



# Unlocking Learner Potential: Assessment as a Tool for Understanding Learning Styles in the Merdeka Curriculum

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## Abstract

This research delves into the multifaceted realm of student learning styles within the assessment framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. Employing a qualitative approach through an extensive review of academic literature, it meticulously examines a vast array of scholarly journals and books to unravel a comprehensive understanding of learning styles and their profound implications for assessment practices. The meticulous analysis unveils three prominent categories of learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. These styles are not merely static traits but rather dynamic constructs shaped by a complex interplay of internal factors, such as individual personality characteristics, and external influences, including the ever-evolving modern era. As a result, many contemporary students exhibit a combination of learning styles, defying rigid categorization into a single style. The Merdeka Curriculum, with its inherent flexibility, empowers educators to embark on a journey of mapping the diverse learning styles of their students. This valuable information is then strategically transformed into a powerful tool for designing assessments that resonate with the unique strengths and preferences of each learner. By tailoring assessments to align with a student's preferred learning style, educators can foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, ultimately propelling each student towards achieving the designated learning objectives. This research serves as a valuable contribution to the evolving landscape of understanding learner styles and their profound implications for assessment practices in the era of the Merdeka Curriculum. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of learning styles and the importance of catering to learner diversity, educators can embark on a transformative journey towards designing assessments that empower each student to reach their full potential and achieve the desired learning outcomes.

**Keyword:** *Learner Potential, Assessment, Learning Styles, Merdeka Curriculum.*

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**Submitted:** 18/06/2024  
**1st Revised:** 27/02/2025  
**2nd Revised:** 27/02/2025  
**Accepted:** 27/02/2025  
**Online Published:**  
28/02/2025

**Citation:** Al Bashir, M. N.  
(2025). Unlocking Learner  
Potential: Assessment as a  
Tool for Understanding  
Learning Styles in the  
Merdeka  
Curriculum. *International  
Journal of Basic Educational  
Research*, 2(1), 1–6.  
<https://doi.org/10.14421/ijber.v2i01.8923>

## Introduction

Indonesian education is still getting better, moving up the progress ladder with the times. The dynamics of education are becoming more apparent in the twenty-first century, and this is leading to major curricular changes. The world of education in Indonesia is still changing as a result of rapid technology advancements, scientific advancements, and globalization. The Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK), the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP), the 2013 Curriculum, and the newly introduced Merdeka Curriculum are just a few of the curriculum modifications that have occurred to achieve this shift (Afif, Nur, 2019).

The Merdeka Curriculum, which was initiated in 2020 with the initial name Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, is a response to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. The Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, initiated a new curriculum specifically designed for educational conditions during the pandemic. Merdeka Curriculum focuses on three main aspects: learning materials, character development, and learner competencies. The student-centered approach to education is the main essence, with the main objective of honing and developing students' interests and talents from an early age. Teaching and learning activities in Merdeka Curriculum are no longer monotonous, thanks to varied and interesting learning methods and media. Learners are encouraged to be more active and

creative, not only receiving information, but also being directly involved in the learning process.

The Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes teacher creativity, both in the learning process and in assessment. The project-based approach characterizes this curriculum, with the main focus on developing soft skills and student character according to the Pancasila Student Profile. The learning process in the Merdeka Curriculum is well designed and structured, but still provides flexibility for students to explore and learn independently. Varied and innovative learning materials are one of the advantages of this curriculum.

The simpler and more flexible curriculum structure allows for learning that is more focused on knowledge and developing students' abilities. The Merdeka Curriculum also provides freedom for teachers to advance the potential of students, encouraging them to learn independently, creatively, and reason critically. The Merdeka Curriculum frees teachers in terms of teaching, allowing them to customize assessments or assessments based on learning outcomes and learner characteristics. Creative assessments that contain appropriate cognitive content are expected to foster critical and creative thinking skills in students. Teachers are also given the freedom to provide creative and innovative teaching materials and learning media, so that students are interested and motivated to participate in the learning process.

The Merdeka Curriculum is also designed to improve teachers' abilities in various fields, so that they can become effective facilitators for students in achieving learning goals. Overall, the Merdeka Curriculum is a new breakthrough in the world of Indonesian education. This curriculum is expected to produce a young generation that is smart, creative, has noble character, and is ready to face future challenges. The Merdeka Curriculum not only introduces technology to students, but also trains them to use technology wisely and usefully, both in learning at school, at home, and in the community. This aims to minimize the negative impact of technology and encourage students to use their time for learning more optimally. In addition to technology, the Merdeka Curriculum also pays attention to learner diversity and assessment in order to advance the world of education. One aspect of diversity that needs to be considered is the learning style or learning modality of students. Learning styles that vary in each individual, depending on their individual characteristics, require teachers to group students based on their learning styles. Thus, teachers can adjust the learning process so that the material taught is more easily absorbed by students.

As explained by (Wilujeng, Sekar & Eyus Sudihartini, 2021) each student has different characteristics and qualities in responding to the learning received. This difference is known as learning style. Learning styles are methods used by students to make it easier for them to absorb information and learning materials. Learning styles can be in the form of activities to obtain, organize, and process the information received. Learning style, as explained (Alhafiz, 2022), is a unique way that each individual has in absorbing and processing information easily, according to their abilities and characteristics. The diversity of learning styles is the foundation for teachers to build an effective, comfortable and creative classroom for all learners. In determining the right assessment for the learning process, teachers need to understand and recognize the characteristics of each learner's learning style. This is so that the assessments designed are in accordance with the abilities and needs of each individual. The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2007, 2017 defines assessment in education as a process carried out by learners to achieve predetermined achievements or performance. The results of this assessment or assessment are then used to evaluate the completeness of students in achieving predetermined competency standards.

Learning style, as defined by (Putri, 2020) is an individual's unique way of understanding information and solving problems. This learning style has a significant influence on the learning process, especially in the achievement of learning materials, teaching methods, and assessment.



For teachers, understanding learners' learning styles is like unlocking the key to creating effective and quality learning. By recognizing each individual's best learning style, teachers can provide the right response and design learning that suits their needs and characteristics. Learners' learning style, as explained by (Hamidah & Jaka Wijaya K, 2020) is the key to open the door to effective and quality learning. By recognizing individual learning styles, teachers can design appropriate learning, create a conducive learning environment, and ultimately, help learners achieve learning objectives.

Learning style, as explained by Damanik in (Al Hamzah, 2021) is a unique strategy that individuals use to understand information and solve problems in the teaching and learning process. These strategies are tailored to individual needs, abilities and characteristics, and are influenced by the time and environment in which they learn. Learning style, as defined by Nasution in (Afrila, 2020) is an individual's unique way of responding to and interacting with information during the learning process. This way is manifested through various behaviors shown by learners, such as the way they receive, process, and understand information. Learning style, as explained by Brown in (Wikanengsih., 2014) is a unique personal characteristic in terms of an individual's intellect and personality that affects the way they understand and process information. This has a significant influence on the learning outcomes achieved by each individual.

Learning style, as defined by Slameto in (Wibowo, 2016), is an individual's unique way of adapting to various learning methods to achieve optimal understanding and absorption of material. This learning style plays an important role in fostering learners' sense of responsibility for their learning process and helps them recognize themselves better, so that they can determine the right learning strategy to meet their needs. Students have different learning styles that are used to adjust learning activities under the same conditions (Wasqita, 2022). It can be said that learning styles have the potential to have a negative impact on students' ability to think critically. This is supported by the uniqueness, differences, and advantages possessed by each learner. Everyone is said to have a learning style because the person is involved in activities that help them understand, process, and organize the information they have obtained so that they can carry out useful tasks that will help them understand how to learn (Sianturi, 2019).

## Methods

The current research uses a strict qualitative methodology, namely an extensive literature review. In order to explore the intricacies of the Merdeka Curriculum, assessment (Muhlis, 2024), procedures, and student learning styles, the researcher must first identify the source of data. This process, which resembles an intellectual treasure hunt, entails painstakingly collecting and examining material from a wide range of reliable sources. Peer-reviewed academic publications, reputable textbooks, perceptive research papers, and educational official websites are a few examples of these sources. This investigation employs a theme analysis technique to sort through the gathered data in accordance with a clearly specified research focus. Using this method, the researcher can carefully identify hidden categories, patterns, and linkages within the data. A particular focus of this analysis is on learning styles – a critical element in understanding how students with diverse preferences can optimally engage with the learning process.

## Result

The Merdeka Curriculum comes as a breath of fresh air in the world of Indonesian education, bringing hope to foster a creative, innovative spirit and the ability to think critically in educators and students. This hope is realized by creating a more effective and meaningful learning process in the classroom, which of course cannot be separated from the achievement of student learning outcomes.



The Merdeka Curriculum is learner-centered, which understands that each individual's learning style is different. This is an important foundation in designing learning that can accommodate this diversity.

More than just a curriculum change, the Merdeka Curriculum is a strategic step to advance Indonesian education in the era of globalization, where science and technology are developing rapidly. The impact of this transformation also needs to be considered in designing learning that is aligned with the nation's artistic and cultural values (Nurwiatin, Neng, 2022) The long journey of curriculum changes in Indonesia signifies an ongoing effort to advance education. However, significant results in improving the quality of education and Indonesia's position in the international arena are still not visible. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum comes as an answer to this challenge. It is hoped that this curriculum can give birth to the nation's next generation who are adaptive, creative, innovative, and have critical thinking skills. More than just a curriculum change, Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is a comprehensive educational transformation. Strong collaboration is needed from all parties, from the government, educators, parents, to students, to realize the ideals of a better Indonesian education (Priantini, 2022) Through a learner-centered approach, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum provides space for each individual to develop according to their potential and interests. This is expected to give birth to the next generation of the nation who are more creative, innovative, and have critical thinking skills, which are the main keys to competing in the international arena.

Merdeka Belajar Curriculum also encourages the use of various learning methods that are more creative and innovative, so that students are not only presented with monotonous and boring learning. This is expected to increase students' interest and motivation to learn, and help them understand the subject matter better (Angga & Sofyan Iskandar, 2022) In addition to curriculum changes that are expected to bring education in Indonesia to be even better, the government is also working on changes in assessments or assessments that can be used to support the curriculum. The assessment made must contain competency-based assessments to measure the assessment of attitudes, knowledge, and skills based on teaching activities and achievements to be achieved by taking into account the characteristics of students ideally, one of which is seen in terms of learning the students themselves (Wikanengsih, 2014) One of the assessments that is often used in learning in this modern era is authentic assessment. The authentic assessment in question is an assessment in learning that focuses and sees students in learning process activities and makes students take an active role and think critically in building knowledge from the surrounding environment (Rosnaeni, 2021) One of the ways that educators carry out in attracting students' attention to learning activities is by utilizing infrastructure, one of which is multimedia learning media. Various and interesting learning media can be used by teachers to arouse students' learning motivation, so that the teaching and learning activities expected by the teacher can be achieved (Damayanti, 2020). The use of learning media needs to pay attention to the components in it, namely the combination of text, animation, graphics, video, and sound. This is done so that during the learning process, learning media is useful in developing learning outcomes by adjusting the characteristics of each learner's learning style. These learning styles include visual learning, auditory learning, and kinesthetic learning. The three learning styles have brought major changes in the present day, especially after the covid-19 pandemic. Changes in learning styles have both positive and negative impacts on students, namely students are expected to have a more active, creative, and innovative spirit in the learning process, but the learning motivation of students has decreased, which has an impact on their enthusiasm for learning (Aldiyah, 2021).

With this significant change, teachers should play an active role in building students' interests, talents, and motivating learning. In addition, teachers need to make creative and innovative learning by using the latest information technology so that learning activities are more lively and students become enthusiastic about learning. In addition, teachers need to





recognize the learning styles of students in order to make it easier to choose appropriate learning activities, making it easier for students to receive information in teaching and learning activities.

### Conclusion

A learning style, or learning modality, is key in unlocking the learning potential of each individual. In the era of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes learner-centered learning, understanding learning styles is crucial to creating an effective and meaningful learning process as well as the learning process. The Merdeka Curriculum opens space for educators to explore various learning methods that accommodate a variety of learning styles. The use of varied learning media, the implementation of diverse learning activities, and the provision of independent and collaborative learning opportunities are key in creating an inclusive and effective learning environment. By understanding and accommodating each individual's learning style, educators can help learners reach their full potential and become independent, creative learners who are ready to face various challenges in the Independent Curriculum era

### Declarations

#### Author contribution statement

This research was conducted by Muhammad Nizar Al Bashir, the first author of this work. with the guidance of Mrs. Siti Fatonah, a lecturer at UIN Sunan Kalijaga.

#### Funding statement

This research did not receive any special grants from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

#### Data availability statement

The data analyzed in this study was collected through a qualitative approach, primarily through a comprehensive literature review. Due to the nature of this research methodology, no specific data sets were archived. However, a full reference list will be provided to enable readers to access the sources used in this research.

#### Declaration of interests statement

The author declares that there are no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could influence the work reported in this paper

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