

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' LEARNING  
ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH *LESSON STUDY*:  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MERDEKA  
CURRICULUM**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research aimed at analyzing the implementation of lesson study to improve the Seventh Grade Students' learning achievements within the implication of the Merdeka Curriculum. This research was a classroom action research (CAR) and 26 students used as samples. To get the data, the researcher used Test. To analyze the data, the researcher used descriptive analysis. The results showed that the learning achievements of the Seventh Grade students of Islamic Integrated School of SMP Harapan Mulia Palembang had improved. It was proved by the learning achievements scores obtained during Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. In other words, in Cycle 1, it was found out that the total was 1550, mean score was 70, comprehensive ability was 70%, and learning completion was 75%) while in cycle 2, the total was 1780, mean score was 85, comprehensive ability was 85%, and learning completion was 98% It means that the average of comprehensive ability was 15% and*

*learning completion had increased by 23%.. In conclusion, the implementation of lesson study could improve the learning achievements of the Seventh Grade Students of Islamic Integrated School of SMP Harapan Mulia Palembang.*

**Keywords:** *Learning Achievements; Lesson Study; The Merdeka Curriculum*

## Introduction

At the beginning of this writing, this research describes about education, Education is regarded as the most basic human right which is in accordance with the constitution of 1945 in Article 31 and Verse 1 and also with the constitution of 2003 No 20 which is related to National Education System in which nation gives guarantee to all of Indonesian people to get education. Furthermore, education is generally considered as a great effort to learn by heart the knowledge which can be studied either in formal or non-formal situation. Recently, Indonesian government has launched a new curriculum which is expected to be more effective than the former

curriculum. This new curriculum is familiarly known as The Merdeka Curriculum. This kind of curriculum is applied to make human resources (students) to be more competitive within this industrial Era 4.0.

In relation to the speech of Nadiem Makarim, the Minister of Education on December 11, 2019 as cited in Pertiwi and Pusparini (2021) who explained that The Merdeka Curriculum as a new system to create a fun learning environment rather than burdensome learners by a particular achievement of the score. It is expected to be able to improve the quality of Indonesian human resources. Rahayu, et al., (2022) further state that The Merdeka Curriculum is developed to create millennial generations who are affordable to get the lesson form the teacher on the right way. Meanwhile, Pantiwati (2015) emphasized The Merdeka Curriculum applied by the teacher can make students memorize and comprehend the lesson being taught. In this context, students are suggested that they can make use of technology devices to

support their learning since the materials in term of textual books are gradually left and the teachers are required to be innovative and creative in developing teaching activity. They need to apply a new effective learning innovation.

As the matter of fact, to implement a new effective teaching-learning innovation is not easy for many teachers. They still have problems and difficulties and some factors must be involved for this case. Kholik et al., (2022) state that one of the factors that makes the teachers feel hard to apply accept and apply a new effective teaching-learning innovation is that they are too strong to resistant a new education policy in doing a change and innovation. Yet, on the other side, teachers are needed to be competent teachers in teaching. It is line with Law No. 14, 2005 on lecturer and teachers which teachers are required to have some competences, namely, pedagogical competence, personality competence, professional competence, and social competence. One of the

efforts done by government to help the lecturers and teachers is by providing them with the competence in conducting classroom action research and lesson study. (Amri, 2013).

Based on the results of the interviews with the class master of the Seventh Grade students, it was found out that the literacy and numeracy ability was still low and needed special intervention or treatment. It was proved by looking at the results of pretest given by the researcher which showed the mean score was 59, comprehensive ability was 59% with learning completion by 47%, categorized in low level. It happened because the teacher always applied conventional teaching method such lecturing in every meeting. In this case, the teacher started the lesson by giving a lecture and task or exercise to the students from the first meeting till the following meeting, and it got worst and worst and he or she did not check the answer of the students. The students felt bored and it made them less motivated to study. This was believed to be the problem that made

students' learning achievements low. Furthermore, the teacher's mindset of being bookish and textual and neglected to be on the teaching track based on lesson plan also became the reason why students' learning achievements low.

One of the effective ways that was useful to improve students' learning achievements was through the implementation of The Merdeka Curriculum using *lesson study*. The *lesson study* (*jugyoukenkyu*), an inquiry model of teacher professional development, is used extensively throughout Japan and has begun to capture the attention of the American educational community as a potential strategy for enhancing teacher professional development in America. (Rock & Wilson, 2005). It involves groups of teachers meeting regularly over a period of time (ranging from several months to a year) to work on the design, implementation, testing, and improvement of one or several "research lessons" considering as classroom action research. (Rock & Wilson, 2005).

Naturally, the *lesson study* is such a method of professional development that encourages teachers to reflect on their teaching practice through a cyclical process of collaborative lesson planning, lesson observation, and examination of student learning. (Susan., et al., 2009). It is a model for fostering the teaching profession through collaborative and sustainable learning studies based on collegiality and mutual learning principles to build a learning community (Azmir, 2018; Lestari, 2018; Linuhung & Suryadinata, 2017; Sairo, 2021).

On the other hand, Aji, et al., (2018) define *lesson study* as a learning strategy or development model that involves lesson collaborative planning and evaluation. It encompasses planning, teaching, observation, and criticism of the lessons. It consists of three main steps; 1) plan, involving teachers preparing and learning the lessons; 2) do, involving teachers (model teachers) and observers; and 3) see, which involves all the components for class discussions and reflections among other teachers as

an evaluation. Indeed, the results of the evaluation considered as learning achievements and mapped into learning assessment. Assessment is a vital aspect of humans' daily lives, present in formal and informal settings. In the case of the latter, it is an axis in the context of teaching English as a foreign language across the different educational levels. In fact, it is the multidimensional nature of assessment that makes it a key element within English language instruction given that its scope ranges from evaluating teaching methods and analyzing learners' performance to reporting grades to school stakeholders properly. (Alkharusi, 2021). It means that assessment is like an activity used to figure out the learning outcome or learning achievements that deal with the successful learning indicator to see whether or not the students had afforded to master lessons taught. From the explanation stated, it is assumed that The Merdeka Curriculum is needed to be implemented in every education level in Indonesia since it engages *lesson study* that covers collaborative learning activity that

can make the classroom atmosphere interesting and fun, and students enjoy the lesson and it automatically makes their learning achievements improved.

## Method

The method of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR), Stringer (2008) states that Classroom Action Research (CAR) will be the means for teachers to improve their teaching and learning process. Creswell (2008) states that Classroom Action Research (CAR) provides the teachers with a means to improve their practices by taking action and by participating in the research. Teachers are required to be creative to implement certain action related to the problems they found in teaching. The students will be more interested in learning because the teachers come out with better teaching. It has been assumed to be very effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning process. It is well

known for its cycle, for instances: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The cycle can be two or three and it usually ends when the researchers are satisfied or happy with the results.

In addition, the subjects of this research were 26 students in Grade 7 of Islamic Integrated School of SMP Harapan Mulia Palembang in the odd semester of the Academic Year 2023-2024. The tdata collection was through test and data analysis was through descriptive analysis. This classroom action research has two cycles, initiating with pre-cycle, cycle 1 and cycle 2 through four stages, for instances: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

## FINDINGS

In this research, the researcher presented the results of the implementation of *lesson study* activity in English within pretest, cycle 1, cycle 2 and the learning improvement referring to total, mean scores, comprehensive ability and learning

completion of the Seventh Grade Students of Islamic Integrated School of SMP Harapan Mulia Palembang in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the Academic Year of 2023/2024. To be detailed, Table 1 describes the results of learning achievements.

Table 1 Students' Learning Achievements

No.	Description	Pretest	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Improvement
1	Total	1400	1550	1780	230
2	Mean Scores	59	70	85	15
3	Comprehensive Ability	59%	70%	85%	15%
4	Learning Completion	47%	75%	98%	23%

Table 1 shows that the mean scores of students' learning achievements in pretest was 59, comprehensive ability was 59% with learning completion by 47%. The low learning achievements of the students due to the teaching and learning process carried out by the teacher basically based on conventional method, such lecturing in every meeting, In this case, the students tended to be bored and less motivated to study. Besides, the teacher

tended to be bookish (based on teacher and students' books) that made such a textual learning not contextual one. Moreover, the teacher also tended to ignore the lesson plan which had been made by him or her. This made teaching and learning could not be done optimally and seemed to be out of the learning objectives.

In cycle 1, the mean score of learning achievements was 70, comprehensive ability was 70% with learning completion by 75%. The results showed that learning achievements was quite good even though it had not met the success indicator of this research, It happened because the students still got perplexed with the lesson developed by the teacher and also the new curriculum, The Merdeka Curriculum. They seemed to be guided to get the answers of the questions given. Some did not pay attention during the lesson. In this context, neither students nor the teacher got comprehension on the policy of the implementation of The Merdeka Curriculum.

In cycle 2, the mean score of learning achievements was 85, comprehensive ability was 85% with learning completion by 98%. Based on observing and reflecting in cycle 1, it was known that the teacher re-designed creative and innovative learning written in teaching module by examining the evaluation of the observer as a team of lesson study community. The teacher also did such differentiated learning activity as the implementation of The Merdeka Curriculum policy. The results showed that learning achievements got improved and increased significantly. It was because of the optimal teaching and learning process and also well-arranged teaching module. In this context, the students felt free to raise their hands to answer the questions. The classroom activities were varied. The students then had positive responses to the differentiated learning implemented. It was proved by looking at the spirit, motivation and happiness that they had during the lesson, as well as their readiness to learn.

## Discussion

In keeping with the results of the findings stated, it was known that the reflection done in cycle 2, it was figured out that the success criteria related to the mean scores and classical completion had met learning achievements. It means that the researcher did not have to carry out cycle 3. The results of this research also showed that *lesson study* is like an effective teaching model which can be applied to improve students' learning achievements for it has an advantage as a collaborative activity which involves units of education, model teacher, observer teams (teachers, parents). In addition, *lesson study* applies an open class concept in order to make learning evaluation in line with the policy of The Merdeka Curriculum that enables the teachers learn more on new teaching model and differentiated learning.

The improvement in cycle 2 showed that there was an effective and interesting teaching and

learning activities among the teacher and the students. The students were free to learn based on their learning interests and styles in expressing ideas and it made classroom interaction improved. On the other side, there were some problems or difficulties encountered by the teachers during the implementation of *lesson study* especially in planning the lesson that must be adjusted with the policy of The Merdeka Curriculum. It occurred because they had not got such trainings so they did not know how to relate learning achievements to materials. They still need to adapt with technology development using computer and internet, as well as to choose and implement the appropriate teaching strategy and arrange the instrument for learning assessment. (Noviarni, 2016). Besides, in the implementation stage, the teacher also had problems in finding out the best strategy and creative materials to make the learning atmosphere more interesting as the indication of implementing differentiated learning of Merdeka Curriculum which was initiated with

students' readiness, interest and profiles (Ria & Mukhibat, 2020).

In this research, *lesson study* in terms of *planning, doing, and seeing* could improve the professionalism of class master of the Seventh Grade Students of Islamic Integrated School of SMP Harapan Mulia Palembang, as a model teacher. It could be seen from the percentage improvement of pedagogic competency, professionalism, personality and social behavior. It was related to the study of Junaid & Baharuddin, (2020) who claimed that one of the factors that can improve teacher's professionalism was through planning detailed lesson and creative materials supported by reflection to improve the following teaching-learning activity. The *lesson study* activities are done by teachers, lecturers and education consultants to build up metacognitive awareness as self-developments in education (Metha & Harnanik, 2019; Yulianto et al., 2017). This was also back up by the former studies which reported that *lesson study* could improve

students' motivation in learning activity.

In this research, collaborative of differentiated learning in *lesson study* engaged with parents and society and it can improve students' learning achievements and the implementation of *lesson study* in the classroom activity as an alternative activity can make classroom interaction among teacher-students and students-students becomes alive and interesting..

## Conclusion

From the findings stated, it could be concluded that the implementation of *lesson study* as one of the teaching models was able to improve the learning achievements of the Seventh Grade Students of Islamic Integrated School of SMP Harapan Mulia Palembang, particularly in English subject as regarded on the implementation of The Merdeka Curriculum which emphasized on the importance of collaborative learning.

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