



Creative Strategies in Music Composition Learning : A Literature Review on Stimulating Student Creativity

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Abstract: This study aims to explore various creative strategies that music educators can use to stimulate students' creativity, so that they can produce original and meaningful musical works. The research method used is a literature review of various pedagogical approaches in learning music composition. The sources of research data come from various journal articles, books, and scientific publications relevant to the topic of music composition learning strategies and student creativity development. The data analysis technique was conducted through content analysis of the reviewed literature to identify learning strategies that are effective in fostering students' creative thinking, musical exploration, and artistic expression. The research findings show that learning music composition is an important aspect of music education because it can develop students' creativity as a whole, especially at the primary and secondary education levels. Approaches such as Experiencing Composition as well as the support of the learning environment, the active role of teachers, and the utilization of technology are important factors in creating learning experiences that encourage students to create authentic and meaningful musical works.

Article History

Received: 26-04-2025

Revised: 30-05-2025

Accepted: 23-06-2025

Published: 25-07-2025

Key Words:

Music Composition
Learning; Creative
Strategies; Student
Creativity; Music
Education; Creativity
Stimulation.

How to Cite: Puri, T., Hutapea, C., Aprianti, Y., & Milyartini, R. (2025). Creative Strategies in Music Composition Learning : A Literature Review on Stimulating Student Creativity. *Jurnal Paedagogy*, 12(3), 842-855. doi:<https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v12i3.15397>



<https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v12i3.15397>

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Introduction

Music composition is an important aspect of art education, especially music. Music art is one of the audio artworks poured into the form of songs or musical compositions in which it describes the thoughts and feelings of the creator through musical elements in one unit, (Andriani, et al 2023). The main benefit of studying music composition is to encourage creativity. According to Sarjoko, et al (2023), through composition learning material in music subjects, students can increase their music appreciation, develop their knowledge, and build their skills in creativity. Applying creative strategies in learning music composition will increase student interest and participation. By learning music composition, students are not only learning music theory and techniques, but are invited to express their own ideas and feelings. This can be obtained by students through composition learning with appreciation activities. Appreciation in music composition learning activities is the process of identifying, absorbing, and understanding the substance of a work of music composition based on existing musical works (Sarjoko, et al 2023). Through appreciation activities, students are strived to find inspiration, ideas, and ideas as a foundation for the creation of their work. This process encourages the development of critical thinking skills, problem solving, and innovation, all of which are essential components in 21st century learning. Nainggolan & Martin (2019) explained that creative music learning not only focuses on developing listening skills, but also encourages students to innovate in creating creative musical compositions, and this



learning process provides additional benefits for students, such as improving their *critical thinking, communication, collaboration*, and honing their creativity and *innovation*, known as the 4C skills.

Creativity is the main key when one wants to create a work that is original, different, and more advanced than what already exists, and with imagination that must develop, because one needs to play with ideas in interpreting songs (Kristiawan, 2016). Creativity is generally understood as an ability to *create*. In a broader context, creativity can be interpreted as the ability to respond to problems, ideas, and think quickly (Hidayatullah, 2020). The relationship between creativity and music is very close because the activity of creating, arranging or even analyzing a song is a process of creativity by someone both in process and product. Through creativity, music acts as a whole music, not just a series of notes (Kristiawan, 2016). Students' activities in absorbing the sounds around them, processing them, and using their imagination to create other sounds, then analyzing the results of their creative process are things that lead to full music learning (Sukmayadi & Purnama, 2016). Webster (2002) in Hidayatullah (2020) clarifies the concept of creativity in music education is not just about how to teach music to children. Ideal music learning should involve aspects of practice: listening, composition, performance, and improvisation, (Tan et al., 2018).

In its implementation at school, music learning must be relevant to the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes the role of the teacher as a facilitator in encouraging student exploration, expression, and independence. Music composition is part of the creating element in learning outcomes that can encourage students to channel their ideas, feelings, and understanding through the process of creating original works. However, the implementation still experiences many challenges and obstacles. One of them is that learning methods tend to be monotonous and do not provide exploration space for students to freely express themselves. In an effort to encourage students' musical development, teachers also should not be trapped in approaches that only focus on memorization, teachers need to open wider space for student creativity so that they can grow as individuals who are able to express freely and reflectively through music, (Rucsanda & Dragulin, 2015). One way to overcome this is by finding effective creative strategies to trigger students' creativity, especially in music composition skills. So that the main objective of learning music in the Merdeka Curriculum has not been fully achieved. Prastyawan (2011) in Widyaningrum (2016) reveals that learning is a system or process of teaching students that is planned, implemented, and evaluated systematically so that learning can achieve learning objectives actively, effectively, and innovatively. From this statement, teacher creativity in implementing effective learning, one of which is by choosing creative learning strategies, is also important.

In response to these challenges, a number of approaches to learning music composition have been developed that emphasize freedom of expression. Kaschub and Smith (2012) in their book *Experiencing Composition: A Creative Journey for Middle School Students* emphasizes the importance of accessibility and freedom of expression in the music composition process, where every student, regardless of technical skill level, has the opportunity to explore and create music. This idea is in line with the principles of Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes project-based learning and student-centered creativity. In addition, Sukmayadi's research (2016) shows that the school music composition learning model by utilizing the uniqueness of vocational schools, namely the use of hand tools as a medium for student creativity, is very effective and efficient in developing the music learning process, especially in building and developing students' musical competence. Meanwhile, the results of Sutomo's research (2021) also strengthen this view by showing that the song



creation game method can increase students' creativity in creating musical works. Some of these studies illustrate that the use of creative strategies in music learning does not always have to rely on digital technology or modern devices but can be adapted to the characteristics and local potential of the education unit. These strategies not only strengthen students' technical and musical skills but also foster self-confidence and encourage creative exploration based on direct experience. Thus, this creative strategy is a relevant alternative in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes differentiation, independence, and strengthening character through contextual and meaningful learning.

However, there remains a significant gap in the practical implementation of creative strategies within music composition learning in school settings. While numerous studies emphasize the importance of creativity in music education, many fail to address how these strategies can be effectively integrated into the realities of primary and secondary education—where limitations in time, teacher expertise, and access to resources often hinder meaningful application. Furthermore, there is a lack of synthesized frameworks that guide educators in systematically fostering students' creative processes, not merely focusing on final musical products. Therefore, an in-depth literature review is needed to identify effective creative strategies in music composition learning. This research aims to explore various creative strategies that can be used by music educators to stimulate students' creativity so that they can produce original and meaningful musical works. By understanding and implementing these strategies, it is hoped that learning music composition can become more interesting and effective and be able to equip students with the necessary skills to face future challenges.

Research Method

The research method in this study is a literature study, in which various reference sources, such as national and international scientific books and articles, are reviewed to support the research. Azzahra et al. (2023) in Narwanti & Bahtiar (2024) explained that literature study is a process of searching and analyzing various literature sources, including books, journals, and other publications relevant to the research topic, with the aim of producing writings that discuss a particular issue. Gumilar (2024) adds that the research method in literature studies is carried out by looking for theoretical references that are in accordance with the problem under study.

The data collection process was carried out by searching and downloading articles through Google Scholar, DOAJ, and Scopus. The sources used in this research were selected based on their relevance and credibility, prioritizing journals that have been indexed in trusted databases. The data analysis used in this research is the Miles and Huberman model which suggests that data analysis activities include data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions, (Zulfirman, 2022). This approach allows the research to get a comprehensive picture of creative strategies in learning music composition, so that it can contribute to the development of more innovative teaching methods in music education.

Results and Discussion

According to Lupton and Bruce (2010) in Lörch and Huovinen (2025), “allowing creativity to emerge” thus requires a “hands-off” approach” in which “the teacher’s intention is not to impose their own views or be prescriptive”. The teacher’s task according Reese’s (2003) in Lörch and Huovinen (2025), was to observe and find the right approach along such a continuum based on the needs of each student in a given situation. Creative strategies in



learning are an innovative approach designed to stimulate students to think creatively and actively participate in the learning process. This approach emphasizes the role of students in constructing their own knowledge, as well as skills, through direct experience, (Azzahra, 2024). Meanwhile, according to Wena (2014), in Lestari (2018) creative and productive learning strategies are learning that is developed by referring to various learning approaches that are assumed to be able to improve the quality of the process, motivation and teaching and learning outcomes.

In the context of education, the implementation of creative strategies involves creatively utilizing various digital media and technologies to create engaging and effective learning experiences. It aims to increase student participation and encourage higher academic achievement, (Wardhana, et al 2024). Creative strategies are not only limited to the use of technology, but also include teaching methods that encourage active participation, collaboration, and creative problem solving, (Wardhana, et al 2024). By applying creative strategies, educators have the ability to customize learning materials according to the needs and interests of students, so that the learning process becomes more contextual and has a deeper meaning for students (Heldanita, 2018; Meliyani et al., 2022).

In addition, in Kalida's research (2015), Siregar & Nara (2011) stated that creative learning is learning that emphasizes how teachers or tutors facilitate learning activities, so that the learning atmosphere becomes conducive and comfortable, this requires educators to package learning materials, so that children can be stimulated to do creative and fun activities. Based on some of these opinions and research results, it can be concluded that creative strategies in learning is an approach that emphasizes the active role of students in the learning process, by encouraging them to think critically, exploratively, and innovatively. This approach not only focuses on academic achievement, but also on developing 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration and communication. Experts agree that this strategy is able to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process because the material is tailored to students' interests and needs, and is packaged in the form of fun and meaningful activities. The use of digital technology and flexible teaching methods are also an integral part of this strategy, making learning more contextual, relevant, and motivating students to actively work. Thus, creative strategies play an important role in creating learning that is dynamic, participatory, and able to develop students' potential to the fullest.

The Role of Creative Strategies in Enhancing Student Creativity

Creative strategies in learning music composition have an important role in developing students' musical imagination potential. This approach encourages students to understand the musical elements in composition and also encourages students to create original works. The creation process indirectly trains high-level thinking skills, especially in the context of creative thinking. According to Djupanda et al. (2015) in Rosita & Muflihah (2024), students who have creative thinking skills generally show characteristics such as innovative mindset, better concept capture ability, achievement of optimal learning outcomes, and the ability to think divergently. In this context, learning that is oriented towards the process of creation is an effective means to foster divergent thinking skills, namely the ability to generate various solutions or ideas from one problem which is one of the important indicators in the development of student creativity. Thus, creative strategies in music composition learning not only improve musical understanding, but also shape students' adaptive and innovative cognitive character.

Research conducted by Meng and Arifin (2024) entitled "*The Role of Creativity in Music Education*" revealed that, creative thinking characterized by the ability to think



divergently is considered as one of the keys in producing various problem solutions. High curiosity, courage to take risks, flexibility, and self-motivation are the main characters in forming a creative personality. Of these characters, in art learning, the courage to take risks is one that many students do not have, they are too afraid to take risks so that the ability to think creatively only reaches thoughts, not actions or works. This needs to be a concern for teachers in order to create a learning environment that provides free space for students to express their creative ideas and execute students' creative thinking. In line with research conducted by Li (2023) states that teaching music in high school teachers must start from their core competencies, combine them with learning conditions, improve a pleasant learning environment, arouse students' interest in music, and make students feel the attraction or beauty of music in music class. There are many methods that teachers can apply, of course, by adjusting the needs of students and the learning environment. One method that can be applied in learning music composition is *project-based* learning and experiential learning.

Project-based and experiential approaches to composition learning

Project-based and *experiential learning* approaches have proven to be effective strategies in learning music composition, especially in stimulating students' creativity through direct involvement in the process of creating music. Through this approach, students not only receive theoretical knowledge, but also gain understanding through concrete experiences such as exploring sound, improvising, writing music, and performing their own compositions. In their research, Nugraha, et al (2023) stated that various previous studies show project-based learning is considered a learning model that can help improve students' skills in the 21st century. PjBL has a positive impact on learning outcomes, creative thinking skills, and has the potential to produce creative and contextualized work.

In line with this approach, Kaschub and Smith (2012) in their book suggest two forms of music composition projects that can be implemented in learning, namely songwriting and film scoring, with a student-centered learning approach. In this model, the teacher acts as a facilitator who provides space for students to explore and express their creativity. In the book, Kaschub and Smith (2012) list the stages before starting a composition project. There are three stages of learning that need to be passed: first, exploration of leitmotifs based on favorite or meaningful objects for students; second, music listening activities to build personal understanding and sound analysis skills; and third, introduction to notation as a musical communication tool. These stages are designed to equip students with in-depth musical experiences before they work on creative projects in the form of songwriting or arranging film music. This article will discuss songwriting, as the easiest option to apply.

The creative process in songwriting can happen immediately or even over a long period of time, so teachers should be able to help students decide how it works. Teachers can give students ideas to start with writing lyrics and then melody, or *melody/chord* first and then determine the lyrics. The teacher can provoke the students to create songs with experiences that the students remember. Then allow the students to explore independently or with their peers, the teacher simply monitors the students' work. It is highly recommended that this project be done in stages to ensure that there is still progress from the students. After the students are done with the songwriting, the teacher can determine the form of evaluation according to mutual agreement. However, it should be emphasized that students need to be encouraged to share their work in a safe and fun environment, either through classroom performances or in public with family and friends. Although some writers prefer other people as singers, the appreciation and applause from the audience can be a strong motivation to continue creating.



Chen (2024) recommends various interactive teaching models in junior secondary music education, such as the use of multimedia, interactive online models, active learning strategies, discussions, and collaborative projects to create dynamic, contextualized, and student-centered learning experiences. These recommendations are in line with Duranton's (2022) findings in the article "*Demystifying Songwriting*", which emphasizes the importance of songwriting activities as a means of emotional expression and creativity development in music education. Duranton also developed a framework that educators can use to guide students in creating their own songs, as well as integrating the practice into the curriculum in innovative ways.

As an implication for classroom practice, it is recommended that students work in groups. Collaboration in songwriting can enrich students' learning experience through sharing ideas, giving each other feedback, and learning together, (Randles, 2024). This strategy not only helps students improve their technical songwriting skills, but also provides them with experiences that are in line with current practices in the music industry. In group work, students learn to communicate, cooperate, accept different musical styles, and become more motivated due to the active and fun learning atmosphere. This approach has proven to be effective in developing songwriting skills as a whole and is in line with the needs of today's music education.

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that songwriting as part of a music composition project is an effective creative strategy in learning music, especially at the junior high school level. A student-centered approach, as proposed by Kaschub and Smith (2012), and supported by the findings of Chen (2024) and Duranton (2022), shows that structured and interactive composition activities can optimally stimulate students' creativity. This strategy not only provides space for students to express musically and emotionally, but also equips them with contextual, collaborative and meaningful learning experiences. Thus, the integration of songwriting in learning is one of the relevant alternative strategies to support the achievements of Merdeka Curriculum through strengthening students' creativity, independence, and character.

Use of Technology as a Creativity Stimulation Tool

According Bújez and Mohedo (2014), Changing the way we teach will also automatically turn us into the teachers of the future: teachers who are creative and committed to our students to whom we give a more personalized treatment and freedom in terms of their learning styles, since if they fail in the future this means that we fail in the present. The use of technology in music composition learning has become an important aspect in enhancing student creativity and engagement. Music technologies, such as *digital audio workstation (DAW)* software, music notation applications, and online collaboration platforms, provide a wider space for students to explore musical ideas more flexibly and interactively. In the book *Experiencing Composition*, Kaschub and Smith (2012) also emphasize creative exploration and the use of digital technology. Students are encouraged to express themselves through various methods such as the exploration of musical motifs, songwriting, movie scoring, and the use of composition software. This is in line with Bauer's (2014) findings that technology can accommodate students' diverse learning styles and increase the accessibility of music learning, especially for students who have limited skills in traditional instruments.

Based on some research, one of the music creation platforms that teachers and students can access is *BandLab*. *BandLab* is a web-based and mobile application that allows users to create and record music through various virtual instruments, samples, and *loops*. According to Zhang (2024), this app has proven to be effective as a music learning tool,



especially in the context of secondary and higher education, as it is able to increase student motivation and performance, especially in *Academic Singing* training. In hybrid music learning, according to Graden (2023), *BandLab* provides equal access for both offline and online students, and supports multimedia learning by introducing concepts such as layering, shape, editing, and dynamics. In addition, Cuenca Rodríguez et al. (2025) state that *BandLab* is also relevant outside of academic contexts due to its flexibility in music production. This study also highlights *Cakewalk by BandLab* as a digital audio workstation (DAW) with high educational potential, providing a professional tool for sound mixing practice that can develop students' musical skills in a hands-on and applicable manner.

It is important to understand that there may be instances where school facilities are inadequate and the use of technology may be difficult to implement. However, this can give students room to be creative with the exploration of natural resources around the school that can be utilized as substitute musical instruments. It is also possible to use human voices as a form of imitation of the sounds of the musical instruments they need.

Collaborative Learning as a Creative Idea Generator

Collaborative approach is a learning method that emphasizes cooperation between learners in completing a task or project, (Puri, et al 2025). According to Laal & Ghodsi (2012) (in Dewi, et al, 2024) collaborative learning is an educational approach where students work in groups to achieve a common goal, be it creating something, solving a problem, or working on a task. Some of the advantages of the collaboration approach according to Hill & Hill (1993) (in Husain, 2020), namely, increased learning achievement, increased understanding, learning is more fun, offering leadership skills, learning inclusively, increasing positive attitudes, and self-esteem, feeling belonging to each other, and developing future skills. Research conducted by Nisa et al. (2018) shows that collaborative learning is widely regarded as an effective approach in education to improve the effectiveness and quality of the learning process. In addition, research by Puri, et al (2025) showed that a collaborative approach in a pedagogical perspective is proven to be an effective strategy for students in art learning in enhancing creativity.

Tamburlini (2022) suggests the implementation of student collaboration in groups at the junior high school level, which involves students collaborating in small, diverse teams to complete complex tasks. For successful implementation, teachers need to plan carefully to ensure positive interdependence, individual responsibility and the development of social skills among students. This tendency can be harnessed to build collaborative learning communities, where mutual help and feedback are part of the music learning process. Collaboration in this kind of community supports the development of students' creativity and confidence in creating musical works. This is in line with Hunter's (2006) explanation in his writing. The study emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning in encouraging students' learning independence, particularly through group activities such as piece presentations and musical performances that enhance active participation. Peer-based learning not only strengthens social skills such as negotiation and leadership, but also helps build students' confidence and emotional engagement. Assessment of collaborative work is challenging, so an approach that balances process and outcome, and involves student-to-student assessment, is effective in supporting authentic and sustainable learning experiences.

Individualized Guidance and Differentiation Strategies to Enhance Students' Musical Potential

Individual mentoring and differentiation strategies in music learning are important approaches to optimize the creative potential of each student. This approach emphasizes the



role of the teacher as a facilitator who understands the differences in student characters and learning styles, the adjustment of learning strategies based on musical interests and abilities, and the application of creative mentoring models in composition classes.

a) The Teacher's Role as a Facilitator who Understands the Different Characters and Learning Styles of Students in Creating Music

Teachers have a crucial role as facilitators who support students' creative process in creating music. Understanding students' developmental characteristics is important to determine appropriate learning strategies, including methods, learning activities, and supporting media, (Utomo, 2013). By understanding these individual differences, teachers can create a learning environment that supports students' musical exploration and expression optimally. Koroh et al., (2023) in their research clearly explained how the teacher's role as a facilitator. Teachers as facilitators play a role by listening, respecting students, encouraging active learning, avoiding domination in discussions, and creating a positive learning environment. This role is proven to increase students' interest in learning by encouraging independence and cooperation, as seen in the research at SD Inpres Nunbaun Delha. This is supported by research conducted by Sapitri et al. (2023) which states that the teacher as a facilitator means providing learning tools, facilities, and acting as a learning partner, thus creating an active, innovative and interesting learning environment. This role emphasizes the importance of guiding students without being the only source of knowledge, and encourages collaboration and independence in the learning process.

b) Strategy Adjustment Based on Students' Interest and Musical Ability

Each student has unique musical interests and abilities. Therefore, customization of learning strategies is essential to meet their individual needs. The differentiation approach emphasizes that each individual has different interests, potentials, and talents, and the teacher's role is to coordinate and collaborate these differences through appropriate strategies, (Suprobo & Ratnawati, 2024). Thus, students can engage more deeply in the learning process and be motivated to develop their musical skills.

By integrating individualized mentoring and differentiation strategies in music composition learning, teachers can create a more inclusive and effective learning experience, so that every student has the opportunity to develop their musical potential to the fullest.

Challenges in Implementing Creative Strategies in Schools

In implementing creative strategies in learning music composition, teachers are often faced with various complex obstacles. The implementation of creative strategies in music learning in schools faces various challenges. Music teachers are often faced with obstacles such as a dense curriculum, limited time, lack of facilities, and lack of adequate training. Research that examines the challenges and obstacles in the implementation of creative strategies in music learning has been conducted by Irmayanti & Supriyanto (2025) which shows that the main obstacles in learning innovation include:

- 1) Facilities and Infrastructure: Limited physical facilities, low quality facilities and accessibility issues hamper the effectiveness of the learning process. Limited funding is also a barrier to fulfilling education infrastructure needs.
- 2) Technology: Unstable internet connections and low technology skills among teachers and students hinder the utilization of technology in learning. Lack of adequate devices exacerbates the situation, while adaptation to new technologies requires intensive training.



In line with previous research, research conducted by Djau (2019) also revealed that one of the obstacles felt by teachers is the lack of adequate facilities provided by schools for Cultural Arts subjects. This condition further strengthens that the limited facilities and infrastructure are significant factors that hinder the effectiveness of the application of creative strategies in learning music composition in schools.

In addition, another problem found in learning is the quality of teacher expertise. In their research, Sabarunisa et al. (2022) suggested that the main problem in learning music in elementary schools is the low quality of teacher expertise, where many educators have non-music backgrounds. This causes music learning to tend to focus on the cognitive domain alone, while affective and psychomotor aspects receive less attention. Difficulties in learning implementation are also influenced by internal factors (physiological and psychological) and external factors (social and non-social), which can become obstacles or opportunities depending on the teacher's self-management. As a solution, the PAIKEM (Active, Innovative, Creative, Effective and Fun Learning) approach is recommended to encourage more meaningful understanding and reduce the dominance of rote methods. This approach requires teachers to understand the principles of creative learning as proposed by John B. Biggs and Ross Telfer (Asmani, 2011), so that the teaching and learning process can take place holistically and fun for students.

Overcoming this obstacle requires investment in educational infrastructure, training programs to improve digital skills, policies that support innovation, and collaboration with various parties. Chen & Chen (2012) in their research suggested that in this case, support is needed by institutions and the government because this contributes to the nation's competitive advantage. With these steps, educational institutions can be better prepared to implement innovations in effective and relevant learning.

Relevance of the Strategy to the Merdeka Curriculum and 4C Strengthening

Creative strategies in learning music composition have a strong relevance to the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in terms of strengthening the values of independence, exploration, and differentiation. The Merdeka Curriculum provides space for students to learn according to their respective interests, talents, and pace, and encourages teachers to become facilitators who guide students' exploration actively and creatively (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Creative strategies encourage students to create music according to their personal expression in line with the differentiation approach, which recognizes that each student has a unique way of learning and expressing themselves through musical media.

Creating music through creative strategies is in accordance with the element of creating in the learning outcomes of the Merdeka Curriculum. In accordance with a copy of the Decree of the Head of the Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research Number 032/H/KR/2024 concerning Learning Outcomes at the Early Childhood Education Level, Basic Education Level, and Secondary Education Level in the Merdeka Curriculum, it is explained that the learning outcomes in the element of creating (creating) include producing music through playing musical instruments or using other sound-producing media available in the surrounding environment. Of course, creative strategies are needed in practicing music to express students' feelings, experiences, interests, empathy, perspectives, and culture. In this case, creative strategies provide space for students to create musical compositions independently, both individually and in small groups. The suitability of creative strategies with the Merdeka Curriculum is when students are given the confidence to choose the theme, musical instruments, and form of composition they want to make. In addition, through creative



strategies by integrating various sound sources and music technology in the learning process, students are encouraged to explore various musical instruments and exploration also includes musical structure, rhythm, melody, and harmony. Based on the principle of differentiation, creative strategies provide a choice of methods, media, and level of challenge according to students' needs and interests. It can be concluded that creative strategies in learning music composition are very much in line with Merdeka Curriculum because they encourage students to learn independently in the way that is most meaningful to them, open up wide opportunities for musical experimentation and exploration, and allow for differentiated learning that is inclusive and adaptive

From the explanation above, this creative strategy in learning music composition has a contribution to strengthening 21st century skills, namely creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication (4C). One of the studies conducted by Nainggolan & Martin (2019) showed that the 4C skills in the 21st century learning framework are directly integrated in creative music learning. Critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills are used simultaneously when creating creative music compositions. According to Gardner in Nainggolan & Martin (2019), to train students to think creatively can be done through exploration, providing challenging problems (tasks), and also motivating students when they fail. Learning music composition requires students to produce something new and through sound exploration, students are given space to experiment which is a creativity skill. In composing music, critical thinking skills are shown in the process of students involving the analysis and evaluation of musical ideas. Creative musical compositions arise from creative thinking. Creative thinking is a concept of divergent thinking (Nainggolan & Martin, 2019). By being faced with many musical choices and considerations, students learn to think critically in each of these stages of music creation. In addition, in a group composition project, students must divide tasks, listen to others' ideas, and unify their vision. The process of composing and performing a piece together demands trust and coordination between students. As composition is often collective, this creative strategy builds collaboration skills through hands-on teamwork. In the context of communication skills, this process strengthens students' ability to speak, listen actively and convey messages through the medium of music. Creative strategies in music composition learning not only hone musical skills, but it is also a well-rounded learning tool to shape a generation of 21st century learners who are creative, critical in thinking, collaborative, and communicative in conveying their ideas

The integration of the values of freedom and uniqueness of expression in the principle of Merdeka Curriculum in music education can be realized through various pedagogical approaches that allow students to be themselves, experiment with their ideas, and express personal experiences through music. To provide space for self-expression, teachers do not only teach right and wrong in music theory, but provide opportunities for students to convey ideas, emotions, or stories through music. Merdeka Belajar curriculum encourages project-based learning, where students are given project assignments that involve exploration, creativity, and collaboration in creating musical works (Purhanudin, 2022). By experiencing the creative process and feeling, students will reflect on their experiences so that they are accustomed to thinking and working artistically, students can see opportunities to empower their resources to create works that have a positive impact on themselves or others (Kemendikbudristek, 2024).



Conceptual and Practical Implications of This Study

This study enriches the field of music education theory by emphasizing the importance of a pedagogical approach oriented toward the creative process in music composition learning. The results of the study indicate that student creativity in the context of music education cannot be separated from a learning environment that supports exploration, as well as from the role of the teacher as a facilitator of the artistic process. By highlighting strategies such as *Experiencing Composition*, this study affirms that music composition is not merely a final product, but also a complex cognitive and affective process. This encourages a paradigm shift from reproductive music learning to constructive and expressive learning. This concept also contributes to the discourse on the development of students' creative agency within the framework of 21st-century education.

In practical terms, the results of this study provide a reference for music educators in designing learning strategies that encourage students to create original musical works. Teachers are encouraged to build a learning environment that is open to sound exploration, improvisation, and collaboration, as well as utilizing digital technology as a medium for musical expression. Implementing strategies such as *Experiencing Composition*, using music software, and assigning project-based tasks can increase students' active participation and emotional engagement in the learning process. These implications are also relevant for curriculum designers and education policymakers who wish to integrate creativity development as an indicator of success in arts education, particularly music, at the elementary and secondary levels.

Conclusion

This literature review confirms that creative strategies in music composition learning play an important role in stimulating students' creativity, especially at primary and secondary levels. Approaches such as *Experiencing Composition* and music creation-based learning have proven effective in encouraging musical exploration, creative thinking and artistic expression. In addition, supportive learning environment, active role of teachers, and technology integration are important elements in optimizing students' creative process. Designing innovative and student-centered learning strategies is key in developing creative potential through music composition. This finding underlines the importance of adapting learning strategies that are not only innovative, but also relevant to the conditions and resources in schools. Therefore, the development of creative and applicable music composition learning strategies needs to be continuously encouraged to answer the challenges of Merdeka Curriculum while strengthening the 21st century skills needed by students in the future.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this literature review, it is recommended that music teachers design composition lessons that are more varied, contextualized, and encourage students' active participation in the creative process. Teachers need to develop pedagogical competencies that are adaptive to creative approaches and utilize digital technology as a means of musical exploration and production. In addition, a learning environment that is safe, inclusive, and encourages collaboration between students also needs to be built to facilitate the creative process optimally. Further field practice-based research is also recommended to test the effectiveness of various creative strategies in different learning contexts. However, barriers such as limited facilities, limited learning time, and gaps in teacher competence in applying creative methods and technology are factors that can affect the success of these strategies.



Therefore, teacher training, infrastructure support from schools and government, and utilization of affordable alternative media are important parts of the solution. Further studies in the form of classroom action research or field experiments are highly recommended to obtain in-depth empirical data. In addition, collaboration between schools, art communities, and higher education institutions also needs to be built in order to create a creative, dynamic, and sustainable music composition learning ecosystem.

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