Strategic Innovation to Enhance Kurikulum Merdeka at Universitas Multimedia Nusantara Indonesia Through E-learning Content Production

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Abstract

E-learning Content Production (ECP) is an elective course the Film Department at Universitas Multimedia Nusantara (UMN) offers. Students learn to develop asynchronous content for academic and non-academic purposes. This research aims to develop the course's strategies to enhance the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka at UMN. Kurikulum Merdeka, initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, is a curriculum designed to have learner-centered principles, contextual, essential, accountable, and involve various stakeholders. The research question focuses on how the ECP enhances Kurikulum Merdeka at UMN. This course specifically teaches students how to create, produce, and manage asynchronous content while aligning it with the principles of Kurikulum Merdeka. This descriptive study employs a case study approach to explore ECP. The data is gathered through class observation and analysis of alpha and beta tests of the asynchronous content. This course provides numerous benefits for both students and teachers. In addition to acquiring knowledge and skills in asynchronous material production, students can collaborate with teachers, share the project's copyright, and fulfill academic and non-academic requirements. Teachers can use the project as asynchronous class materials and engage in collaborative research with students. The study shows that collaborative work between students as creators and teachers as guides/users encourages the creative results of asynchronous content that accommodates the needs of the subjects created and innovative aspects of learning.

Keywords: E-learning, Applied Teaching and Learning Strategies, Asynchronous, Kurikulum Merdeka

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Introduction

The implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka, initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education in 2022, has dramatically impacted Indonesia's education system (Sarnoto et al., 2022). This curriculum is targeted to enhance the learners' quality, skill, and knowledge. Apart from its promising perks, educational institutions in the country face many challenges when applying it. One of the significant challenges is the adjustment toward allocating 20 credits of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) content. MBKM has to be a part of a university program that implements student-centered learning aimed at credible and noble students' characters (Setiawan & Suwandi, 2022). MBKM has several programs that students can choose such as internships, independent study, teaching campus, Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA), humanitarian projects, entrepreneurship, rural development/thematic community services, and student exchange (International Program Industrial Engineering, n.d.)—replacing 20 credits out of the significant curriculum consequently resulting in the elimination of essential courses, which might create critical gaps in students' knowledge and skill (Kusumo et al., 2022; Pakpahan et al., 2023; Prakoso et al., 2023; Pratikno et al., 2022). This study aims to develop strategic innovations to enhance the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka at Universitas Multimedia Nusantara (UMN) through the production of e-learning content. Students produce the content by collaborating with lecturers, assisted by the Learning Center Department of UMN. All the students participate in the Elearning Content Production class, an elective course provided by the Film Department of UMN. This course is the answer to the various needs of the university's asynchronous material, applying the MBKM curriculum and the needs of students to earn student activity credits.

Since its implementation in 2022, Kurikulum Merdeka has significantly impacted the Indonesian education system. The demand to build an Industry 4.0 community pushes the students to master technology (Erstad & Voogt, 2018; Student Affairs Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, 2023). Students must acquire various skills and knowledge needed in the Industrial Revolution (Wahyuni et al., 2023). Educational institutions must change their curricula from teacher-centered to learner-oriented to implement the Kurikulum Merdeka. However, this shift comes with its challenges because of the need for familiarity, support, and facilities (Fazis & Febrian, 2023; Matsuyama et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2005; Wahyuni et al., 2023).

To answer this challenge, the writers developed an innovative elective class called E-learning Content Production (ECP) for the Film Department of UMN. This class teaches students to create, produce, and manage asynchronous content. This class collaborates with the UMN Learning Center Department. In this class, students work in groups supervised by assigned teachers, who will give them the syllabus of designated courses that will be turned into asynchronous content. After the midterm test, the materials will be developed and produced starting week 8. Students will chunk out the materials and turn them into reading materials, learning videos, quizzes, discussion forums, and assignments. This class integrates e-learning and collaborative learning practices to produce asynchronous modules for other courses needed (Lam et al., 2010; Ngai et al., 2019).

Besides getting the skill and knowledge to produce asynchronous materials, students will also benefit by getting points for student activity (Satuan Kredit Kegiatan Mahasiswa or SKKM). During their study at UMN, students are required to fulfill student activity points. SKKM aims to prepare students' soft skills to work in the industry. Specifically, this research prepares students to perform in the film industry. Each student is required to fulfill 20 SKKM

points, which are divided into four fields:

1. Academic Activities
2. Extracurricular Activities
3. Community Service
4. Organization and Personality Development (Student Affairs Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, 2023)

Students will earn academic points by participating in this class. This could happen because the students develop and produce asynchronous material during the E-learning Content Production Class. The asynchronous material is then registered as intellectual property rights.

This research aims to enhance the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka at UMN by developing effective strategies for its implementation. The methods include exploring and utilizing the ECP as a course that teaches students to produce asynchronous modules. In this class, they learn to understand the context of the subject to be made and discuss the plan with the PIC assigned and supervised by the ECP teacher.

Research Question

How does E-learning Content Production enhance Kurikulum Merdeka at Universitas Multimedia Nusantara Indonesia?

The research will focus on the class observations and analysis of alpha and beta tests of asynchronous modules produced by ECP students. The study was conducted during the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. There were two classes of ECP with a total of 66 students who worked on ten projects (8 courses and two modules for Health and Safety Environment). A comprehensive overview of the ECP and its relevance to Kurikulum Merdeka will also be discussed.

Research Method

The research employs a case study approach to explore ECP. The data is gathered through class observation and analysis of alpha and beta tests of the asynchronous content. ECP was conducted during the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, starting 29 January – 31 May 2024. There were two classes, with 33 students enrolled in each class. From the first to seventh meetings, the teacher taught about the history of distance learning and theories about asynchronous learning. Before the midterm test, students learned how to do asynchronous modules, which included chunking the materials, designing the modules, and turning them into reading text, videos, quizzes, discussion forums, and assignments. After the midterm test, students were divided into groups of 3-5 and assigned to produce asynchronous modules for ten selected courses. After all modules were completed, alpha and beta tests were conducted. The alpha test was conducted in week 12, while the beta test was conducted in week 14. The alpha test evaluated initial functions and content appropriateness to the materials. The beta test was to assess user experience and readiness for implementation.

Result

The output of this course is 20 asynchronous modules, which 20 groups of ECP students produce. The modules are as follows:

Table 1: List of Modules and PIC

No	Modules	PIC	Language	Class	Group
1	Campus dress code	Student service officer	Indonesia	A	1
2	Polite greetings	Bahasa Indonesia lecturer	Indonesia	A	2
3	AR634 Project Management: Week 2	Architectural lecturer	Indonesia	A	3
4	AR634 Project Management: Week 10	Architectural lecturer	Indonesia	A	4
5	DKV 104 Photography Principles	Visual Communication Design lecturer	English	A	5
6	FG 141 Research Methodology: Artistic Research Method	Film lecturer	Indonesia	A	6
7	FG 141 Research Methodology: Creative Process	Film lecturer	Indonesia	A	7
8	FM 632 Indonesia Film History: Narrative film in Java 1920 - 1942	Film lecturer	Indonesia	A	8
9	FM 632 Indonesia Film History: Japanese Propaganda Films in the Archipelago 1942-1945	Film lecturer	Indonesia	A	9
10	ARS 543 Advanced Computational Design	Visual Communication Design lecturer	Indonesia	A	10
11	ID 401 2D-3D Assets: Character Design	Visual Communication Design lecturer	English	B	1
12	ID 301 Interactivity: Digital Game	Visual Communication Design lecturer	English	B	2
13	FIL632 Intro to Moving Image Production in Film: Time Management for Film Productions	Film lecturer	Indonesia	B	3
14	FIL632 Intro to Moving Image Production in Film: Timeline & Budget for Film Productions	Film lecturer	Indonesia	B	4
15	DKV310 Visual Communication Design 2: Layout and Grid for Design	Visual Communication Design lecturer	English	B	5
16	FG211 Color Theory and Design Principles	Film lecturer	Indonesia	B	6
17	DKV 214 Creativity Theory: Scope of Creativity	Visual Communication Design lecturer	English	B	7
18	DKV 810 Seminar: Presentation Manner	Visual Communication Design lecturer	English	B	8
19	FG 622 Visual Development: Basics of Global & Indonesian Architectural Styles	Film lecturer	Indonesia	B	9
20	Health and Safety Environment for Shooting. Micro Sleep / Safety Riding Procedure.	Film lecturer	Indonesia	B	10

Every group uploaded and arranged the modules to training center.umn.ac.id, a Moodle-based platform provided by the Learning Center Department. Each module comprises reading material, a learning video, a quiz, a discussion forum, and an assignment. Each video should be at most 10 minutes. When they managed the module in the platform, every group was assigned a teacher role.

Each group pitched its concept to the assigned PIC, who were lecturers who taught the courses. Students were given the freedom to create their ideas for their videos. They could use or combine animation, live-action, and typography to make the video. They had to get approval on the script and storyboard from the PIC before they could shoot the video.

Alpha Test

The alpha test was conducted in week 12. Students had to upload and arrange the modules in the platform (trainingcenter.umn.ac.id). After that, the ECP teacher sent the alpha test to the PIC of each group, which evaluated the content of the module. The PIC had to check the content of the modules and test the function. The example of the alpha test result is attached at the end of this article. The alpha test result was sent to the students and ECP teacher. If revisions were needed, students would revise the module within two weeks.

Beta Test

The beta test was to assess user experience and readiness for implementation. The test was conducted in week 14. Each group was assigned to evaluate two other groups. They would check the features and functions of the modules, ensure the modules worked adequately on different devices, and monitor how users interact with the modules (feature usage and completion of each task). They didn't check the security, bug, and technical issues since the university's IT department did that. After checking, students had to fill in the beta testing form. Students could check the results and make revisions if needed. The form is as follows: bit.ly/LCP_Beta_Test. The result is attached to the end of the article.

Figure 1: Example of Video Created by ECP Students

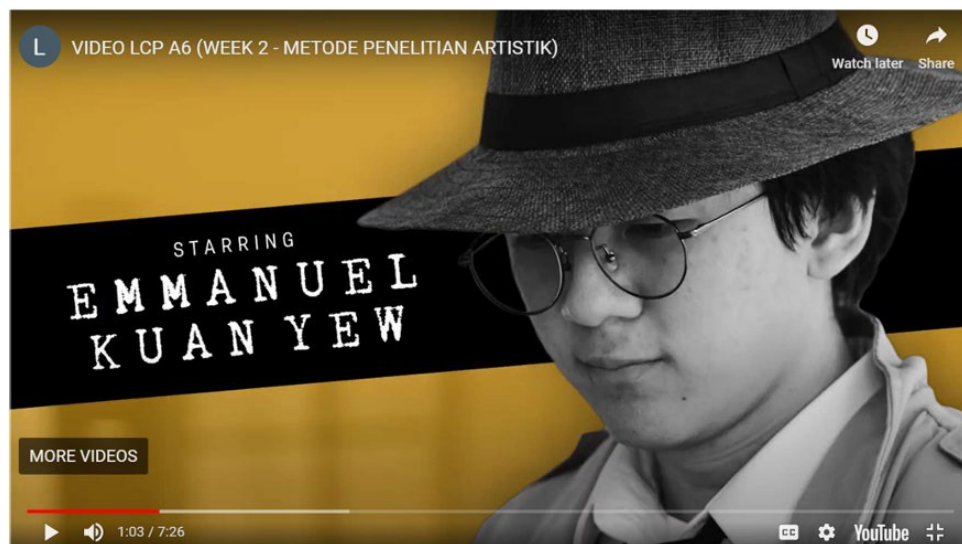Figure 2: Example of Video Created by ECP Student

Figure 3: Example of Video Created by ECP Student

Figure 4: Example of Video Created by ECP Student

Discussion

1. **The need to enhance Kurikulum Merdeka**
   Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at the university level has been challenging since it reduces 20 credits out of the core curriculum. The missing credits raised a big concern because students will need more skills and knowledge in film production. Thus, a way out is required to answer the problem. ECP is a project-based course in which students learn to produce asynchronous modules. To accomplish this, students must analyze the syllabus, chunk out the materials, and turn them into elements of the online module. After that, students also have to pitch their ideas to the PIC of each project, who acts as a "client." By doing so, students would learn the soft skills of communication and negotiation, which are essential in the film industry. Besides soft skills, students also learn hard skills such as producing, shooting, and editing educational videos. By doing this, students benefit from the course despite the fact that the curriculum has been reduced to fit in Kurikulum Merdeka.

2. **Strategic innovation to implement Kurikulum Merdeka and fulfill academic and non-academic requirements**
   The concept of Kurikulum Merdeka is that students can learn whatever they like. Thus, this course is designed to be project-based. It is a 3-credit course in which students produce a set of asynchronous modules that include videos, reading materials, quizzes, discussion forums, and assignments. Both students and teachers (PIC and ECP teachers) share the copyrights of the videos. These copyrights benefit both sides. Students can claim them as SKKM points (non-academic activities), whereas lecturers can claim the required academic workload.

Conclusion

E-learning Content Production is an elective course the Film Department offers to answer Kurikulum Merdeka. This course helps students gain skills and knowledge in producing asynchronous modules. Students also own copyrights and get the non-academic credit points (SKKM) they need for graduation requirements. Teachers also benefit from this course. The ECP lecturer and the PIC assigned for each group also co-own the copyrights to the material. These help them fulfill their required academic workload.

For further research, there are some suggestions as follows:
1. Effectiveness of asynchronous materials produced by E-learning Content Production students
2. The impact of the non-academic credit points (SKKM) toward students' overall readiness for graduation, particularly in creative fields where content production is essential
3. The effect of the asynchronous modules toward faculty productivity and academic workload

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