

## Teaching Strategies Employed by Novice and Experienced English Teachers in SMP Negeri 1 Seririt

Kintan Ayu Pramesti<sup>1</sup>, Luh Putu Artini<sup>2</sup>, Luh Putu Eka Sulistia Dewi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Indonesia

Email : [kintan.ayu@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:kintan.ayu@undiksha.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>; [putu.artini@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:putu.artini@undiksha.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>;

[sulistia.dewi@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:sulistia.dewi@undiksha.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan preferensi strategi pengajaran yang digunakan oleh guru bahasa Inggris pemula dan berpengalaman di SMP Negeri 1 Seririt. Fokus penelitian ini mengacu pada strategi yang direkomendasikan dalam Kurikulum Merdeka, yang menekankan pada pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa dan pengembangan keterampilan abad 21. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui tiga instrumen utama, yaitu teaching strategy checklist, lembar observasi, dan panduan wawancara mendalam. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini terdiri dari satu guru pemula dan satu guru berpengalaman. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa guru pemula lebih sering menggunakan strategi pembelajaran langsung dan terstruktur, seperti learning strategy training, discovery learning, and cooperative learning. Hal ini disesuaikan dengan keterbatasan pengalaman mengajar mereka dan kebutuhan untuk membangun kontrol kelas. Sementara itu, guru berpengalaman menunjukkan preferensi untuk strategi yang lebih fleksibel dan berbasis proyek seperti project-based learning and problem-based learning. Keduanya juga tampak secara konsisten menerapkan strategi afektif dan sosial untuk membangun hubungan yang positif dengan siswa. Faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi preferensi strategi meliputi pengalaman mengajar, ketersediaan fasilitas, dan kesiapan serta karakteristik siswa. Studi ini memberikan wawasan tentang perbedaan pendekatan pedagogi antara guru pemula dan guru berpengalaman dalam konteks penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka.*

**Kata Kunci:** *EFL, Guru Berpengalaman, Guru Pemula, Kurikulum Merdeka, Strategi Mengajar.*

### Abstract

This study aims to describe the teaching strategy preferences used by novice and experienced English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt. The focus of this study refers to the strategies recommended in the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning and the development of 21st-century skills. The method used is qualitative research with data collection techniques through three main instruments, namely the teaching strategy checklist, observation checklist, and in-depth interview guides. Participants in this study consisted of one novice teacher and one experienced teacher. The results of the analysis show that novice teachers more often use direct, structured learning strategies, such as learning strategy training, discovery learning, and cooperative learning. This is adjusted to their limited teaching experience and the need to build classroom control. Meanwhile, experienced teachers show a preference for more flexible and project-based strategies such as project-based learning and problem-based learning. Both also appear to consistently apply affective and social strategies to build positive relationships with students. Factors that influence strategy preferences include teaching experience, availability of facilities, and student readiness and characteristics. This study provides

insight into the differences in pedagogical approaches between novice and experienced teachers in the context of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

**Keywords:** *EFL, Experienced Teachers, Beginner Teachers, Independent Curriculum, Teaching Strategies.*

## INTRODUCTION

English language education plays a vital role in today's educational landscape, particularly in the era of globalization. As the world's lingua franca, English serves as a primary means of cross-cultural communication and international information exchange (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). With the rapid advancement of technology and increasing human mobility, English proficiency has become a strategic necessity for individuals to actively participate in global interactions (Septiani, Handayani, & Susanto, 2019). Recognizing this, many countries, including Indonesia, have made English a compulsory subject at various educational levels from elementary to senior high school (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022).

English holds strategic value within the national education system. The Indonesian government has integrated English into the national curriculum to prepare students to compete globally and meet the demands of the 21st century. Effective English instruction also creates broader access to higher education and international career opportunities (Lestari & Suarnajaya, 2020).

The curriculum plays a critical role in shaping the direction and quality of education. According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 1 Paragraph 19, a curriculum is defined as a set of plans and arrangements regarding educational goals, content, learning materials, and methods used as a guide for learning implementation to achieve specific educational objectives. As such, the curriculum is not static; it is dynamic and responsive to global developments, local needs, and advances in science and technology (Sari, 2022).

In recent decades, the Indonesian education system has undergone several curriculum reforms in response to these changing needs. One of the most notable shifts occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, when remote learning became the standard mode of instruction. This led to the introduction of the Emergency Curriculum (Kurikulum Darurat), designed to simplify core competencies, and provide schools with flexibility in tailoring instruction to students' contexts and available resources (Iskandar, et.al., 2022).

Post-pandemic, the government launched the "Kurikulum Merdeka" aimed at transforming learning to meet the needs of the digital age and 21st-century education. This curriculum emphasizes teacher autonomy in designing contextualized and differentiated instruction, while focusing on strengthening students' competencies through project-based learning and character development (Suksesti & Subkhan, 2022). Within the Merdeka Curriculum, the development of 21st-century skills Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity (4Cs) is a fundamental objective (Mansyur, et.al., 2024).

Instructional strategies play a key role in determining the effectiveness of learning. Zaid, et.al. (2019) found that relevant and contextual teaching strategies significantly enhance student comprehension, motivation, and engagement. Freeman and Anderson (2013) also emphasized that approaches such as cooperative learning, project-based learning,

problem-based learning, blended learning, and computer-assisted language learning are effective in fostering comprehensive language skills.

The choice and implementation of teaching strategies are influenced not only by curriculum and pedagogy but also by internal teacher factors—most notably, teaching experience. Novice teachers and experienced teachers often adopt different approaches to classroom instruction. Novice teachers tend to rely heavily on rigid lesson plans and frequently struggle with classroom management and pedagogical flexibility (Burns & Richards, 2009). In contrast, experienced teachers have developed professional intuition and are more adept at tailoring instruction to student needs and contextual challenges (Khairunisa, et.al., 2023).

These differences are rooted in the cognitive frameworks and pedagogical competence shaped by teaching experience. Experienced teachers are typically more reflective and innovative in incorporating technology, selecting appropriate instructional media, and aligning their methods with student needs (Mustika & Wardah, 2021). A study by Laila, et.al. (2020) supports this, noting that teaching experience significantly impacts a teacher's ability to create active, participatory, and enjoyable learning environments.

While numerous studies have examined teacher experience and instructional methods, there is still a lack of empirical research that specifically compares the teaching strategies employed by novice and experienced English teachers in Indonesian junior high schools, especially in the Balinese context. This study, therefore, seeks to explore and compare the instructional strategies used by novice and experienced English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt. By adopting a qualitative approach, this research aims to provide a detailed understanding of how teaching experience influences the selection and implementation of strategies in English language classrooms under the Merdeka Curriculum and within the broader framework of 21st-century learning. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to teacher professional development and to the enhancement of English instruction at the junior secondary education level.

## METHOD

### *Types of research*

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to explore and understand the differences in teaching strategies between novice and experienced English teachers in SMP Negeri 1 Seririt. According to Bogdan & Taylor (1993) qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces qualitative descriptive data in the form of behavior and written or spoken words from research subjects. In line with the opinion of Creswell (2018) Qualitative method is an approach used to collect data, analyze, interpret, and compile research results. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to collect rich and detailed data regarding the phenomenon under study in an actual learning situation.

### *Time and Place of Research*

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt located in Singaraja, Bali. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that the school has a diverse number of teachers in terms of teaching experience, consisting of novice teachers and experienced teachers. SMP Negeri 1 Seririt is one of the public junior high schools that has A accreditation and has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, so it is relevant to be used as a research

location related to teacher teaching strategies. The research was conducted for one month, during which the researcher observed the teaching and learning process carried out by the two groups of teachers in the classroom. The research implementation time was adjusted to the learning schedule and the willingness of the teachers who participated in this study.

### ***Research Target/Subject***

The subjects in this study consisted of one novice English teacher and one experienced English teacher who actively taught at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt. The subjects in this study consisted of one novice english teacher and one experienced english teachers who were actively teaching at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt. In selecting the research subjects, there are several criteria that must be met:

1. The research subject is an english teacher who actively teaches at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt.
2. The research subject is a novice teacher with less than three years of teaching experience in SMP Negeri 1 Seririt.
3. The research subject is an experienced teacher who has more than five years of teaching experience at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt.

### ***Procedure***

The research procedure was carried out through several main stages, starting from planning, implementation, to reporting the results. In the initial stage, the researcher determined the focus and design of the research, namely descriptive qualitative. Furthermore, the researcher prepared data collection instruments in the form of observation guidelines, interview guides, and teaching strategy checklists. After that, the data collection process was carried out at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt by observing classroom learning, interviewing novice and experienced teachers, and collecting supporting documents such as lesson plans and teaching media. The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To maintain validity, triangulation of methods and sources was used. The final results were analyzed and compiled in the form of a research report.

### ***Data, Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques***

#### ***Data***

The data used in this study consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from primary sources through three main techniques, namely direct observation in class, in-depth interviews with English teachers (both beginners and experienced) and filling out a teaching strategy checklist instrument (Assingkily, 2021). Observations were conducted to observe the strategies that were implemented in the classroom, while interviews were conducted to dig deeper into the reasons and considerations of teachers in choosing certain strategies. In addition, the teaching strategy checklist was used as a tool to identify the methods and approaches used in learning activities. Meanwhile, secondary data came from documentation in the form of learning tools such as lesson plans, learning media, and other learning notes used by teachers during the learning process. The combination of these two types of data provides a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the differences in teaching strategies between novice teachers and

experienced teachers in the context of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt.

### ***Instrument***

In this study, researchers used several data collection instruments to find out the teaching strategies of novice and experienced teachers at SMP N 1 Seririt. The use of multiple instruments is in line with Creswell's (2014) opinion that in qualitative research, the use of multiple instruments can increase data credibility through the triangulation process. These instruments were designed to collect comprehensive data on the variety of teaching strategies, classroom management, and pedagogical approaches used by teachers with different levels of teaching experience.

#### **1. Teaching Strategy Checklist**

In this qualitative study, a teaching strategy checklist was developed as one of the main instruments to identify teaching strategies used by English teachers at the junior high school level. This instrument is in the form of a list of statements that represent various approaches and methods of 21st-century learning that are in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. These statements are formulated based on indicators adapted from the work of Hosaini, et.al. (2022), which emphasizes the importance of active, participatory, and student-needs-based teaching strategies. This checklist is self-reported, where teachers are asked to review their own practices and mark statements that correspond to the strategies, they have implemented in their daily teaching activities. Blank spaces indicate strategies that have not been used. In addition, a comment section is provided so that teachers can provide qualitative explanations that strengthen the data, such as the reasons for choosing a particular strategy or the obstacles faced in implementing it. This approach allows researchers to obtain a picture that is not only quantitative but also narrative, providing in-depth insight into the tendencies and contexts of instructional decision-making by teachers with different backgrounds.

#### **2. Observation Checklist**

The observation checklist serves as an important tool in documenting the learning activities carried out by English teachers during the teaching process. This instrument is designed to record various instructional techniques used directly in the classroom, allowing researchers to obtain authentic and relevant data in the real context of learning. Guided by the indicators of modern learning strategies recommended by the Merdeka Curriculum, this checklist was developed based on the guidelines of Hosaini, et.al. (2022). Each item in the checklist reflects key aspects of 21st-century teaching, including technology integration, collaborative approaches, and student empowerment in the learning process. During the observation, researchers noted the emergence of certain actions or strategies by marking them according to the indicators listed. Through this approach, data collection was carried out objectively, structured, and consistently, thus strengthening the validity of the findings. This checklist also allows identification of dominant and less-implemented practices, providing a strong basis for further analysis of the effectiveness of teaching strategies based on differences in teachers' teaching experiences.

### 3. Interview Guide

Interview guide is an instrument used in research, which is a set of questions used during interviewing teachers as respondents. Furthermore, the interview guide is used as a reference to direct the course of the interview. According to (Ary et al., 2014) there are three types of interviews in qualitative research: unstructured interviews, structured interviews, and semi-structured interviews. In this study, a semi-structured interview was used, which relied on a series of open-ended questions. Seidman (2019) emphasized that the semi-structured format allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses, thus revealing a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the selection of certain teaching strategies by each group of teachers. The questions in the interview guide cover aspects of lesson planning, selection of teaching methods, material development, classroom management strategies, and reflection on the effectiveness of the strategies used. The questions were systematically organized to elicit in-depth information about the teaching strategies implemented by novice and experienced teachers.

### 4. Anecdotal Record

According to Herdiansyah (2010), anecdotal record is an observation method used by researchers to make observations by only carrying blank paper to record typical, unique, and important behavior seen in subjects. Anecdotal record is used as a supporting instrument to record important and unexpected events during the learning process. As stated by McMillan (2016), anecdotal records function as narrative records that allow researchers to document specific events that illustrate teachers' teaching strategies in a natural and contextual manner. The researcher records in detail various aspects such as the teacher's spontaneous response to student questions, how to handle unexpected situations in the classroom, or improvised modifications to teaching strategies. The use of anecdotal notes provides rich and in-depth qualitative data on the differences in approaches between novice and experienced teachers in managing the classroom during learning.

### 5. The Research Itself

According to Nasution (1992) the researcher is the key instrument or main research tool. In Line with Sugiyono (2011) in qualitative research, the researcher as an instrument means that the researcher sets the research focus, seeks, and selects informants as data sources, carries out the data collection process, analyzes the research data, assesses the quality, and interprets the data, and makes conclusions based on the result of the data. Prastowo (2016) argues that only humans as instruments can understand the meaning of human interaction, read gestures, and dive into the feelings and values contained in the words or actions of respondents. Although a recording device or camera is used, the researcher still plays the main role as a research tool.

### *Data collection technique*

Qualitative research methods use four main techniques in investigation, namely participant observation; in depth interviews, documentation and triangulation (Sugiyono,

2007). Bogdan and Biklen (2016) stated that the use of various data collection techniques in qualitative research allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study.

### 1. Survey

Surveys serve as a data collection tool to explore how English teachers, both novice and experienced, interpret and implement instructional strategies within the framework of the Kurikulum Merdeka. By using open response items, the researcher gains insight into the reasoning, adaptations, and reflective practices that underlie teaching decisions.

### 2. Observation

The observation process will focus on the teaching strategies used by teachers, including learning methods, use of media, classroom management techniques, how to deliver material, and teacher interactions with students. The researcher acts as a non-participant observer where the researcher only observes and records various learning activities without being directly involved in the teaching and learning process. The observation results will be recorded in the observation sheet that has been prepared to facilitate the data analysis process.

### 3. In-depth Interview

In-depth interviews in this study were conducted to obtain detailed information about the teaching strategies used by novice and experienced teachers. The interviews will focus on teachers' experiences in implementing various teaching strategies, the reasons for choosing certain strategies, the challenges faced, and how to overcome obstacles in the learning process. Each interview session will be recorded and transcribed to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained.

### *Data Analysis Techniques*

In this study, data analysis was conducted by referring to the interactive model proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994), which consists of three main components, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing or verifying conclusions. This model was chosen because it is systematic and flexible in handling qualitative data, and allows researchers to carry out the analysis process continuously. The analysis process begins with data collection through in-depth interviews with English teachers who are included in the categories of novice and experienced teachers. The results of the observations and interviews were then analyzed through the following stages.

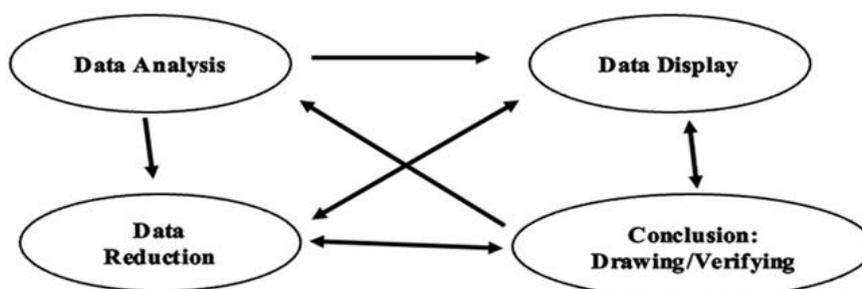


Figure 1. Method of Data Analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the data analysis in Chapter 4 was compiled based on the analysis procedures explained in Chapter 3. All data were obtained through three main instruments, namely the Teaching Strategy Checklist, observation sheets, and interview guidelines. These three instruments were used to thoroughly explore the teaching strategy preferences of novice and experienced English teachers. Data from the checklist provide an overview of which strategies are most often applied by each teacher, while the observation results show how these strategies are implemented directly in teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted to complement the findings from the two previous instruments and to explore the reasons behind the choice of strategies used by each teacher. This chapter will discuss the findings obtained from the three instruments in a structured manner based on each teacher category.

### *Teaching Strategies Employed by Novice English Teachers*

Table 1. Novice Teacher's Applied Teaching Strategy

No.	Teaching Method	Teaching Strategy Indicators Applied	Percentage	Note	
1	Learning Strategy	18/20	80%	The number of dictionaries in the library is not enough for all students	
	Training				
	Metacognitive Strategy	10/10	100%		
2	Cognitive Strategy	5/6	83,3%		Continue presenting student project results in video form at the end of the material to save learning time
	Affective Strategy	3/4	75%		
3	Project Based Learning	9/10	90%		Lack of facilities and infrastructure in
	Problem Based Learning	8/9	88,9%		
4	Discovery Learning	5/6	83,3%		
5	CALL	4/6	66,7%		
6	Cooperative Learning	7/7	100%		
7	Active Learning	4/5	80%		
8	Integrated Learning	3/6	50%		
9	Flipped Learning	1/4	25%		

				schools to develop learning media
10	Competency Based Learning	3/3	100%	
11	Differentiated Learning	3/3	100%	

Based on the table, it can be seen that novice English teachers use almost all of the learning strategies listed in the Teaching Strategy Checklist in every class they teach. This shows the teacher's efforts to try various approaches in delivering material according to students' needs. However, the teacher also noted that there were several strategy indicators that were difficult to implement optimally. For example, in the Cognitive Strategy category, the teacher mentioned that the number of dictionaries available in the library was very limited and there were no resources for additional procurement. In addition, several learning strategies appeared to be rarely used by teachers. One of them was Flipped Learning, which was only implemented by 25%. The teacher explained that this strategy was difficult to implement due to limited school facilities and infrastructure, such as multimedia devices needed to watch learning videos in class. However, the teacher still showed adaptive efforts in implementing the strategy that best suited the classroom situation and school conditions.

English teachers often apply strategies such as metacognitive strategy, cognitive strategy, affective strategy, project-based learning, problem-based learning, discovery learning, cooperative learning, active learning, competency-based learning, and differentiated learning. These strategies are reflected in learning activities that encourage students to be actively involved through group discussions, project assignments, and direct identification of materials in real contexts (Adiguna, et.al., 2023). On the other hand, strategies such as CALL and integrated learning are only applied occasionally and are not consistent in all meetings. The application of this strategy depends on technical factors such as the availability of facilities and learning time. The strategy that is rarely or almost never used is flipped learning. Therefore, to further explore the reasons why teachers do not apply the flipped learning strategy, interviews were conducted to obtain direct explanations from teachers regarding the obstacles faced in the field. Although this strategy is listed in the Teaching Strategy Checklist, the results of observations and interviews show that its implementation is not running as it should. The following is an interview excerpt that describes the reasons teachers have not been able to apply the flipped learning strategy optimally:

*"The reason I do not use this strategy (flipped learning) in learning is because the conditions and situations at school do not yet allow it. The economic conditions of each student are different; some do not have a handphone, let alone internet access at home. This is certainly a big obstacle if I ask them to study the material independently outside the classroom using videos or online sources. In addition, I also have limited time to prepare digital content that is appropriate and easily accessible to students. On the other hand, the 7th grade students I teach are still in the transition period from elementary to junior high school, so they still need a lot of direct direction from the teacher and are not fully ready to learn independently outside the classroom. That is why I choose to deliver the material directly in class so that all students get the same understanding."* NT/21-03-2025

The teacher explained that the main reason for not implementing the flipped learning strategy comprehensively was the limited school facilities and the varying socio-economic conditions of students. Some students do not have devices such as cellphones or internet access at home, so it will create a gap in the learning process if they are asked to study the material independently outside the classroom. According to Rizki & Wulandari (2023), flipped learning can increase student engagement and develop critical thinking skills if implemented properly and supported by a supportive environment. However, in the context of schools with limited facilities and low student access to digital learning media, implementing this strategy is a challenge (Wijaya, et.al., 2022). The teacher finally chose to carry out the simple part of the strategy, such as giving light assignments before learning takes place, and continuing to focus on face-to-face activities so that all students can understand the material evenly.

This decision is in line with the views of Suprpto & Marlina (2022), who stated that adaptation of teaching strategies needs to consider student readiness and the learning environment so that learning continues to run effectively. Therefore, even though they have not fully implemented flipped learning, teachers still try to apply the principles of active learning by adjusting strategies to real conditions in the classroom, as explained by Huda (2021) that active learning emphasizes the active role of students in the learning process and adjusts the approach based on needs and situations in the field.

#### *Teaching Strategies Employed by Experienced English Teachers*

The Teaching Strategy Checklist was given to experienced teachers on January 24, 2025, and submitted on February 3, 2025. This instrument was worked on by teachers by checking the indicators of teaching strategies that had been applied during the learning process. To calculate the percentage of strategy implementation, the number of indicators checked is divided by the total indicators available in each strategy category, then multiplied by 100. The "notes" column in the checklist functions to write additional information or clarification from teachers regarding certain indicators that may need to be explained further. Based on the results that have been analyzed, experienced teachers showed a very high level of strategy implementation in most categories, such as Learning Strategy Training, Problem Based Learning, Discovery Learning, and Cooperative Learning, all of which reached 100%. The complete results of the checklist filled out by experienced teachers can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. Experienced Teacher's

No.	Teaching Method	Teaching Strategy Indicators Applied	Percentage	Note
1	Learning Strategy Training	20/20	100%	
	Metacognitive Strategy	10/10	100%	
	Cognitive Strategy	6/6	100%	
	Affective Strategy	4/4	100%	
2	Project Based Learning	9/10	90%	

3	Problem Based Learning	9/9	100%
4	Discovery Learning	6/6	100%
5	CALL	1/6	16,67%
6	Cooperative Learning	7/7	100%
7	Active Learning	5/5	100%
8	Integrated Learning	6/6	100%
9	Flipped Learning	2/4	50%
10	Competency Based Learning	3/3	100%
11	Differentiated Learning	3/3	100%

To ensure the accuracy of the data from the Teaching Strategy Checklist, direct observation was conducted by the researcher on Monday, February 3, 2025, from 10:30 to 12:40 in class 9. The observation lasted for 130 minutes, and the researcher placed herself in one of the back seats of the class to observe the learning process without disturbing students' learning activities. The material discussed at that time was "recount text". The teacher began the activity by greeting, praying, and giving advice before entering the class, then reviewing students' understanding of the material to be taught (Harmin, et.al., 2022). The teacher wrote important points on the whiteboard such as the definition, structure, and linguistic characteristics of the recount text, and accompanied students when completing the recount writing assignment that had been given.

Several students were asked to come forward and present their writing results in front of the class, while other students were asked to pay attention. The teacher also asked questions to other students to ensure they were listening and listening to their friends in front of the class (Urmila, et.al., 2023). Two-way interaction took place actively, including the use of English which was corrected and corrected by the teacher if it was not appropriate. The teacher also showed an appreciative attitude towards students and emphasized the importance of using good language. In the next session, students work in groups to fill in the gaps in the dialogue from the textbook. The answers to the questions are written on sticky notes, then the sticky notes are attached to HVS paper, then one of the group representatives sticks their work on the whiteboard to be corrected by other groups. This activity is closed with reflection by the teacher and students. The classroom atmosphere during the learning process remains conducive from beginning to end.

### *Differences in Strategies between Novice and Experienced Teachers*

From the research findings, we can see the teaching strategy preferences used by both teachers based on their teaching experience (age), namely novice teachers and experienced teachers. Both show different strategic tendencies reflected through the two main instruments used, namely the Teaching Strategy Checklist and the Observation Checklist. Based on four observation meetings, it appears that at the fourth meeting both young teachers and experienced teachers have shown a teaching pattern that tends to be stable, so

that the observation stage is considered to have reached saturation point (Jurniarti, et.al., 2023). To deepen understanding of the preferences and reasons behind the choice of certain strategies, interviews were conducted after the last observation. This interview aims to further explore the underlying teaching reasons, the background of the use of strategies, and how teaching experience influences their decisions in choosing certain approaches in the classroom.

The first instrument, namely the Teaching Strategy Checklist, shows that novice English teachers apply various learning strategies such as learning strategy training (including metacognitive, cognitive, and affective strategies), project-based learning, problem-based learning, discovery learning, cooperative learning, active learning, competency-based learning, and differentiated learning. In their teaching practices, novice teachers actively interact with students, provide explanations in stages, do ice breaking, involve students in group discussions, and facilitate them in understanding the material through various examples and exercises. However, novice teachers have never applied flipped learning strategies and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). This can be seen from the limited school facilities and minimal student access to digital media (Widiastuti, et.al., 2023).

Instead, teachers deliver more materials directly in the classroom, and guide students one by one when they have difficulty understanding the material. In addition, experienced teachers tend to often apply various teaching methods listed in the Teaching Strategy Checklist, even almost all strategies are applied, including Learning Strategy Training, Problem Based Learning, Discovery Learning, Cooperative Learning, Active Learning, and Integrated Learning. In practice, experienced teachers demonstrate flexibility in using various approaches, such as combining individual and group work, providing direct feedback, involving students in correcting friends' answers, and utilizing discussions to deepen understanding. Experienced teachers are also consistent in building a conducive classroom atmosphere, adjusting learning to students' needs, and providing space for students to ask questions and express opinions.

The second instrument is observation. Based on the results of field observations, the teaching strategy preferences of novice teachers began to show saturation in the fourth observation. This can be seen from the repetitive learning patterns, where teachers tend to use a direct approach and the same techniques, such as writing material on the board, asking students to underline vocabulary that is not understood, and explaining the meaning gradually. Although this strategy is effective for building basic understanding, the repetition of similar methods from one meeting to the next shows the limited variety of strategies used. Teachers also seem more comfortable using a structured and teacher-centered approach.

Like novice teachers, observation data from experienced teachers also reached saturation in the fourth meeting because it showed a relatively stable and repetitive learning pattern in each session. No new strategy variations or significant changes in approach were found in the last observation, so the information obtained was sufficient to represent their teaching strategy preferences. During the observation, experienced teachers seemed to prefer an approach based on collaboration and active student participation. They often used guided discussion techniques, asked students to answer questions verbally, and encouraged them to correct each other and share understanding through group work. In addition, teachers also often included reflections at the end of the session to ensure that students understood the

material that had been studied (Saputra, et.al., 2020). Her preference for open and responsive strategies demonstrates skills in adapting teaching to the classroom environment. This suggests that teaching experience helps shape teachers' tendencies to choose strategies that encourage student engagement and enhance understanding through social interaction.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlights the distinct teaching strategies employed by novice and experienced English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Seririt, especially within the framework of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The findings reveal that novice teachers tend to rely on structured and direct instructional methods such as learning strategy training, discovery learning, and cooperative learning, driven by their limited classroom experience and the need for classroom management. In contrast, experienced teachers demonstrate a greater inclination toward flexible, student-centered approaches like project-based and problem-based learning, which align more closely with 21st-century skill development. Both groups of teachers were found to consistently apply affective and social strategies to foster positive relationships with students. Key factors influencing their strategy preferences include teaching experience, available resources, and student readiness and characteristics. These insights shed light on the pedagogical differences shaped by experience levels and emphasize the importance of adaptive teaching in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka effectively.

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