

Primary School Strategies for Optimising Self-Reflection Activities in the Merdeka Curriculum

Kiki Fatmawati

UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Indonesia

e-mail: kikifatmawati86@uinjambi.ac.id

Abstract: This study explores elementary school strategies for optimizing self-reflection activities in the Independent Curriculum. In this study, researchers used a qualitative approach with a case study method. The informants of this research are principals, teachers, and students of State Elementary School 47/IV Jambi City. Data will be collected through three main methods, namely semi-structured type interviews, lesson observations by observing the learning process reflected in selected classes, and document analysis by studying relevant documents. The findings of this study are the strategies carried out from the aspect of teacher self-reflection in the form of questions contained in the form of experience notes, self-reports, autobiographies, journals, and diaries. Peer reflection involves discussing, observing, and reflecting on the learning process. Reflection by the principal in the form of holding discussions, providing trigger questions and observations to see the learning process directly, and reflection by students by being given questionnaires and direct questions. This research significantly contributes to delivering practical insights and concrete strategies for other schools to optimize self-reflection activities to support the more effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the primary school level.

Keywords: Merdeka curriculum, Self-reflection, Elementary School strategy



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). Allows readers to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of its articles and allows readers to use them for any other lawful purpose.

Copyright (c) 2024 Kiki Fatmawati

DOI: <http://10.30736/atl.v8i2.2074>

Received 14 July 2024, Accepted 21 September 2024, Published 22 September 2024

A. Introduction

Education in Indonesia underwent a significant transformation with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum to improve the relevance and effectiveness of the learning process in primary schools (SD). Curriculum renewal is essential to developing the education system (Sugiri & Priatmoko, 2020). The Merdeka curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, allowing schools to adapt the curriculum to local needs and student characteristics. A critical component of this approach is the integration of self-reflection activities, which aims to develop students' ability to recognize, evaluate, and improve their understanding of learning and personal experiences. Reflection is a skillful practice that utilizes experience, knowledge, and inquiry to enhance our ability to intervene, interpret, and act positively on successes, significant issues, and questions. Reflective practices can reveal new insights and understandings regarding who we are and what we do. These practices can also demonstrate options, possibilities, and avenues for positive and sustainable action (Hermawan, 2019). Reflection is an essential element

of teacher professionalism in the formation of innovation and revolution in classroom learning. Through reflection, teachers can find deficiencies and strengths in classroom learning so that the following learning is better and maximum (Jatmiko & Putra, 2022)

Based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, in 2023, around 60% of primary schools in Indonesia have started implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, with the level of teacher understanding of the concept of self-reflection only reaching 75%. Furthermore, the implementation of self-reflection in the Merdeka Curriculum at the elementary level still faces various challenges (Fatmawati, 2024). Not all schools can optimize self-reflection activities effectively and integrate them into the daily learning process. It has been found that teachers do not understand the reflection that must be done because they do not have sufficient support and coaching from schools to help them develop reflection skills. Limited opportunities to discuss and share with fellow teachers lead to limited teacher reflection.

Based on the initial study at State Elementary School 47/IV Jambi City, teachers conducted reflections according to the guidelines. They provided feedback on the results of reflections to improve subsequent learning, although some teachers still had difficulty conducting self-reflection in the classroom. Furthermore, the research found several school strategies for optimizing self-reflection, including using digital platforms to create reflective portfolios and applications or software to record and analyze teaching practices (Zeichner & Liston, 2013) and designing assessments that encourage students to reflect (Black & Wiliam, 2018). Similarly, Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner (2017) organized regular self-reflection workshops by providing reflective mentors for new teachers (Hammond et al., 2017).

Several studies have shown the benefits of teacher reflection. With reflection, teachers can find strengths and weaknesses and provide orientation for further learning improvements (Philipsen, Tondeur, McKenney, & Zhu, 2019; Singh, Rowan, & Allen, 2019). Teachers can express different new ideas for teaching the subject matter in the future by making changes and improvements to teaching methods, approaches, and learning media (Nugraha, Widodo, & Riandi, 2020). Furthermore, (Beka & Kulinxha, 2021) Conducted research on teacher reflection with portfolios, allowing prospective teachers to organize their work better and enabling cooperation between pre-service teachers, directly affecting their professional competence. This is evident in SD Negeri Joho 01 implementing reflection improves teachers' ability to organise learning (Kurniasari, Permadi, & Purbasari, 2024).

Research on self-reflection in education has been widely conducted, and related challenges and solutions have been found to reflect in differentiated learning (Kurniasari et al., 2024). Reflective research on self-assessment teaching supervision (Gunawan et al., 2017). Self-reflection research on efforts to improve teacher professionalism (Rahman, 2014). Ramadhini & Sukmawan (2024) also researched the reflection of practicing teachers in the differentiated learning process in Indonesia. Maulana et al., (2023) research discusses the efforts of PAI teachers to reflect on learning. The research

findings (Altun & Yursteven, 2017) show that self-reflection and peer review contribute considerably to teacher professional development during the research.

There is no comprehensive study exploring primary schools' specific strategies for optimizing self-reflection activities in Indonesia's context of the Merdeka Curriculum. This research fills this gap by focusing on practical implementation at the primary school level. This research questions how the strategies used in SD optimize self-reflection activities in the independent curriculum. Therefore, this study aims to explore the strategies used by primary schools to optimize self-reflection activities in the Merdeka Curriculum. By understanding the practical strategies that these schools have implemented, best practices can be identified that can be adopted by other schools to improve the effectiveness of implementing self-reflection in daily learning. This is expected to positively contribute to improving the quality of education at the primary level in Indonesia, which aligns with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum to produce more meaningful and relevant learning for every student.

B. Method

As the issues raised in this study are not quantitative, a qualitative approach with a case study method (Hinkin, Tracey, & Enz, 1997) It was used to explore the strategies used by primary schools to optimize self-reflection activities in the Merdeka Curriculum. Researchers use a case study method based on the formulation of Robert K. Yin (Hinkin et al., 1997), focusing on using a descriptive approach. Researchers want to describe and understand how school strategies optimize self-reflection activities. Thus, the descriptive approach can help explain the strategy of optimizing self-reflection at State Elementary School 47/IV Jambi City in detail and thoroughly and provide a clear picture. So that researchers can use the data collected to describe these strategies in a broader context. Informants in this study focused on the Principal, Teachers, and students. The informants were selected using a purposive sampling method with inclusion criteria considering the experience of self-reflection in learning.

Table 1. Research informants

No	Informants	Quantity
1	Principal	1
2	Teacher	5
3	Students	8

Source: personal

Data will be collected through three main methods: interviews, observation, and document analysis. Interviews: The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the selected principal teachers and students. These interviews elicited their personal views and experiences of self-reflection. Observation of learning: The researcher observed the reflective learning process in the selected classes. This observation helped the researcher understand how self-reflection was carried out during learning. Document analysis: The researcher studied relevant documents such as lesson plans and reflection documents to gain additional insights into existing educational strategies and policies.

The data collected will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which looks for thematic patterns in interviews, observations, and documents that emerge throughout the study (Ajar Baskoro, Taufik Umar, & Ahsan, 2023). This helps researchers identify primary schools' strategies for self-reflection. The researcher used data triangulation to ensure validity and reliability by combining interview, observation, and document analysis results.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

The following are the results of research on the strategies of SD N 47.VII Jambi City, in optimizing reflection activities, researchers examine strategies from aspects of teacher self-reflection, peer reflection, reflection by the principal, and student reflection by utilizing analysis using Parsons' AGIL theory.

Teacher Self-Reflection

According to Parsons's AGIL theory, the teacher's first strategy is to adapt by adjusting the method of conducting self-reflection in the learning process and assessment that has been carried out. Furthermore, particular time should be provided in the teaching schedule to reflect at least once a semester. Self-reflection activities carried out in elementary schools according to goal attainment by utilizing the following questions:

Table 2. Teacher Self-reflection Questionnaire

No	Question
1	What are my goals for teaching this semester?
2	What was your favorite part of the learning process this semester?
3	What things have worked in the learning process?
4	What are the things that need to be improved in the learning process?
5	What do I need to do to improve my next lesson?
6	What do I need to do to improve my next lesson?
7	What were some of the biggest challenges I faced this semester?
8	How can I overcome these challenges?

Adaptation from: (McTighe et al., 2017)

The teachers themselves develop the questions according to their needs. In addition to self-reflection, fellow educators and school principals can use these questions. The answers to the questions can be in the form of experience notes, self-reports, autobiographies, journals, or diaries. Teacher self-reflection is directed at knowing the extent to which teachers, as professionals, carry out activities or signs that must be carried out. Teachers also carry out latency patterns by making reflection a routine habit in teaching practice and using reflection results to plan continuous professional development.

Peer Reflection

The adjustment of the reflection method with peer assessment or fellow educators/teachers is an assessment by fellow educators/teachers on the planning and

implementation of learning carried out by the educator concerned. This is intended to build a culture of mutual learning, cooperation, and mutual support among peers. Peer reflection can be done at least once a semester. In conducting reflection, peers can use strategies to discuss the learning process, observe the learning process, and reflect on the learning process. Furthermore, they share the reflection results with colleagues in the forum. Latency pattern by building and maintaining a reflective culture in the school environment.

Reflection by the principal

Reflection conducted by the principal aims to build a reflective culture and provide constructive feedback. Building a reflective culture is an activity that encourages continuous reflection on the learning process, which becomes an integral part of the learning process. Giving constructive feedback is an activity carried out by the principal to provide input, suggestions, and examples to teachers to improve the quality of learning. The strategy of the principal of SD Negeri 47 Jambi City in facilitating teachers in the reflection process is to hold discussions about what the school needs to do to help the learning process. Principals also provide sparking questions to improve the quality of learning and assessment. The principal also randomly enters for observation to see the learning process firsthand. As stated by the principal:

"As the principal, I strongly support teachers conducting classroom reflections to improve the next lesson. Once a month or two, I alternately hold discussions with teachers regarding the reflections carried out, and I even see the learning process directly in the classroom."

The supervisor also carries out his strategy by accompanying teachers in conducting reflections. Reflection is dialogical and nonjudgmental. Teachers are invited to dialogue and think openly without judging or blaming others. In the reflection process, supervisors are not encouraged to ask for administrative reports that burden teachers. Principals and supervisors continue to encourage a reflective culture in schools as a regular habit in teaching practice.

Reflection by Students

Students' reflection aims to build independence and responsibility in the learning process and daily life, build a culture of transparency, objectivity, mutual respect, and appreciation of the diversity of opinions in assessing the learning process, build a participatory learning atmosphere, and provide feedback to educators and students to train them to think critically. Reflection is beneficial for teachers and students. Reflection activities are conducted at least once a semester.

In its implementation, teachers make questionnaires and conduct direct questions that can help provide information related to the learning process evaluation. An interview with one of the students revealed that "Sometimes we are asked to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the lesson related to what we have done and what we get in learning."

After teachers reflect and get feedback from peers, principals, supervisors, and students, they develop plans to improve the quality of learning. Thus, teachers will continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching, leading to student quality.

Discussion

SD N 47.VII Jambi City conducts teacher reflection by utilizing various aspects ranging from teacher self-reflection, peer reflection, reflection by the principal, and reflection by students. Teacher reflection by assessing whether they have carried out their duties properly or not. With reflection, teachers can find out their weaknesses and strengths and will encourage teachers to move to make improvements to their competence (Rahman, 2014). Reflecting on learning problems becomes a new insight for teachers for the next practice (Marcos, Miguel, & Tillema, 2009). Reflection studies have benefits, including teachers having full ownership of their learning, the relevance of learning is ongoing and not limited to a particular time and place, taking problematic situations as learning opportunities, and how other sources take on new relevance through reflective self-learning (Attard, 2017).

Peers carry out reflection strategies by discussing the learning process, observing the learning process, and reflecting on the learning process. Strategies that peers can use can increase reflective capacity by being done individually in groups and through dialogue (Davut Göker, 2016). Interaction with others with knowledge related to reflection is a prerequisite for developing reflective practice (Stenberg, Rajala, & Hilppo, 2016). It is hoped that with reflection, weaknesses in each lesson can be found so that improvements can be made immediately. Continuous improvement can improve the learning process and increase students' comfort (Yuliyanto, Fatichatul Hidayah, Perdana Istyastono, & Wijoyo, 2018).

The principal of SD Negeri 47 Jambi City facilitates teachers in the reflection process by holding discussions about what the school needs to do to help the learning process, providing trigger questions to improve the quality of learning and assessment, and then randomly entering the classroom for observation to see the learning process firsthand. Principal reflection is a critical concept in teacher education (Beauchamp, 2015; Sööt & Viskus, 2015). In line with the explanation that reflection should be included in the learning tasks that teachers do before and during the teachers' teaching tasks to foster effective teachers (Çimer & Çimer, 2013). For this reason, the principal's role is vital in monitoring the running of reflections carried out by teachers. With these activities, teachers can measure the achievement of the planned targets. Meanwhile, students also feel a change towards a more effective and better direction that is planned for the next activity (Ritonga, Harahap, & Adawiyah Lubis, 2022).

Meanwhile, student reflection by providing questionnaires and conducting direct questions can help provide information related to the learning process evaluation. Student reflection with questioning questions can improve the ability to analyze their efforts with the activities. The questions given by teachers at SD Negeri 47 Jambi City are in line with those conducted by (Spilková, 2001) Namely, what did I do? How did I do it? With what

results? What did I cause from my activities? Where is the problem? Is there another way to do it? And so on. Reflection by teachers with students about the learning experience can explore the potential of students' analytical skills (Mortari, 2012). Furthermore, reflecting on students' experiences in learning can gradually apply theoretical concepts obtained by students into practices that students can do (Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä, & Turunen, 2016)

D. Conclusion

The results of this study illustrate that principals and teachers carry out strategies to optimize the implementation of reflection activities to improve the quality of learning and teaching, which leads to the quality of students. Strategies carried out from the aspect of teacher self-reflection in the form of questions contained in the form of experience notes, self-reports, autobiographies, journals, diaries, peer reflection in the form of discussing, observing, and reflecting on the learning process, reflection by the principal in the form of holding discussions, providing trigger questions and observations to see the learning process directly and reflection by students by being given questionnaires and direct questions. Implementing learning reflection in elementary schools must be carried out continuously, and careful planning must be carried out according to existing conditions to improve the quality of learning. The limitation of this research was that it was only conducted in one school, so it was still not comprehensive to see the efforts of elementary schools in implementing reflection and did not examine self-reflection models. Therefore, it is hoped that further research related to reflection and the application of reflection models can be conducted by taking several schools, both at the elementary school level and high schools and even universities.

References

- Ajar Baskoro, D., Taufik Umar, A., & Ahsan, J. (2023). Transformasi Peran Guru di Era Digital: Studi Kasus di Perguruan Nurul Fadhillah, Percut Sei Tuan, Deli Serdang. *Jurnal Sustainable*, 6(1), 224–236. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32923/kjmp.v6i1.3664>
- Altun, S., & Yursteven, N. (2017). The Role of Self-Reflection and Peer Review in Curriculum-focused Professional Development for Teachers. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education*, 33(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.16986/HUJE.2017030461>
- Attard, K. (2017). Personally Driven Professional Development: Reflective Self-Study as a Way for Teachers to Take Control of Their Own Professional Development. *Teacher Development*, 21(1), 40–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2016.1218363>
- Beauchamp, C. (2015). Reflection in Teacher Education: Issues Emerging from a Review of Current Literature. *Reflective Practice*, 16(1), 123–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2014.982525>
- Beka, A., & Kulinxha, G. (2021). Portfolio as a Tool for Self- Reflection and Professional Development for Pre-Service Teachers. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching*

- and Educational Research*, 20(2), 22–35. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.20.2.2>
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2018). Classroom assessment and pedagogy. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 25(6), 551–575. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2018.1441807>
- Çimer, A., & Çimer, S. O. (2013). How does Reflection Help Teachers to Become Effective Teachers? In *Educational Research* (Vol. 1).
- Davut Göker, S. (2016). Use of Reflective Journals in Development of Teachers' Leadership and Teaching Skills. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(12A), 63–70. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.041309>
- Fatmawati, K. (2024). Dynamics of Merdeka Curriculum Change: Challenges and Opportunities in Private Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Management. *MUDARRISA: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Islam*, 16(1), 49–76. <https://doi.org/10.18326/mudarrisa.v16i1.918>
- Gunawan, I., Alifiyah, I., & Evananda, F. (2017). Kompetensi Guru Sekolah Dasar: Sebuah Analisis Reflektif dengan Teknik Supervisi Pengajaran Penilaian Diri Sendiri. *Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Negeri Malang*, (2), 249–258. Malang: Universitas Negeri Malang.
- Hammond, L. D., Hylar, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective Teacher Professional Development in the evolution of human and non-human animals. In *Learning Policy Institute*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- Hermawan, C. M. (2019). Refleksi Guru dalam Melakukan Penelitian Tindakan untuk Meningkatkan Keberhasilan Siswa. *Muallimuna : Jurnal Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 4(2), 78. <https://doi.org/10.31602/muallimuna.v4i2.1862>
- Hinkin, T. R., Tracey, J. B., & Enz, C. A. (1997). Scale Construction: Developing Reliable and Valid Measurement Instruments. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 21(1), 100–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109634809702100108>
- Jatmiko, H. T. P., & Putra, R. S. (2022). Refleksi Diri Guru Bahasa Indonesia dalam Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi di Sekolah Penggerak. *Lingua Franca: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, 6(2), 224. <https://doi.org/10.30651/lf.v6i2.14701>
- Körkkö, M., Kyrö-Ämmälä, O., & Turunen, T. (2016). Professional Development through Reflection in Teacher Education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 55, 198–206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.014>
- Kurniasari, N., Permadi, I., & Purbasari, K. H. (2024). Refleksi Guru pada Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Riset Pendidikan Dasar (JRPD)*, 5(2), 187. <https://doi.org/10.30595/jrpd.v5i2.21877>
- Marcos, J. J. M., Miguel, E. S., & Tillema, H. (2009). Teacher Reflection on Action: What is Said (in Research) and What is Done (in Teaching). *Reflective Practice*, 10(2), 191–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623940902786206>
- Maulana, A., Rasyid, A., Hasibuan, F. H., Siahaan, A., & Amiruddin. (2023). Upaya Guru PAI Melakukan Refleksi Pembelajaran Diferensiasi dalam Kurikulum Belajar Mandiri. *Jurnal Pendidikan*, 3(1), 203–212. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58939/afosj-las.v3i1.524>

- McTighe, J., Wiggins, G., Warso, A. W. D. D., Zahroh, S. H., Parno, Mufti, N., & Anggraena, Y. (2017). Panduan Pembelajaran dan Asesmen. In *Badan Standar, Kurikulum, Dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, Dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia*. Jakarta.
- Mortari, L. (2012). Learning Thoughtful Reflection in Teacher Education. *Teachers and Teaching*, 18(5), 525–545. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2012.709729>
- Nugraha, I., Widodo, A., & Riandi, R. (2020). Refleksi Diri dan Pengetahuan Pedagogi Konten Guru Biologi SMP melalui Analisis Rekaman Video Pembelajaran. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Indonesia*, 8(1), 10–26. <https://doi.org/10.24815/jpsi.v8i1.15317>
- Philipsen, B., Tondeur, J., McKenney, S., & Zhu, C. (2019). Supporting Teacher Reflection During Online Professional Development: a Logic Modelling Approach. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 28(2), 237–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2019.1602077>
- Rahman, B. (2014). Refleksi Diri Dan Peningkatan Profesionalisme Guru. *Jurnal Pedagogia*, 17(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20961/paedagogia.v17i1.36026>
- Ramadhini, N. A. J., & Sukmawan, S. (2024). Refleksi Diri Guru Praktikan dalam Proses Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. *Asatiza: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 5(2), 131–143. <https://doi.org/10.46963/asatiza.v5i2.1785>
- Ritonga, R., Harahap, R., & Adawiyah Lubis, R. (2022). Pelatihan Metode Refleksi Bagi Guru Sekolah Penggerak dalam Proses Pembelajaran. *SELAPARANG: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Berkemajuan*, 6(2), 995. <https://doi.org/10.31764/jpmb.v6i2.8666>
- Singh, P., Rowan, L., & Allen, J. (2019). Reflection, research and teacher education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 47(5), 455–459. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2019.1665300>
- Sööt, A., & Viskus, E. (2015). Reflection on Teaching: A Way to Learn from Practice. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 1941–1946. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.591>
- Spilková, V. (2001). Professional Development of Teachers and Student Teachers through Reflection on Practice. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 24(1), 59–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619760120055899>
- Stenberg, K., Rajala, A., & Hilppo, J. (2016). Fostering Theory–Practice Reflection in Teaching Practicums. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(5), 470–485. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2015.1136406>
- Sugiri, W. A., & Priatmoko, S. (2020). Perspektif Asesmen Autentik Sebagai Alat Evaluasi Dalam Merdeka Belajar. *At-Thullab : Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 4(1), 53. <https://doi.org/10.30736/atl.v4i1.119>
- Yuliyanto, E., Fatichatul Hidayah, F., Perdana Istyastono, E., & Wijoyo, Y. (2018). Analisis Refleksi pada Pembelajaran: Review Reasearch. *Seminar Nasional Edusainstek UNIMUS Semarang*. Semarang: Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang.

Zeichner, K. M., & Liston, D. P. (2013). *Reflective Teaching* (2nd Editio). New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203771136>