

# DANCE LITERACY AS AN EXPRESSION OF EXPERIENCE AND CREATIVITY IN DANCE EDUCATION

<sup>1</sup>Atip Nurharini, <sup>1</sup>Ika Ratnaningrum, <sup>1</sup>Putri Yanuarita Sutikno, <sup>1</sup>Farid Ahmadi, <sup>2</sup>Intan Permata Hapsari

***Abstract---**This article elaborates on reading and writing the body movement as an expression that can be depicted through dance creativity. In reading the move as an expression of communication, students can find ideas, thoughts, minds, or feelings which are eventually expressed through dance moves. Activities in dance literacy help students develop their dance reading skills of what they see related to the choreography. Moreover, the dance created through dance literacy learning is students' skills in using body movement language, including observation, implementation, exploration, construction, and creativity. The effect of dance literacy in dance education at school is as a medium to implement habit formation to the students about dance literacy; therefore, it can foster activities such as the expression of feeling, sensitivity, dance experience, and creativity, which are eventually arranged as a dance creation.*

***Keywords---**dance literacy, expression, creativity, choreography, dance education*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The attempts to promote a nation that is growing and developing in the industrial revolution 4.0 era cannot be separated from the role of creativity of human resources. Creativity is an essential part of emerging ideas and thoughts in making innovative creations. The development of creative thinking in children is required in science, technology, education, and culture (Hrybiuk, 2019). Creativity includes the thinking process and enriches experiences through the interactional process with the teachers, students, and the environment (Kupers *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it needs an education role that involves creative education features to create and develop more creative people who can think independently and critically (Mishra and Henriksen, 2018).

Creativity is a thing attached to the activities in dance education, it is important to train students to be sensitive, imaginative, creative, and innovative. Creativity is a keyword related to any kind of dance, whether the student is as a dancer, choreographer, dance teacher, dance enthusiast, and dance critic. The creativity that is developed through dance education puts the priority on students' well-being, benefits creation, facilitates the creative process in creating dance such as the ownership, the improvement in learning interest and learning motivation

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<sup>1</sup>Primary School Teacher Education, Education Faculty Science, Semarang State University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Sekaran Gunungpati Semarang Indonesia  
e-mail: atip.nurharini@mail.unnes.ac.id

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(Barton, 2014). The process of dance creation by a choreographer is called choreography, which refers to the selection and management of moves into a dance, in which there are creative behaviors. (Fitrianisa, 2016).

Dance education activities require the process of dance literacy to appreciate dance as an expression that can create a new construction. The process cannot be separated from the activities of reading, writing, analyzing, and evaluating body language. Dance literacy as a written language of the related field such as dance study and dance critics to frame and discuss the dance subject as a students' learning medium (Dils, 2007; ).

Dance, essentially, is a part of body literacy which is expressed through a moving body. The move is created as a literacy process to reveal imagination, thoughts, and self-expression. Dance as a literacy medium has a unique power and potential, besides, dance is knowledge that can be realized as a form of investigation, a medium to develop and represent knowledge through body language (Leonard, Hall and Herro, 2016).

Dance literacy and creativity role in dance education have a mutual relationship, makes a chart note of dance in teaching-learning activities (Ashley, 2013). To understand a dance, individuals need to build a comprehension network that is obtained from life experience and education, by reading and writing dance moves. This activity can be accomplished in various ways and through individual contemplation as well as the dialogue with others (Dils, 2007).

With the increase in literacy, body movement can emerge and develop to fulfill the functions of dance, in terms of the improvement in skills, knowledge, and sensitivity. The needs for dance creation can be used as a child therapy and childcare. These moves involve touch, dance moves, rhythm, and music in a child's life, so it can foster the child's development (Levy, 2017 ; Giguere, 2011). Dance moves are subjective and emotional power combining with body consciousness to move in a particular space, rhythm, and volume to achieve the dance creation (Dragon, 2015). Dance is a universal and non-verbal language that can be a means of communication with others. Body expression through physical action or observing the expression can improve health, coordination, cognitive skills, motivation, and human (Roxas *et al.*, 2018). Body expression is an important modal for communicative communication and inventing effective and conscious technology. Body expression is more important for non-verbal communication than it was thought (Kleinsmith and Bianchi-Berthouze, 2013)

The dance presented by a person comprises values of expressive moves which are communicated verbally with a certain limit. The characteristics of dance as a communicative art are the management of energy, space, and rhythm while producing interactive and communicative interaction. The values behind every move have meanings, expressions, or symbolic expressions. However, sometimes, not all dance enthusiasts understand the purpose of the dance show. To help the enthusiasts who less understand dance move, it needs literacy of instruments, costumes, make up, and any related things of the dance presented by the dancers. Several things that can help students learn to dance can be accomplished in various ways. It means that learning dance is easier than learning another kind of art (Englund and Sandstrom, 2015). However, not all teachers understand how to teach dance. Consequently, it burdens the students to find out and practice dance moves.

Based on the field observation, it obtained the data during dance learning at SDN Sampangan 02 in Semarang that the students did not possess deep knowledge, experiences, and skills about dance moves. The students less

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understood the dance presented in the video, the students were less able to provide arguments for the dance moves. Moreover, students were not accustomed to finding out ideas and thoughts actively and excellently to do dance moves. The phenomena were triggered by the students' condition that was lack of creative thinking and finding out ideas, answers, and creates dance. This is triggered by the lack of literacy activities to write, read, and understand each dance move.

Reading activities of body language have not been familiar in dance education. Teachers are less able to broaden and deepen the materials communicatively, they do not make students get used to appreciating when finding out ideas and thoughts actively and excellently of what they see and observe. Observation is a part of dance literacy, therefore, students are able to express and find out ideas which can be explored in creating a dance. Furthermore, students can be creative and skillful in practicing dance moves. The phenomena are indicators of advantages of dance education by involving dance literacy process as a dance expression and creativity.

Dance education is a pedagogical science that is different and humanizes people. The essence of this education is students' development through increasing aesthetic awareness. The activities offer an opportunity to improve the reasoning process by extending imagination, perception, and conceptual range in dance expression and exploration. To support this effort, aesthetic concept and its relevance with dance as a profile of dance. The expression developed through moves creativity is becoming the approach in dance education, by creating a dance, a dance show, and dance creativity as a result of dance literacy process in dance education at schools (Bannon and Sanderson, 2000). The activities of dance education involve the understanding process of knowledge, imagination, exploration, composition, and creativity (Nurharini, 2018). Body expression and spontaneity are shortly related to students' responses and emotions to the stimulus of expressive activities and practices (Canales-Lacruz and Arizcuren-Balsco, 2019).

Dance is a medium to transfer traditional knowledge to young generations. Dance can be viewed as a pedagogical practice that aims to build tradition and social norms for the children in society. During the shift of the 20st-century about the importance of dance for children, dance is promoted as a medium to foster children's positive development and raise their awareness of the world. Dance is counted as an academic subject, it plays an important role in social integration, in cognitive and affective learning, as well as skills and as a means of communication among individuals and groups. Therefore, dance program for students offers advantages of cultural communication, as well as traditions and self identity. (Katz-Zichrony, 2015). Dance has been considered as an excellent activity to help cognitive development. In the last few years, neuroscientists have used dance as a model to learn the nervous process during the execution, expression, and observation of the presented move (Merom *et al.*, 2016).

**II. RESEARCH METHOD**

The subjects of this study were students of SDN Sampangan 02 Semarang. The researchers considered the time efficiency, cost, and energy, as well as the number of students to determine the number of samples. The researchers randomly selected the sample by comparing it to the population of some students. In this study, the sampling technique used by the researchers was purposive sampling with several considerations. The considerations included:

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- a) Children who have a potential in dance
- b) Children who are active during dance learning
- c) Children who are interested in dance learning
- d) Children who are active and creative in dance

The number of students as the sample was 30 students from the fourth and the fifth grade. Specifically, the fourth graders were 10 students and the fifth graders were 20 students.

**Techniques of Data Collection and Instruments**

In general, the methods of data collection in this study employed several complementary methods:

**a. Observation**

Observation was conducted by observing students' behaviors in following dance activities, observing something simultaneously as the basis of analysis. The guidelines of observation are (1) observing all things related to the process of dance education, (2) making a note of the data and symptoms evoked due to the process of dance literacy. When the students accomplish dance literacy, the researchers observed the students' activities. Observation was conducted for all students by using an observation sheet. Each student was observed by 5 observers. Therefore, the researchers involved 6 observers. The observation activity was conducted through 8 steps. During the 1-4 steps, the observation was about the process of literacy activities, while in 5-8 steps, the results of the literacy were implemented during creating a dance.

**b. Interview**

Semi-structured interview was conducted, recorded, transcribed, and analysed. Eventually, it produced a descriptive narration of students' subjective experience in developing dance moves and involving in the activities of dance literacy. The interview was conducted directly for 30 minutes using a recorder and video. The interview was conducted before and after the dance literacy. Each interviewer interviewed 5 students. The number of interviewers was 6 people using 6 recorders.

**c. Fieldnote Technique**

Field notes included notes of the research activities during dance learning. These notes depicted the important events in the process of dance literacy by reading the moves of body language until creating a dance.

**d. Documentation analysis**

It was used to identify and analyze the problems of reading dance literacy through dance creation, so that students were able to move, express their intention, forms, and techniques of dance moves. The analysis was carried out by taking pictures and videos of others' work, as well as students' pictures and videos during the activities of dance literacy by observing, repeating, assessing, and creating a dance. Each student became a reference to enrich the data that can reveal the events, behaviors, and students' skills.

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Below is the instrument of the research.

**Table 1:** Research instrument

Criteria	Subject	Research instrument
Dance literation	Students	Observation sheet Interview sheet Fieldnotes and camera

**Techniques of Data Analysis**

The qualitative technique was conducted through reducing data, presenting research procedures, and creating descriptive data in the forms of written or spoken words from people and the observed behaviours. The analysis process involved every data source including students, videos, records, and data sources through interview, observation, field notes, and documentation. In the step of data reduction, there was a comprehensive data analysis, selection, and specification for each part. This was undertaken to make comprehension easier when presented. The unnecessary things were left behind, while the related things were taken for the process of data reduction. Data display can be done by presenting specific data in tables, while the conclusion was by learning the data, interpreting, comparing, and making conclusions. In the analysis step, there were (1) natural setting was a primary data source and researchers were the key instrument, (2) descriptive, (3) emphasized the process instead of results, (2) inductive data analysis, and (5) meanings were the main concern. The research procedure created descriptive data in the forms of students’ written or spoken words and the action that can be observed during dance literature.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

3.1. Expression and Dance Creativity

The process of dance literacy produces students’ skills in communicating body language through observation, implementation, exploration, construction, and creativity process. The result obtained for each indicator is elaborated in detail as follows.

3.1.1. Observation

Dance education is conducted once a week on Friday for 1,5 hours. The teacher observed students as many as 30 students. In the learning activities of dance literacy, the teacher observed students’ activities involving reading, writing, and evaluating. Dance education has the following basic competence:

- Class /Semester : 4 / 1 (One)
- Theme 1 : Beauty in diversity
- Subtheme 1 : Cultural Diversity of My Nation
- Meeting : 2

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Basic Competence (KD):

- 3.3 Understand the basic moves of traditional dance
- 4.3 Practice the basic moves of traditional dance

Indicators:

- 3.3.1 Identify the basic moves Bungong Jeumpa traditional dance
- 3.3.2 Explain the basic moves Bungong Jeumpa traditional dance
- 4.3.1 Practice the basic moves Bungong Jeumpa traditional dance in standing position

Learning Objectives

1. After observing pictures, students are able to identify the basic moves of Bungong Jeumpa traditional dance in standing position correctly.
2. After observing pictures, students are able to mention the details of basic moves of Bungong Jeumpa traditional dance in standing position correctly
3. After observing pictures, students are able to practice the basic moves of Bungong Jeumpa traditional dance in standing position correctly with teacher’s count.

The teacher asks the students to observe dance pictures and videos. The observation of pictures included:

A. Basic Moves of Dance

In traditional dance, students observe the basic moves. The basic moves involve the head, hands, and leg moves. The observation results of each basic move are as follows.

a) Head and Neck Moves

Head and neck move in dance are such as *pacak gulu*, nodding, and shaking. The moves are presented in the following figure.



Figure 1. Head moves

b) Hand moves

The hand moves which are observed in this study are:



Figure 2. Hands moves

c) Leg moves

Leg moves in dance consist of several moves such as *jinjit*, *ngrundho*, and *lumaksono*. The types of leg move in dance are as follows.





Figure 3. Leg moves

d). Body Moves

Body moves consist of *hoyog*, *leyek*, *ogek lambung*, *megol*, *entrak*, *oklak*. The observation of body moves is clarified in the following figure.



Figure 4. Body moves

The observation of dance in the fifth graders is based on the theme, subtheme, basic competence, indicators, and learning objectives.

- Class /Semester : 5 / 2 (Two)
- Theme 9 : Things around us
- Subtheme 3 : Human and Things in Environment
- Meeting : 6
- Basic Competence (KD):

3.3 Understand floor patterns in creative traditional dance

4.3 Practice floor patterns in creative traditional dance

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Indicators:

- 3.3.1 Understand floor patterns in creative traditional dance
- 4.3.1 Practice floor patterns in creative traditional dance

Learning Objectives

- 1. After experimenting, students are able to present floor pattern moves in creative traditional dance with correct accompaniment.
- 2. After observing pictures, students are able to practice floor pattern moves in traditional dance creatively.

The activity of students' observation is presented in the following picture.



Figure 5. Students do observation

1. Reading

In reading activities, the students have a task to read body moves in a dance show or any move demonstrated by others. The obtained results after reading dance moves are the students can express the following moves:

- a. Head Moves: shaking, looking right-looking left
- b. Hand Moves: *lenggang* (moving two hands to the right and left side), moving both hands upward, swinging to the right-left, hitting, swinging hands upward, pulling hands downward, and making hands straight to side.
- c. Body Moves: Shaking buttocks, moving body to the right-left side
- d. Leg Moves: tiptoeing, *srisik*, *tranjal*, *debek*, *gejuk*, jumping

2. Writing

In writing activities, students are able to write and describe various moves including head, body, hands, and leg moves. Besides, students are able to make a description of dance floor pattern, dance creativity in a dance show, expression, and dance skills of each dancer.

3. Evaluating

In evaluating activities, students are able to provide feedback, suggestion, critics, and guidance to the dance show.

3.1.2. Implementation



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The result of observing dances is then practiced together with other students. Each student is able to practice the moves based on the observation, both from pictures and videos. Students are able to create dance aesthetics, composition of works, and creating the beauty of property, make-up, costumes with very good results. It can be seen that students are able to show aesthetic moves using power technique based on the needs and theme. The moves found and practices are varied, including the counting, power, and feeling in the moves. The variety of moves in counting is counting one to eight produces 1 move, counting one to eight produces 2 moves, counting one to eight produces 3 moves, counting one to eight produces 5 moves, counting one to eight produces 5 moves, counting one to eight produces 6 moves. The moves implement dance characteristics such as *wiraga*, *wirama* and *wirasa*. The students' moves can be seen in the following figure.



Figure 6. Students' Moves

3.1.3. Exploration

Students are able to develop the existing moves into a variety of moves. Basic moves are developed into various moves. All moves are varied through energy changes, for example, sharp or soft, strong or weak. The moves are explored into tight or loose moves, free flow or balanced. Students are able to make changes in moves with various dynamics.



Figure 7. Dance Exploration

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3.1.4. Construction

The body parts that students move look aesthetic and attractive. During the activities of dance learning, students set moves, arrange moves, and combine moves into a set of moves in harmony with the supporting elements of dance performance.



Figure 8. Moves construction

3.1.5. Creativity

Students' creativity can be built well, this can be seen from their development since the very first step of simple moves of body parts such as leg, hands, body, and head. Moreover, the moves are developed and practiced further. The moves are practiced in place then in another place. Furthermore, the students are filling the space including the direction, tempo, level (high-low), and rhythm. The second one is through music stimulation which is responded by creative moves.



Figure 9. Moves creativity

**DISCUSSION**

Dance literacy in dance education is carried out to create an expression as a process to reveal or present intention, thoughts, feelings, desire, wishes, emotions, and others of dance moves. Students' expression is an

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experience in dance. Expression is a communication process that students need to encounter in a medium which aims to build the same perception or message in communication.

However, the expression created by the students needs guidance to evoke emotion to perform total dance moves. The better the emotion is, the more various one's energy, design, and moves will be. Expression can be manifested through sadness, joy, anger, hate, fun, fear, and other moves. (Kleinsmith and Bianchi-Berthouze, 2013). The expression that students create is developed to reach a certain level of creativity. The development of materials is carried out by considering the improvement in dance literacy promoted by the teacher. As a result, students' creative process is developing, which is being creative in dance moves, creative in determining floor patterns which consist of air design (design/top pattern). The pattern consists of straight, circular and half-round. The straight pattern is firm, and strong, while the zig-zag pattern shows an imbalance and gives an impression that is not calm and confusion. (Supriyanto, 2018).

Dance literacy can be implemented in the activities of dance education so that students are able to communicate the language of moves, by using expression and creativity. This is because dance is a result of expression that can be defined as a man's way to communicate with the environment through the language of moves. (Hartono, 2018). Dance literacy can be built in students to make a creation or dance choreography through the training process at schools. Through this habit formation, students can be more sensitive to lessen or add dance moves through dance exploration and construction. (Warburton *et al.*, 2013). Dance training should be continuously conducted to train students' sensitivity to body moves. At the same time, this does not only deepen the understanding of knowledge, but also extends the practice to achieve an optimal result (Karkou and Sanderson, 2001).

To produce high creativity, it needs a training process of creative and innovative thinking to improve academic achievement, so there will be a positive correlation of creativity and academic (Kupers *et al.*, 2019)

**IV. CONCLUSION**

Dance education through the implementation of dance literacy can train students' skills in using body language, which is observation, implementation, exploration, construction, and creativity. The impact of dance literacy in dance education at schools is a medium to familiarize students with dance literacy, so it can foster activities such as the expression of feeling, sensitivity, dance experience, and creativity which eventually construct dance creation.

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