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## **NURTURING CREATIVITY THROUGH TRADITIONAL DANCE FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The possibilities of nurturing creativity for students with learning disabilities (LD) are limitless. Providing access to students with LD to venture in the elements of creativity through traditional dance allows them the opportunity to improve their self-confidence, express their thoughts and ideas to others and the chance to receive feedback in order to continue improving themselves, their knowledge and skills. In some primary schools in Malaysia, traditional dance has been introduced as an element of music education and extracurricular activities in order to encourage creative learning and participation among students; however, it is found that there is a significant discrepancy in the levels of exposures and opportunities among students with special needs, specifically for indigenous students with LD. School is reviewed as the place for indigenous students with LD to inculcate creativity, explore on new tasks, and preparation for future roles in the society. In this qualitative case study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the school Principal, senior assistants and two Special Educational Needs teachers from a public primary school located in Bera, a district in Malaysia state of Pahang, to explore on how creativity of indigenous students with LD is nurtured through traditional dance. This study focuses on the following two research questions. Firstly, how is creativity nurtured for indigenous students with LD through traditional dance? Secondly, how has traditional dance affected the indigenous students with LD? From this study, suggestions to encourage more schools to adapt to traditional dance as a tool to encourage creative participation of students with disabilities were also discussed. Therefore, this study increases the literature on creative learning for indigenous students with LD by providing evidence obtained from the exposure of traditional dance as an activity leading to new knowledge and a better understanding on how this help nurture creativity.

**Keywords:** creativity, indigenous students, learning disabilities, traditional dance

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Ministry of Education, 2012) outlines six key attributes, amongst which is thinking skills that includes creative thinking. This is an area where all students regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity and social economic background will be instilled with the interest for knowledge, skills and lifelong learning for their development. Another document which highlighted on creativity in education is the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) Applications in Schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014) as another effort by the government to meet the need of future nation. Through KBSR and KBSM, Critical and Creative Thinking Skills (CCTS) was

introduced with the aim to produce students who are able to think critically and creatively that will enable them to compete globally.

Creative thinking is an important survival skill for the 21st century (Rabi & Masran, 2016), and it involves original ideas, imagination and self-expression. According to Amabile (1983), creativity is best conceived as a behaviour resulting from values of personal characteristics, cognitive abilities and social environment, while Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, (2004), stated that creativity is an important element in problem-solving and other cognitive abilities. In order to be creative, one must be determined to generate new ideas, analyse and sell the ideas to others (Stenberg, 2006) and avoid setting boundaries or limitations in interaction and collaboration (Gurteen, 1998). Furthermore, he added, since there is no limit in creativity, being able to perform and complete a task in a new or more effective way can also be defined as a creative act.

Intangible culture is defined by UNESCO as the practice, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills which includes performing arts. Tongpaeng et al., (2017) argues that with the extensive fields of heritage, tradition and culture namely intangible cultural like traditional dance in Southeast Asia, it is significant for the valuable cultural knowledge to be maintained and passed on to the next generation. However, according to Idris et al., (2016) due to human conflict and lack of appreciation for the cultural heritage, the valuable legacy of performing arts are under threat today. Therefore, now, more than ever, it is vital for educators to play their roles in raising awareness and educating students for the safekeeping of cultural elements which will ensure its significance despite the change and progress. Kabanda (2014), states that cultural conservation is important as it directly affects social progress, and indirectly contributes to nation branding, social inclusion and cultural democracy.

On the other hand, indigenous students are reported to have low self-esteem and negative attitudes towards education (Ministry of Rural and Regional Development Malaysia, 2005) and it is often a challenge to adapt and engage themselves in mainstream and inclusive classrooms. Additionally, a study by Primus et al., (2017) reported that indigenous students may have greater risk of adjustment problem compare to non-indigenous due to different culture. Mohd Tap (1990) added that, in an effort to improve the quality of life for indigenous students, education is the main agenda in the development programmes. However, according to Jegathesaran et al (2017), indigenous students still face challenging educational experiences which leads to poor outcomes in education. With reference to JHEQA (2008), many of indigenous students dropout of school at the end of Year six, and before sitting for the Malaysian Certificate of Education Examination (SPM). Since education accomplishment amongst indigenous students is still lagging far behind, intervention initiatives at the elementary level are crucial for indigenous students to prepare themselves with the necessary skills, hence their lack of interest in schooling, low academic achievement and other relevant issues can be looked into and improved (Md Nor, Roslan, et al., 2011).

Indigenous students with LD have equal rights to participate in any school activities just as their peers in mainstream do. This is strongly supported by UNESCO's International conference on Education (1994), movement on building Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of Education for All (EFA) where all participating countries have come to agreement in promoting inclusion in education so that all students, including indigenous students with LD will also have equal access to effective educational opportunities (Meijer & Watkins, 2019).

As such, the government of Malaysia has introduced various programmes to improve the quality of life of the indigenous community (Mohd Noor, 2012), which includes the effort by The Ministry of Education (MoE) in providing equal education and opportunities for everyone in indigenous community. A study by Wahab et al., (2020) has found that the elements of traditions and music would attract the interest of indigenous students in learning, hence should be included in the elementary education as it has shown to be effective in building self-confidence and attaining achievement. Participation in dance and music has various benefits in cognitive, kinesthetic, and communicative development (Koff, 2012). Additionally, a study by Kana'iaupuni et al., (2010) also found that students of teachers using culture-based educational strategies report greater school motivation and are more likely to have strong community ties.

Student and Culture Based (SCB) framework is designed and proposed in this study where a developing culturally responsive pedagogy to support and assist SEN teachers in nurturing creativity for indigenous students with LD for their participation and development is described. SCB framework is based on the Theory of Creativity (Amabile, 1997), Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Ladson-

Billings, 1995), and the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In this study, Amabile's theory of creativity covers the aspect of creative learning which has been overlooked by SEN teachers in the past, particularly for indigenous students with learning disabilities. Culturally responsive pedagogy allows SEN teachers to recognise the cultural practices from the communities of indigenous students with disabilities hence enabling them to support their needs. On the other hand, the self-determination theory (SDT) is useful in understanding the nature of motivation and to establish whether indigenous students with LD have the motivation to participate in traditional dance at school actively. Therefore, these three approaches utilise the relevant pedagogy when teaching indigenous students with LD, drawing on the emphasis and the importance of nurturing creativity as part of the learning process.

This paper is organised into four sections. First, the theoretical framework supporting creative approach in nurturing creativity through traditional dance is outlined. Then, the literature on opportunities for creativity to be nurtured through traditional dance was elaborated. Next, the methodology section is presented in this study, followed by the findings, discussions and consequently the conclusion, limitations, and suggestions for future studies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Based on the theory by Amabile (1997), the three components in individual's creativity are the domain skills, creativity thinking skills and intrinsic task motivation. Additionally, the theory also argues that apart from social environment, personality plays an important role in intrinsic motivation, and when perceptions are more positive and intrinsic motivation is stronger, the level of creativity in an individual becomes higher. The theory also discovers that individuals who try to be creative describe a rich and wide variety of emotions of their lives.

Apart from becoming an important element of problem solving, creativity is known to bring positive benefits in education. However, creativity remains somewhat of an ambiguous concept; hence many different definitions and theories exist concerning what creativity is (Kupers et al, 2019). A study by Plucker et al., (2004) proposed for creativity to be defined as "the interaction among process and environment where an individual or group produces an evident product that is novel and useful within a social context".

According to Zhao (2019), creativity is an important ability, talent and spirit of human being to produce original thoughts and ideas which makes us different from other species. Kupers et al. (2019), on the other hand, stated that the environment is not an outside force that stands in the way of children's inborn creativity, but an intrinsic part of creative development as creativity emerges through continuous interactions between the child and the environment. Andiliou & Murphy (2010) defined creativity as the 'the ability to produce an original and unexpected, yet appropriate and useful solution in responding to a situation', while Runco (2010) argued that creativity is associated with but distinct from intelligence, innovation, imagination, insight, and health. It is noteworthy to mention that, Gustina and Sweet (2014) concluded, there are six reasons why creativity is important, namely economy value, government's priority, education, reference, productivity, and administration. Runco (2010) on the other hand, added that creativity plays a role in many things, including problem-solving, adoption, learning, and coping. Creativity involves more than just imagination. It marks the original and valuable outcomes for the individual or society (Suciu, 2014).

With reference to the framework by Ladson-Billings (1995), culturally responsive pedagogy refers to a multidimensional, student-centred approach that recognises the experiences of students from all cultures and backgrounds. Culturally responsive pedagogy is distinguished by teachers who are committed to cultural skills and knowledge besides positioning themselves as facilitators and learners. Subsequently, in this study, the pedagogy is intended to develop understanding and commitment which will lead to the achievement of all indigenous students with LD through adaptation of their cultural strength and diversity. In a study by Samuel (2018), including the components of cultures in classrooms not only encourage students to feel connected and valued, but lead to empowerment and help them better understand themselves and their peers.

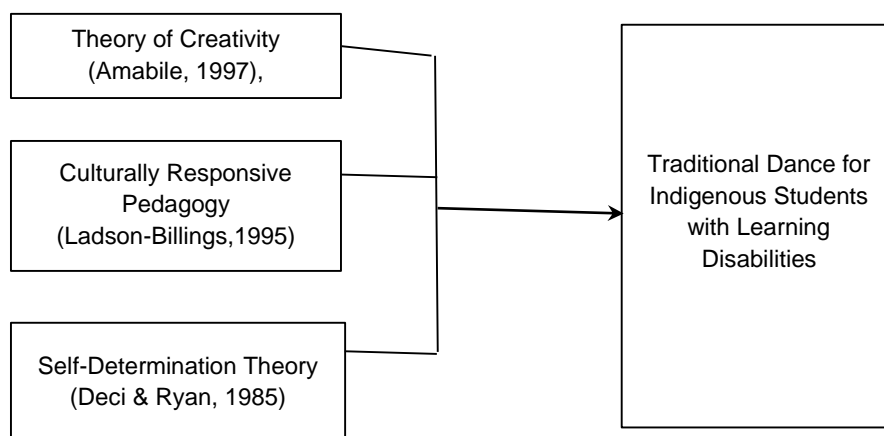
The rapid development in dance plays an important role in the sustainability of cultural arts (Saearani, 2017), particularly in traditional dance. Despite the fact that Malay traditional dance is difficult to trace due to the centuries of unwritten history (Saearania & Rahimb, 2020), a study by

Georgios et al., (2018) stated that intervention involving traditional dance program presented higher perceived health related quality of life (HRQoL) values in six dimensions namely health, mood, self-perception, friends, school-learning and self. Additionally, he stated that the special nature of traditional dance lesson is completely different from learning other motor skills as team spirit is also developed during the dancing process, and subsequently promotes self-esteem and learning.

Nevertheless, dancing to music contributes to our ability to bond with the society (Cross & Morley, 2009), and in a study by Dabalsa (2017), it is found that dancing increases physical fitness, enriches motor skills, coordination, and enhances social skills by encouraging teamwork. Additionally, Hagen and Bryant (2003) suggested that dance indicates group stability and ability to perform coordinated movement, therefore, the time and devotion required in preparing the skills indicates the quality of partnership to perform them. Previous studies have found that synchrony during music and dance serve as a mechanism to socialise, while other studies have suggested that synchrony demonstrates alliance that is expressed by the group's unique ability to effectively cooperate (Lee, Launay & Stewart, 2020).

Over time, inclusion provides the opportunity for student socialisation hence improving students' outcome (Lampont et al., 2012). With reference to Self Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci & Ryan (2016), students who are intrinsically motivated would engage in positive behaviours because they are fulfilled when they do. In addition, within SDT, intrinsic motivation is a great source of energy for the engagement of for indigenous students with LD towards traditional dance as well as in inclusive settings. Burke (2018) argues that developing skills associated with self-determination for students with LD will prepare them to be more competent in decision making, problem solving and self-management, which was strongly supported by the definition of Shogren et al., (2015), on self-determination as a “general psychological construct of theories of human behaviour”. As such, self-determination reveals the motivation for participation in traditional dance particularly for indigenous students with LD as it indicates the level of self-determination towards a particular activity. Figure 1 describes the framework of the study.

**Figure 1:** Framework of the study



## METHODOLOGY

This section describes the research methods employed for this study. With reference to Rubin & Rubin (2005), interview protocol provides rich and detailed qualitative data to further understand participants' experiences, as well as how they describe and make meaning from those experiences. Hence, interview protocol was developed to facilitate this study where the interview questions are aligned with the research questions which address, (1) how is creativity nurtured for indigenous students with LD through traditional dance?, and (2) how has traditional dance affected indigenous students with LD?

According to Patton (2015), a researcher's interview protocol such as asking questions for specific information related to the aims of a study is an instrument of inquiry. Therefore, in order to

explore how creativity is nurtured through traditional dance for indigenous students with LD, and to understand how traditional dance has impacted them, purposive sampling was employed from the school where the case study was conducted to ensure specific set of criteria are met. This study has obtained official approvals from the Ministry of Education (MoE) of Malaysia and District Education Office of Bera, Pahang. In addition, permission and consent were also obtained from the school Principal, Senior Assistant in Special Education and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) teachers to participate in this study.

Participants have consented to the interview sessions which were conducted based on the list of questions prepared, that lasted at an average of 60 minutes with the medium of Malay language. All participants involved feel most comfortable with the language and it is more convenient for them to express themselves through the provided platform pertaining to the topic discussed. Parental Consent Forms were also filled up and submitted by parents of the indigenous students with LD who are involved in the traditional dance activities, allowing the researcher to make full use of the recorded videos, photographs of their traditional dance performances and other documents of relevant activities in school for the purpose of the study. Researcher has also obtained consent from all participants involved to audio and video record the interview sessions.

According to Heale & Forbes (2013), triangulation is used as a means to avoid potential biases as well as to determine the completeness of data, while Tracy (2010) adds that triangulation is related to the quality or validity of a study. Therefore, apart from the open-ended questions which were crafted to explore the perceptions of the Principal, Senior Assistant in Special Education and the SEN Teachers employed in this study, other data collection techniques were also involved in assisting with the data collection, namely, video recording analysis, document analysis and member checking with a motive of triangulating the data collected. Hence, the stated techniques added richness and depth to the research inquiries of the study.

### **Participants Sampling**

Recruitment focused on SEN teachers from a public primary school in Bera District, a district in Southwestern Pahang, Malaysia, who (a) are SEN teachers for more than 2 years, (b) involve in the training of traditional dance for the indigenous students with LD (c) utilise traditional dance as a tool to nurture creativity among indigenous students with LD (d) SEN teachers for primary school students age 7 – 13 years old (e) able to communicate their perspectives on the topic in an interview format, and (f) consented to participate. This study developed a set of labels to represent each participant. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic background and labels to indicate the representations of each participant involved in this study.

**Table 1:** Profile of the participants

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Labels</b>	<b>Years in SEN</b>	<b>Years in Current School</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Highest Academic Qualification</b>
Senior Assistant	SA	7	4	Male	53	Bachelor's Degree
School Principal	SP	5	3	Male	55	Bachelor's Degree
SEN Teacher 1	T1	6	2	Male	31	Bachelor's Degree
SEN Teacher 2	T2	9	9	Female	32	Bachelor's Degree

### **Data Analysis**

Data was collected, analysed and transcribed from the interview sessions with the participants, as well as from document analysis and video recordings. Once the data was collected, coding procedures to determine themes from transcripts and observation notes were employed. To move from the raw data to

conceptual themes, Rubin and Rubin's (2005) steps of interview data analysis was referred to. Additionally, a qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti 8.0™ was utilised to code the finalised sets of codes and generate emergent themes.

## **FINDINGS**

This section begins with contextual findings, followed by the thematic findings. Thematic findings revealed similarities regarding teachers' perspectives on how creativity is nurtured through traditional dance, including the advantages and challenges. While participants considered implementation of traditional dance beneficial in the areas of creativity, restraints of time and resources were also discussed.

### **Contextual Findings**

Uniquely, the school which was chosen for the case study is the only school with indigenous students enrolled in SEN class throughout the entire district. Overall, there are 35 students with SEN in the school; 27 (male), 8 (female) with representation of races as follows; Malay (24), Orang Asli (6), Chinese (3) and Indians (2). SEN teachers involved made the initiative to visit the indigenous students with LD in their respective homes to build relationship and trust with their family members. The traditional dance group comprises of indigenous students with LD in this school had participated in a traditional dance competition back in 2020 which was organised by District Education Office which resulted in their winning. Subsequently, the team represented their district (Bera) to state level (Pahang) which also resulted in them winning the first place for SEN category. Furthermore, their talent, passion and involvement in traditional dance are well received by their parents. Additionally, through funds received from generous sponsors as well as from parents involved, the school ensures that the students in the traditional dance group have their proper costume, dancing equipment and tools during performance. Other than that, regular traditional dance trainings and attendance are also emphasised by the school.

### **Thematic Findings**

The themes, (1) contributing ideas on creative dance movement; (2) highly motivated in participation of school activities; and, (3) confidence in performing tasks and responsibilities were generated based on the perceptions of the participants from the data obtained on nurturing creativity through traditional dance for indigenous students with LD.

#### ***Contributing ideas on creative dance movement***

Creative movement through traditional dance is a way for indigenous students with LD to express themselves. According to T1, their ability to confidently share new ideas and suggestions on the dance movements with their peers and teachers demonstrates that their participation has stimulated their creative imagination and improving on their cognitive skills:

*"...as traditional dance combines physical skills and mental skills, the students interacted among them and shared their creative ideas through the opportunities provided from their participation in traditional dance". (T1)*

*"...the dancers will contribute their ideas so the dance movements can be more interesting, new and creative." (T1)*

*"During training, they will come up with new ideas on creative dance movements, share and discuss with their peers and teachers involved." (SA)*

Similarly, T2 experiences the same situations where indigenous students with LD involved will convey their ideas on traditional dance creative movements through the opportunities provided in traditional dance training:

*“...through traditional dance activity, the indigenous students with LD are able to identify their passion, talent and interest, which subsequently encourage them to share their ideas on ways to improve on the creative dancing movements....”. (T2)*

The participants elaborated how the opportunities through traditional dance develop the indigenous students' creative thinking skills in their interaction and sharing of ideas. Nevertheless, their courage to contribute their ideas on the dance creative movements portrays social competence where they take on the developmental task of building relationships, trust and acceptance with their peers and teachers.

*“they become bold to contribute their ideas especially when there is traditional dance competition being organised”. (T1)*

*“sense of belonging and wanting to make sure they share their ideas and showcase their talent”. (T2)*

From the video recording analysis of indigenous students with LD performing traditional dance, it is significant to mention that the activity is fun and rewarding for the students involved as it provides opportunities for them to discuss and share new ideas, as well as to develop concentration and attentiveness.

Figure 2 and 3 show the students involved during their traditional dance training sharing ideas on new creative group formations to their teachers. With reference to T1 and T2, their confidence becomes evident since they have been participating in traditional dance training numerous times.

**Figure 2 and 3**



Indigenous students with LD learn by doing and engaging their mind and bodies to participate in traditional dance. When indigenous students with LD contribute their ideas, they become willing to receiving input, comments and criticism from their teachers that will subsequently widen their perspectives and assist in developing more new ideas.

### ***Highly motivated in participation of school activities***

Indigenous students with LD who participate actively in traditional dance showed tremendous improvement on their creative and thinking skills. Their engagements assist in increasing the level of participation for other activities organised by school. According to T1, their involvement in traditional dance become the motivation for them to confidently and actively involved in other school activities:

*“...it became easier to get them involved in other activities organised by school since they have high motivation to become willingly proactive”. (T1)*

*“...by joining other activities in school actively, they are able to showcase their capabilities instead of their disabilities” (T1)*

Both T1 and T2 further explained that the indigenous students with LD also participated more actively and creatively in classrooms when there are discussions that require them to brainstorm on problem solving. Additionally, the participants also mentioned that other teachers from mainstream classrooms also stated the involvement of sharing creative ideas when they are involved in other school co-curriculum activities:

*“...not just during traditional dance training, the students also talk about their ideas to other teachers in the uniform bodies and society clubs that they are involved in.” (T2)*

According to T1, SA and SP, traditional dance becomes the method for indigenous students with LD to become aware and understand their own personal strengths and weaknesses, hence with that understanding, they are able to develop intrinsic motivation to encourage themselves to participate in other activities the school has to offer.

*“...it is a good tool because through traditional dance, they become more motivated to participate in the school programmes and activities without even being told to do so.” (SA)*

*“if before representing school they feel insecure to participate in school activities, all those changed when they were given the platform in traditional dance training to give them self-assurance on their own capabilities that leads them to become highly motivated to join most of the school activities.” (SP)*

*“...they willingly participate and volunteer to be part of programs and activities organised in school..” (T1)*

T1 added that the parents of indigenous students with LD also played major role in motivating their children to be more proactive in school programmes and activities. Whenever there are school programmes, their parents will show determination in ensuring that their children are able to take part.

*“...because when their parents witnessed their children’s achievement, they become more certain to encourage and motivate their children in getting involved in school activities.” (T1)*

*“...they showed enthusiasm and interests to explore other programs and activities organised”. (T2)*

*“...their parents show strong support which become their source of encouragement and motivation..” (SA)*

Furthermore, from video recording analysis, indigenous students with LD can be seen gaining benefits from the school activities that they willingly participate from their own self-determination and motivation. They also display excitement and genuine interest in the activities they participated in.

Figure 4 and 5 demonstrate the students participating in school activities, other than traditional dance, with minimum supervision from their teachers. Through participation in more activities, indigenous students with LD become increasingly independent in learning and practising new knowledge and skills.



**Figure 4 & 5**



*Source: T1's collection*

Motivation correlates with success in school. In addition, motivation shown by indigenous students with LD through traditional dance and participation in other activities is not only significant, it is also an important predictor in determining their achievement in other aspects of development in school, mainly social skills and self- confidence.

***Confidence in performing tasks and responsibilities.***

Several studies have been carried out to assess how self-confidence correlated to performance tasks. For indigenous students with LD, confidence comes from the feelings of acceptance of themselves and how other teachers and peers believe in their abilities and skills from their involvement in traditional dance. According to T1, since they have represented school and won many times for traditional dance competition, they do not doubt their own capabilities like they used to:

*“...they trained so hard so when they win, they feel more confident to perform other tasks and responsibilities given to them, even from other teachers.” (T1)*

*“even teachers from mainstream classrooms gave positive feedback for them when they perform the tasks given”. (SA)*

When the school acknowledged the effort from the indigenous students with LD in traditional dance, it is only appropriate the further develop their skills and knowledge. Hence, according to the SP, giving the students more tasks and responsibilities will assist them in enhancing their potentials and highlighting on their abilities, not disabilities:

*“similar to students from mainstream, indigenous students with LD must also go through the same procedure when we want to recruit school prefects, class monitor and so on. Through social inclusion, they will feel more confident in performing their tasks and responsibilities.” (SP)*

Indigenous students with LD face serious challenges in their level of academic attainment, thus it is recognised that through their achievement and nurturement of creativity in traditional dance, improvement in their confidence to perform tasks can be achieved:

*“....indigenous students with LD who have low level of self-confidence showed low performance in school, while indigenous students with LD who have high level of self-confidence can easily accomplish their tasks in school and most of them are not afraid to participate in every activity.” (SA)*

*“...there is a significant relationship between students level of self-confidence and their performance tasks.” (T2)*

*“...level of self-confidence in indigenous students with LD can influence to their performance tasks in school.” (T1)*

The attitudes cultivated in school through traditional dance can help indigenous students with LD to adapt to different social roles, consequently empowering them with the confidence to perform better in the tasks and responsibilities.

*“...since traditional dance provide them with the confident attitude to also become role models to others” (T2)*

*“....through traditional dance, indigenous students with LD develop healthy sense of self-confidence, feel good about themselves hence perform their tasks better”.*  
(SP)

Additionally, from the video recording analysis, the level of self-confidence shown by indigenous students with LD should be considered as the quality in which they are assured of themselves in performing tasks. Despite needing extra time compared to their peers in mainstream classrooms, they stayed focus and successfully completed the given responsibilities.

Figure 6 and 7 show evidence of the activities they have confidently participated and attained great achievement which consequently assist them to perform their tasks and responsibilities confidently.

**Figure 6 and 7**



*Source: T1's collection*

Their achievements are the building blocks which enable the indigenous students with LD to construct a sense of them as a success. Additionally, participants also talked about the indigenous students with LD taking pride in just becoming part of the traditional dance group, as in the beginning it was just a new discovery to them.

## **DISCUSSION**

Following the analysis of the results, it is worth highlighting that traditional dance has positive influence on indigenous students with LD with the potential to become better coordinated, more confident and social. Looking at how traditional dance as significant aspect in the development of creative thinking skills for indigenous students with LD, additionally with the evidence found in extensive studies in decades pertaining to students with LD through music and dance, now of all times, it is pivotal to acknowledge the relevance of traditional dance as an approach in nurturing creativity among indigenous

students with learning disabilities. Dance and movement therapy are covered by the umbrella term of creative art therapy which focus on creativity. A study by Jeong et al., (2005) argues that the purpose of dance movement therapy is for therapeutic change through the psychotherapeutic use of dance and movement to express emotions and experiences in a psychophysical way.

Hence, from the study, it is evident that traditional dance contributes to reassurance on both the physical and the emotional levels, with reference from the participants of the study who reported that dance and movement gave the indigenous students with LD the opportunity to talk about their feelings, emotions and thoughts. The creativity nurtured through traditional dance resulted in a higher self-esteem for indigenous students with LD who proved that they have grown in self-confidence and were no longer worried about other people's opinion of them and their disabilities hence enabling them to develop their own creative unique personality and style.

A study by McCavera (1991) has found that music benefits children with learning disabilities and positively effects their tolerance, self-discipline and self-esteem. It is found that music evokes the best qualities in children, and in relation to the study, Adilogullari (2014) states that dancing provides the opportunity to share emotions and expression to others without any word, hence, one of the promising ways to reduce social physique anxiety, while Burrill (2011) states that integration of arts can bring benefits to all children, with or without disabilities. Due to the challenge faced by students with LD in processing too much information around them in class (Smith, 2010), it is found that they will gain immense benefits through dance integration (Carnahan et al., 2009).

Teachers have an important role to play in nurturing creativity as students, with or without disabilities, can develop capacity for everyday creativity and the ability to generate new ideas or develop skills for creative problem solving. However, according to Aljughaiman & Mowrer-Reynolds (2005), some teachers feel that enhancing creativity is not necessarily one of their responsibilities, and as a matter a fact, the study has also found that teachers are unprepared to foster creativity when they do not know the definition of creativity and how to identify creative behaviour. To make dance learning fun and enjoyable, a dance teacher and choreographer must be creative, has good interpersonal skills, is persistent, and can work with a team (Sharma, 2019). A study by Md Nor, Roslan, Mohamed et al., (2011) also concluded that it is crucial to send the right teachers to schools with indigenous students with LD in order to make learning interesting and meaningful to them.

It is worth mentioning that teachers will not be able to integrate creative teaching or nurture creativity through traditional dance without the support of their school leaders and peers. Therefore, schools are to encourage teachers to be imaginative and open, while also challenging them to improve students' well-being and creativity thinking skills. Additionally, schools need to ensure that teachers receive the necessary feedback, followed by effective development for them as teachers leading to the improvement of their method and practice in the nurturement of creativity. Another factor which hinders the development of students' creativity is the teachers' preference on teaching methods that give them the control on the teaching process. Through traditional dance, this approach can be avoided as it is based on the each of the indigenous students with LD's individual experiences

With reference to a study by Gralowsky (2016) encouraging students to participate in creative activities will serve the purpose of developing and managing their beliefs in their creative potential, and developing a sense of their creative self-efficacy which are intended to make the students realise on their ability, and that their ideas are not worse than those of other students. Hence, creative activity namely traditional dance provided the ability for indigenous students with LD to foster new ideas from unique perspectives, hence encouraging them to adapt to variety of creative thinking skills.

In order to fill in the creativity gap in activities occurring in schools, teachers and school administrators need to accomplish that creativity is not just another enrichment activities to be implemented in school, creativity as a matter a fact, has been proven as a set of psychological skills which resulted in the enhancement of creativity skills which will be imperative in the 21st century workforce. Teachers have strong influence in encouraging or, on the contrary, suppressing creativity. Therefore, it is evident that teachers who lead by example, model creative participation and willing to accept, share and encourage new, creative ideas will result in students unleashing more creativity involvement in schools.

### **Limitations of Study**

Despite the positive influence and benefits discussed in this study, it is important to also acknowledge a few limitations. Interviews with indigenous students with LD and their parents can somehow determine the effectiveness of the creativity opportunities through traditional dance designed for them in the school, however, this study did not explore that perceptions due to the nature and objectives of the study. In addition, the school chosen as a case study has a unique contextual ground in Malaysia where it places extra emphasis on traditional dance and indigenous students with LD are highly encouraged and engaged to participate. Hence, this qualitative case study does not intend to generalise the findings since other schools does not have such unique contextual ground in order to generalise it.

### **Recommendation for Future Studies**

From this study, it is found that there is still much to learn about indigenous students with LD, traditional dance, and the other effects of traditional dance on them. Since this study focused on traditional dance, attempting future study on the same subjects but with a different style of dance and selection of variety of disabilities instead of just LD would provide different perspectives and help illustrate how dance affects students with other disabilities as well. Future studies can further create more understanding and awareness on teachers, parents and school administrators on the affects dance has on the brain and body, and in addition, future studies could also explore the perspectives of indigenous students with LD and their parents on the effectiveness in cultivating creativity through traditional dance or other different style of dance as provided to them in school. Nevertheless, it would also be appropriate in future studies to conduct a more prolonged monitoring and with a larger sample size in order to observe more impacts on the nurturement of creativity through traditional dance over time.

### **CONCLUSION**

The main conclusions to be highlighted are, firstly, teachers can establish the kind of supportive environment and platform through creative tool and activity where indigenous students with LD are able to express their creative ideas. Previous studies have also concluded that teachers who can model creative thinking and express their ideas, become outstanding in nurturing creativity and generating creativity among students. Fundamentally, the roles of teachers and school administrators are significant as they are in unique positions to create environments for indigenous students with LD to explore the creative aspects of learning and participation. It is effective for traditional dance provided in a school where indigenous students with LD are involved and resulted in them exhibiting greater confidence and self-esteem in contributing ideas, executing other school activities and developing confidence to complete their given tasks.

Indigenous students with LD begin to increase their confidence, discipline, competence and adapt to the impacts and the usefulness of traditional dance in different aspects in school. Additionally, it is found that providing feedback during traditional dance will assist in the reinforcement for indigenous students with LD to incorporate creativity into their self-concept. Secondly, there are various ways for indigenous students with LD to be creative and to be categorised as creative group of people. Previous studies have concluded that creativity is a set of skills and attitudes that anyone is capable of finding new and innovative solutions to problems solving, portraying higher self-esteem as well as the abilities to follow their passion. By increasing motivation and amplifying fun and joy, creativity nurtured through activity such as traditional dance will enhance the learning experience, which consequently leading indigenous students with LD in pursuing more meaningful goals and aims in school. Through participation in traditional dance, teachers and indigenous students involved will come to terms that creativity requires continuous effort and support. Students involved must be constantly reminded that creativity involves imagination and through traditional dance, indigenous students involved are able to practice creative thinking skills and characteristics.

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