

Library Research: Teachers' Difficulties and Strategies in Designing Lesson Plan Based on the Merdeka Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

The successful implementation of learning is dependent on the student and the teacher. Teachers play an important role in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, so continuous professional development is essential to ensuring quality learning outcomes. Good teaching and the application of curriculum policies are supported by an efficient lesson plan. A lesson plan is an important component of teaching. Teachers must be able to create lesson plans appropriate to the material to be delivered, and teachers must also adjust to the character of their students when designing lesson plans. Some teachers still do not understand how to make lesson plans in the Merdeka Curriculum. The aim of this study was to examine teachers' difficulties and strategies in designing lesson plans based on the Merdeka Curriculum. This study used a qualitative method. In collecting data, the authors used library research. The result stated that teachers have difficulty determining the learning approach, choosing a learning method, formulating the objective of learning based on the learning outcome, selecting the media in teaching, formulating differential material, formulating real-life context, designing lesson steps within time constraints, designing learning activities based on students' interests, and formulating worksheets and assessments. The teachers can overcome this problem by: checking guidebooks, joining in-house training (IHT), attending the English Teacher Working Group (MGMP), using the Merdeka Mengajar platform, consulting with more seasoned colleagues, collaborating with other teachers, and adapting lesson plans.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes content crucial to students' character development and competencies and was created as part of a learning reform initiative as a more flexible curriculum framework (Kemendikbudristek BSKAP, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum is one alternative form of government policy that can be used to predict of learning loss conditions during the learning process. The government explained that the curriculum supports learning recovery through three main components: (1) project-based learning for the development of appropriate character and soft skills as measured by the Pancasila Student Profile; (2) a focus on the subject matter; and (3) an emphasis on critical thinking development. (Rohimajaya & Hamer, 2023). The Pancasila student profile has six primary attributes: global diversity, collaboration among one another, faith, Devotion of God Almighty, integrity, independence, and critical and creative thinking. These characteristics define Indonesian students as competent, lifelong learners who defend the Pancasila value (Juliani & Bastian, 2021).

Teachers should have good competence to support their performance in the classroom. English teacher needs relevant technique in various levels in education. Improving teachers' competency and motivation can have significant beneficial effects on raising their academic achievement. (Siri et al., 2020). The fact is the principles of 21st century learning (PAK-21), teacher competence has the potential to support teachers' professional development and it is foundation for teachers to improve teaching quality with modern educational advancements or the 21st century skills (Sulaiman & Ismail, 2020). The existence of Merdeka curriculum, it is hoped that learning will also change and become meaningful learning that can be adapted to students' needs. The Merdeka curriculum aims to make education less boring and more enjoyable. It also aims to produce graduates with strong moral principles (Marisa, 2021).

Teachers are essential to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers must possess adaptable and creative pedagogical skills to create relevant, engaging, and developmentally appropriate lessons (Hasanah et al., 2022). The teacher is a key role in facilitating student-centered learning, enabling students to delve into their interests and talents (Azmi & Iswanto, 2021). Teachers serve as guides and mentors, helping students identify and develop their potential (Simamora & Pasaribu, 2023). Teachers can equip a generation with critical thinking skills, creativity, and social responsibility, preparing them to face future challenges confidently and comprehensively (Anggraena et al., 2022). Teachers play a crucial role in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, so continuous professional development is essential for ensuring quality learning outcomes (Kusanagi, 2022). Good teaching and the application of curriculum policies are supported by efficient lesson planning (Kola, 2021).

A lesson plan must be created by the teacher. The learning objectives, resources, activities, media and learning materials, and learning assessment were the five components of English lesson plans (Antari, 2021). Before beginning any part of teaching or learning, it is crucial to prepare lesson plans for English language learners. Lesson planning is significant for two reasons: first, it helps teachers plan their lessons; second, it has to do with the relationships between teachers and students. Teachers should use a structured process that includes several essential elements to create an effective lesson plan. To begin with, the lesson plan needs to include the following: learning objectives, instructional design, and assessment techniques (Latha, 2023). To engage students and make connections between the new material and earlier lessons, the lesson should start with a set induction. It should conclude with feedback and assessment to evaluate students' understanding (Ansori, 2022). Lesson plans should also be customized to the needs of the students, taking into consideration their motivation, different learning styles, and potential optimization (Kadariyah, 2022). For an integrated and successful teaching strategy, teachers should make sure that the learning objectives and the methods of assessment are closely related (Akmaliyah, 2022). An effective lesson plan should include instructional design, learning objectives, a set induction, a tour of previous lessons, a learning activity, student feedback, and assessment. However, developing a good lesson plan is not always easy. It requires not only aligning content with curriculum standards but also addressing diverse student needs, varying learning styles, and classroom dynamics. The planning is essential to ensure that lessons are both engaging and educational for all students.

In the previous studies, the findings revealed that when implementing the Merdeka curriculum, English teachers encountered five obstacles. Learning assessment, classroom management, media use, lesson planning, and lesson execution were the five obstacles to the Merdeka curriculum (Fitra & Tiarina, 2023). Second, teachers still need training in lesson design even though they have a solid understanding of lesson plans; this will enable them to create lesson plans that are more in line with the Kurikulum Merdeka (Wahyuni, 2023). Based on previous studies, detailed studies of challenges and the practical strategies employed by teachers in designing lesson plans for the Merdeka curriculum are limited. This research fills a gap by providing additional information not covered in previous. The researcher will study teachers' difficulties and strategies in designing lesson plans based on the Merdeka curriculum with a library research approach. This research is focus on the intersection of obstacles and practical solutions, offering a comprehensive perspective on teachers' experiences. The result of this research will benefit readers, learners, and educational institutions, especially English teachers who will create lesson plans based on the Merdeka curriculum. The findings are expected to make a significant contribution to the field of education by providing insights that could inform professional development programs, enhance lesson design strategies, and ultimately support English teachers in their efforts to implement the Merdeka curriculum effectively.

2. METHOD

The methodology of this research is qualitative research. The qualitative method involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to clarify ideas, viewpoints, or experiences. Emerging questions and methods, data collection in the participant's environment, inductive data analysis, developing from specifics to general, and data interpretation are all steps in the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, data

collection occurs through library research. Library research is a method of data collection in which sources available in libraries, such as books, journals, and articles, are used to gather information for a study (Guntur et al., 2023). The data collected on teachers' difficulties and strategies in designing lesson plans for the Merdeka curriculum came from books and online sources, including e-journals and articles. Researcher collected data from digital sources, including Google Scholar, ERIC, Research Gate, and Mendeley. The researcher selected the sources in English. It was published within three years, from 2022 to 2024. After collecting information, the researcher analyzes it to obtain comprehensive results.

3. RESULT(S) AND DISCUSSION

This study's raw data was collected from 5 research journals and 1 dissertation. The researcher chose the materials because they can all be downloaded for free from any search engine and are relevant to the study's topic. The purpose of this study is to use these resources to derive conclusions about the strategies and difficulties teachers face when creating lesson plans.

Table 1. Sample of table analysis

No	Year, Author, and Title	Research Setting	Method	Result
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2022 – Saiful. A, Fitriah. F, & Intan. F. – The challenges and strategies of Islamic school mentor teachers in implementing ELT lesson plans 	State Islamic Secondary School No. 4 in Banda Aceh.	Qualitative research	The results showed that Teachers got the most challenges when putting lesson plans into practice because of time constraints, format changes, administrative duties, and uninterested students. Other common strategies employed by teachers to overcome their challenges were discovered by the study to include using a guidebook, asking colleagues for advice, attending the Teachers Professional Development Forum, or Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran, and using the internet as a learning resource.
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2024 – Utami C, Hidayad F & Rosmiyati E. – An analysis of English teacher's lesson plan referring to merdeka belajar program. 	SMA PGRI 2 of Palembang	Qualitative research	The findings indicated that teachers were still unclear about how to apply the Merdeka Belajar curriculum for the first year. Therefore, teachers at SMK PGRI 2 Palembang have already participated in In-House Training (IHT). Despite the fact that the teacher discovered some challenges and barriers, including a lack of instruction, limited school infrastructure, and some students who remain unclear about the learning system, In order to get outside these obstacles, teachers at Palembang's SMK PGRI 2 utilize the Merdeka Mengajar platform and work together with other teachers.
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2024 – Srie N. W & Yuli T. – Qualitative researchAn Analysis of English Teachers' Abilities and Difficulties in Designing "Modul Ajar" in the Merdeka Curriculum 	SMAN 2 Batang Anai	Qualitative research	The results indicated that English teachers' abilities fell into the sufficient and poor categories, scoring 70 and 60 points, respectively. Meanwhile, the challenges faced by English teachers are as follows: a) finding an efficient learning strategy; b) selecting the best learning method; c) producing engaging learning materials for all students that match learning methods; d) creating learning steps that match the time

allotted; e) selecting the best learning strategy that matches the time planned and the learning steps; f) having trouble connecting the content to real-world situations or daily life in trigger questions; g) having trouble fitting in learning activities during class time; h) having trouble facilitating or providing content that meets all of the needs of the students; i) having trouble coming up with student worksheets and assessment tools because of time constraints.

Teachers' Difficulties in Designing Lesson Plans

Teachers are confused about the Merdeka Curriculum, especially older teachers (Arifin et al., 2023). It takes time to become familiar with and adapt to significant curriculum changes, such as competency development and project-based learning methodologies. Unfortunately, inconsistent socialization results in many teachers lacking sufficient knowledge of implementing the Independent Curriculum in the classroom because not all teachers receive enough training in this area. In addition, especially in schools located in remote areas, lack infrastructure, and a shortage of resources, such as teaching aids and materials, poses a challenge (Cahyani et al., 2024). The Merdeka Curriculum also requires teachers to complete extra administrative tasks, like creating a lesson plans (RPP) and more comprehensive assessments. It also takes time and adjustment to change from a teacher-centered learning approach to more flexible and student-centered method.

The researcher found some difficulties faced by English teachers in designing lesson plan:

1. Teachers lack of experience and technology in designing lesson plans (Cahyani et al., 2024).
Teachers who are new to implementing the Independent Curriculum find it challenging to comprehend the components of a lesson plan and how to incorporate them into an effective lesson plan and how to apply the technology. This ignorance may result in learning plans that are inconsistent and of poor quality.
2. Teachers have difficulty determining the learning approach (Winda & Tiarina, 2024).
Choosing the effective approach of learning requires an extensive comprehension of various educational theories and how they can be applied in the classroom setting. Teachers are still confused when deciding which approach best suits their learning objectives and student characteristics.
3. Teachers have difficulty choosing a learning method (Winda & Tiarina, 2024).
A variety of learning methods can influence teaching effectiveness. Teachers may struggle to choose the best method for achieving specific learning objectives and integrate these methods into lesson plans.
4. Teachers have difficulty formulating the learning objective based on the learning outcome (Fatah, 2023). They struggle with developing clear and measurable learning objectives in lesson plans based on learning outcomes. Unclear goals can lead to unfocused learning and make it difficult to measure success.
5. Teachers have challenging determining the media in teaching (Sari & Sukarno, 2023) (Sanjaya et al., 2022). Choosing the appropriate learning media is critical to facilitating the teaching and learning process. Teachers often find it difficult to determine appropriate media for the material and methods chosen, and they have limited access to this media.
6. Teachers have difficulty formulating differential material (Winda & Tiarina, 2024).
Creating differential learning materials that relate to students' needs requires creativity and a deep understanding of the subject. Teachers still find it difficult to create various and engaging materials for their students.
7. Teachers have difficulty formulating real-life context (Winda & Tiarina, 2024).
Making connections between the curriculum and students' everyday lives can make learning more relevant and motivating. However, teachers frequently find it challenging to articulate this context in a relevant and meaningful activity.
8. Teachers have difficulty designing lesson steps within time constraints (Winda & Tiarina, 2024).
Time constraints make designing comprehensive and efficient learning steps difficult. Teachers must effectively manage their time to ensure that all significant learning objectives are covered in the lesson plans.

9. Teachers have difficulty designing learning activities based on students' interests ((Winda & Tiarina, 2024). A detailed understanding of students' needs and interests is necessary to incorporate their interests into learning activities. Teachers are often challenged to create fun activities that also help students meet their learning goals.
10. Teachers have difficulty formulating worksheets and assessments (Winda & Tiarina, 2024) (Fatah, 2023). Assessments and worksheets are important component of the process of learning. Creating efficient worksheets and assessment instruments that can fairly and accurately measure learning outcomes can be challenging for teachers.

Teachers' Strategies in Designing Lesson Plans

Teachers' established problem-solving techniques are important when implementing the Independent Curriculum. A new method of instruction called the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes character development and project-based learning to help students become competent. Teachers must therefore devise a workable plan in order to modify this curriculum effectively. Another important aspect in learning plan development is strategy. Any learning implementation lesson plan (RPP) that is developed must be based on the three pillars of the independent curriculum: flexibility, relevance, and context. In addition to learning competency, teachers must design a lesson plan which includes character development and 21st-century skills like Knowledge, attitudes, and skills well (Manalu et al, 2022). Based on data analysis, the researcher found some strategies faced by English Teachers in designing lesson plans in the Merdeka Curriculum:

1. Teachers use lesson plans that are checked for compliance with curriculum standards and guidelines by checking guidebooks (Akmal et al, 2022). Teachers may reduce challenges by consulting curriculum guidebooks by ensuring that their lesson plans conform to established standards and guidelines. This manual offers a precise framework and facilitates the creation of an organized lesson plan.
2. Teachers join in-house training (IHT) to improve their understanding of lesson plans (Cahyani et al., 2024). IHT can increase teacher understanding of RPP and teach new skills and information related to lesson planning.
3. Teachers attend the English Teacher Working Group (MGMP) to share their experiences and strategies for designing lesson plans (Akmal et al., 2022). Teachers can exchange lesson plan design strategies and experiences in the MGMP forum. Through cooperation, teachers can solve problems together and gain knowledge from one another.
4. Teachers can learn and obtain lesson plan information using the Merdeka Mengajar platform (Cahyani et al., 2024). Teachers can learn and get lesson plan information using the Merdeka Mengajar platform. This platform offers teachers valuable and accessible resources to enhance the standard of their lesson planning.
5. Teachers can enhance lesson planning and overcome obstacles by consulting with more seasoned colleagues (Akmal et al, 2022). When creating lesson plans, teachers can overcome challenges by obtaining advice from more seasoned colleagues. Colleagues with greater experience can offer guidance and advice that is based on experience.
6. Teachers use a variety of online tools (YouTube, Google) to create lesson plans when using the Internet as a learning resource (Cahyani et al., 2024).
7. Teachers can collaborate with their peers to plan lesson (Cahyani et al., 2024). Collaboration with colleagues in designing lesson plans can produce more comprehensive and innovative learning plans.
8. Teachers can adapt lesson plans from other lesson plans and modify them according to the needs of their students (Akmal et al., 2022).
Adapting a lesson plan from another lesson plan and changing it according to students' needs is an effective strategy. Teachers can manage students' time and work by using existing lesson plans as references and adapting them to the student's needs and learning context.

This study showed that creating learning implementation plans (RPP) has presented several kinds of challenges for English teachers. Mishra in 2009 stated categories of lesson planning: goals (teacher and student will engage), objectives (student will do about knowledge and skill), prerequisites, material, lesson description, and lesson procedure. The lesson procedure offers a thorough, step-by-step breakdown of how to carry out the lesson and accomplish the goals of the lesson plan. Typically aimed at the teacher, this offers recommendations on how to carry out the lesson plan. It also emphasizes what the teachers should assign to the class during the lesson. This section has three main components: an introduction, a main activity, and a closure. The researcher found teachers have difficulties designing lesson plans in all lesson plan categories. Some of the challenges

that have been noted include a lack of expertise in creating lesson plans, problems with teachers having difficulty determining the learning approach, choosing a learning method, formulating the objective of learning based on the learning outcome, determining the media in teaching, formulating differential material, and formulating real-life context. Other difficulties involve getting out of time to create learning steps, having trouble developing activities that adapt to students' interests, and having to prepare efficient student worksheets (LKS) and assessment tools. Strategies are required to help teachers overcome the challenges they have when creating lesson plans. Teachers can use various strategies when developing independent curriculum teaching modules (lesson plans). But, it is still important to understand that the first step in the process is to assess the needs and circumstances of the students, teachers, and schools (Maulida, 2022). Some strategies above can adapt by English teachers. Strategies for creating lesson plans that incorporate 21st-century skills, practical methods, and cognitive processes. Teachers plan their lesson plan using computational and symbolic processes, considering the objectives and standards of education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study indicated that designing lesson plans presents a number of challenges for English teachers, including experience-related issues, choosing instructional strategies, and customizing content to fit students' real-world settings. Compiling engaging activities for students, developing efficient student worksheets and assessment resources, and working within time constraints are additional challenges. However, this study also offers several solutions that can assist teachers in overcoming these challenges when creating lesson plans for Merdeka curriculum. Using curriculum guidebooks, going to in-house training (IHT), and joining the English Language Teacher Working Group (MGMP) to exchange competencies and experiences are some of these strategies. In addition, utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar platform, communicating with more seasoned colleagues, working together with colleagues, and adapting lesson plans from other sources have all been successful. By consciously implementing these techniques in practice, teachers can enhance the standard of their lesson plans and give their students more meaningful and effective chances to learn.

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