



The Implementation of Merdeka Learning Flow in Traditional-Based Dance to Increase Junior High School Students' Creativity

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Abstract. This research aims to identify the application of MERDEKA learning flow in Dance subjects at schools and its effects on students' creativity improvement in dancing. The MERDEKA learning flow is the acronym of *Mulai dari diri sendiri* (starts from oneself), *Elaborasi konsep* (concept elaboration), *Ruang kolaborasi* (collaboration space), *Demonstrasi kontekstual* (contextual demonstration), *Elaborasi pemahaman* (understanding elaboration), *Koneksi antar materi* (inter-materials connection) and *Aksi nyata* (concrete action). In 2021, the Government via Education Minister released Kurikulum Sekolah Penggerak (lit. Mover School Curriculum), but there are no significant changes upon the implementation since there are still many teachers using the old way to teach, and today, there appears to be an approach called MERDEKA learning flow that is assumed to match this type of curriculum. MERDEKA learning flow requires students to be more active in understanding the lesson without being dependent on the teacher and makes them explore much deeper in comprehension and practice. In this research, a quantitative approach and experimental method are used. The primary data collection tools are tests or questionnaires, observation, interviews, and documentation. The research is executed in SMPN 2 Cibinong to grade-7 using the new curriculum, that is, Sekolah Penggerak. The data analysis is using inferential analysis. The study showed that by using this approach, the students' creativity were elevated. Moreover, the learning result achieved using MERDEKA learning flow was also shown in the improvement of their creativity especially in moving and creating traditional-based dance movements.

Keywords: MERDEKA Learning Flow · Creativity · Choreography

1 Introduction

Change and development of science and information-technology as well as culture had happened since 2010, not to mention that the global outbreak seemed to force everyone to adapt more quickly to it. Education is obliged to adapt with technology and condition during the pandemic, but education sector was accounted as being slow and static. What happened in schools and classrooms from year to year has been the same even after the ever-changing curriculum and learning method took place. Students has not become the

learning subject, instead, they are the learning object for teachers. The same thing is true by the time Kurikulum Penggerak was implemented, during which nothing much has changed because there were still considerable numbers of teacher who used the old ways to teach. Today, teachers are demanded to be more creative, as well as develop the method and media for the better, especially when they have to face the students who are about to recover from 2-years-worth learning loss due to COVID.

The approach introduced during Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar to mover teachers is MERDEKA learning flow, which was initially used during mover teacher candidate education program only, but now it began to be implemented in school's teaching and learning activity. The word MERRDEKA is the acronym of *Mulai dari diri sendiri* (starts from oneself), *Elaborasi Konsep* (concept elaboration), *Ruang kolaborasi* (collaboration space), *Refleksi terbimbing* (guided reflection), *Demonstrasi kontekstual* (contextual demonstration), *Elaborasi pemahaman* (understanding elaboration), *Koneksi antar materi* (inter-materials connection) and *Aksi nyata* (*concrete action*). Thus, the learning process on children is composed of eight steps with the activities are done accordingly to the aforementioned acronym. MERDEKA learning flow is seen as successfully engaging the students to be more active, in addition to improving their ability in practical application or implementation of the knowledge (or theories), for the reason that there is a step for applying concrete action within the flow.

The purpose of MERRDEKA learning flow is to be the initial step to bring independency of learning upon students, controllably and in a guided manner. Additionally, it aims to uncover its own positive and negative areas as early as possible with the purpose of the user may find solutions to fix what it is lacking and at the same time improving the quality of what it already has, so that MERRDEKA learning flow is suitable with students' characteristics in their own class [1].

Creativity, as stated by Rhodes [2], is distinguished into person dimension, product process, and press, while creativity itself. According to Supriadi [3] is an ability a person owns to create something new, whether it is an idea or a real product that is relatively different compared to what had existed. In addition, Munandar [4] stated that creativity is an ability to make new combination based on data, information, or existing elements. Creativity described from those statements is more focused on never-been-seen products or results that come from originality. However, if it one talks about a product, it is always tied to how it is being produced, and the process is always tied to the creator individually, as how it has been explained by Guilford [5] where creativity refers to OK abilities that are characteristics of creative people.

Dance is a manifestation, realization, and expression performed in a set of dancing movements that contains comments about reality in life, so it may fuse with its audience after the performance is over. Soedarsono [6] stated that "Dance is a set of movements that includes basic dancing elements such as rhythm, music accompaniment, fashion, space, and theme." Dancing means creating structured movements with certain pattern that they come together into something called dance. In dancing, one must be confident to move and make beautiful movements. The first step in creating dancing arts is possible by deciding the theme to ensure the meaning and message to convey [7]. Understanding creation method in dancing is the basis to explore various movement technique. Each

dance in Indonesia has their own unique technique. Movement technique and their processes might be the same, albeit different way to say. Otherwise, it is also possible to have similar technique, process, and terminology.

There was an old writing in a school blog, entitled “*Alur Pembelajaran Merdeka – Berkarya Sederhana*” by Widiyanto [8]. The writer explained the flow of Merdeka learning in Simple Arts subject using the aid of Edmodo platform during online learning. In the mentioned article, the arts used was not specific so any kind of arts may be included, but here in this writing, the type of arts is specifically directed to tradition-based creative dance.

The composition of this article is aimed to describe the application of MERDEKA learning flow on dancing lesson in a school that used the new curriculum, namely mover school, as well as the impact of the application of MERDEKA learning flow towards the improvement of creativity of Junior High School students especially in creating dance movements.

2 Research Methods

In this research, an experimental quantitative was used. Experimental is one of many methods in quantitative used to find the effect of independent variables (treatment) on controlled, dependent variable [9]. This research used variables with Likert scale, to be precise, questions that show agreement or disagreement of the respondents [9]. Test, questionnaire, observation, and documentation were used as the data collection techniques. Sampling of population was done at SMPN 2 Cibinong on 7-grade students with mover school curriculum. The research data analysis used was inferential analysis, in other words, it is a method used to draw conclusion based on sampling results. The final result of this data processing method derived as possibility or probability which is delivered in percentage [10]. According to Sugiyono [11], inferential statistic is statistical technique employing sample data to analyze a population. In order to visualize the population properly, random sampling had been used. There were three data collection tools in this research:

1. Test/assessment, done two times before and after application.
2. Completing questionnaire two times, before and after application, distributed to students representative of each class.
3. Observation, performed two times, before and after application.

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 The Application of Merdeka Learning Flow

The word MERRDEKA is the acronym of *Mulai dari diri sendiri* (starts from oneself), *Elaborasi Konsep* (concept elaboration), *Ruang kolaborasi* (collaboration space), *Refleksi terbimbing* (guided reflection), *Demonstrasi kontekstual* (contextual demonstration), *Elaborasi pemahaman* (understanding elaboration), *Koneksi antar materi* (inter-materials connection) and *Aksi nyata* (*concrete action*). Thus, the learning process on children is composed of eight steps with the activities are done accordingly to the aforementioned acronym. The explanation of those 8 steps or stages of Merdeka learning flow are as follow:

1. *Mulai dari diri sendiri*, meaning starts from oneself.
2. *Elaborasi Konsep*, meaning elaboration of concept.
3. *Ruang kolaborasi*, meaning the space of collaboration.
4. *Refleksi terbimbing*, meaning guided reflection.
5. *Demonstrasi kontekstual*, meaning contextual demonstration.
6. *Elaborasi pemahaman*, understanding elaboration.
7. *Koneksi antar materi*, inter-materials connection, and
8. *Aksi nyata*, meaning *concrete action*.

In dancing art subject using the mover school curriculum, there are learning achievements and learning step flow. The students in this curriculum were divided into several phases, i.e. grade-7 to 9 are in phase-D. The following is the illustrations of learning achievement and dimension on students in every phase.

Figure 1 portrayed students' collaboration to discuss the dance they were going to perform. Here, all students should be actively participated so that collaboration happened.

Moreover, the following table showed the flow steps of MERDEKA learning in tradition-based creative dance lessons.

From the table above it is seen that every step has specific activities to raise students' creativity. Thus, the learning objective might be more meaningful as the students were explored during the teaching and learning process.

Meanwhile, at the end of step A (*aksi nyata*, concrete action), the students executed simple performance at school to show their dance creation and to be appreciated by the audience. The students were engaged in the learning process accordingly to the steps based on MERDEKA learning flow and the writer observed any visible developments and happened events. The following is the illustration by the time the students executed the dance performance independently, with the event being named *Festival Seni Tari Kreasi* (Creative Dance Arts Festival) (Fig. 2).

The *Festival Seni Tari Kreasi* (Creative Dance Arts Festival) has been held as the final stage of the research procedures. The students performances were based on the learning process as stated in the 8 stages of MERDEKA Curriculum flows (Fig. 3).



Fig. 1. Collaboration space step.



Fig. 2. Dance arts festival.



Fig. 3. Students' performance.

3.2 Creativity Improvement on Students

Based on the results of the research after MERDEKA learning flow is applied, there was an improvement in students' creativity in creating dance and exploring movements. This improvement is seen from the test, questionnaire, and observation (Table 1).

Test Results. For the test results, the writer gave two tests before and after the implementation. The second test showed 0.76% improvement, using the following formula:

Table 1. The 8-Learning step MERDEKA learning flow dance arts for grade-7 mover school curriculum

Flow	Point of Discussion	Participants Activities	Participants Products	Dancing Lesson
M <i>Mulai Dari Diri</i> (Starts from oneself)	Trigger questions to begin the topic. This step became the self-reflection for students.	Answering trigger questions in a form of a discussion forum quiz (students can see their friends' responses.)	Worksheet	Trigger question: Have you ever participated in a dancing art performance? Have you ever create a dance? Do you know the meaning of choreographer?

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Flow	Point of Discussion	Participants Activities	Participants Products	Dancing Lesson
E <i>Eksplorasi</i> <i>Konsep</i> (Concept Exploration)	Key materials to build up understanding.	Students appreciate contemporary video, read articles about Indonesian choreographer, study presentation slide about Dance Composition, and memorize previous lesson about Tari Nusantara. Students give comments on the appreciation.	Video and learning device, student worksheet	Students appreciate contemporary dance and creative dance of students from last year. Students give comments or opinion after appreciation.
R <i>Ruang Kolaborasi</i> (Collaboration Space)	Group assignment for deeper understanding, as well as to motivate collaboration.	Students receive guideline from the teacher to make working group and following instruction according to the worksheet and discussion guideline.	Group worksheet and discussion guideline	Students make groups to create dance art, started from deciding the theme and providing different responsibilities among group members
R <i>Refleksi Terbimbing</i> (Guided Reflection)	Students write reflection of the lesson using the prepared questioning guideline.	Students present their discussion forum group work result (students can see their friends' responses.)	Worksheet, presentation for group-discussion result	The representative of the group present their discussion result, the chosen theme, dance title, group name, group hierarchy, and the work progress

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Flow	Point of Discussion	Participants Activities	Participants Products	Dancing Lesson
D <i>Demonstrasi Kontekstual</i> (Contextual Demonstration)	Independent assignment to evaluate understanding.	Direct supervision and discussion within the group	Worksheet for lesson application result, the result of creative dancing from each group	
E <i>Elaborasi Pemahaman</i> (Understanding Elaboration)	Supervision, discussion, and Q&A with the teacher to measure the level of understanding	Students participate in a summative test in a form of a quiz / HOTS questions test including RK and key material, scoring, students may retake test	Worksheet and direct summative test or via Google Form	Quiz about dancing composition, consists of 25 multiple choice questions
K <i>Koneksi Antar Materi</i> (Inter-material Connection)	Discussion for learning reflection and making follow-up plans that are related to other lessons	Group discussion and direct practice, submitting articles about dance art	Preparing supporting elements in performance within each group, submitting dance article	Preparing supporting elements such as: music accompaniment, costume, property, performance, Submitting articles about dance (Indonesian language)
A <i>Aksi Nyata</i> (Concrete Act)	Executing concrete action at school or in the classroom	Each group perform their creation in front of their friends, being recorded and documented, and upload the file in Google Drive (which is accessible to other participants).	Executing concrete action, executing art performance	Each group perform creative tradition-based creative dancing with the supporting elements, appreciated by students from neighboring class

$((Y-X)/X)*100\%$ where X is the score before the implementation and Y is the score after. According to the variable table, this was considered as significant.

Scoring List. Scoring List Dance Arts Grade-7 semester-2 (Table 2).

Table 2. List of students' test result,

No.	Student Name	Class	Assessment 1 (X)	Assessment 2 (Y)	Note $((Y-X)/X)*100\%$
1.	Ahmad Humam Rifqi	VII-1	87	95	0,092
2.	Kamilia Oktavianie Putri V	VII-1	83	90	0,084
3.	Evandika Juliandi	VII-2	85	93	0,094
4.	Naila Zhafira Izzati	VII-2	85	92	0,082
5.	Nayla Almaqhira Ramadhani	VII-3	84	90	0,071
6.	Faza Anggi Nabawwa Siregar	VII-3	83	90	0,084
7.	Viola Anindita Kurniawan	VII-4	90	95	0,056
8.	Annisa Karimah	VII-4	86	92	0,070
9.	Muhammad Faiq Azka	VII-5	80	88	0,100
10.	Zahran Kevin	VII-5	82	88	0,073
11.	Disa Agustina	VII-6	87	93	0,069
12.	Queen Aqila Althafunnisa	VII-6	90	95	0,056
13.	Fauzia Safa Almagfira	VII-7	85	92	0,082
14.	Keysa Fadhillah	VII-7	83	90	0,084
15.	Andini Putri Maheswari	VII-8	85	93	0,094
16.	Raihanna Aqilla Ardian	VII-8	85	92	0,082
17.	Syavira Dinar Handayani	VII-9	82	90	0,098
18.	Intan Diah Astarini	VII-9	84	90	0,071
19.	Muhammad Fathir Rizqi	VII-10	83	90	0,084

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

No.	Student Name	Class	Assessment 1 (X)	Assessment 2 (Y)	Note $((Y-X)/X)*100\%$
20.	Vitrah Nur Ramadhani	VII-10	85	92	0,082
21.	Syafira Zahra Ramadhani	VII-11	87	95	0,092
22.	Gizzella Anggrieta	VII-11	88	95	0,080
23.	Briliant Movic	VII-5	80	90	0,125
24.	Nurlia Azura Delfiani	VII-5	80	88	0,100
25.	Nawang Fanni	VII-8	90	90	0,000
26.	Charlotte Zefanya	VII-2	83	92	0,108
27.	Khayla Nizami	VII-2	88	92	0,045
28.	Muhammad Mufti	VII-4	82	90	0,098
29.	Intan Diah Astarini	VII-9	85	92	0,082
30.	Dzika Garlinda M	VII-10	90	92	0,022
31.	Rani Deatry D	VII-10	85	88	0,035
32.	Zahira Nindya	VII-10	90	93	0,033
	Average Increase				0,075

Questionnaire. Questionnaire completion was done twice before and after MERDEKA learning flow is implemented. Looking at the total points, the result of the second questionnaire after the implementation is higher than the first, where there were 0.51% improvement (Table 3). It was filled out by the representatives of the students in each class involved and the sample was chosen randomly. The followings are the points result of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire results showed significant key point to support the objective of the study. The responses stated that their creativity was elevated through the implementation of the aforementioned approach. Hence, this satisfaction result was in line the goal of the teaching and learning process.

Observation Results. Based on the results of the observation, there was seen some development in students' activity and activeness after the application of MERDEKA learning flow.

According to the variable data has made:

As shown on the data and variable in Table 4, the improvement is considered as significant, since the increase is over 0.5% for the test and questionnaire result. Consistent with the observation data that was accomplished before and after the application, the writer displayed in the form of graphic based on Guilford theory [5], where it had been

Table 3. Students' questionnaire result.

No.	Student Name	Class	Questioner 1	Questioner 2	Note
1.	Ahmad Humam Rifqi	VII-1	19	27	0,42
2.	Kamilia Oktavianie Putri V	VII-1	26	30	0,15
3.	Evandika Juliandi	VII-2	13	20	0,54
4.	Naila Zhafira Izzati	VII-2	16	33	1,06
5.	Nayla Almaqhfira Ramadhani	VII-3	16	30	0,88
6.	Faza Anggi Nabawwa Siregar	VII-3	15	23	0,53
7.	Viola Anindita Kurniawan	VII-4	20	23	0,15
8.	Annisa Karimah	VII-4	14	15	0,07
9.	Muhammad Faiq Azka	VII-5	15	21	0,40
10.	Zahran Kevin	VII-5	16	20	0,25
11.	Disa Agustina	VII-6	24	28	0,17
12.	Queen Aqila Althafunnisa	VII-6	32	36	0,13
13.	Fauzia Safa Almagfira	VII-7	20	24	0,20
14.	Keysa Fadhillah	VII-7	15	28	0,87
15.	Andini Putri Maheswari	VII-8	12	16	0,33
16.	Raihanna Aqilla Ardian	VII-8	13	25	0,92
17.	Syavira Dinar Handayani	VII-9	20	32	0,60
18.	Intan Diah Astarini	VII-9	20	32	0,60
19.	Muhammad Fathir Rizqi	VII-10	17	30	0,76
20.	Vitrah Nur Ramadhani	VII-10	15	22	0,47
21.	Syafira Zahra Ramadhani	VII-11	16	26	0,63
22.	Gizzella Anggrieta	VII-11	20	32	0,60
23.	Briliant Movic	VII-5	16	24	0,50
24.	Nurlia Azura Delfiani	VII-5	10	15	0,50
25.	Nawang Fanni	VII-8	22	34	0,55
26.	Charlotte Zefanya	VII-2	20	30	0,50
27.	Khayla Nizami	VII-2	13	25	0,92
28.	Muhammad Mufti	VII-4	16	24	0,50
29.	Intan Diah Astarini	VII-9	14	22	0,57
30.	Dzika Garlinda M	VII-10	17	27	0,59
31.	Rani Deatry D	VII-10	14	20	0,43
32.	Zahira Nindya	VII-10	18	26	0,44
	Average Increase				0,075

Table 4. Improvement variables.

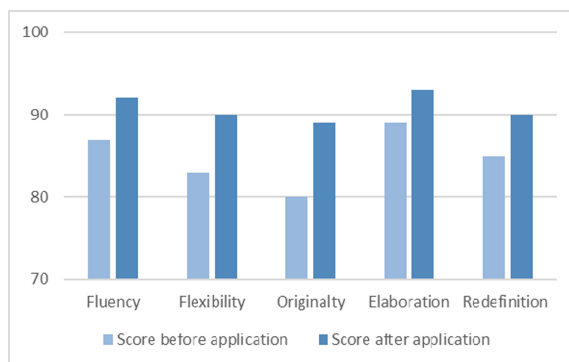
No.	Result	Predicate
1	0.1–0.4%	Not significant
2	0.5–0.8%	Significant
3	0.9–1.2%	Very significant

stated that there are five creative thinking abilities as follows: fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, and redefinition. The following is the graphic creativity improvement according to Guilford (Fig. 4):

The chart above has also supported the aforementioned findings stated in Table 3 where students share similar responses in terms of students creativity. In short, the chart has shown several indicators of creativity that increase by the end of applying the 8 steps in MERDEKA Belajar curriculum flow.

The description of the characteristics of five creative thinking ability as stated by Guilford:

1. Fluency is the ability to manifest thoughts. After the application, students created more thoughts in this indicator.
2. Flexibility is the ability to express various way and approach to solve problems. In this indicator, students were able to independently solve some troubles happened since the preparation throughout the final group performance.
3. Originality is the ability to invent new, original, non-cliché ideas. In this indicator, the students were easier to guide to create new ideas after the application, even though they still took reference from existing arts.
4. Elaboration is the ability to describe something in details. In this indicator, after the application, the students were better to explain, arrange, and create report papers about their dancing arts started from background, moral value from the dance, musical concept, costume, and blocking.

**Fig. 4.** Creativity improvement.

5. Redefinition is the ability to review a problem based on different viewpoints compared to what had been understood within society. In this indicator, the students were able to accept and fix what they missed after guided reflection and pre-assessment were done.

4 Conclusion

The application of MERDEKA learning flow could be an alternative learning approach to make students more active and independent, as well as improving their creativity especially while using Merdeka Belajar curriculum which is currently being implemented in some selected schools. This improvement could be seen based on the result of the following data analysis: score increase on the test, point increase on questionnaire, also, based on the observation that had been categorized by Guilford into five characteristics of creative thinking ability. After application, students' fluency produced more ideas in terms of deciding the theme, music, and movements. Students also showed improvement in their flexibility, as they were seen to gain express more freedom and variety of movements. Students were also able to provide original new ideas even if they took reference or inspiration from existing arts. During elaboration, students could apply movement theories they had learned better than before. As for redefinition, students could generate better innovation and new thoughts.

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