



***PLATFORM MERDEKA MENGAJAR:  
EFFECTIVE INNOVATION SOLUTIONS  
IN MERDEKA BELAJAR CURRICULUM***

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**Abstract**

The independent learning (*Merdeka Belajar*) curriculum requires teachers to be able to innovate and be creative in carrying out the learning process, so a special platform for teachers was created, namely the *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* (PMM) as a forum for developing teachers' teaching potential in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. This research aimed to describe the use of the PMM as a learning innovation solution. This research used a qualitative method with descriptive analysis through a library research approach. The findings in this research showed the PMM is an important breakthrough so that teachers can adjust to the demands of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. Some of the features provided in the PMM include teaching tools, student assessments, independent training, community, proof of work, and inspirational videos. With this research, it is hoped that teachers can optimally utilize the features of the platform to support innovative learning in the independent curriculum.

**Keywords:** *Platform Merdeka Mengajar*, independent curriculum, *Merdeka Belajar*

**INTRODUCTION**

Education is a program consisting of several elements, such as students, teachers, schools, methods, facilities, and infrastructure, to the curriculum (Alfath et al., 2022). Education will continue to move forward and be updated, changing dynamically to adapt to the changes that are taking place. With the development of science, better education can be a provision for students in their future lives (Ihsan, 2022; Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; Macgilchrist et al., 2019; Zidny et al., 2020).

One of the important elements in education is curriculum. The curriculum is part of the learning process as a system of plans regarding learning materials that are used as guidelines for carrying out learning activities (Nurhayati et al., 2022; Annala, 2022; Gershon & Helfenbein, 2023; Pu & Xu, 2023). The development of the learning system will not be

separated from the curriculum design, which is the main objective and plan for implementing the system.

In its history, the education system in Indonesia has continued to change following the flow of developments in the era, this change can be seen from several government policies that always update the curriculum as a standard education system applied in Indonesia (Priantini et al., 2022). Various policy updates carried out by the government aim to improve the quality and quality of education (Ningrum, 2022).

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia stated that the development of the curriculum in Indonesia changed several times, from the 1947 curriculum, then the 1954 Curriculum, the 1968 Curriculum, the 1973 Curriculum (Pioneer School Development Project), the 1975 Curriculum, the 1984 Curriculum, the 1994 Curriculum, the 1997

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Curriculum (revised of the 1994 Curriculum), the 2004 Curriculum (Competency-Based Curriculum), the 2006 Curriculum (Education Unit Level Curriculum), and the 2013 Curriculum (Insani, 2019).

Until the leadership of Nadiem Makarim, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) launched a new curriculum policy called the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is a form of self-adjustment to keep up with the changes that are taking place (Ihsan, 2022). The presence of this independent curriculum results from a response to the needs of the education system in Indonesia (Ningrum, 2022).

The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum requires educators to always get used to innovating, improvising, and being creative in implementing learning. Educators must also be able to recognize the characteristics and needs of students in the learning process. Through the independent learning curriculum, teachers, lecturers, or educators need to reflect and evaluate the learning provided to students according to the demands of the times.

Currently, several schools that have implemented the independent curriculum assess that there are still many challenges that must be faced and evaluated, one of which is the mindset of educators, this is because, in the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum system, there is a change in the function of educators who originally taught with a uniform approach or one size fits all, to someone who must be able to shape students into independent learners, therefore in this case, educators must be able to become mentors, facilitators, or coaches in project-based learning activities actively (Sartini & Mulyono 2022).

There are still many educators who use the old learning model, namely teaching only based on existing textbooks (Emiliya et al., 2023; Nasution et al., 2024; Yuliyardi et al., 2022; Feladi et al., 2017; Syaifullah et al., 2024; Sii et al., 2017; Batubara, 2023), in addition to the lack of motivation and innovation from educators to create other learning resources that can help them in presenting their subjects, becoming an obstacle to the implementation of learning (Ihsan, 2022; Burhanudin, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021; Dübbers et al., 2021).

It is even said that many educators are not creative in creating a learning environment (Ihsan, 2022). This is due to the large number of educators who are not ready and able to prepare good learning plans, in addition, both educators and students still do not understand the concept of independent learning, some are even completely unfamiliar with the term.

This shows that there is still a lack of digital literacy from education practitioners, even though digitalization and literacy skills are important things to answer today's challenges (Sartini & Mulyono 2022; Akayoglu et al., 2020; Anisimova, 2020; Lestari et al., 2020; Falloon, 2020). As a follow-up to concerns about the decline in the quality of human resources, especially educators amid the implementation of this new curriculum system, the most appropriate step according to the Ministry of Education and Culture is to improve teacher performance and competence in terms of educating.

So, in this context, a special platform was created for teachers to develop the potential and performance capabilities of teachers, namely the *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* (PMM) with the main aim of improving competence, as well as working to inspire fellow teachers (Marisana et al., 2023; Budiarti, 2022; Surani et al., 2022; Ramdani et al., 2022; Simangunsong et al., 2023; Prasetyaningsih et al., 2024).

## **METHOD**

The method used in writing this article was the library research method with descriptive analysis. Researchers search for data and information for reference materials for making articles by collecting sources as they are from various articles, books, and the internet. In collecting data, researchers used relevant source search techniques, with primary references being the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum Question and Answer Pocket Book and the *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* Pocket Book issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Researchers also analyzed the practice of using the PMM in various article sources with descriptive analysis techniques because it was the most appropriate step for this research topic. The data obtained were then compiled, processed, and analyzed to provide an overview of the problem topics discussed.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Merdeka Belajar Curriculum***

Curriculum development is a must. This statement is based on changes in the times that will certainly continue to occur and experience a shift in momentum so that society must also follow these changes. That is why the curriculum as an important part of the learning process must be developed to answer the challenges of the times that continue to develop (Simanjuntak et al., 2022; Fensham, 2022; Deng, 2021; Munkebye et al., 2020; Kazemi et al., 2020). If it is not changed, of course, the current curriculum will not develop and be backward, resulting in the condition of community educational institutions that will be neglected (Ihsan, 2022).

In response to this, the Minister of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) Nadiem Makarim initiated the concept of “Independent Learning Education”, during his speech at the 2019 National Teachers’ Day (HGN) event (Ningrum, 2022). The *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* provides a new perspective that education does not only focus on cognitive assessment, but also on affective and psychomotor assessment of students (Alfath et al., 2022; Kusumardi, 2023; Wahyuningsari et al., 2022; Idhartono, 2022).

This curriculum was developed as a more flexible curriculum framework, focusing on developing student competencies and character (Wiguna & Tristaningrat 2022; Lembong et al., 2023; Suzetasari et al., 2023; Lestari, 2022; Chamisijatin et al., 2022). Since the 2021/2022 academic year, the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* has been implemented in 2,500 educational institutions (schools). According to the data, educational institutions that implement the independent curriculum are the School Mover Program (PSP) and around 901 Center of Excellence Vocational Schools (SMK PK) (Marisana et al., 2023).

In its implementation mechanism, the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* provides three options for educational units (schools). First, implementing several parts and principles of the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* without completely abandoning the educational unit curriculum. Second, implementing the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* using teaching and learning tools provided by the government; or third, implementing the independent

curriculum with the development of various teaching tools by educational units (Marisana et al., 2023).

As the name implies, this curriculum is also more independent. At the high school level, there are no more elective programs, students determine the subjects they are interested in, according to their talents and aspirations. For educators themselves in the teaching process, they can carry out teaching according to the assessment of the level of achievement and development of students, and educational institutions (schools) are given authority in developing and managing the curriculum and teaching and learning process that are adjusted to the character of the educational unit and students (Priantini et al., 2022). So, the main characteristics of this curriculum are; first, project-based learning for the development of soft skills and student character.

Second, focusing on essential material so that there is enough time for in-depth learning of basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy. Third, Flexibility for teachers in implementing a differentiated learning process according to the abilities of students and making adjustments to the local context and content (Wiguna & Tristaningrat 2022).

The learning process of this curriculum demands to be able to be fun with the development of innovative and creative thinking by educators. Where the essence of this freedom of thought must first be possessed by educators as the driving subject of education. This has an impact on the process of implementing the curriculum, it is proven that there are still many obstacles felt by educators, for example, the data showed that the general understanding of educators in elementary schools regarding the concept and implementation of the independent learning program was 60.00% (Marisana et al., 2023).

Educators are one of the important factors in the implementation of this curriculum. The independent curriculum requires teachers to have active abilities in teaching to answer the challenges of learning methods that still seem monotonous and lack innovation. Another important factor that influences the success of implementing this independent curriculum program is consistency in the use of programs in every teaching and learning activity which is also accompanied by the provision of evaluations

because the learning methods applied by educators to students determine the success of learning (Ningrum, 2022; Rizqina et al., 2023; Sholihah et al., 2023; Faisal, 2023; Muna et al., 2023; Sofa et al., 2023).

The teacher's ability even has an impact on student learning outcomes (Marisana et al., 2023; Lesmana et al., 2019; Marlina, & Usni, 2022; Bowman et al., 2020; Craig et al., 2022; Miao et al., 2022). Due to the very large role of educators in making the independent curriculum a success, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology launched the PMM to support the needs of teachers in implementing the independent curriculum so that they can help educators find references, inspiration, and understanding to create more innovative learning.

### ***Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) as a Solution for Innovation in Merdeka Belajar Curriculum***

To support the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) created the PMM. This platform is intended for teachers and principals. Contains various features to help and facilitate teachers in finding inspiration, references, literacy, and understanding in efforts to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. The PMM acts as a friend for teachers in forming Pancasila students (Priantini et al., 2022).

The PMM is a technology platform launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia to be a friend of driving teachers and school principals so that it can be used for teaching, learning, and creating. The PMM can be accessed via <https://guru.kemdikbud.go.id> or via the PMM application which can be downloaded on the Playstore. To be able to access the products available on the PMM, you must have a learning account ([belajar.id](https://belajar.id)) or a madrasah account ([madrasah.kemenag.go.id](https://madrasah.kemenag.go.id)).

The features provided in this platform consist of six items and are grouped into three based on their benefits, namely Teaching and Learning Activities, Self-Development, and Seeking and Sharing Inspiration (Sari et al., 2022). Items for teaching and learning activities include, namely 1) student assessment, containing a collection of question packages

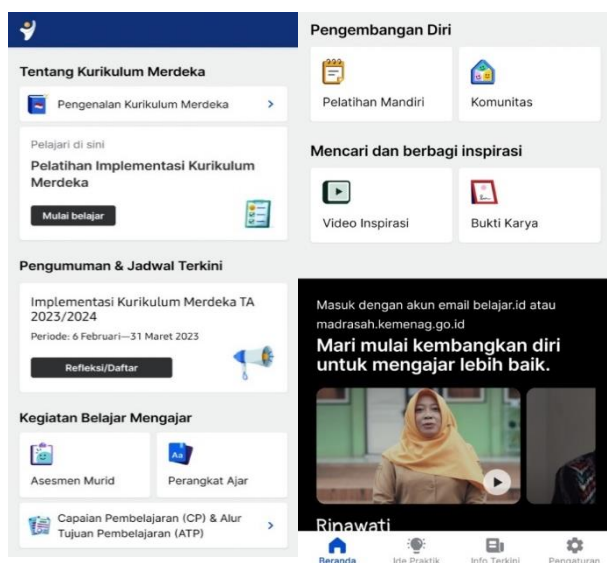
that have been created based on certain phases and subjects, helping teachers get student learning achievement results and can be used to determine the level of student competency as a whole. Helping teachers carry out diagnostic analysis of literacy and numeracy quickly so that they can deliver learning according to the stages achieved by students, 2) teaching tools, containing various teaching materials that support teaching and learning activities, such as teaching materials, teaching modules, project modules, and textbooks. Teaching tools can be downloaded so that they can still be accessed even if they do not have an internet connection. Teaching tools can also be shared with other fellow teachers via available social media. (Ketaren et al., 2022).

The items for teacher development include 1) independent training, which contains various short training materials so that teachers can conduct training independently anytime and anywhere. The materials presented can improve teachers' ability to explain materials in independent curriculum learning. In addition, this feature provides training in the form of a post-test which aims to determine the extent of teacher understanding in mastering the modules provided, if the teacher understands 70% of the modules he has studied, then the teacher can continue to the next modules, and if understanding has not reached 70% then the next module cannot be accessed, 2) community, contains various learning communities throughout Indonesia and can be used for discussions with other teachers to discuss various innovative teaching practices and tools.

Items for finding and sharing inspiration, namely 1) inspiration videos, which contain a collection of inspirational videos made by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, and experts as a reference source for improving educator competence, 2) evidence of work, used as a place for documenting work to describe performance, and competence achieved while carrying out the profession as an educator or principal. As well as a place to share practices, and successful strategies and get good feedback from other fellow teachers.

Although most items on the platform require a learning account to access them, some products can be accessed without a learning account, namely inspirational video items that can be accessed by everyone so that they can

increase their insight regarding the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. The PMM has very complete features as a guide for teachers and a guide for their students. By accessing and utilizing the PMM, teachers can get many references to understand learning in the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. Teachers who have logged in and have access to the platform can immediately download the necessary learning materials or videos via their gadgets or laptops (Sari et al., 2022)



**Figure 1 The Example of Home Screen Display of the PMM on Mobile Phones**

In the PMM, teachers can search for teaching references that follow the abilities of students, training features are provided to develop teacher competence and work and inspire other fellow teachers (Ketaren et al., 2022). The use of the PMM has proven to be effective for teachers with 63.3% of respondents strongly agreed that the inspiration and information obtained after using the PMM could support the development of educators.

Meanwhile, for the insights obtained, 66.7% agreed that this platform can provide knowledge and insight to educators regarding their role as teachers who implement independent curriculum learning and 70% of teachers who were respondents agreed that the features in the PMM help teachers improve their teaching competence (Marisana et al., 2023).

The PMM was specifically designed by the Ministry of Education and Culture as a follow-up step to the digital-based education transformation efforts in Indonesia and is

provided as a driving force for teachers in teaching, learning, and working. The contribution that can be made by educational units is to immediately register each of their schools to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum (Priantini et al., 2022). So that the PMM program can run smoothly with the help of teachers who actively use the PMM.

Many teachers still do not understand how to use this platform properly and some of them have not been able to implement the PMM program into the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum learning activities. Therefore, further programs and strategies are needed that function so that teachers can consistently use the PMM so that it can be implemented in the learning process (Marisana et al., 2023).

Socialization and training in the use of the PMM for teachers can be one form of activity that aims to enable teachers to use this platform optimally. Such as the training in the use of the PMM for teachers After the activity, 85% of the participants who attended stated that they were satisfied with the socialization activities that day. Teachers can better understand and know the benefits of using the PMM so that it helps to find references for innovative learning models (Sari et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia launched the *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* (PMM) as a support for the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum to help teachers find references, inspiration, and understanding in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum and creating more innovative learning. The PMM has 6 features divided into 3 categories, namely self-development, teaching and learning activities, and finding and sharing inspiration. Teachers can use this platform to find reference sources for teaching tools such as; modules and teaching materials, books, project modules, and other sources. Not only for reference, teachers can also use this platform for self-development, sharing inspiration, and discussing with other educators throughout Indonesia. With the PMM, teachers are helped to find innovations in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. However, the obstacle in applying the PMM is that many teachers are still not skilled in using

this platform, so more training and socialization are needed regarding the use of the PMM.

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