

## LITERACY AND NUMERACY THROUGH KAMPUS MENGAJAR IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TO SUPPORT THE MERDEKA BELAJAR CURRICULUM

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### Abstract

Merdeka Belajar program was launched as a government effort to improve the quality of education in Indonesia and face increasingly complex and dynamic global challenges. The educational problems at SDN 143 Kopo are the lack of optimal literacy and numeracy activities for students and the limited human resources to deal with a large number of students. The method used in this activity is the direct learning assistance method, where Kampus Mengajar (KM) students act as facilitators in helping students deal with difficulties encountered in learning. Each step taken will be explained descriptively. The flow of an implementation of activities made using 4 stages, namely observation, preparation, implementation, and evaluation has been going well. In practice, the planned work program for elementary school students includes the "Gerakan Literasi dan Numerasi" (GLS), creating reading corners, reciting activities, and teaching English. The result obtained is an increase in students' enthusiasm for learning, especially in literacy and numeracy skills. Students begin to be able to recognize letters, read and count with the help KM5 students. The planned work program can run with the help of KM5 students. The existence of KM5 students makes students more enthusiastic and enthusiastic in teaching and learning activities.

**Keywords:** Kampus Mengajar (KM), Literacy, Numeracy, Elementary School.

### INTRODUCTION

In the era of industry 4.0, students are expected to possess multiple skills and adapt to advances in science and technology (Alhloul & Kiss, 2022). To achieve the expected graduate achievement targets, education must adopt an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) approach that emphasizes not only content but also the development of skills. Currently, the curriculum mainly focuses on producing graduates with achievements aligned with the vision and mission of their study program (Barrot, Llenares, & Del Rosario, 2021). However, the demand for higher education is rising to meet the needs of the workforce, which requires graduates to

possess various qualifications. The Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia, Nadim Makarim, recognizes the phenomenon and predicts that by 2030, every university graduate will need to have not only knowledge and skills but also attitudes and values that guide them to become ethical and responsible citizens (Taguma & Barrera, 2019).

In 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia launched the Merdeka Learning Curriculum, a program aimed at improving the quality of education and preparing students to face complex global challenges. The curriculum's three pillars are Freedom to Learn, Freedom to Read, and Freedom to Culture. The Independent Learning pillar emphasizes students' freedom to choose their learning paths and patterns using online or face-to-face approaches (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022). The Merdeka Baca pillar encourages students to read more and develop their interest in reading. The Merdeka Budaya pillar emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity and encourages students to appreciate and respect cultural differences (Mahliatussikah & Kuswardono, 2023). The Merdeka Learning program is a student-centered approach aimed at creating a comfortable and motivating learning atmosphere (Yuhastina, Parahita, Astutik, Ghufonudin, & Purwanto, 2020).

The development of the MBKM curriculum is based on three theoretical aspects. The first aspect is the orientation of the curriculum, which is focused on student involvement in MBKM activities at the university level. The second aspect relates to the challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the MBKM curriculum, which are currently being reviewed through a literature review and initial hypotheses. The third aspect concerns the readiness of graduates to connect and engage with the business world and industry through the MBKM curriculum approach. This link and match aspect predicts that graduates will acquire new skills through nine MBKM curriculum activities, including teaching assistantships, student exchanges, independent research, thematic community service, internships, entrepreneurship, research, humanitarian projects, and national defense (Zakiyyah, Cahyani, & Fatnah, 2021). The MBKM curriculum is designed to be integrative and multidisciplinary, with an emphasis on active learning (Ni'mah & Sari, 2022; Ishak, 2021).

During the almost two years of the pandemic, students at all levels of education, particularly in elementary schools, have experienced a decline in their literacy and numeracy skills. This is particularly evident in low-grade students (grades 1, 2, 3), who still struggle with understanding letters and numbers. Some students are still unable to read, write or understand the correct pronunciation of consonant and vowel sounds in literacy. In numeracy, some students are still unable to perform basic mathematical operations such as multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction, and they often make mistakes in writing numbers from 1 to 100 in sequence. Literacy and numeracy are essential basic competencies to improve the quality of a nation, and both are the focus of learning in basic education. However, the literacy and numeracy of students in Indonesia remain low, and it is necessary to carry out habits and activities that involve various parties in their implementation, such as school principals, teachers, and parents of students. One of the government's policies to address this problem is through the Teaching Campus program, which aims to produce quality, competent, critical-minded, and nationalistic tertiary graduates and improve the literacy and numeracy skills of students. Although some students still lack adequate literacy and numeracy skills, this program is expected to help achieve educational goals (Hardini, Haerudin, & Wirza, 2022).

According to Amalia (2021), KM5 can be a source of inspiration for university policies

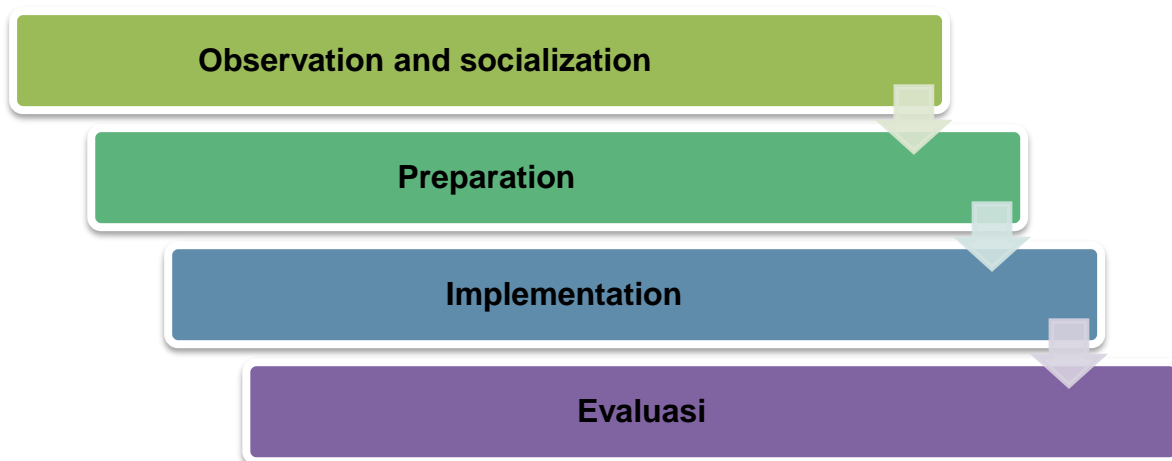
that aim to provide opportunities for universities to produce more qualified graduates. Regardless of the pros and cons of the Teaching Campus policy, this policy strongly supports the continuity between what students learn in theory and what they encounter in the workplace. Therefore, students are required to become the best graduates who can understand conceptual theory and implement the knowledge gained in everyday life. Thus, the Teaching Campus policy is one of the right solutions to reduce unemployment in Indonesia. The Teaching Campus Program is part of the Independent Learning-Campus Independent policy and offers a variety of programs to diversify the student learning experience beyond traditional college learning.

The educational problems at SDN 143 Kopo include the lack of optimal literacy and numeracy activities for students, as well as limited human resources to deal with the large number of students. Wealthier parents can enroll their children in tutoring institutions to address these problems, but less fortunate parents cannot do the same. Learning difficulties can lead to decreased motivation, as students may find the subject difficult and unimportant. Thus, there is a need for more intensive guidance for elementary school students to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Education is the main capital that every individual needs to survive and succeed, especially in the 21st century, which demands critical and creative thinking skills. Schools and parents must provide the best education and learning support from an early age to foster thinking skills. This study focuses on the implementation of Campus Teaching 5 (KM5) activities in improving literacy and numeracy skills in students at SDN 143 Kopo. During the campus teaching program, KM5 students assist the learning process, strengthen students' literacy and numeracy, and assist with school activities.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this activity is the direct learning assistance method, in which Campus Teaching (KM) students act as facilitators in helping students deal with difficulties encountered in learning. Each step taken will be explained in detail. This study assistance is one way to improve students' literacy and numeracy. Learning assistance is an effort to help students both individually and in groups in making choices, adjustments, and solving learning problems experienced. The implementation of this service activity is shown in Figure 1. The steps for implementing the activity include:

1. Observation and outreach: Campus teaching participants convey their work program to schools.
2. Preparation: Students prepare materials and resources to support literacy and numeracy activities.
3. Implementation: Students carry out the work program that has been planned and approved by the school.
4. Evaluation: Each activity will be evaluated to determine whether it has been successful or not.



**Figure 1. Flow of activity implementation**

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Observation and Socialization**

Observation activities were carried out by visiting SDN 143 Kopo, Bandung City in person. Observation documentation is shown in Figure 2. The observation method used was through interviews and direct observation. The students conducted interviews with teachers and the principal to understand the condition of the school and to identify any obstacles faced by the school. Furthermore, students also made direct observations in class during teaching and learning activities (KBM). Based on the observations made, data related to problems at the school were obtained. The following findings were made from the observations and interviews:

1. The curriculum used for grades 1 and 4 is an independent curriculum, while grades 2, 3, 5, and 6 use the 2013 curriculum.
2. The learning methods used in the classroom are quite varied, including lectures, discussions, peer collaboration, question and answer, and inquiry.
3. The media used in class include smart boards, twin mirrors, projectors, and other digital platforms.
4. The learning resources used vary and include thematic books and learning resources from the internet.
5. Some grade 1 students still struggle with reading and writing, which makes it difficult for them to keep up with the material being taught.
6. Some grade 1 students are still accompanied by their parents at school.
7. Some students still have difficulty in the numeracy section.
8. The limited number of rooms makes it difficult to organize reading facilities.



**Figure 2. Observation and socialization of Kampus Merdeka activities to school**

### **B. Preparation**

Based on the results of observations, KM students will create work programs to overcome problems at school, especially in student literacy and numeracy. The observation results show that there are still many elementary school students who need literacy and numeracy guidance. If analyzed, this is in line with previous research which states that when a person generally does not hone their academic abilities, there will be a continuous decline in abilities, and even a loss of academic abilities (Kim, Raza, & Seidman, 2019). The less the abilities are used, the more the student's learning outcomes will decrease, causing a decline in learning achievement. Therefore, Campus Teaching students carry out literacy and numeracy assistance activities for SDN 143 Kopo students. It is hoped that the students' literacy and numeracy skills can increase. Not only literacy and numeracy skills, but students are also expected to be able to develop socio-emotional competencies and 21st-century skills. Activities that have been prepared by the students will be presented in advance to the school and Campus Teaching Field Supervisors (DPL). The activity is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Socialization of KM5 student work programs to the school**

### **C. Implementation**

The implementation of this activity is divided into several steps, including:

- ❖ Assisting students in improving literacy and numeracy skills through the School Literacy Movement (GLS)

At this stage, KM students act as facilitators to help students further develop their reading and math skills. Students from grades 1 to 6 are required to read at least one book for 15 minutes. For grades 1 to 3, students who are not yet fluent in reading will be guided by KM students. Meanwhile, students in grades 4 to 6 who have finished reading are taught to summarize and explain the books they have read. Then, students have explained the material related to reading and mathematics. They can also ask questions to produce intelligent conversations that broaden their understanding. The results obtained are that students can read and count well. This is in line with previous research that states that two-way discourse improves the learning system, resulting in superior results to those achieved through one-way discourse. Teachers must help students become more internally motivated and link instructional practices and student performance to learning objectives.



**Figure 4. GLS activity**

❖ Creating a reading corner for each class

As a development of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 23 year 2015 concerning the Growth of Character in Children, the number of books available in schools is quite large. However, due to limited space, the books are not well organized. A reading corner is a place for students to read, where books on natural and social sciences are provided. KM students made arrangements for the existing books and tidied up the reading corners in each class. Collaboration between class teachers and KM students is expected to increase students' interest in reading.

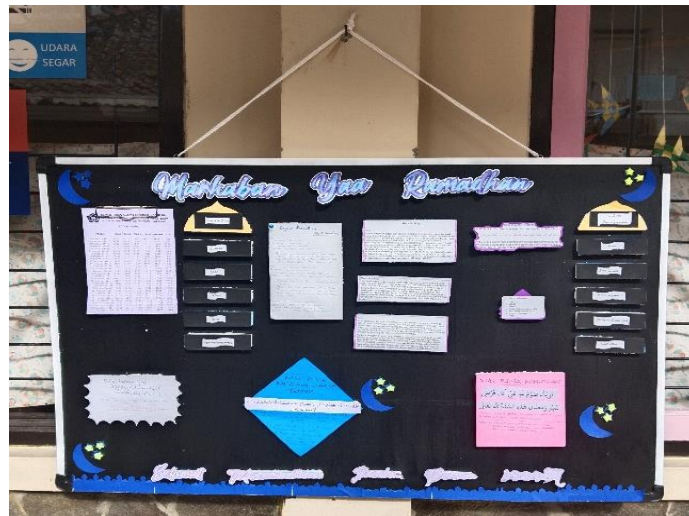


**Figure 5. Reading corner**

❖ Creating student wall magazines (mading).

The wall magazines not only serve as a means of communication between students and their peers but also between students and the school/organizers. Mading serves as a learning tool for students to develop their writing skills. The interest and passion for writing can be initiated and developed through magazines. This function can be optimized when magazines are managed seriously. The students created a class bulletin board to display student work. The

bulletin board is strategically placed so that everyone who visits can see it. One of the student's works is shown in Figure 4. The process of creating student magazines is dynamic. Every time a new work is made by students, it will be displayed on the bulletin board.



**Figure 6. School bulletin board displaying student work**

- ❖ Conducting learning activities for Muslim students to recite the Quran and pray in congregation.

This activity is carried out to familiarize students with praying five times a day and to improve their ability to read the Quran. This activity is shown in Figure 5. Teaching how to read the Quran is also carried out during Ramadan. The activity begins with writing letters and verses of the Quran, followed by asking students to read and discuss the Tajweed verses together. Student's ability to read and write verses of the Quran is good enough for the upper grades. However, for the lower grades, more intensive guidance is still needed to learn the Quran. During this activity, several interesting observations were made, where some students who were lacking in numeracy skills were quite good at reciting the Quran with proper makhraj and tajweed. This proves that every student has different talents and abilities, and it is important not to underestimate someone's ability in a certain field because they may have abilities in other fields that are not yet known. Students, as well as teachers, must have personal and religious competence to help students form good morals (Supriyadi & Julia, 2019).





**Figure 7. Congregational prayer activities at school**

❖ Teaching English and adapting to technology

English is taught starting from the elementary level, where students learn to recognize numbers, words, and names of objects in English. They also learn how to use simple dialogues in English. To aid this activity, students use Google Translate's audio feature to listen to correct pronunciation. Furthermore, students are introduced to the benefits of technology that can aid their learning process. The activity includes teaching students how to operate computers, as shown in Figure 6. The current national assessment uses electronic media, including computers integrated with the internet or online-based. The assessment evaluates three aspects: learning environment survey, character survey, and Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM). AKM is a fundamental competency assessment that is required by all students to develop their self-quality. It measures two competencies, namely reading literacy and numeracy. To prepare students for the online-based National Assessment, teachers need to strengthen their students' technological competence. Students responded positively to this learning activity and showed enthusiasm and energy. Written tests, starting with convergent questions, help build a shared knowledge base and self-confidence among discussion participants. Interactive techniques have many benefits, including quickly assessing whether students have mastered the material.



**Figure 8. Technology adaptation activities for students**

#### **D. Evaluation**

Each activity or work program carried out will be evaluated to improve its effectiveness. For now, the planned work program is running well, and the effect of GLS activities that have been going on for a month can be seen in students. This is proven when students can read independently, although some students still need guidance. The main obstacle during the implementation of this work program is the limited time due to other activities and holidays. In the last two months, schools have had many activities that must be carried out, such as the Mid Semester Examinations (UTS), AKM, competitions outside of school, and national holidays. The availability of reading books, both about the subject matter and general books, is quite good, but organizing them in the limited school space is challenging. The condition of the reading room is also not suitable to bring all students to the library. Therefore, KM5 students took the initiative to move books to each class to create a reading corner, where books are placed according to their contents.

To measure the success of the training activities, regular monitoring and evaluation are conducted by the school and DPL. When the work program is in progress or completed, KM5 students are required to make an activity report. Inputs obtained from parents of students are also taken into consideration. Through evaluation and monitoring, the following results are obtained:

1. Students are more diligent in studying at home when KM5 students come to help with the school. The students received many questions from students related to the subject matter.
2. The school generally understands the importance of literacy and numeracy for elementary school students, but due to limited human resources and many activities, the implementation is less than optimal. When there were KM5 students, the school was greatly assisted in carrying out the planned schoolwork program.
3. KM5 students who are good at operating electronic devices are also very helpful in teaching. The learning media used are more varied. The existence of Teaching Campus activities is expected to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills. For schools, the addition of human resources allows all planned activities to be carried out correctly.

## CONCLUSION

Implementation of the Teaching Campus program has had a positive impact on both the school and the students. The school has gained additional human resources to teach and mentor students. The flow of activities, which includes four stages: observation, preparation, implementation, and evaluation, has been going well. The planned work program for elementary school students includes activities related to literacy and numeracy skills, such as creating reading corners in class, creating class bulletin boards, reciting programs, congregational prayers, and teaching English. As a result of the program, students have shown an increased enthusiasm for learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills. With the help of both teachers and KM5 students, students are now able to recognize letters, read, and count. The program can only be successful with the help of KM5 students, as their presence makes students more enthusiastic and active in teaching and learning activities. The sustainability of this program requires assistance and participation from various parties, including families, schools, and KM5 students.

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