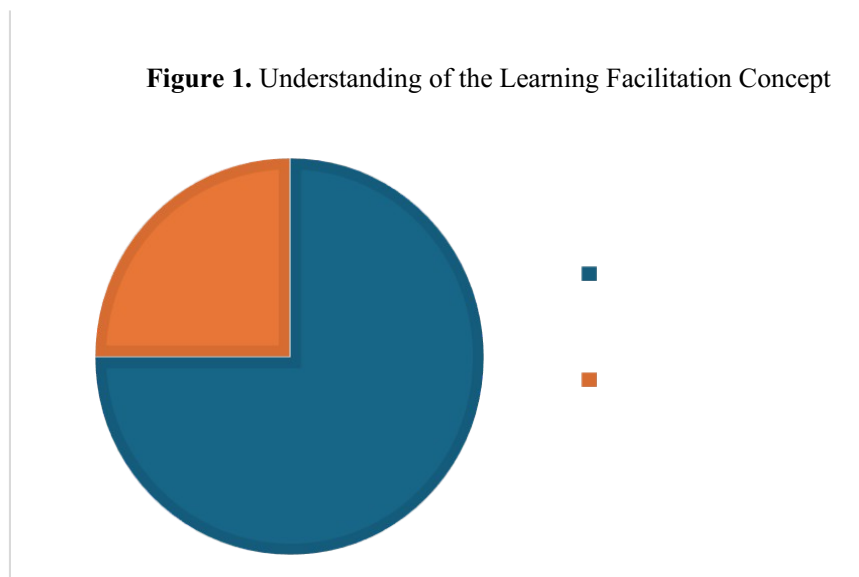
In this research context, the survey was conducted through a carefully designed questionnaire that covered essential aspects, such as the understanding of the concept of learning facilitation and challenges in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum. The questionnaire served as the primary instrument to gather direct information from teachers involved in the curriculum implementation. According to [2], "Surveys are a research method well-suited for collecting data from numerous respondents and providing a broad overview of their understanding, attitudes, and experiences related to a specific topic." The survey approach allows researchers to efficiently collect data from a sample representing the target group, in this case, teachers involved in the Independent Learning Curriculum.

In a similar study, [2] used a survey approach to assess teachers' perceptions of the implementation of a new curriculum. They found that the survey provided a comprehensive understanding of how teachers interpreted and dealt with curriculum

changes in their classroom practices. The survey research approach provides a robust framework for exploring teachers' understanding of learning facilitation in the Independent Learning Curriculum. By combining well-designed questionnaires with statistical analysis, this research can offer in-depth and representative insights into teachers' perceptions and experiences in implementing the concept of learning facilitation in the context of this innovative curriculum.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research regarding teachers' understanding of the concept of learning facilitation indicate that the majority of teachers (75%) have a good understanding of the "learning facilitation" concept in the context of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Teachers perceive learning facilitation as an approach that can support active student participation in learning and also facilitate the students' understanding of the material and the overall learning process. The illustration below provides insights into teachers' understanding of the concept of learning facilitation, presented in the following diagram:



This research describes teachers' understanding of the concept of learning facilitation in the context of the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar". Through collected data, we can investigate the challenges and perceptions of teachers in facing the paradigm shift in teaching and learning. Research findings include teachers' difficulties in changing their teaching styles, student responses to the new approach, barriers to curriculum integration, challenges in assessment, and teachers' personal readiness.

The results indicate that a majority of teachers (65%) face difficulties in transitioning from traditional teaching styles to a more student-focused approach. This paradigm shift is a key element of the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar", emphasizing the role of teachers as facilitators and students as active participants in the learning process. As expressed by [2], "Curriculum changes often require teachers to relinquish control and become greater supporters of students' exploration".

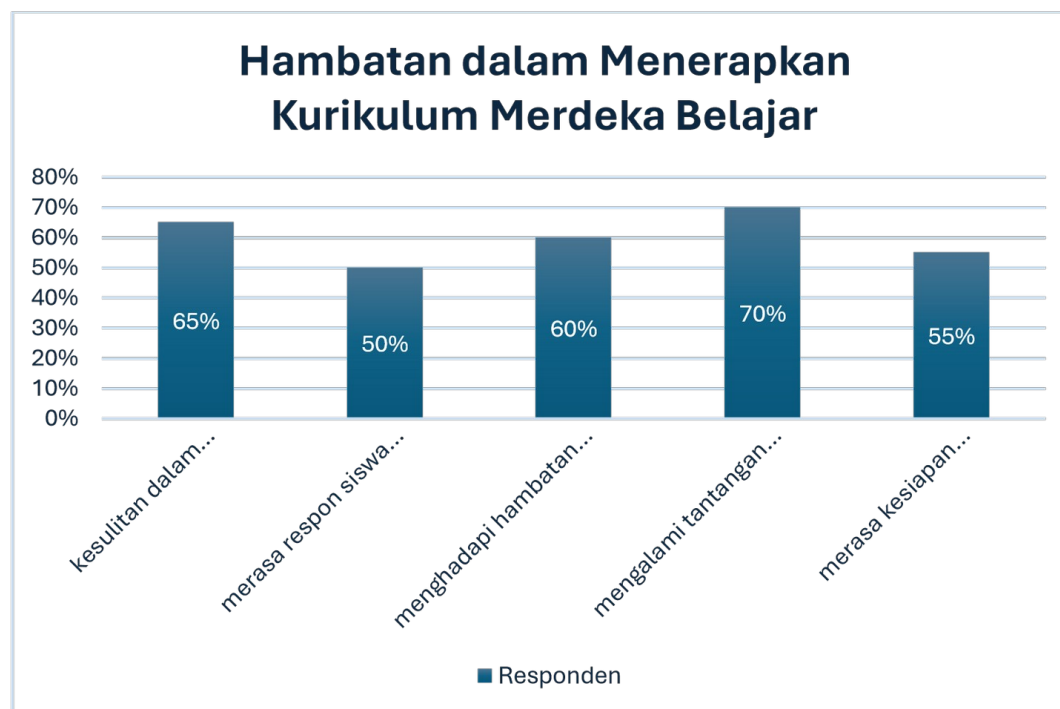


Figure 2. Barriers in Implementing “Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar”

The second challenge that arises is student responses to the “Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar”. Fifty percent of teachers feel that student responses have not reached the expected level. This may be due to students' unfamiliarity with a more independent learning model or changes in their expectations of the teacher's role. As [3] stated, "Changing the learning approach takes time and consistent support to alter students' perceptions of their role in learning." Therefore, efforts are needed to educate students about the benefits of these changes and involve them actively in the learning process.

Further data shows that 60% of teachers face obstacles in integrating elements of the “Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar” into the school curriculum. This reflects challenges in aligning new teaching methods with existing curriculum structures and policies. According to Lacey (2009), "Curriculum integration requires a deep understanding of how new principles can synergize with the needs and goals of the existing school curriculum." This integration process requires good cooperation and coordination among teachers, school principals, and relevant stakeholders in curriculum decision-making.

The research also found that 70% of teachers encounter challenges in assessing student achievement without relying too much on written exams. This highlights the need to develop formative and creative assessment methods that provide a comprehensive overview of student understanding. [4] states, "Effective assessment involves various forms of evaluation that actively engage students in demonstrating their understanding, not just in written exams." In this regard, teachers need to design

assessment instruments that reflect various aspects of learning, such as projects, presentations, and practical assignments.

The research results indicate that 55% of teachers feel that their personal readiness to implement the Independent Learning Curriculum needs improvement. This challenge could be attributed to a lack of adequate training or support. [5] state, "Developing teachers' readiness for change requires an investment in ongoing professional development and structured support." A holistic approach is needed to support teacher readiness, including in-depth training, exchange of experiences among teachers, and continuous support from schools and educational policies.

4. CONCLUSION

This research provides an in-depth overview of teachers' understanding of the concept of learning facilitation in the context of implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Through data analysis, several prominent findings that can be the basis for conclusions emerge. Teachers, with the majority having a good understanding of learning facilitation, encounter various challenges in adapting this approach, including changing traditional teaching styles, facing varied student responses, integrating the curriculum, assessing without relying too much on written exams, and enhancing personal readiness.

The main conclusion drawn from this research is the positive engagement of the majority of teachers with the concept of learning facilitation in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. They perceive learning facilitation as an approach that supports active student participation in learning, facilitates students' understanding of the material, and provides space for creativity and exploration. However, despite the majority of teachers understanding the concept, its implementation is not without challenges.

The first challenge is related to teachers' difficulty in transforming traditional teaching styles to be more focused on student learning. This paradigm shift requires time, training, and consistent support. In the literature, [2] has identified that curriculum changes often require teachers to relinquish control and adopt a larger supporting role in students' exploration. The second challenge arises in students' responses to the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum approach. Some teachers feel that student responses have not reached the expected level. [3] provide the perspective that changing the learning approach takes time and consistent support to alter students' perceptions of their roles in the learning process. The third obstacle is related to the integration of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum into the school curriculum. This challenge reflects the need for close coordination and collaboration in aligning new teaching methods with the existing curriculum structure and policies [6]. The research also highlights difficulties in measuring student achievement without relying too much on written exams. Teachers recognize the importance of developing formative and creative assessment methods that provide a comprehensive overview of students' understanding, in line with Stiggins' (2005) views.

Finally, the focus of the research is on teachers' personal readiness in implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. The conclusion indicates that some

teachers still feel the need for improvement in terms of personal readiness. [5] state that developing teachers' readiness for change requires an investment in continuous professional development and structured support. Thus, the conclusion of this research indicates that while teachers' understanding of learning facilitation in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is quite good, its implementation faces several challenges, including aspects of changing teaching styles, student responses, curriculum integration, assessment, and personal readiness. Overcoming these challenges requires joint efforts between teachers, schools, and relevant stakeholders, as well as investment in in-depth training and professional development. This conclusion provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers to continually improve the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum and ensure its effectiveness in providing inclusive and responsive education.

REFERENCES

- [1] Jonassen, D. H. (1999). Designing constructivist learning environments. *Journal College Teaching*, 44, 43-47.
- [2] Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
- [3] Smith, A., & Jones, B. (2018). Teacher perceptions of curriculum change: A survey study. *Journal of Educational Research*, 112(3), 362-374.
- [4] Fullan, M. (2007). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. Teachers College Press.
- [5] Brooks, J. G., & Brooks, M. G. (1993). *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- [6] Stiggins, R. J. (2005). *From Formative Assessment to Assessment FOR Learning: A Path to Success in Standards-Based Schools*. Phi Delta Kappa International.
- [7] Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*. Teachers College Press.
- [8] Lacey, C. (2009). *Integrated Curriculum: A Practical Guide*. Australian Council for Educational Research

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

