Implementation of a Musical Skills Course to Train Early Childhood Education Programs Students Songwriting Skills

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Abstract: This research explores the effectiveness of Musical Skills courses to train the musicality and skills of Early Childhood Education Programs students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo in creating songs for early childhood. The early childhood education curriculum in Indonesia currently applies the Merdeka Curriculum, where in intracurricular activities play is a switch from Merdeka Belajar, so the activities chosen must provide a fun and meaningful experience for children, focus on children's welfare, and strengthen the profile of Pancasila Students. The Musical Skills course prepares students to have skills in creating songs for early childhood and preparing songs according to themes in the Merdeka Curriculum. These themes are: "Aku Sayang Bumi", "Aku Cinta Indonesia", " Kita Semua Bersaudara ", " Imajinasi dan Kreatifitasku ". Students can create songs according to their creativity with the main ideas of the big themes of Early Childhood learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, students can arrange musical accompaniment for the songs they have created using simple musical instruments that can be played by earlychildhood.

Keywords: music education; early childhood; musical skills

INTRODUCTION

Songs are one of the media used in early childhood learning throughout the world, but in Indonesia currently not all early childhood education programs teachers have the musical skills or musicality that supports these activities. Activities that are often carried out are singing while clapping, without musical accompaniment, with songs that are sometimes not appropriate to the current learning theme, or old songs that are always repeated. Teachers experience problems due to the lack of a repertoire of songs that match the learning themes specified in the curriculum (Wadiyo, 2021).

Using songs in classroom learning can provide many benefits. Songs can be used to help children develop listening, pronunciation and speaking skills. Songs can also be an aid in teaching vocabulary, sentence structure, and sentence patterns. The biggest advantage of using educational songs is that it makes the learning atmosphere more enjoyable (Millington, 2011; Murphey, 1992). Musical experience can be enhanced by experience gained from fine arts, storytelling, poetry, theater, movement and dance classes. Here the teacher has a very important role (Gujjar & Choudhry, 2009; Xhemajli, 2016). Furthermore, music education can be used not only to develop skills music, but also to develop social and individual abilities, problem solving abilities, cognitive abilities, critical thinking, and academic achievement (Topoÿlu, 2014).

Students of the early childhood education programs at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo are prepared to be able to answer the needs of the world of early childhood education in Indonesia. Students must be equipped with musical skills and experience regarding the process of creating songs for early childhood. This research aims to look at the creative process of creating songs for early childhood carried out by students of the early childhood education programs in the music skills course.

METHOD

This research was conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, early childhood education programs, on semester 5th students. This research used a qualitative design based on case studies. This research aims to look at the creative process of creating songs for early childhood carried out by students in the music skills course. There were 27 students divided into 2 classes, classes A and B. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format by asking questions related to the students' ability to read and write notation, ability to compose song lyrics, ability to create song melodies.

The documentation carried out is by looking at the course semester learning plan (RPS) and lecture material by the lecturer. Observations were made during the lecture process, with concentration on the song creation process by students.
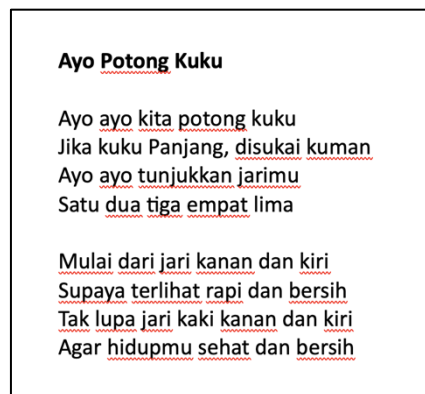
Researchers validated the data using data triangulation techniques, especially matching data from interviews, documentation studies and observations. Triangulation was chosen to check the consistency of data found from various data collection techniques (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Data analysis was carried out through the use of an interactive model starting from data collection, data reduction, data presentation, to verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
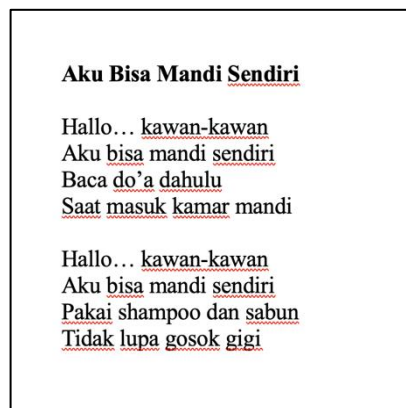
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the Merdeka Curriculum, art is one component in the structure of activities to achieve learning outcomes in early childhood education, so it is very important for students in the early childhood education programs to have skills in the arts, especially musical arts. Students are encouraged to have artistic skills that are integrated into the curriculum and extracurriculars (student activity units). The Musical Skills course aims to equip students with skills in the field of music, especially creating songs for early childhood. This course is a continuation of the previous course which focuses on music theory and music practice. This study was carried out in the odd semester 2023/2024 on semester 5th students, classes A and B.

In the first week of lectures, students are invited to review the material in the previous course, namely material on number notation and block notation, then students are invited to find out how to use chromatic signs in block notation. This material aims to make students understand that not all songs are suitable if sung on a natural scale. It must be adjusted to the ambitus or voice range in early childhood. Next, students are given material about children's songs, what are the rules for composing lyrics, what can and cannot be done in the process of composing song lyrics for young children. In the next stage, students are asked to form small groups with 4-5 members in each group, where later in this group the creative process of song creation will be carried out.

Each group is asked to compose a poem which will later become song lyrics. The theme of the song can be chosen according to the big theme in the Merdeka Curriculum, "I Love the Earth", "I Love Indonesia", "We are All Brothers" or "My Imagination and Creativity" and the whole theme can be developed. Students can choose one of the themes they want. Next is the process of turning the rhymes and stanzas in poetry into suitable lyrics for songs.

Ayo Potong Kuku

Ayo ayo kita potong kuku
Jika kuku Panjang, disukai kuman
Ayo ayo tunjukkan jarimu
Satu dua tiga empat lima

Mulai dari jari kanan dan kiri
Supaya terlihat rapi dan bersih
Tak lupa jari kaki kanan dan kiri
Agar hidupmu sehat dan bersih

Picture 1. Examples of song lyrics created by students

Aku Bisa Mandi Sendiri

Hallo… kawan-kawan
Aku bisa mandi sendiri
Baca do'a dahulu
Saat masuk kamar mandi

Hallo… kawan-kawan
Aku bisa mandi sendiri
Pakai shampoo dan sabun
Tidak lupa gosok gigi

Picture 2. Examples of song lyrics created by students

According to Mang (2005), children's songs have special characteristics, for example simple and fun. Simplicity refers to melodies, rhythms, harmonies and messages that are easy for children to understand. The melody is also very simple. The notes don't jump far and the phrasing is short. The rhythm is easy to follow with one or two rhythm patterns. The harmonization only uses the tonic, subdominant and dominant. This can be simplified with tonic and dominant.

According to Shen (2009), a pleasant song is a song that is joyful when sung. Through songs, apart from making children happy, educational messages will be more easily conveyed (Millington, 2011). This activity also increases students' creativity based on responses to messages sung with the teacher in class (Wadiyo, et al, 2021).

From the song lyrics that have been created, continue with the stage of composing the song melody. The song contains an invitation to always maintain personal hygiene, so the song melody must be cheerful and enthusiastic. After finding a suitable melody for the song lyrics, students try to write it into musical notation. Even though in the previous semester students had received material about number notation and block notation, they still experienced problems when writing down the notes of the melodies of the songs they had created. Assistance from the lecturer is needed so that students can write the correct notation, according to the melody of the song.
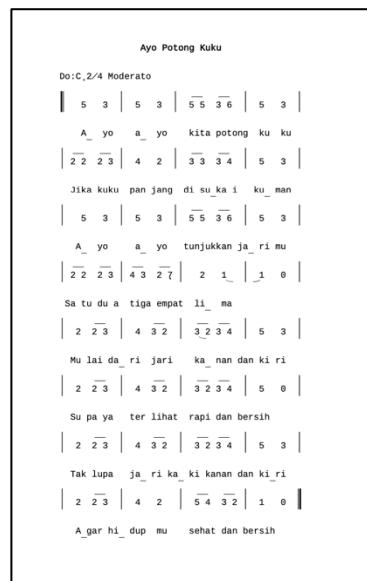
Picture 3. Example of notation for the song "Ayo Potong Kuku" from the results of a student's creative process
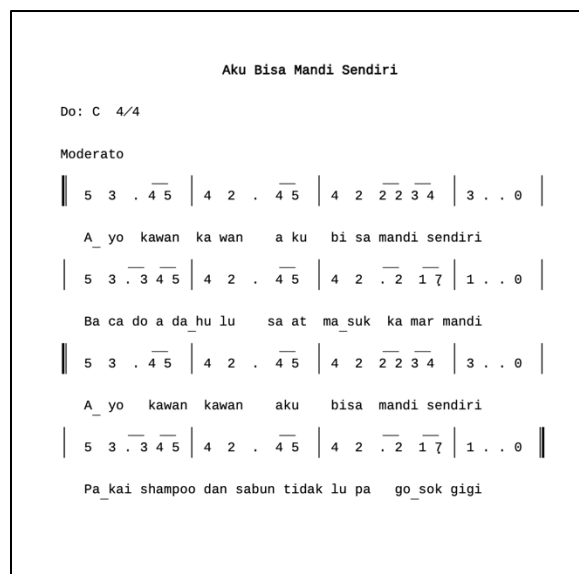
Picture 4. Example of notation for the song "Aku Bisa Mandi Sendiri" from the results of a student's creative process

The song melodies produced by students are a creative process together with assistance from lecturers. It can be ascertained that the melody of the song is not a composition created by another songwriter.

Orkibi (2011) explains that the foundation understanding of the creative process reflects intermodal theory Atkins et al. This theory refers to the integration of art with other scientific disciplines. This integration aims to (1) focus on process; (2) provides clarity, control, and intensification of emotions; (3) add play space or imagination range; and (4) improve crystallization of emotions that may arise in the artistic process. Artistic sensitivity is another issue that should be discussed in depth intermodal theory. Theoretically, art is available to whom course and no artistic skills are required use art for other non-artistic purposes and/ or in an effort to integrate the use of art with other fields.

The next stage is the stage of arranging the musical accompaniment for the song that has been created. Students determine the type of accompanying musical instrument that will be used. For harmonic instruments, students can use keyboard or guitar instruments, and for melodic and rhythmic instruments, students can use pianika, tambourine, belira, maracas, or they can create their own musical instruments to use. For example, students can make their own maracas from cans filled with seeds, or fill glass bottles with water in different volumes so that they become melodic instruments. Here students are given space to be creative according to the ideas they have. Lecturers provide assistance in determining chords for song accompaniment as well as composing melodies for intros, interludes and endings.

In the final meeting of the lecture, students put on a musical performance in groups featuring songs complete with musical accompaniment which is the final project for the end-of-semester assessment. The final achievement for this Musical Skills course is that students perform songs they have composed together, complete with accompanying musical arrangements, which of course are composed simply because this process is carried out by students from the early childhood education programs, not students from the music arts study program. However, students have gone through the learning process as an experience that will become a provision in the future to produce other works.

Picture 5. Performance of the song "Aku Bisa Mandi Sendiri"

Picture 6. Performance of the song "Ayo Potong Kuku"

CONCLUSION

Everyone can display aesthetic expressions through songs. From this research, we know that PG PAUD study program students who have no practical musical experience can create songs to convey educational messages as written in the curriculum. With the stages of the creative process using poetry as song lyrics, it is then developed into a simple melody according to the special characteristics of songs for early childhood. Line by line of lyrics, until it becomes one complete song presentation and carries an educational message for children. Even though some students sang in discordant tones, basically a song by Together had been created. Hopefully this experience can be a provision for the future.

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