

THESIS

**INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGES FACED BY EFL TEACHERS IN
DESIGNING UNIT KEGIATAN BELAJAR MANDIRI**

By:

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ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTEMENT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM

MALANG

2026

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MALANG

2026

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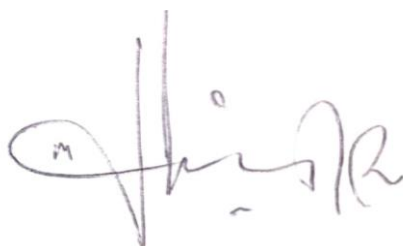


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1. This thesis has never been submitted to any other tertiary education institution for any other academic degree.
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3. willing to accept any legal consequences that may be imposed on me.

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MOTTO

"Brains, beauty, and a bachelor's degree. I can have it all."

DEDICATION

The researcher dedicates this work with all gratitude to the beloved father, mother, brother and sister, whose love, sacrifice, and string of prayers have always been the main pillar of strength in every step. The researcher also extends deep dedication to Mrs. Maslihatul Bisriyah, M.TESOL., for her patience, valuable guidance, and extraordinary motivation that not only led to the completion of this thesis, but also inspired the researcher's intellectual and personal growth. Thanks also flow to the extended family, as well as friends and fellow comrades, whose warmth, laughter, and presence have colored the college years so beautifully. Last but not least, this dedication is directed to myself as a form of appreciation for the resilience to survive in difficult times, the tenacity to continue moving forward, and the courage to turn the string of hopes into a real achievement.

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This thesis was written as one of the requirements for a bachelor's degree in the English Language Education Study Program. The author fully realizes that the success of this scientific work is inseparable from the prayers, support, guidance, and assistance of various parties. Therefore, with all humility, the author expresses his deepest gratitude and respect to:

1. My beloved parents, Mr. Widji and Mrs. Tarmi, pillars of strength and the first heaven in my life. Thank you for your unconditional love, the constant outpouring of prayers in every prostration, and the extraordinary sacrifices that I can never repay. Your advice and sincerity are a beacon that always fuels the author's passion to complete this educational path.
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only provided harmony that accompanied the author's long nights of typing, but also provided an injection of enthusiasm and positive energy that successfully dispelled the boredom during the process of compiling this thesis.

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The author realizes that this thesis is far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are greatly appreciated for future improvements. Hopefully, this work can provide benefits, inspiration, and positive contributions to the world of education and to all readers.

Malang, 08 June 2026
The researcher



Serlina Yulia Alfian Safira
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LATIN ARABIC AND TRANSLATION GUIDE

Based on the joint decision of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia and the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 158 of 1987 and Number 0543b/U/1987, it has been decided that the Arabic- Latin transliteration guidelines used in this thesis are as follows:

A. Words

ا = a	ز = z	ق = q
ب = b	س = s	ك = k
ت = t	ش = sy	ل = l
ث = ts	ص = sh	م = m
ج = j	ض = dl	ن = n
ه = h	ط = th	و = w
خ = kh	ظ = zj	ه = h
د = d	ع = ‘	ء = ‘
ذ = dz	غ = gh	ي = y
ر = r	ف = f	

B. Long Vocal

Long Vocal (a)	= a [^]
Long Vocal (i)	= i [^]
Long Vocal (u)	= u [^]

C. Diphthong Vocal

او	= aw
اي	= ay
او	= u [^]
اي	= i [^]

TABLE OF CONTENT

APPROVAL SHEET	ii
LEGITIMATION SHEET	iii
ADVISOR'S NOTE	iv
APPROVAL	v
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP	vi
MOTTO	vii
DEDICATION.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	ix
LATIN ARABIC AND TRANSLATION GUIDE.....	xii
TABLE OF CONTENT	xiv
ABSTRACT.....	xvii
ABSTRAK.....	xviii
خلاصة.....	xix
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Research Questions	6
1.3 Research Objectives	6
1.4 Significance of the Research.....	7
1.4.1 Theoretical Significance.....	7
1.4.2. Practical Significance.....	8
1.5 Scope and Limitations	9
1.6 Definition of Key Terms	10
1.6.1. Instructional Challenges.....	10
1.6.2. Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM)	11
1.6.3. Designing	11
1.6.4. EFL Learning.....	11
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM).....	12
2.1.1 Definition of Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM)	12
2.1.2 Components and Structure of Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM)	13
2.1.3 Pedagogical Functions of UKBM.....	14

2.1.4 Designing UKBM in EFL	14
2.2 Instructional Design Models	16
2.2.1 Steps in Designing Learning Materials	16
2.2.2 Principles of good EFL materials	17
2.2.3 Instructional Challenges in Designing UKBM.....	17
2.3 Self-Regulated Learning (SRL).....	18
2.3.1 Definition of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)	19
2.3.2 SRL and Its Relevance to UKBM.....	20
2.4 Previous Studies	20
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Research Design.....	25
3.2 Research Setting and Participant	26
3.3 Research Instrument	27
3.3.1 Interview Questions	27
3.3.2 Documentation	28
3.4 Data Collection.....	29
3.4.1 Interview	29
3.4.2 Documentation	30
3.5 Data Analysis	31
3.5.1 Data Reduction	31
3.5.2 Data Display	31
3.5.3 Conclusion Drawing and Verification.....	32
3.6 Data Validity	32
CHAPTER IV FINDING AND DISCUSSION.....	33
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION.....	52
References	55
APPENDICES.....	59
Appendix 1. Interview Guide (<i>Pedoman Wawancara</i>)	59
Appendix 2. Documentation Guide (<i>Pedoman Dokumentasi</i>).....	62
Appendix 3. <i>Survey Permit</i>	64
Appendix 4. <i>Research Letter</i>	65
Appendix 5. <i>Validation Sheets</i>	66
Appendix 6. <i>Documentation</i>	68

<i>Appendix 7. Interview Transcript</i>	69
<i>Appendix 8. UKBM</i>	78
<i>Appendix 9. Curriculum Vitae</i>	80

ABSTRACT

Safira, Serlina Yulia Alfian. (2026). *Instructional Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Designing Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri*. Thesis. English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Advisor: Maslihatul Bisriyah, M.TESOL

Keywords: Instructional Design, EFL Teachers, *Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri* (UKBM), Self-Regulated Learning, Independent Curriculum.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) in Indonesia requires a shift toward student-centered learning, primarily facilitated through *Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri* (UKBM). While UKBM theoretically supports Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers face distinct logistical and pedagogical complexities. This qualitative case study investigated the instructional challenges encountered by EFL teachers in designing UKBM and examined their adaptive coping strategies at an Islamic school in Batu. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with four EFL teachers and triangulated via documentation analysis of finalized UKBM modules across Grades 7–9 and longitudinal draft comparisons.

Thematic analysis revealed three primary instructional challenges: (1) severe time constraints exacerbated by administrative workloads; (2) difficulties in achieving linguistic appropriateness and instructional clarity for autonomous readers; and (3) a cognitive dilemma in balancing mandatory Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) with heterogeneous student proficiencies. To mitigate these obstacles, teachers deployed three adaptive strategies: (1) establishing collaborative shared-workload design frameworks with peer reviews; (2) implementing deliberate pedagogical scaffolding and digital multimodal features; and (3) curating concise textual inputs while delivering flexible, differentiated classroom support.

This study concludes that UKBM development is a dynamic pedagogical process driven by teacher agency. The findings imply that successful implementation relies heavily on reducing institutional administrative burdens and providing targeted training in digital curation and pedagogical scaffolding.

ABSTRAK

Safira, Serlina Yulia Alfian. (2026). *Instructional Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Designing Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri*. Skripsi. Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Dosen Pembimbing: Maslihatul Bisriyah, M.TESOL

Kata Kunci: Desain Instruksional, Guru EFL, Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM), Pembelajaran Mandiri (*Self-Regulated Learning*), Kurikulum Merdeka.

Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Indonesia membutuhkan pergeseran menuju pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa, terutama difasilitasi melalui Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM). Meskipun UKBM secara teoritis mendukung Pembelajaran Mandiri (*Self-Regulated Learning/SRL*), guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (*English as a Foreign Language/EFL*) menghadapi kompleksitas logistik dan pedagogis yang berbeda. Studi kasus kualitatif ini meneliti tantangan instruksional yang dihadapi oleh guru EFL dalam merancang UKBM dan meneliti strategi adaptasi mereka di sebuah sekolah Islam di Batu. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan empat guru EFL dan ditriangulasi melalui analisis dokumentasi modul UKBM yang telah diselesaikan di Kelas 7–9 dan perbandingan draf longitudinal.

Analisis tematik mengungkapkan tiga tantangan instruksional utama: (1) kendala waktu yang parah diperparah oleh beban kerja administratif; (2) kesulitan dalam mencapai kesesuaian linguistik dan kejelasan instruksional untuk pembaca mandiri; dan (3) dilema kognitif dalam menyeimbangkan Keterampilan Berpikir Tingkat Tinggi (*Higher Order Thinking Skills/HOTS*) yang wajib dengan kemampuan siswa yang heterogen. Untuk mengurangi hambatan-hambatan ini, para guru menerapkan tiga strategi adaptif: (1) membangun kerangka kerja desain beban kerja bersama yang kolaboratif dengan tinjauan sejawat; (2) menerapkan perancah pedagogis yang disengaja dan fitur multimodal digital; dan (3) menyusun masukan tekstual yang ringkas sambil memberikan dukungan kelas yang fleksibel dan terdiferensiasi.

Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pengembangan UKBM adalah proses pedagogis dinamis yang didorong oleh peran guru. Temuan ini menyiratkan bahwa implementasi yang sukses sangat bergantung pada pengurangan beban administratif institusional dan penyediaan pelatihan yang ditargetkan dalam kurasi digital dan perancah pedagogis.

خلاصة

سفيرة، سيرلينا يوليا ألفيان. (2026). التحديات التعليمية التي يواجهها معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في تصميم وحدات أنشطة التعلم الذاتي. رسالة ماجستير. قسم تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية التربية وتدريب المعلمين، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية في مالانج

.المشرفة: مصلحاتول بسرياه، ماجستير في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لغير الناطقين بها

الكلمات المفتاحية: التصميم التعليمي، معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وحدات أنشطة التعلم الذاتي، التعلم الذاتي، المنهج المستقل

يتطلب تطبيق المنهج المستقل في إندونيسيا تحولاً نحو التعلم المتمحور حول الطالب، والذي يُيسر بشكل أساسي من خلال وحدات أنشطة التعلم الذاتي. على الرغم من أن وحدات أنشطة التعلم الذاتي تدعم نظرياً التعلم الذاتي، إلا أن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يواجهون تعقيدات لوجستية وتربوية مميزة. تتناول هذه الدراسة النوعية، التي تُجرى على حالة عملية، التحديات التعليمية التي يواجهها معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في تصميم وحدات أنشطة التعلم الذاتي، وتدرس استراتيجيات التكيف التي يتبعونها في مدرسة إسلامية في باتو. جُمعت البيانات من خلال مقابلات شبه منظمة مع أربعة معلمين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة المكتملة في الصفوف من UKBM أجنبية، وجرى التحقق من صحتها عبر تحليل وثائق وحدات برنامج السابغ إلى التاسع، بالإضافة إلى مقارنات طويلة للمسو

كشف التحليل الموضوعي عن ثلاثة تحديات تعليمية رئيسية: (1) ضيق الوقت الشديد الذي يتفاقم بسبب عبء العمل الإداري؛ (2) صعوبات في تحقيق الملاءمة اللغوية والوضوح التعليمي للقراء المستقلين؛ (3) معضلات معرفية في الموازنة بين مهارات التفكير العليا الإلزامية وتفاوت قدرات الطلاب. وللتخفيف من هذه المعوقات، طبق المعلمون ثلاث استراتيجيات تكيفية: (1) إنشاء إطار عمل تعاوني مشترك لتصميم عبء العمل مع مراجعة الأقران؛ (2) تطبيق الدعم التربوي المتعمد والخصائص الرقمية متعددة الوسائط؛ (3) صياغة مدخلات نصية موجزة مع توفير دعم صفي مرن ومتنوع. عملية تربوية ديناميكية يقودها دور المعلمين. تشير UKBM تخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن تطوير برنامج هذه النتائج إلى أن التنفيذ الناجح يعتمد بشكل كبير على تقليل الأعباء الإدارية المؤسسية وتوفير التدريب المستهدف في مجال التنسيق الرقمي والدعم التربوي

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, research objectives, significance of the research, research limitations, and definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language skills are recognized as essential in the 21st century, as language competence helps with worldwide communication, accessing information, and participating in educational and professional domains (Stein-Smith, 2017). English language competence is demanded even with the increased rate of globalization, not only within educational but also within social interactions globally (Liu-Farrer et al. 2021). In Indonesia, English is considered a language that is learnable as English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as English is not used in everyday life. This affects learning challenges to the language competence, such as limited availability of language skills, varying language skills, and varying motivations concerning language learning (Mardhatillah and Suharyadi, 2023).

This case exemplifies the necessity for teaching methods that are capable of inducing study on the part of the student independently and with guidance. In a bid to improve quality, a report states that the Indonesian government introduced the “Independent Curriculum” (Kurikulum Merdeka), a learning design that breaks the norm with an Adaptability, learnfulness, differentiation, and Contextual Learning

(Ap et al., 2025). One of the main aims of this curriculum is to ensure the self-directed learning. In order to support this, many schools have embraced Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM) as instructional resources comprising a set of organized activities corresponding to learning objectives. UKBM enables learners to progress at their own speed, revisit content, and carry out tasks on their own (Pantiwati and Sari, 2022).

In theory, UKBM corresponds with the ideas behind Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) and constructivist teaching methods. Zimmerman's SRL framework describes how learners who manage their educational process will organize, track and assess their learning techniques via systematic stages (Zimmerman and Schunk, 2001). UKBM aims to facilitate this by providing learning goals, sequential tasks, formative assessments and guidance that prompts learners to consider their comprehension. Therefore, UKBM could serve as a resource for promoting self-directed learning, particularly within the framework of English language acquisition.

Nevertheless, the presence and progress of UKBM within schools are inconsistent. The Ministry of Education allows schools the freedom to select their approach to applying the Independent Curriculum, which includes *Mandiri Belajar*, *Mandiri Berubah*, or *Mandiri Berbagi* (Kemendikbudristek, 2024). Only those schools participating in the School Mover program must fully adopt the Independent Curriculum. Consequently, the design of UKBM differs among institutions; some create their own UKBM, some adapt pre-existing UKBM and

others choose not to use them at all. This variation affects teachers' practices in designing UKBM, particularly for English teachers who must adapt materials to student characteristics and learning outcomes (Romdaniyah et al., 2023)

In reality, there are several problematic issues encountered in the design phase by teachers themselves. Some of the commonly faced problems include a lack of time to develop materials, less technical training, developing activities that promote independent learning, and aligning activities with learning outcomes (Munaweroh, 2020). For English teachers, such challenges become even more complicated by identifying suitable texts, designing communicative activities, and writing instructions comprehensible enough for students to work independently. This illustrates that UKBM design involves both technical skills and pedagogical insight. An explanation of the importance of the educational process, particularly in relation to the organization and structuring of learning, can be viewed from a religious perspective as stated in the words of Allah SWT in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 31:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Meaning:

He taught Adam all the names (things), then He showed them to the angels, saying, "Tell Me the names of these (things) if you are right!"

The verse emphasizes the process of teaching through the organization, classification, and presentation of knowledge. Classical Islamic scholars such as

Ibn Kathir (2000) and Al-Qurtubi (2003) interpret this verse as illustrating how Allah SWT endowed Prophet Adam with the ability not only to acquire knowledge, but also to recognize concepts, categorize information, and communicate meaning in a structured manner. This interpretation highlights that learning is closely related to the way knowledge is systematically arranged and conveyed, rather than merely produced (Al-Attas, 1991).

In this context, the design of Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM) reflects these principles in instructional practice. Designing UKBM requires teachers to structure learning objectives, sequence activities, formulate clear instructions, and provide guidance that enables students to engage in independent learning. Thus, the role of teachers in designing UKBM aligns with the educational values implied in the verse, particularly in organizing and facilitating knowledge so that it can be accessed and understood by learners.

Therefore, teachers' efforts in designing Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM), despite the challenges they face such as limited time, lack of reference materials, and unclear technical procedures, play an important role in enhancing the quality of education. In this sense, the process of designing UKBM is not merely a technical task, but also a pedagogical responsibility that reflects teachers' commitment to organizing knowledge systematically and facilitating meaningful learning experiences for students. Thus, this verse offers a foundation for faith that efforts designing and organizing learning based on Qur'anic values also contribute to improving educational quality. Furthermore, this verse shows that education is

not limited to conveying facts; rather, it involves activities that include assembling, organizing, and presenting facts in a manner that could be understood by other people. This is in line with their roles as purveyors of facts as well as designers who have duties such as establishing goals and learning tools optimization.

Previous studies on UKBM have primarily emphasized learning material creation processes and the evaluation of their effects on student performance. Resources and evaluating their effect on student performance. For example Nurmawati and Sulistyowati (2023) investigated the usefulness of UKBM materials for literacy-oriented explanatory texts discovering moderate enhancement in students' literacy abilities. Likewise Bayani et al. (2024) combined Project-Based Learning with UKBM in a chemistry course. Noted notable positive outcomes, on students motivation and success. Other researchers have emphasized media innovation, such as the development of interactive flipbook-based UKBM modules (Astuti et al., 2023) or mobile and digital applications (Madiya, 2020)

In the case of learning the English language, studies are not so many. Munaweroh (2020) explored the utilization of UKBM in teaching English in senior high schools and reported that teachers inclined toward a classical way of using UKBM, while students generally had positive perceptions of UKBM. However, issues related to training and lack of interactive materials need to be improved. Meanwhile, Astuti et al. (2023) presented the development of an EFL-oriented UKBM flipbook, after demonstrating its feasibility and practicality in application, though it did not discuss teachers' perspectives during classroom practice.

Based on this review, it is concluded that although prior studies have placed greater emphasis on the effectiveness and development of UKBM products, not much emphasis has been placed on addressing the challenges that teachers face in designing UKBM, especially in the EFL context. However, designing represents an important process that gives substance to the quality of UKBM implementation in the classroom. As such, this study will fill this gap by exploring the experiences of English language teachers while designing UKBM, identifying challenges they are confronted with, and how they overcome them.

1.2 Research Questions

To address the issues outlined in the background, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What instructional challenges do EFL teachers encounter in designing UKBM materials?
2. How do EFL teachers overcome these challenges when designing UKBM?

1.3 Research Objectives

In line with the research questions, the objectives of this study are formulated as follows:

1. To explore and identify instructional challenges encountered by EFL teachers in designing UKBM materials.
2. To identify the strategies and solutions employed by EFL teachers to overcome the challenges during the UKBM design process.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The significance of this study can be viewed from two perspectives: theoretical and practical.

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of educational science, specifically in learning tool design that supports autonomous learning. Until now, the study on UKBM is more targeted at the result of implementation and the effectiveness of student learning outcomes, while the design process by the teachers have not been extensively researched. The study is a development on previous researches because it provides a full understanding of challenges experienced by teachers in designing UKBM within the realm of English learning. The research result also has a potential implication on enhancing a deeper comprehension on the application of SRL principles on UKBM design process, thus developing theories linked with learning design and development of self-regulation skills in students. Thus, this study expands not only the theory on UKBM but also contributes to the discourse on the role of teachers as learning designers who can affectively influence students' learning autonomy.

1.4.2. Practical Significance

In practice, this study benefits several stakeholders in education. For English teachers, the study offers a clear picture of the problems faced when designing UKBM and the strategies that can be implemented to solve the problems. The study can highlight moments for reflection for teachers regarding how they design the activities of UKBM, difficulty-of-material decisions, writing directions, and embedding SRL components in their UKBMs. Alternatively, teachers will gain new insights into other methods or practices that can make the use of UKBM more effective.

For schools, the results of this study can then be used to formulate support policies for teachers that are more appropriate, for example, through training programs, academic mentoring, the provision of learning resources, or workload arrangements that provide space for teachers to develop teaching materials. Schools can use findings from this research as the basis for developing an improved system for supervising or monitoring UKBM design so that learning materials used at schools are of consistent quality and meet students' needs.

This study gives relevant empirical information to policymakers or higher-level stakeholders, such as education offices or curriculum developers, about teacher readiness in designing UKBM and the type of support they need. This could be used to review the policies on the

implementation of the Independent Curriculum, especially with regard to the support given to the teachers in designing the independent learning tools.

This research will also be beneficial for other future researchers as an initial reference for developing more in-depth follow-up research, such as research on the relationship between the quality of UKBM and the learning outcomes of students, research on the effectiveness of SRL-based UKBM, or research on UKBM designing training models for teachers.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This study will be conducted with a specific scope to ensure that the analysis remains focused, manageable, and aligned with the overall objectives of the investigation. It focuses on discussing the problems of English teachers in designing UKBM within one Islamic junior high school located in Batu. This setting was selected based on its enactment of the Merdeka Curriculum and the active use of UKBM, making this setting relevant as well as representative for examining the phenomenon studied. In so doing, by focusing on one institution, this study hopes to attain in-depth contextual insights into teachers' experiences rather than generalizations.

This study is even further narrowed to those teaching English who are also directly participating in the UKBM design process. This rules out other discipline instructors, school administrators, or students as the main focus is to investigate the perspectives and challenges expressed by EFL teachers only. Furthermore, this research does not examine the use or effectiveness of UKBM on learning outcomes

but rather only investigates the design process, which includes planning, structuring, editing, and preparation of UKBM modules. In addition to identifying obstacles, the scope of this study also encompasses the strategies and solutions employed by these teachers to mitigate the challenges they encounter. By exploring these practical responses, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers navigate the complexities of instructional design in a real-world setting. This serves to narrow the scope and retain conceptual clarity given that the research is concerned with the design of instructional materials and not classroom implementation.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To ensure clarity and avoid misunderstanding, several key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1.6.1. Instructional Challenges

Instructional challenges refer to the difficulties, constraints, or obstacles that teachers face in planning, designing, organizing, and delivering learning experiences. These challenges may arise from pedagogical factors (such as selecting appropriate materials, sequencing content, formulating objectives, and preparing assessments) as well as contextual, technical, or institutional factors that affect the instructional design process.

1.6.2. Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM)

UKBM in this study is defined as a learning tool that allows the students to conduct self-directed learning through a continuum of systematic learning activities. UKBM generally consists of learning objectives, core materials, activities step-by-step, exercises, reflections, and formative assessment. In the Independent Curriculum context, UKBM is one media applied to facilitate differentiated learning and independent learning.

1.6.3. Designing

Refers to the entire process of designing learning tools, from needs analysis and instructional planning to material structuring, activity selection, and limited revision based on teacher reflection. In this design process, teachers become the learning designers who must ensure that the resulting UKBM will be relevant and clear, and will meet learning outcomes.

1.6.4. EFL Learning

In this study, it is defined as the learning process of the English language in an environment where English is not the main communication language, like the Indonesian context. Such a situation calls for special strategies since students are deprived of seeing directly how English is used in everyday life.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter highlights the key concepts of UKBM and EFL learning, challenges faced by teachers in designing teaching materials, and the theories underpinning this research. It also includes a review of previous studies to identify research gaps that this research aims to address.

2.1 Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM)

This section discusses several key concepts that form the basis of this research, including the definition and structure of Independent Learning Activity Units (UKBM), the principles of independent learning that underlie them, and their application in the context of English Language Learning.

2.1.1 Definition of Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM)

UKBM is defined as an organized learning unit that guides students to carry out a series of independent tasks to reach certain learning outcomes (Septiana et al., 2020). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology describes that UKBM supports independent learning through clear objectives, guided activities, assessments, and reflection (Setiyani, 2022). Many studies reviewed refer to the UKBM as an integrated module containing learning content, activities, and assessments that students can work on independently within an integrated framework (Pantiwati and Sari, 2022).

UKBM is thus more than a worksheet or supplementary material; it is a module pedagogically designed with regard to the main elements of student-centered learning. Its effectiveness greatly relies on clarity of instructions, coherence of structure, and appropriateness of material. These features ultimately place UKBM in a strategic position as a tool to support students' different learning tempos and autonomy in mastering competencies within inclusive education in a variety of settings.

2.1.2 Components and Structure of Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM)

UKBM generally has the following structure: clearly stated learning objectives, concise content input or explanations, sequential learning activities, practice tasks, formative assessments, and reflection prompts. These elements reflect established instructional design principles as outlined in the ADDIE model, which emphasizes systematic planning, development, and evaluation (Septiana et al., 2020).

This structure becomes very important in the EFL context since students heavily rely on written instructions while working independently on any assignment. As such, the teacher is supposed to make sure that linguistic clarity, manageable cognitive load, and proper scaffolding exist within the module. When properly designed, UKBM does indeed provide a structured learning path for students, whereby students can review material,

check understanding, and reinforce learning outside of direct teacher instruction.

2.1.3 Pedagogical Functions of UKBM

UKBM performs a number of pedagogical functions which correspond to the aims of the Independent Curriculum. First and foremost, UKBM promotes independence of learning by making students responsible for their own progress. Second, UKBM could provide differentiated learning-pacing in which learners learn at their own speed but still could be engaged in the core competencies. Third, UKBM gives structured opportunities for formative assessment, thereby monitoring learning progress by teachers and students (I Wayan Madiya, 2020).

For EFL learners, UKBM also provides repeated exposure to reading texts, vocabulary, and task-based practice-an important feature given the limited use of English outside the classroom. The UKBM thus serves as both a teaching resource and a tool for building learner independence, making it very relevant to the context of foreign language learning.

2.1.4 Designing UKBM in EFL

Designing UKBM is complex, for it demands that the teacher integrate scientific competencies with learning design principles and deeper understanding of student needs. When designing the UKBM, the teacher not

only creates the materials but also shapes instruction, ensures that activities are set to meet learning outcomes, while it is ensured that there is relevance in the learning materials to the contexts of the students. This challenge has been strongly reinforced by the finding of Mrema (2024) that many teachers do not select use proper materials, have a systematic activity procedure, and ensure that the assignments should also consider the level of the students' abilities. In addition, time considerations because of administrative matters and teaching commitments result in the process of will make designing UKBM even more challenging. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), such challenges will make life even more complex. The considerations include linguistic difficulty, vocabulary choice, text comprehensibility, and cultural appropriateness of the materials used. Similarly, as suggested by Tomlinson (2014) designing effective teaching materials involves not only considering the student's cognitive load but also needs to focus on a student's motivational levels and opportunities for meaningful learning. The design of UKBM for English subject matter, thus, needs a greater degree of educational skill due to the consideration needed for language learning in the content, activity design, and assessment. Furthermore, Harsono (2015) pointed out the importance of consistency in the design of teaching materials where there should be consistency in the objectives and experience for the learners.

2.2 Instructional Design Models

This section discusses several important concepts that form the basis for developing teaching materials, particularly those related to the steps in designing learning materials (Steps in Designing Learning Materials) and the principles of good teaching materials in the context of learning English as a foreign language (Principles of Good EFL Materials).

2.2.1 Steps in Designing Learning Materials

The design of learning materials typically starts with a needs analysis to assess student characteristics and curriculum requirements (Nazwa Maulani Dewi and Amariah, 2023). Once a needs analysis has been conducted, the next stage involves designing a framework for the learning material, which includes learning objectives, navigation, activities, and evaluation (Lukasiak et al., 2005). The design implementation stage encompasses the creation or selection of pertinent texts, activities, media, and instructions. The materials are subsequently applied in the classroom to evaluate usability and student responses. The final phase includes evaluation, formative and summative, that ascertains whether a learning material is useful for achieving a learning objective (Baht, 2019). Studies conducted prior related to this issue have revealed that a systematic design enhances quality and engagement levels associated with a learning material (Johar et al., 2023)

2.2.2 Principles of good EFL materials

Good Effective English learning materials will always incorporate the following principles to ensure effectiveness in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environments. According to Tomlinson (2014), those learning materials should always incorporate authenticity, engagement, and relevance to learners' experiences. They should also give learners opportunities to communicate language in various contexts. Other principles to keep in consideration may include clear instruction, equal emphasis on both receptive and productive skills learning, and sufficient scaffolding. Learner motivation and learning will always improve when learning materials with these principles are used (Harsono, 2015).

2.2.3 Instructional Challenges in Designing UKBM

Designing a Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM) under the *Kurikulum Merdeka* framework presents multifaceted instructional hurdles for EFL teachers, particularly in balancing structural regulations with student-centered language pedagogy. The primary challenge lies in aligning the instructional materials with the diverse language proficiency levels of students. EFL teachers often struggle to differentiate tasks within a single module so that it remains accessible for lower-proficiency students while still challenging advanced learners. This difficulty in calibrating linguistic input aligns with Tomlinson's (2012) material development theory, which

emphasizes that materials failing to bridge the students' actual language gap will hinder autonomous scaffolding. This issue is further compounded by rigid structural constraints and intense time management pressure. Adapting communicative and authentic language tasks into the systematic, text-heavy format required by UKBM demands extensive preparation, creating a dilemma for teachers who face heavy administrative workloads (Richards, 2015). A recent empirical study by Widodo and Savitri (2023) also highlights that the mechanical formatting of independent learning modules in Indonesia frequently overshadows the communicative quality of the tasks themselves due to limited design time. Lastly, embedding Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) indicators into English tasks remains a complex pedagogical hurdle. Teachers often find it difficult to operationalize psychological SRL phases such as forethought and self-reflection—into practical language assessment rubrics, leading to superficial self-reflection checklists (*Tabel Refleksi Diri*). As argued by Zimmerman and Schunk (2011), without deeply integrated pedagogical prompts, students tend to complete self-assessment tasks mechanically rather than engaging in genuine metacognitive evaluation of their language competence.

2.3 Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

This section discusses the concept of SRL, its theoretical framework, and its relation to the design of UKBM.

2.3.1 Definition of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) is about the capability of learners to monitor and manage their own learning processes through goal-setting, monitoring, and self-evaluation. Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) conceptualize SRL as a cyclical model that consists of three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. SRL stresses metacognitive awareness, motivation, and self-discipline, which altogether enhance learners' capability to engage meaningfully with learning tasks.

Thus, there is a fundamental framework established for SRL, encompassing not only the cognitive and metacognitive aspects but also the behavioral and emotional regulation aspects, enabling learners to regulate not only the learning environment, effort, and responses in learning but also the affective aspects (Buono et al., 2020). Learners displaying high levels of self-regulation are able to design conditions conducive to learning, such as structuring the learning environment, regulating distractions, and accessing help where needed. Such actions are crucial for sustaining engagement during task complexity or complexity in learning. Actually, study has demonstrated that the more the skills in SRL, the more the learners persist, adapt, and are autonomous in the learning context, taking charge of the learning process (Deng and Chen, 2025).

2.3.2 SRL and Its Relevance to UKBM

UKBM is a teaching tool designed to assist students with SRL by integrating explicit learning objectives, directed tasks, self-examination questions, and a reflective element. These elements correspond respectively to the phases of SRL-objectives relate to forethought, directed tasks support performance, and reflection promotes self-evaluation (Khoiriyah and Roberts, 2025). When designed appropriately, UKBM is a useful means of embedding SRL processes into daily learning practice.

However, without a full understanding of SRL principle, teachers will struggle to design UKBM that properly nurture learner autonomy. This heightens the need for critical analysis of challenges experienced in the design process.

2.4 Previous Studies

Various studies investigate the implementation and effectiveness of UKBM in a wide variety of subjects and educational levels. Reveal how UKBMs have been utilized to enhance learning practices. However, they also indicate significant gaps in information on challenges faced in the design stage, particularly in EFL learning.

The study by Nurmawati and Sulistyowati (2023) investigated the applicability of UKBM in improving students' literacy skills for explanatory texts using a single-subject pretest–posttest design. The findings indicated a moderate improvement in literacy skills, with a 36% increase, suggesting that UKBM is effective in enhancing students' comprehension levels. However, the study primarily focused on the

implementation and learning outcomes of UKBM, rather than the instructional challenges faced by teachers in preparing and structuring UKBM materials. It did not examine how UKBM was planned, organized, or designed by teachers, nor did it explore the extent to which Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) principles were considered in the preparation of UKBM. This limitation highlights the need for further studies that explore teachers' challenges in designing UKBM, particularly in EFL learning contexts.

Similarly, Bayani et al. (2024) also conducted a quasi-experimental study to integrate the teaching of UKBM through Project-Based Learning in chemistry classes. They found it to have significant positive effects on motivation and learning achievement. The authors recommended future studies apply similar techniques in EFL settings, indicating that UKBM's effectiveness may vary according to subject and language demands. Although the results were significant, this study had yet to examine the role of teachers in designing the UKBM, and the difficulties faced during the process of preparing such modules; accordingly, this paper leaves a gap on a methodological and pedagogical perspective.

A different line of inquiry involves the *development of UKBM products*. Astuti et al. (2023) developed a UKBM Flipbook under the ADDIE Model for English for Foreigners Learning, related to feasibility and practicality. The module was highly valued for its practicality and validity. Although it contributes to instructional product development, this still does not look into teachers' real experiences or struggles when designing UKBM under school conditions. The reliance on the

ADDIE model also implies collaborative and expert-driven development, which is quite different from UKBM creation by classroom teachers who work with limited time and resources.

Another relevant study is by Munaweroh (2020), who focused on the use of English UKBM for independent learning at Senior High School. Her mixed-method reported that teachers tended to apply UKBM classically and that students had generally positive perceptions. However, this study showed indirectly that teachers were not sufficiently trained to design interactive and well-scaffolded UKBM. Even though challenges were touched upon, the data underpinning the findings were based on usage and not the design process; therefore, important questions still remain unanswered.

Other UKBM-based developments also appear in non-EFL subjects. Azizah et al. (2019) created an M-UKBM mobile module with PBL for physics and found a high effect size of 3.14 with gain scores of 0.46. Madiya (2020) developed an Android-based e-UKBM for chemistry, reporting higher post-test scores in the experimental class (84.63) than the control group (72.78). Gita et al. (2021) combined PBL with UKBM and achieved high N-gain results (0.70). Susilo and Makhful (2020) tested correlations between UKBM and learning success in Islamic Education and found almost no significant correlation ($r = 0.025$), suggesting uneven implementation quality. Ruslika and Sertiawati (2020) found that UKBM explained 38% of variance in Japanese learning outcomes. Meanwhile, Septiana et

al. (2020) analyzed UKBM implementation in biology using SWOT and reported good motivation and adequate standards.

Based on a review of previous research, it is clear that although UKBM has been extensively researched, the focus of existing research is still limited to aspects of product effectiveness and the design of teaching materials based on the RandD model. The majority of studies focus on the development of digital or printed products, or on measuring learning outcomes after UKBM is implemented, thus contributing primarily to aspects of media design and improving student achievement. Furthermore, many studies utilize expert-based development, so the reported processes do not fully reflect the real-world situations experienced by teachers in regular schools when they must independently design UKBM.

Conversely, research on UKBM in the context of English language learning is relatively limited, and most only discuss perceptions, product feasibility, or learning effectiveness. These studies have not detailed how English teachers face challenges in the UKBM design process, including how they select materials, adjust language levels, structure instructions, or integrate principles of self-regulated learning. Furthermore, studies on UKBM in Islamic schools and at the MTs (Islamic Junior High School) level are still very limited, resulting in the socio-religious context in which UKBM is designed receiving little academic attention.

Considering these findings, it can be concluded that there are significant research gaps. First, previous research has focused more on the final outcome, specifically the UKBM product or improved learning outcomes, rather than on the

process teachers undergo, including the difficulties, pedagogical considerations, and strategies used in designing UKBM. Second, most research has been conducted through an RandD approach, thus not reflecting real life encountered by the teachers who have to design UKBM amidst time constraints, administrative burdens, and curriculum demands. Third, the EFL context and its relationship with SRL principles from the teacher's perspective have not been investigated in depth, even though these two aspects are significant in determining the quality of UKBM materials designed.

Study on the experience of teachers in designing UKBM at an Islamic Junior High School in Batu will be beneficial for filling these gaps of methodology and context. This study aims at establishing a more holistic understanding of challenges, pedagogical decisions, and strategies that teachers use in the process of UKBM design within the framework of Independent Learning, particularly in English within an Islamic educational environment.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides the methodological framework that guide the process of research. The framework covers research design, research setting, participants, techniques for data collection, research instruments, procedures for data analysis, credibility of research, ethical considerations, and research procedures.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive design to allow researcher to obtain detailed descriptions of real-life experiences of teachers within the natural context of school settings. A qualitative descriptive design befitted this study as it aimed to describe phenomena as they occurred, without interference with variables or testing hypotheses (Kim et al., 2017). Because this study aimed to identify the actual challenges faced by teachers in the UKBM design process, it allowed the researcher to capture rich and detailed narratives directly from participants through a qualitative descriptive design.

This design helped concentrate the study on “what” types of challenges existed, “how” those challenges emerged, and “why” those challenges occurred. Instead of specifying the findings for a larger population, this research aimed to provide a concrete understanding that will relate to issues of designing instructional materials, professional needs in relation to that of teaching, as well as design in EFL in Indonesian classrooms (Sugiyono, 2021). Furthermore, this design was

employed to explore not only the barriers encountered by teachers but also the practical strategies and solutions they implemented to overcome those challenges. By documenting these responses, the study sought to provide a holistic description of the teachers' problem-solving process in ensuring the UKBM modules remain functional and aligned with the curriculum goals.

3.2 Research Setting and Participant

This study was conducted in one Islamic Junior High School in Batu, East Java. This school implemented Merdeka Curriculum using independent designs of UKBM for every unit of learning. The choice of this setting for this research has been deliberate due to various reasons, including that this school:

1. Will provide access to teachers who are actively involved in UKBM design,
2. Will provide real-life instances of UKBM being employed in a classroom setting, and
3. Will Offers a distinct setting where religious values, curriculum requirements, and institutional needs intersect.

With a real-school setting choice, this study enabled to facilitate the investigator in understanding a true representation of challenges which teachers experience in integrating curriculum needs, school requirements, teaching duties, as well as the difficulty of developing independent learning modules for EFL students.

The respondents consisted of English teachers who were directly involved in designing UKBM. Purposive sampling was used in this study, since not all teachers

are involved in designing UKBM, and this study required respondents who have related experience and knowledge (Taylor and Owen, 2021).

The inclusion criteria included:

1. Teachers who were actively teaching English in the school.
2. Teachers with experience in designing UKBM.
3. Teachers who teach using the Merdeka Curriculum structure.

The number of participants consisted of four teachers, taking into consideration that in qualitative research, the aim is not to cover as many subjects as possible but rather to gather as much information as possible about.

3.3 Research Instrument

In a qualitative research, the major instrument used for data gathering and interpretation is the researcher. In this study, the researcher conducted interviews and document analysis to gather relevant data. To facilitate data gathering, the researcher used two research instruments, which are interview guides and document analysis guides.

3.3.1 Interview Questions

Interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into teachers' perceptions, experiences, and challenges in designing UKBM. According to Chand (2025) interviews help in gaining information that would otherwise not

be available through observation and documents, for example, individual difficulties, reasoning, and feelings.

This study employed a semi-structured interview technique, which combined structured questions as well as further exploratory questions. This semi-structured format of an interview allowed the researcher concentrate on key issues related to this research, as well as other issues that come up naturally.

The interview questions explored:

1. Teachers' understanding of UKBM,
2. The steps they follow in designing it,
3. The challenges they experience (linguistic, conceptual, technical, or time-related),
4. Available support and resources,
5. Teachers' strategies in overcoming those challenges.

Each interview lasted approximately 25 to 40 minutes and was recorded with consent for authenticity.

3.3.2 Documentation

Documentation referred to the process of collecting written or visual materials relevant to the research topic. According to a definition by Doheny-Farina and Doheny-Farina (1988) documentation enhanced qualitative research findings since it involves tangible evidence that either supports or verifies data gathered from interviews.

In this study documentation was used as a means of gathering data that has a relation to teachers' design of UKBM. This data consisted of UKBM drafts, finished UKBM modules, improved ones, evaluation sheets, school rules, as well as curriculum documents.

The goal of documentation analysis was to uncover how teachers are able to design their UKBM, such as the use of instruction clarity, instruction ordering for related learning, alignment of instructions with learning outcomes, and incorporation of independent elements. Documentation also supported the validation of interview findings by comparing teachers' explanations with actual written products.

3.4 Data Collection

This section described how data was gathered in this research using two major techniques, which are interviews and documentations. This explanation covered reasons for using both techniques, along with a general overview of how these techniques were implemented in a manner that would help in satisfying this research topic.

3.4.1 Interview

To gather data, semi-structured interviews were used. This helped in understanding issues faced by teachers in designing UKBM. Interviews would be scheduled for a specific time, and a quiet setting would be chosen.

During the interview, the teachers share their experiences, challenges, and perceptions. Doing this interview also help in understanding reasons for these challenges being experienced in the institutions and how the teachers are coping with these challenges. Recording, transcribing, and analyzing all interviews also form part of data gathering. This interview were conducted in Indonesian to help in proper expression of thoughts by teachers. This is important since it will help teachers express themselves naturally, particularly when it comes to issues of technology and teaching challenges which, in most cases, are difficult to put in words when using English. Each interview session were audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accuracy, and then transcribed verbatim for analysis. This data obtained from interviews can help validate findings and provide a broader insight into the realities and decisions of the teachers concerning the design of UKBM in the Independent Curriculum.

3.4.2 Documentation

Documentation was collected alongside with the interviews. Teachers provided to their drafts, revisions, templates, and other related files of the UKBM that would be used in the course of design. This is provided insights to the researchers about how the UKBM was designed and adjusted, if any issues were encountered as described in the interviews, and if those issues occurred in the document as well.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data obtained from this research were analyzed using a qualitative data analysis model which was established by Puspita and Sugiyono (2021), which has three-related stages, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This began from the start of data gathering until completion of this research report.

3.5.1 Data Reduction

Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and focusing the raw data obtained from interview and documentation. At this point, researchers transcribed interview recordings, documented their field notes, and classify documents gathered from teachers. Irrelevant data concerning issues experienced by teachers in designing UKBM would be eliminated. This reduced data then be coded in a manner that groups it into emerging issues such as aligning UKBM with curriculum guidelines, time constraints, technological issues, lack of resources, as well as issues in working together.

3.5.2 Data Display

After data reduction, the next step is data presentation. Data presentation is where information is put in a descriptive form for ease of understanding and interpretation. Again, it is at this point that the researchers present the coded data in a thematic form and a matrix that represents the patterns arising from the experiences of teachers. This step help researchers

identify relationships between categories and compare findings from various data sources, such as interviews and documentation.

3.5.3 Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The final stage is drawing conclusions. This stage involves the interpretation of data meanings as well as developing a conclusion that answers the research questions. These conclusions would be developed on the basis of patterns that were obtained in the data analysis stage. In order to check for validity, these conclusions would then be checked for consistencies with the original data and, in certain cases, interpretations would also be checked.

3.6 Data Validity

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, this study apply triangulation techniques as recommended by (Puspita and Sugiyono, 2021). In qualitative research, triangulation involves validating data to make it consistent and trustworthy by analyzing data gathered from different methods in a way that ensures no validations are derived from a solo source. Although this research involves interviews and document analysis, triangulation remains valuable, as it can help validate data from interviews with data from school documents.

Thus, through this method, data from interviews can be matched with other important documents such as lesson plans, drafts of UKBM or other pertinent school documents in relation to verifying the experiences that teachers went through in the design phases. If similar concerns, topics, and definitions are identified in a

similar manner in both sources, then the findings are deemed valid and trustworthy. Thus, personal misinterpretation on the part of the investigator is avoided, as well as the validity of the observations.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter elaborate the findings and discussion related to the research. The findings contain result of data analysis collected through interview and documentation about the challenges and strategies in designing UKBM. While, the

discussion explained the further explanation related to the finding of the research.

4.1 Research Findings

After conducting interviews with four teachers at an Islamic Junior high school in Batu, researcher obtained in-depth data regarding the challenges and strategies in designing UKBM. This data was analyzed to answer the research questions. To maintain confidentiality, the identities of the school and teachers are disguised in this report. The following is a detailed profile of the participants involved in this study:

Table 1. Participants' Profile

No	Participant	Gender	UKBM Designed For Grade
1	Participant 1	Female	Grade 7
2	Participant 2	Female	Grade 7
3	Participant 3	Male	Grade 8
4	Participant 4	Female	Grade 9

4.1.1 Instructional Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers

Based on the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, the instructional challenges are categorized into three major areas:

1. Time Constraints and Administrative Workload

The most dominant and consistent challenge raised by the participants was time constraints caused by teachers' heavy workloads. In practice, teachers not only

play the role of designing instructional materials, but also as classroom instructors, learning administrators, and implementers of various other school activities. The complexity of these roles directly impacts the limited time allocated to optimally designing UKBM.

This was clearly expressed by Participant 3:

"The fundamental issue rests on time limitations. Because teachers are simultaneously burdened with multiple administrative and institutional duties, focusing single-mindedly on material design becomes highly problematic."

This statement indicates that the UKBM design process cannot be carried out in a focused manner because it must be carried out concurrently with various other responsibilities. This situation creates an imbalance between teachers' professional demands and their available time. The underlying cause of this challenge is the accumulation of multiple professional responsibilities assigned to teachers. Besides preparing and designing UKBM, teachers are expected to conduct classroom instruction, complete administrative documentation, participate in institutional meetings, and contribute to various school programs. As a result, the time available for instructional material development becomes increasingly limited. These competing responsibilities make it difficult for teachers to devote sufficient attention to each stage of the UKBM design process. Furthermore, this time constraint impacts the quality of the learning design process. Ideally, UKBM design involves systematic stages such as needs analysis, formulation of learning objectives, activity development, and evaluation. However, under time constraints,

some of these stages tend to be simplified or even omitted. Furthermore, time pressure is exacerbated by institutional demands, particularly as the new school year approaches, when the UKBM must be ready for use. The effect of this situation is reflected in the overall quality of UKBM development. Limited time reduces opportunities for teachers to conduct thorough planning, revise instructional activities, and contextualize learning materials according to students' needs. Consequently, teachers often prioritize completing the module within the required deadline rather than engaging in a more comprehensive design process. This condition may also limit creativity and innovation in developing learning activities and instructional materials. This creates a dilemma for teachers: whether to complete the UKBM quickly or maintain its quality.

As expressed by Participant 4:

"While our objective is to produce optimal, high-quality modules, the development process is inherently time-consuming. Accelerating the design phase to meet institutional deadlines inevitably risks compromising the structural quality of the learning materials."

This quote reflects the internal conflict teachers experience between professional idealism and work realities. Teachers desire to produce quality teaching materials, but existing conditions force them to make compromises. Furthermore, time constraints also impact creativity and innovation. Under time pressure, teachers tend to use practical approaches such as adapting existing materials rather than developing new, more contextual materials. As a

consequence, the instructional potential of UKBM may not be fully optimized. Instead of functioning as a carefully designed self-directed learning resource, the module may become more focused on meeting institutional requirements within a limited timeframe. This has the potential to reduce the UKBM's optimal function as a self-directed learning medium. Therefore, it can be concluded that time constraints are not simply a technical issue, but rather a strategic factor that influences the overall quality of UKBM design.

2. Linguistic Appropriateness and Instructional Clarity

The second challenge that emerged related to the use of language and clarity of instructions in UKBM. As teaching materials designed to support independent learning, UKBM is required to be not only informative but also communicative, engaging, and easy to understand for students of all ability levels. Participants emphasized that UKBM must have a more varied presentation than conventional textbooks to increase student engagement. This is reflected in the Participant 2 statement:

"To foster student engagement and prevent monotony, an UKBM module must present a more varied, interactive, and stimulating layout than standard commercial textbooks."

This statement indicates that teachers pay attention not only to the content of the material, but also to how the material is presented to avoid boredom and make it more accessible to students. The cause of this challenge lies in the nature of UKBM as a self-directed learning resource. Unlike conventional classroom instruction,

UKBM requires students to learn and complete activities independently, often without immediate assistance from the teacher. Therefore, teachers must ensure that both the language and instructional guidance are sufficiently clear, engaging, and appropriate for students with varying levels of English proficiency. This requirement increases the complexity of the design process because teachers must simultaneously consider content accuracy, language simplicity, and student accessibility.

However, in practice, simplifying language is not easy. Teachers need to transform complex concepts into systematic and easy-to-follow instructions, especially since in independent learning, students do not always receive direct explanations from the teacher. This was expressed by Participant 3:

"Formulating pedagogical pathways that make complex grammatical concepts readily understandable to autonomous students is a highly challenging task."

This quote demonstrates that the process of simplifying language is not only seen as instructional challenge but also a pedagogical challenge that requires specialized skills. Teachers must be able to act as language mediators, bridging the gap between academic content and students' comprehension. The effect of this challenge is directly reflected in students' learning experiences. When explanations and instructions are not sufficiently clear, students may misinterpret tasks, misunderstand learning objectives, or encounter difficulties completing activities independently. Such confusion can reduce students' engagement and hinder the

effectiveness of UKBM as a tool for autonomous learning. Consequently, teachers must spend additional effort reviewing, simplifying, and restructuring instructional content to ensure that students can navigate learning activities successfully.

Furthermore, clarity of instructions also relates to how learning activities are structured in stages. If instructions are unclear, students can potentially become confused, ultimately hindering the effectiveness of independent learning. Therefore, appropriate language and clarity of instructions are crucial aspects in designing UKBM because they directly impact students' ability to understand and carry out learning activities independently.

3. Cognitive Level Dilemma and Selecting Material

The next challenge relates to the difficulty in determining the appropriate cognitive level in learning activities. Teachers face a dilemma between meeting the demands of developing Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and adapting to the diverse abilities of students.

This was expressed by Participant 3:

"We thought about whether this question needs to be HOTS or can be understood by all students... so it has to be balanced."

This statement demonstrates that teachers are in a complex position, where they must balance the demands of the curriculum with the real-world conditions in the classroom. The cause of this challenge is the discrepancy between curriculum expectations and students' actual learning readiness. While the curriculum encourages the integration of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) into learning

activities, students in the same classroom often possess different levels of English proficiency and cognitive ability. Consequently, teachers must continuously consider whether learning tasks are sufficiently challenging to promote critical thinking while remaining accessible to all learners.

In a heterogeneous classroom context, the full implementation of HOTS-based questions can be a barrier for students with lower abilities. Conversely, if the material is oversimplified, the goal of developing higher-order thinking skills is suboptimal. Furthermore, this challenge is also closely related to the process of selecting the material. Teachers must be able to select and simplify material from a wide range of sources into concise yet meaningful content. This challenge is further intensified by the abundance of available learning resources. Teachers are often required to review extensive materials from textbooks, curriculum documents, and supplementary sources before deciding which content is most relevant to students' learning needs and curriculum objectives.

As expressed by Participant 4:

“The material in the book is very extensive, so we have to choose what is really important for the students.”

This demonstrates that teachers act as curators of materials, not only utilizing existing resources but also selecting and adapting them to suit learning needs. This process demands high analytical skills, as teachers must ensure that the selected materials still cover core concepts without overloading students with information. The effect of this challenge is the emergence of a continuous pedagogical dilemma

during the UKBM design process. Teachers must make careful decisions regarding the depth, complexity, and scope of learning activities. If the selected materials and tasks are too difficult, students may struggle to understand the content and lose confidence in completing learning activities independently. On the other hand, if the materials are overly simplified, opportunities to develop critical thinking skills and achieve curriculum expectations may be reduced. Thus, the dilemma of cognitive level and materials selection are interrelated challenges, requiring teachers to continually adjust the balance between material depth, content breadth, and student abilities.

4.1.1 Strategies and Solutions to Overcome the Challenges

In facing the challenges, teachers developed a number of adaptive strategies that were contextual and collaborative:

1. Collaborative Design and Peer Review

To alleviate time constraints and administrative burdens, the teachers shifted from individual material development to a structured collaborative framework. Distributing design responsibilities across the subject-matter teacher community *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP) significantly optimized their workflow. Participant 4 explained this collaborative division of labor:

"We utilize a shared-responsibility model for material design. Responsibilities are distributed evenly across our teaching team, ensuring that the development workload does not fall on a single individual."

This collaborative approach functions as an informal peer-review mechanism. Teachers evaluate each other's drafted modules to maintain quality control, ensure curriculum alignment, and refine instructional steps before classroom deployment. Participant 3 illustrated this iterative feedback process:

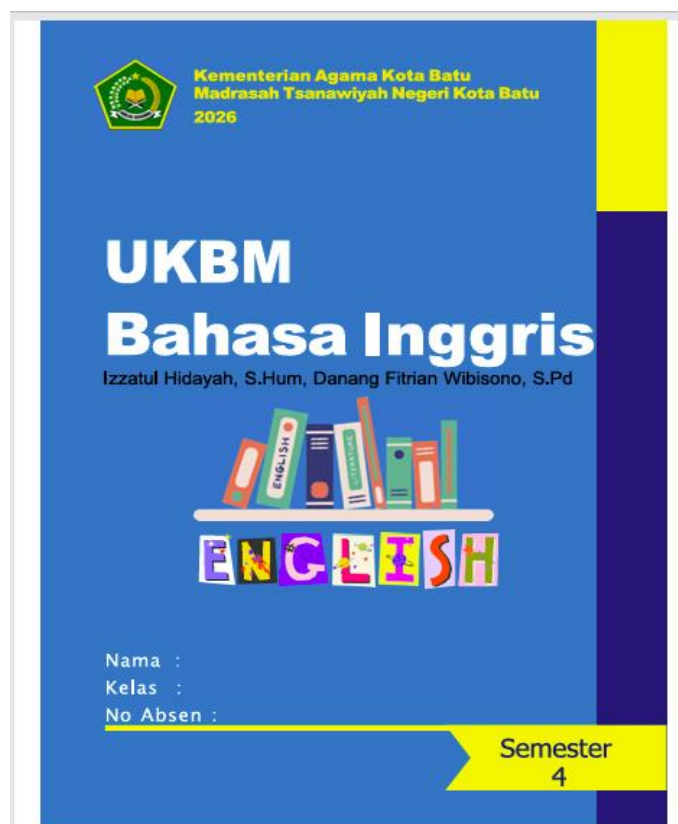
"When I complete a draft, my colleagues review it to identify missing components or suggest structural improvements. We resolve these instructional gaps through regular collaborative discussions."

Participant 3 further noted:

"This collaborative environment is highly beneficial because it allows us to exchange professional insights and collectively solve complex design issues."

By pooling pedagogical expertise, teachers reduce both individual workload and cognitive fatigue, transforming UKBM development into a sustainable, quality-driven professional practice. To substantiate these interview accounts, a documentation analysis was conducted on the final UKBM modules for Grades 8.

Picture 1. Collaborative Design and Peer Review



The structural cover pages and introductory metadata of these completed modules explicitly list multiple EFL teachers as co-authors and instructional designers for identical learning units. This physical evidence confirms that the teachers practically manage individual administrative and time burdens through a shared-workload framework.

2. Simplifying Language and Structuring Instructions

To address challenges related to linguistic appropriateness and instructional clarity, teachers adopted strategies focused on simplifying language, structuring

instructions, and using multimodal explanation.

Participant 3 acknowledged the difficulty of ensuring clarity:

"We must employ creative instructional strategies to simplify complex linguistic items, ensuring the core message remains highly accessible to independent learners."

This suggests that transforming instructional content into accessible language requires deliberate pedagogical effort, especially in the context of self-directed learning where students rely heavily on written instructions. To overcome this, teachers applied a step-by-step structuring strategy, organizing tasks from simple to more complex:

"Our instructional design initiates with fundamental, easily digestible tasks before gradually transitioning students toward highly complex, integrated language activities." (Participant 2)

This structured progression not only supports cognitive development but also enhances instructional clarity, as students can follow learning sequences more easily.

"The UKBM serves as an instructional anchor; however, we further elaborate and expand upon these concepts through active classroom interactions." (Participant 1)

This indicates that instructional clarity is achieved through a combination of written and oral explanation, ensuring that students fully understand the learning tasks. Overall, these strategies demonstrate that teachers act as language mediators,

transforming complex academic content into accessible and comprehensible forms for students. This is highly visible in the structural layout of the analyzed Grade 7 UKBM modules.

Picture 2.

BIG/D/7.2/4



A. Match the picture with the correct activities about online class.







Raise hand

Pay attention

Take note

Turn on the camera

Mute the microphone

Share screen







B. Answer the following questions based on the text above.

Ibu Ayu's Online Class

Ibu Ayu teaches English every Tuesday and Thursday. During the pandemic, Ibu Ayu taught English online. She used a video conferencing application. Ibu Ayu met and talked with her students virtually. She also explained the materials and has a discussion with her students. The students felt very happy and excited to learn English online. Sometimes the students spoke at the same time. In a video conferencing application, speaking at the same time makes the class noisy. Ibu Ayu thought about making rules for online learning.



9 | UKBM (Bahasa Inggris) Kelas 7-MTsN KOTA BATU

Dipindai dengan CamScanner

As demonstrated in picture 2, the documentation reveals a systematic, bottom-up learning progression within the instructional units. The module deliberately initiates the learning cycle with a low-stakes lexical task where students are required to match visual illustrations with their corresponding phrases concerning online classroom dynamics ("*Match picture with correct activities about online class*").

This introductory layout acts as a visual-lexical priming tool, ensuring that independent learners can grasp foundational contextual vocabulary before dealing with complex language production.

Picture 3.

B. Answer the following questions based on the text above.

Ibu Ayu's Online Class

Ibu Ayu teaches English every Tuesday and Thursday. During the pandemic, Ibu Ayu taught English online. She used a video conferencing application. Ibu Ayu met and talked with her students virtually. She also explained the materials and has a discussion with her students. The students felt very happy and excited to learn English online. Sometimes the students spoke at the same time. In a video conferencing application, speaking at the same time makes the class noisy. Ibu Ayu thought about making rules for online learning.

9 | UKBM (Bahasa Inggris) Kelas 7-MTsN KOTA BATU

BIG/D/7.2/4

1. Why does *Ibu Ayu* teach English online?

2. How many times does *Ibu Ayu* teach English in a week?

3. What type of application does *Ibu Ayu* use in teaching online?

4. What activities does *Ibu Ayu* do in online learning?

5. Do you think *Ibu Ayu* needs to make online learning rules? Explain.

CS Dipindai dengan CamScanner

Following this foundational scaffolding, picture 3 confirms a clear upward transition toward a highly complex language application within the same instructional framework. In this advanced stage, the structural layout shifts from

simple identification to an extensive reading comprehension task. Students must independently navigate an informative text and answer contextual analysis questions. This progressive layout strongly validates the participants' claims; teachers strategically structure the UKBM layout by moving from foundational vocabulary matching to independent reading enrichment, ensuring that the instructional clarity is systematically maintained as the cognitive demands increase.

3. Differentiated Instruction

To resolve the dilemma of balancing cognitive demands and diverse student abilities, teachers implemented a combined strategy of differentiated instruction. In addition, teachers provided adaptive instructional support for students with different abilities:

"For high-achieving students who master the core UKBM tasks rapidly, we immediately provide advanced enrichment activities to further stimulate their cognitive development." (Participant 2)

To prevent information overload and maintain student focus, teachers also applied a concise curation strategy to the textual content.

Furthermore, teachers addressed learner diversity through multimodal facilitation:

"We actively accommodate diverse learning modalities by embedding auditory, visual, and audio-visual resources directly into the UKBM architecture." (Participant 3)

This reflects an inclusive approach where students with different learning styles can access the same material effectively

Participant 1 described this design principle:

"Our focus is on creating instructional content that is brief, highly dense, and clear, avoiding unnecessary textual filler."

Positioning the UKBM as a focused tool rather than an exhaustive encyclopedia allows teachers to balance curriculum standards, content depth, and student diversity.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that EFL teachers face a complex web of instructional challenges in designing UKBM modules: time limitations, linguistic alignment, and cognitive balancing. While these findings validate established instructional design frameworks, they reveal distinct contextual and adaptive dynamics unique to an EFL environment within an Islamic Junior high school setting. Regarding time constraints and administrative workloads, the empirical data strongly aligns with Nazwa and Amariah (2023), Lukasiak et al. (2005), and Baht (2019), who assert that effective instructional material development demands systematic, multi-staged processes including needs analysis, structured drafting, implementation, and continuous evaluation. This systematic process is also proven by Johar et al. (2023) to significantly enhance the overall quality and engagement levels of instructional tools. However, as noted by Mrema (2024), real-world educational settings often subvert these ideal models due to pervasive administrative burdens. This study confirms that under heavy workloads,

teachers frequently shorten design phases, relying on fast adaptations of existing materials. This intense time management pressure and the dilemma of adapting communicative tasks into a rigid format often force teachers to prioritize structural compliance over pedagogical quality.

As emphasized by Richards (2015), heavy administrative workloads significantly impede a teacher's capacity to engage in thorough instructional design. Furthermore, this situation reflects the concerns raised by Widodo and Savitri (2023), who argue that the mechanical formatting of independent learning modules in Indonesia frequently overshadows the communicative quality of the tasks themselves due to severely limited design time. Crucially, while previous research typically frames these institutional limitations solely as static, negative obstacles to learning (e.g., Munaweroh, 2020), this study offers a significant theoretical extension. The findings reveal that these constraints actively drive pedagogical resilience, pushing teachers to implement highly adaptive strategies like shared-workload collaboration and peer-review mechanisms to maintain quality.

In terms of linguistic appropriateness and instructional clarity, the findings match the foundational materials development principles of Tomlinson (2014), who argues that successful foreign language materials must be communicative, relevant, clear, and structured to manage the student's cognitive load. This difficulty in calibrating linguistic input tightly intersects with Tomlinson's (2012) broader material development theory, which posits that if instructional materials fail to effectively bridge the students' actual language proficiency gap, the capacity for

autonomous scaffolding is significantly hindered. EFL teachers often struggle to differentiate tasks within a single module so that it remains accessible for lower-proficiency students while still challenging advanced learners. Within an autonomous framework, explicit written instruction is vital because students interact with the text independently without direct teacher presence (Setiyani, 2022). This study deepens this principle by demonstrating that language simplification is not a mechanical edit, but a sophisticated instructional act. Teachers must serve as instructional mediators, balancing cognitive load by restructuring tasks from simple to complex. This proves that translating the ideal of "clear instruction" into functional EFL modules requires advanced pedagogical skills.

Concerning the cognitive dilemma and material selection, the findings support Harsono (2015) regarding the necessity of maintaining strict consistency between learning objectives and the learners' actual experiences. The highly curated nature of the observed UKBM modules corresponds with Septiana et al. (2020), who state that autonomous learning modules must contain streamlined, non-redundant data. Unlike rigid, linear instructional design models (such as the traditional ADDIE framework mentioned by Septiana et al., 2020), this study shows that material curation is highly dynamic, non-linear, and constantly adjusted based on classroom realities, positioning the teacher as an active "content curator."

When viewed through the lens of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory, these challenges directly affect the quality of autonomous student support.

Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) state that successful SRL depends on explicit structural organization, transparent goals, and built-in opportunities for self-reflection. Buono et al. (2020) and Deng and Chen (2025) further add that higher SRL capacities enable students to regulate their learning environment and persist through task complexities. However, embedding these SRL indicators into practical English tasks remains a complex pedagogical hurdle, as teachers often find it difficult to operationalize psychological SRL phases into functional language assessment rubrics. This frequently leads to superficial self-reflection checklists (*Tabel Refleksi Diri*). As argued by Zimmerman and Schunk (2011), without deeply integrated pedagogical prompts, students tend to complete self-assessment tasks mechanically rather than engaging in genuine metacognitive evaluation of their language competence. As noted by Khoiriyah and Roberts (2025), the architecture of UKBM is theoretically built to facilitate these SRL phases (objectives for forethought, tasks for performance, and prompts for reflection).

However, this study demonstrates that time limits, linguistic ambiguity, and misaligned cognitive levels can disrupt its execution in the field. Thus, the successful operationalization of SRL via UKBM is entirely dependent on the teacher's capacity to overcome these design constraints.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusions derived from the research findings and discussion regarding the instructional challenges and coping strategies of EFL teachers in designing *Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri* (UKBM). Additionally, it offers pedagogical and institutional suggestions for EFL teachers, school administrators, and future researchers.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, discussion, and empirical triangulation through interviews and documentation, this study draws two primary conclusions mapped directly to the research questions. In terms of instructional challenges, EFL teachers encounter three interconnected hurdles during the UKBM design phase. First, severe time constraints and heavy administrative workloads restrict teachers from completing ideal, multi-staged instructional design processes, forcing them to expedite drafting to meet institutional deadlines. Second, achieving linguistic appropriateness and instructional clarity presents a major pedagogical hurdle, as teachers must translate complex foreign language items into highly explicit, self-explanatory written instructions suitable for autonomous learning. Third, a cognitive level dilemma persists as teachers struggle to integrate mandatory Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) while accommodating the heterogeneous English

proficiencies of their students, which is further compounded by the logistical difficulties of culling extensive textbook content into streamlined modules.

To mitigate these challenges, teachers actively employ flexible and collaborative solutions as their adaptive strategies and coping mechanisms. To navigate time limitations, teachers implement a collaborative shared-workload design within their subject-matter community, utilizing peer-review mechanisms to maintain quality control. Furthermore, to ensure instructional clarity, they utilize pedagogical scaffolding by structuring written tasks progressively from simple mechanical drills to advanced independent production, while also integrating multimodal features such as audio-visual QR codes. Finally, to resolve cognitive disparities, teachers separate standardized design from adaptive execution; they curate and condense textual content during the initial design phase and provide differentiated support and enrichment during physical classroom interactions.

In summary, this study concludes that UKBM design is not a rigid, linear product development framework. Instead, it is a dynamic, non-linear pedagogical process wherein teachers must continuously exercise resilience and professional agency to balance curriculum standards, language-specific demands, and institutional realities.

5.2 Suggestion

Reflecting on the core conclusions of this study, several strategic suggestions are proposed:

1. For EFL Teachers: Teachers should continue to optimize the collaborative network within the subject-matter teacher community (*Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran* or MGMP) to share materials and decrease individual workloads. Furthermore, teachers should proactively integrate more digitized, multimodal resources (such as interactive links or multimedia materials) into the UKBM layout to maintain student engagement during self-regulated learning cycles.
2. For School Administrators and Policy Makers: School institutions, particularly within the Islamic education sector, need to re-evaluate the administrative burden distributed to classroom instructors. Providing designated, uninterrupted planning periods before the new academic year can help teachers focus single-mindedly on quality instructional material design. Additionally, targeted professional training focusing on autonomous scaffolding and digital module curation should be provided regularly.
3. For Future Researchers: Since this study adopted a qualitative case study design focusing on the teachers' development process, future researchers are encouraged to conduct longitudinal or quantitative studies to measure the direct correlation between these specific teacher strategies and actual student language outcomes. Exploring the socio-religious contextual influences on material design within Islamic school environments also remains a promising area for further academic inquiry.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Guide (*Pedoman Wawancara*)

The following interview questions are designed to explore Instructional Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Designing Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri and the strategies used to overcome these challenges.

(Pertanyaan-pertanyaan wawancara berikut disusun untuk menggali Tantangan Pembelajaran yang Dihadapi Guru EFL dalam Merancang Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri serta strategi yang digunakan untuk mengatasinya.)

Date (*Tanggal*) :

Location (*Lokasi*) :

Respondent's Information (*Informasi Responden*)

Name (*Nama*) :

Experience in Designing UKBM (*Pengalaman Merancang UKBM*):

No	Interview Question
1	What is your understanding of the purpose and function of UKBM in the Merdeka Curriculum? (<i>Apa pemahaman Anda tentang tujuan dan fungsi UKBM dalam kurikulum Merdeka?</i>)
2	Do school policies or curriculum changes pose challenges in designing UKBM? (<i>Apakah kebijakan sekolah atau perubahan kurikulum menimbulkan tantangan dalam merancang UKBM?</i>)

3	Do you face difficulties selecting or adapting English materials suitable for your students' proficiency level? <i>(Apakah Anda mengalami kesulitan dalam memilih atau menyesuaikan materi bahasa Inggris yang sesuai dengan tingkat kemampuan siswa anda?)</i>
4	What challenges do you face when designing tasks, activities, and assessments within UKBM? <i>(Tantangan apa saja yang Anda hadapi saat merancang tugas, aktivitas, dan penilaian dalam kerangka UKBM?)</i>
5	Do students' motivation or readiness for independent learning affect your UKBM design? If so, how? <i>(Apakah motivasi atau kesiapan siswa untuk belajar mandiri memengaruhi desain UKBM Anda? Jika ya, bagaimana?)</i>
6	How challenging is it to write clear instructions so students can work independently? <i>(Seberapa menantangkah menulis instruksi yang jelas agar siswa dapat bekerja secara mandiri?)</i>
7	Do you find it difficult to integrate elements of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) or independent learning into UKBM? <i>(Apakah Anda merasa kesulitan mengintegrasikan unsur-unsur Pembelajaran Mandiri (Self-Regulated Learning/SRL) atau pembelajaran independen ke dalam UKBM?)</i>
8	Do you experience time constraints during the UKBM design process? How does it affect your work? <i>(Apakah Anda mengalami kendala waktu selama proses desain UKBM? Bagaimana hal itu memengaruhi pekerjaan Anda?)</i>

9	Have you encountered technical difficulties, such as formatting or digital editing, when creating UKBM? (<i>Apakah Anda pernah mengalami kesulitan teknis, seperti pemformatan atau pengeditan digital, saat membuat UKBM?</i>)
10	How adequate are the references, templates, or guidelines provided by the school in supporting your UKBM design process? (<i>Seberapa memadai referensi, templat, atau panduan yang disediakan oleh sekolah dalam mendukung proses desain UKBM Anda?</i>)
11	How do you overcome challenges in designing UKBM? (<i>Bagaimana Anda mengatasi tantangan dalam mendesain UKBM?</i>)
12	What specific strategies do you use to solve problems during the UKBM design process? (<i>Strategi spesifik apa yang Anda gunakan untuk memecahkan masalah selama proses desain UKBM?</i>)
13	Do you collaborate with other teachers when designing UKBM? How does this collaboration help? (<i>Apakah Anda berkolaborasi dengan guru lain saat mendesain UKBM? Bagaimana kolaborasi ini membantu?</i>)
14	What resources or external support (training, workshops, references) help you in designing UKBM? (<i>Sumber daya atau dukungan eksternal apa (pelatihan, lokakarya, referensi) yang membantu Anda dalam mendesain UKBM?</i>)

15	How do you revise your UKBM when you identify areas needing improvement? <i>(Bagaimana Anda merevisi UKBM Anda ketika Anda mengidentifikasi area yang perlu diperbaiki?)</i>
16	In your opinion, what improvements are needed to help teachers create higher-quality UKBM in the future? <i>(Menurut Anda, perbaikan apa saja yang dibutuhkan untuk membantu guru menciptakan UKBM (Universal Basic Education) yang berkualitas lebih tinggi di masa mendatang?)</i>
17	Which digital tools or platforms do you use to support UKBM design? How effective are they? <i>(Alat atau platform digital apa yang Anda gunakan untuk mendukung desain UKBM? Seberapa efektifkah alat atau platform tersebut?)</i>

Appendix 2. Documentation Guide (*Pedoman Dokumentasi*)

This documentation guide is used to collect documents related to the design process of UKBM by English teachers.

(Pedoman dokumentasi ini digunakan untuk mengumpulkan dokumen yang berkaitan dengan proses perancangan UKBM oleh guru Bahasa Inggris.)

Types of Documents Collected (*Jenis Dokumen yang Dikumpulkan*)

1. UKBM Draft (*Draft UKBM*)
2. UKBM Revision (*UKBM hasil revisi*)
3. Final UKBM Module (*UKBM versi final*)

4. School Template or Guidelines (*Template atau panduan sekolah*)
5. ATP, CP, and learning objectives used (*ATP, CP dan tujuan pembelajaran yang digunakan*)
6. Revision notes or feedback (*Catatan revisi atau masukan*)

Documentation Analysis Focus (*Fokus Analisis Dokumentasi*)

1. UKBM Structure (*Struktur UKBM*)
2. Clarity of Instructions (*Kejelasan instruksi*)
3. Alignment with Curriculum (*Kesesuaian dengan kurikulum*)
4. Integration of Independent Learning / SRL (*Integrasi kemandirian belajar / SRL*)
5. Language Appropriateness (*Kesesuaian bahasa untuk level siswa*)
6. Technical Format and Layout (*Format teknis dan tata letak*)

Appendix 3. Survey Permit



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG
FAKULTAS ILMU TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
Jalan Gajayana 50, Telepon (0341) 552398 Faximile (0341) 552398 Malang
<http://fitk.uin-malang.ac.id> email : fitk@uin-malang.ac.id

Nomor : 849/Un.03.1/TL.01.04/03/2026
Sifat : Penting
Lampiran : -
Hal : Izin Survey

09 Maret 2026

Kepada Yth.
Kepala MTsN Kota Batu
di
Tempat

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Dengan hormat, dalam rangka penyusunan proposal Skripsi Tadris Bahasa Inggris (TBI) Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan (FITK) Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, kami mohon dengan hormat agar mahasiswa berikut:

Nama : Serlina Yulia Alfian Safira
NIM : 220107110036
Tahun Akademik : Genap - 2025/2026
Judul Proposal : **Instructional Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Designing Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri**

Diberi izin untuk melakukan survey/studi pendahuluan terhadap Guru Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris di MTsN Kota Batu.

Demikian, atas perkenan dan kerjasama Bapak/Ibu yang baik disampaikan terimakasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.



Tembusan :

1. Ketua Program Studi TBI
2. Arsip

Appendix 4. Research Letter



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG
FAKULTAS ILMU TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
Jalan Gajayana 50, Telepon (0341) 552398 Faximile (0341) 552398 Malang
<http://fitk.uin-malang.ac.id> email : fitk@uin-malang.ac.id

Nomor : 857/Un.03.1/TL.01.04/03/2026
Sifat : Penting
Lampiran : -
Hal : Izin Penelitian

09 Maret 2026

Kepada Yth.
Kepala MTSN Kota Batu
di
Tempat

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Dengan hormat, dalam rangka menyelesaikan tugas akhir berupa penyusunan skripsi mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan (FITK) Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, kami mohon dengan hormat agar mahasiswa berikut:

Nama	: Serlina Yulia Alfian Safira
NIM	: 220107110036
Jurusan	: Tadris Bahasa Inggris (TBI)
Semester - Tahun Akademik	: Genap - 2025/2026
Judul Skripsi	: Instructional Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Designing Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri
Lama Penelitian	: Maret 2026 sampai dengan Mei 2026 (3 bulan)

diberi izin untuk melakukan penelitian kepada Guru Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris di MTSN Kota Batu.

Demikian, atas perkenan dan kerjasama Bapak/Ibu yang baik di sampaikan terimakasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.


Muhammad Walid, MA
0823 200003 1 002

Tembusan :

1. Yth. Ketua Program Studi TBI
2. Arsip

Appendix 5. Validation Sheets

Validations Sheet

Instrument Validation Sheet of Observation and Interview for Research Entitled
"Instructional Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers In Designing Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri "

Validator : Harir Mubarak, M.Pd
NIP : 19870708201802011152
Expertise : English Language Teaching Development
Instance : Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang
Validation Date : 10 March 2026

A. Introduction

This validation was made to obtain an assessment from the validator (Mr/Ms) on the research instrument used in this study. Every comment and suggestion given is very useful to improve the quality of the research instrument. Thank you for your willingness to become a validator instrument in this research.

B. Guidance

1. In this section, asses by ticking (✓) with the following criteria to the columns bellow:

1: Very poor
2: Poor
3: Average
4: Good
5: Excellent

2. Please give comments and suggestion in the columns below:

C. Validation Sheet

No	Aspect	Score				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The interview questions are relevant to the research objectives.				✓	
2.	The interview questions represent the research problems related to challenges in designing UKBM.				✓	
3.	The interview questions explore strategies used by teachers to overcome the challenges.				✓	

CS Dipindai dengan CamScanner

4.	The documentation guide is appropriate to support the research objectives.				✓	
5.	The documentation indicators represent important aspects of UKBM design.				✓	
6.	The interview questions are arranged systematically.				✓	
7.	The interview questions allow respondents to explain their experiences in detail.				✓	
8.	The documentation guide provides clear types of documents to be collected.				✓	
9.	The documentation analysis focus is relevant to the study.				✓	
10.	The interview questions use clear and understandable language.				✓	

D. Suggestion

I hope this instrument can dig up the data on the field based on your research question.

E. Conclusion

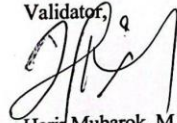
Based on the validation sheet above, it can be concluded that the instruments that have been made is:

Please cross out (abcd) the answer that doesn't match the conclusion you gave.

- a. The instrument can be used without revision.
- ☒ b. The instrument can be used with alight revision.
- c. The instrument can be used with many revisions.
- d. The instrument can be used.

Malang, 10 March 2026

Validator,



Harin Mubarak, M.Pd

19870708201802011152

Appendix 6. Documentation



Appendix 7. Interview Transcript

No	Interview Questions and Transcript Details	Speaker	Transcription / Dialogue
1	What is your understanding of the purpose and function of UKBM in the Merdeka Curriculum? (Apa pemahaman Anda tentang tujuan dan fungsi UKBM dalam kurikulum Merdeka?)	R	Selamat siang Bapak dan Ibu. Sebagai pertanyaan pembuka, bagaimana pemahaman Anda mengenai tujuan dan fungsi utama dari penerapan UKBM ini?
		P2	Sebenarnya UKBM itu kalau dulu hampir sama dengan modul, berfungsi sebagai teman belajar siswa. Buku paket dari pemerintah itu rata-rata kurang lengkap untuk kebutuhan anak-anak di lapangan. Jadi guru membuat UKBM ini untuk mengembangkan materi dari kurikulum agar lebih bervariasi, lebih banyak, dan lebih menarik.
		P3	Tujuannya sebetulnya untuk mencari materi yang esensial dalam pembelajaran. Kan buku paket itu sudah diberikan oleh pemerintah, nah kita membuat UKBM itu untuk memadatkan materi esensial tersebut, sekaligus mendukung program SKS yang diterapkan di sekolah agar siswa bisa belajar mandiri secara tertata di kelas.
2	Do school policies or curriculum changes pose challenges in designing UKBM? (Apakah kebijakan sekolah atau perubahan kurikulum menimbulkan	R	Apakah kebijakan sekolah atau dinamika perubahan kurikulum memunculkan tantangan tersendiri saat proses perancangan?

	tantangan dalam merancang UKBM?)		
		P4	Program UKBM ini bagi kami di madrasah sebetulnya masih tergolong baru, berjalan sekitar 2-3 tahun ini. Tantangan awal dari kebijakan itu muncul karena awalnya UKBM difokuskan khusus untuk kelas akselerasi, bukan kelas reguler. Jadi kami terus terang sempat kebingungan memikirkan bagaimana formulasinya agar tepat sasaran.
3	Do you face difficulties selecting or adapting English materials suitable for your students' proficiency level? (Apakah Anda mengalami kesulitan dalam memilih atau menyesuaikan materi bahasa Inggris yang sesuai dengan tingkat kemampuan siswa anda?)	R	Apakah Anda mengalami kesulitan tertentu dalam memilih atau mengadaptasi materi bahasa Inggris yang pas dengan level kemampuan siswa?
		P4	Materi di dalam buku paket itu kan sangat luas sekali cakupannya. Jadi sebagai guru bahasa Inggris, kesulitan kami adalah harus benar-benar jeli memilih, memotong, dan mengurasi materi mana saja yang esensial dan penting untuk perkembangan kemampuan bahasa siswa agar tidak tumpang tindih.
4	What challenges do you face when designing tasks, activities, and assessments within UKBM? (Tantangan apa saja yang Anda hadapi saat merancang tugas,	R	Apa saja tantangan yang paling dirasakan saat menyusun tugas, aktivitas belajar, dan instrumen asesmen di dalam UKBM?

	aktivitas, dan penilaian dalam kerangka UKBM?)		
		P3	Itu menjadi dilema tersendiri buat kami di tim pengajar. Kami sering kali berpikir keras dan berdebat apakah pertanyaan atau asesmen di dalam UKBM ini perlu dibuat berbasis HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) atau dibuat lebih sederhana agar bisa dipahami oleh semua siswa dengan mudah.
5	Do students' motivation or readiness for independent learning affect your UKBM design? If so, how? (Apakah motivasi atau kesiapan siswa untuk belajar mandiri memengaruhi desain UKBM Anda? Jika ya, bagaimana?)	R	Apakah faktor motivasi atau kesiapan belajar mandiri dari siswa turut memengaruhi bagaimana Anda mendesain modul UKBM tersebut?
		P3	Sangat memengaruhi. Konsep awal UKBM kan agar siswa yang motivasi belajarnya tinggi bisa cepat selesai dan melanjutkan ke bab berikutnya secara mandiri, atau mereka bisa membantu temannya yang kesulitan di dalam kelas. Penentuan tingkat kognitif tugas di UKBM harus benar-benar seimbang agar anak yang kesiapan belajarnya di bawah tidak merasa terbebani.
6	How challenging is it to write clear instructions so students can work independently? (Seberapa menantangkah menulis instruksi yang jelas agar siswa dapat bekerja secara mandiri?)	R	Seberapa menantang bagi guru untuk menuliskan instruksi kerja tertulis yang sangat jelas agar siswa benar-benar bisa belajar mandiri tanpa bimbingan langsung?
		P1	Menulis instruksi itu tantangan yang luar biasa ya.

			Kita harus memikirkan bagaimana menyesuaikan struktur bahasa Inggrisnya agar siswa bisa paham sendiri secara mandiri tanpa kehadiran penuh guru. Apalagi untuk anak kelas 7 yang baru transisi dari SD, bahasa instruksinya harus sangat eksplisit, singkat, tapi padat.
		P4	Benar, dari pihak kurikulum juga menekankan kalau pembuatan soal dan instruksi itu harus jelas, detail, dan formatnya disesuaikan karena modul ini tujuannya dipegang anak untuk belajar mandiri, jadi bahasanya tidak boleh ambigu.
7	Do you find it difficult to integrate elements of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) or independent learning into UKBM? (Apakah Anda merasa kesulitan mengintegrasikan unsur-unsur Pembelajaran Mandiri (Self-Regulated Learning/SRL) atau pembelajaran independen ke dalam UKBM?)	R	Apakah Anda merasa kesulitan mengintegrasikan unsur-unsur Pembelajaran Mandiri (SRL) ke dalam komponen UKBM?
		P1	Iya, kesulitannya adalah membuat alur mandiri yang konsisten di dalam modul tertulis. Kita harus mendesain sedemikian rupa agar materi yang padat itu bisa masuk ke format ringkas namun tetap menuntun siswa belajar secara runtut dari awal sampai evaluasi mandiri.
8	Do you experience time constraints during the UKBM design process? How does it	R	Terkait aspek manajemen waktu, apakah Anda kerap mengalami kendala

	affect your work? (Apakah Anda mengalami kendala waktu selama proses desain UKBM? Bagaimana hal itu memengaruhi pekerjaan Anda?)		keterbatasan waktu? Lalu, bagaimana hal itu berdampak pada hasil kerja Anda?
		P3	Masalah utamanya memang ada pada keterbatasan waktu. Tugas guru di madrasah ini kan banyak sekali, ada beban administrasi, mengajar di banyak kelas, dan kegiatan sekolah lainnya. Waktu yang mepet ini membuat fokus kami terbagi saat harus duduk mendesain modul.
		P4	Kami sering menghadapi dilema antara kecepatan dan kualitas. Menjelang tahun ajaran baru ada tuntutan agar modul cepat selesai untuk dicetak. Kami ingin hasilnya sempurna dan maksimal, tapi proses desain itu butuh waktu lama. Kalau dipaksa cepat selesai, kami takut kualitas isi modulnya malah kurang maksimal.
9	Have you encountered technical difficulties, such as formatting or digital editing, when creating UKBM? (Apakah Anda pernah mengalami kesulitan teknis, seperti pemformatan atau pengeditan digital, saat membuat UKBM?)	R	Apakah ada kendala teknis yang dihadapi, seperti hambatan pemformatan dokumen atau pengeditan digital selama pembuatan draf?
		P2	Di bagian teknis, tantangannya adalah bagaimana mendesain layout agar tampilan UKBM ini bervariasi dan menarik secara visual dibandingkan buku cetak biasa, supaya

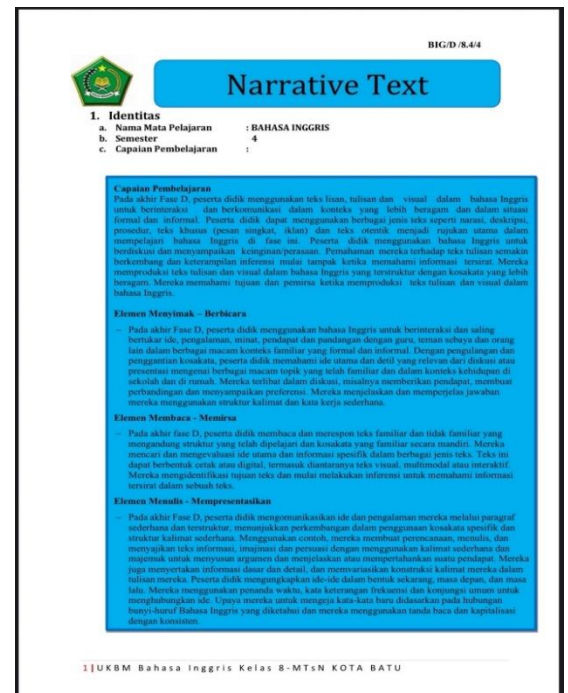
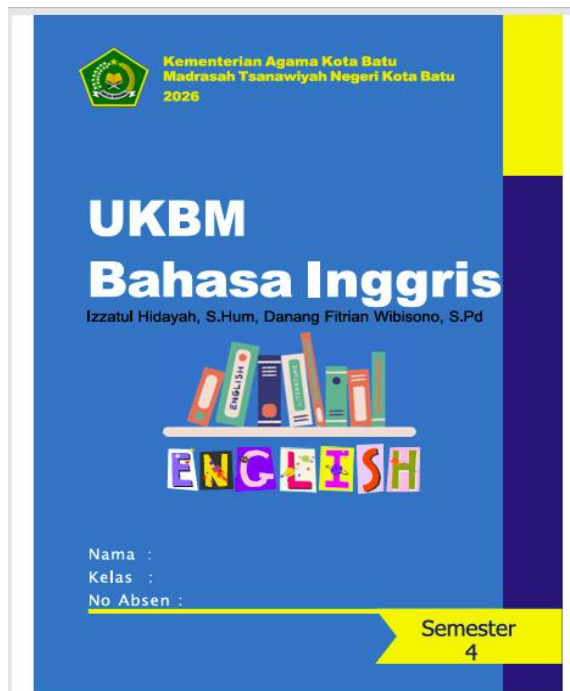
			anak-anak tertarik membaca instruksinya dan tidak bosan.
10	How adequate are the references, templates, or guidelines provided by the school in supporting your UKBM design process? (Seberapa memadai referensi, templat, atau panduan yang disediakan oleh sekolah dalam mendukung proses desain UKBM Anda?)	R	Menurut pandangan Anda, seberapa memadai panduan atau templat baku yang diturunkan oleh pihak sekolah untuk menyokong proses kerja Anda?
		P4	Pada awal program ini berjalan, format dan desain dasar layout memang sudah disediakan langsung dari pihak kurikulum sekolah. Jadi kami para guru tinggal mengikuti format panduan tersebut lalu bekerja sama mengembangkannya ke materi bahasa Inggris.
11	How do you overcome challenges in designing UKBM? (Bagaimana Anda mengatasi tantangan dalam mendesain UKBM?)	R	Secara garis besar, bagaimana langkah umum Anda dalam mengatasi pelbagai tantangan yang muncul tersebut?
		P2	Kami menyiasatinya dengan berproses bersama-sama di tim guru. Kami tidak berjalan sendiri-sendiri, melainkan mendiskusikan setiap kendala materi yang muncul agar ketemu solusinya.
12	What specific strategies do you use to solve problems during the UKBM design process? (Strategi spesifik apa yang Anda gunakan untuk memecahkan masalah selama proses desain UKBM?)	R	Bisa dijabarkan strategi spesifik apa yang diterapkan tim pengajar untuk memecahkan masalah instruksional di dalam isi UKBM?
		P2	Strategi kami adalah menerapkan tahapan materi yang runtut (scaffolding).

			Kami memulainya dari komponen yang gampang dulu untuk siswa, baru setelah itu perlahan bergeser ke materi yang lebih kompleks di kegiatan belajar berikutnya.
13	Do you collaborate with other teachers when designing UKBM? How does this collaboration help? (Apakah Anda berkolaborasi dengan guru lain saat mendesain UKBM? Bagaimana kolaborasi ini membantu?)	R	Apakah Anda melakukan kerja sama atau kolaborasi dengan rekan sejawat? Bagaimana bentuk kolaborasi tersebut membantu meringankan kendala Anda?
		P3	Kolaborasi antar guru di tim MGMP sekolah itu sangat membantu. Sistem pengerjaannya adalah jika saya membuat draf, nanti guru lain akan mereview dan memberikan masukan seperti 'bagian ini kurang' atau 'ini perlu diperbaiki'. Lewat kolaborasi ini kami bisa bertukar pendapat dan meringankan beban kerja individual.
		P4	Iya, kami sangat mengandalkan kerja tim. Karena guru bahasa Inggris jumlahnya terbatas, kami membagi tugas pengerjaan bab per orang agar bebannya adil dan tidak menumpuk di satu orang saja.
14	What resources or external support (training, workshops, references) help you in designing UKBM? (Sumber daya atau dukungan eksternal apa (pelatihan, lokakarya, referensi) yang membantu	R	Sumber daya penunjang atau dukungan eksternal apa saja seperti pelatihan atau pelatihan kerja yang turut membantu kesiapan Anda?

	Anda dalam mendesain UKBM?)		
		P1	Kami terbantu dengan adanya kegiatan workshop penyusunan perangkat pembelajaran yang beberapa kali diikuti oleh guru-guru, itu memberikan modal awal bagi kami untuk memahami struktur penyusunan modul mandiri ini.
15	How do you revise your UKBM when you identify areas needing improvement? (Bagaimana Anda merevisi UKBM Anda ketika Anda mengidentifikasi area yang perlu diperbaiki?)	R	Bagaimana mekanisme Anda dalam melakukan revisi atau perbaikan bilamana mendapati bagian modul yang kurang representatif?
		P2	Kami selalu melakukan revisi berdasarkan evaluasi berkala setelah modul digunakan. Memang kami beberapa kali melakukan revisi dari draf pertama sampai versi yang sekarang, tujuannya agar versinya terus disempurnakan. Meskipun terkadang draf file lama yang penuh coretan revisi itu langsung kami abaikan dan kami ganti dengan file baru yang paling siap pakai.
16	In your opinion, what improvements are needed to help teachers create higher-quality UKBM in the future? (Menurut Anda, perbaikan apa saja yang dibutuhkan untuk membantu guru menciptakan UKBM yang berkualitas lebih tinggi di masa mendatang?)	R	Di masa depan, perbaikan atau pembenahan apa yang paling diperlukan agar guru bisa menelurkan produk UKBM yang jauh lebih berkualitas?
		P4	Perbaikannya mungkin ada pada penataan manajemen waktu pengerjaan dari

			sekolah ya, agar guru diberikan waktu khusus yang cukup untuk fokus mendesain secara sempurna, sehingga kualitas modul yang dihasilkan bisa benar-benar maksimal tanpa harus terburu-buru kejar cetak.
17	Which digital tools or platforms do you use to support UKBM design? How effective are they? (Alat atau platform digital apa yang Anda gunakan untuk mendukung desain UKBM? Seberapa efektifkah alat atau platform tersebut?)	R	Terakhir, perangkat digital atau platform apa saja yang Anda gunakan untuk mendukung proses pengerjaan? Seberapa efektifkah alat tersebut?
		P4	Aplikasi digital yang paling andal dan selalu kami gunakan salah satunya adalah Canva. Canva sangat efektif untuk membuat lembar aktivitas seperti match and match (mencocokkan kata) atau membuat diagram penjelas. Bahkan kadang saya juga menggunakan bantuan prompt AI untuk memunculkan ide aktivitas belajar bervariasi sebelum drafnya diperiksa dan difinalisasi bersama Pak Danang.

Appendix 8. UKBM



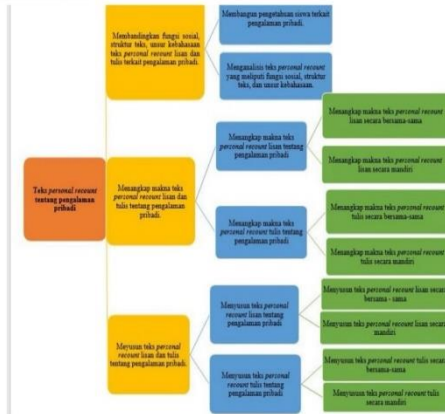
- d. Materi Pokok : Narrative Text
 e. Alokasi Waktu : 3 JP X 7
 f. Tujuan Pembelajaran :

Upon completion of Chapter 2, the students should be able to:
 1. Connect and sequence events in an imaginative story;
 2. Explain characters' actions, feelings, and behavior in an imaginative story; and
 3. Retell and rewrite an imaginative story.

g. Materi pembelajaran

A narrative text is a piece of writing that tells a story to entertain the audience with the additional purpose of making the audience think about an issue, teach them the lesson, or excite their emotions. (Anderson and Anderson:1998)

2. PETA KONSEP



A. Match the picture with the correct activities about online class.



B. Answer the following questions based on the text above.

Ibu Ayu's Online Class

Ibu Ayu teaches English every Tuesday and Thursday. During the pandemic, Ibu Ayu taught English online. She used a video conferencing application. Ibu Ayu met and talked with her students virtually. She also explained the materials and has a discussion with her students. The students felt very happy and excited to learn English online. Sometimes the students spoke at the same time. In a video conferencing application, speaking at the same time makes the class noisy. Ibu Ayu thought about making rules for online learning.

B. Answer the following questions based on the text above.

Ibu Ayu's Online Class

Ibu Ayu teaches English every Tuesday and Thursday. During the pandemic, Ibu Ayu taught English online. She used a video conferencing application. Ibu Ayu met and talked with her students virtually. She also explained the materials and has a discussion with her students. The students felt very happy and excited to learn English online. Sometimes the students spoke at the same time. In a video conferencing application, speaking at the same time makes the class noisy. Ibu Ayu thought about making rules for online learning.

1. Why does Ibu Ayu teach English online?
2. How many times does Ibu Ayu teach English in a week?
3. What type of application does Ibu Ayu use in teaching online?
4. What activities does Ibu Ayu do in online learning?
5. Do you think Ibu Ayu needs to make online learning rules? Explain.

Appendix 9. Curriculum Vitae

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name : Serlina Yulia Alfian Safira

Student ID : 220107110036

Place, date of birth : Bojonegoro, 05 Juli 2004

Gender : Female

Religion : Islam

College : Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Faculty : Faculty of Education and Teacher Training

Program Study : Tadris Bahasa Inggris (English Education)

Address : Paloh, Karangan, Kepohbaru, Bojonegoro

Phone Number : 085607745220

E – mail Address : safirasherly6@gmail.com

Education Background: RA Miftahul Ulum
MI Miftahul Ulum
MTs Miftahul Ulum
SMK Darul Ulum Baureno
UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

