

# Dance Learning for Children with Moderate Mental Retardation at the Pembina State Special Education School of Yogyakarta

Heni Siswantari<sup>1</sup>, Mira Setia Wati<sup>2</sup>

Elementary School Teacher Education

Universitas Ahmad Dahlan

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>heni.siswantari@pgsd.uad.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>mira.setiawati1@gmail.com

**Abstract**— SLB Pembina Yogyakarta concentrated on students with mental retardation category of mild, moderate, to severe scales. Dance learning was given to all students as an extracurricular activity to hone the children's motor skills. This study aimed to describe the dance learning for children with moderate intellectual disabilities in SLB Pembina Yogyakarta. The method used was qualitative perspective with data collection techniques, namely are learning process observation, interviews with teachers, and dance learning documentation. The results showed that: 1. Children with moderate intellectual disabilities had a good grasp in dance learning. 2. Dance learning strategies in SLB Pembina used direct learning techniques with demonstration and audio-visual methods 3. The evaluation was done with dance performance at the end of the meeting. Suggestion for the dance teacher of students with intellectual disabilities was the innovation in the method, so that children were interested in learning motion exploration through learning outside the classroom.

**Keywords**—*dance learning; moderate mental retardation; special education school.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs have the same rights in education. This provision has been regulated in Indonesia's National Education System Constitution, Number 20, Year 2003, Article 32, which explains that special education is education that is needed for students who have difficulty in following the learning process due to physical, emotional, mental, and social disorders or having potential intelligence and special talents. The students referred in the statement printed in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia, No. 70 of 2009, article 3, covering thirteen categories: 1) blind children; 2) deaf children; 3) mute children; 4) children with mental retardation; 5) quadriplegic children; 6) unsociable children; 7) children with learning difficulty; 8) slow learners; 9) children with autism; 10) children who have motor impairments; 11) children who are the victims of drug abuse, illegal drugs, and other addictive substances; 12) children who have any other disorders; and 13) multiple handicapped children.

The government has provided special education for Children with Special Needs, one of them is the Special School

for students who have mental or physical limitations which is called Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB). The school has more functions than schools in general. There are various kinds of special services that will be provided and adapted to the types of student's limitations. Therefore, it is expected that every child with special needs will receive the appropriate education services in SLB. Hence, the presence of this school for students who have abnormalities and potential intelligence or special talents are expected to avoid discrimination from other peers.

Children with Special Needs or Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus (ABK) who take education in SLB are children with various kinds of limitations and privileges. One of them is ABK child who has mental limitations or is called mental retardation child in the moderate category with an IQ in between 35 to 50. Reference [1] states that children with Special Needs have various obstacles, one of them are children with mental retardation who have retardation in intelligence, emotional and social, which need special treatment to develop to the maximum ability. Children with intellectual disabilities have significantly less intelligence than the average children in general, accompanied by obstacles in adjusting to the surrounding environment [2]. Physical and mental development of children with mental retardation is maximized in various activities and learning in schools. One of the optimizations of student development is in the field of dance learning. The arts in education are functioned more as a media to meet children's development, both physically and mentally. Besides, art education functions as a fulfillment for the needs of expression, appreciation, and recreation [3].

One of the SLB that is implementing dance learning for children with moderate mental retardation is the SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta. Dance learning in SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta has the goal of honing the children's motor sensors to increase the potential of moderate children with mental retardation. The selection of the exact learning method is needed to optimize the potential kinesthetic intelligence possessed by moderate children with mental retardation

Children with intellectual disabilities have limitations in coordinating three limbs at once, which makes it a problem for the dance instructors at the school. One of the strategies is to change the existing dance to be simpler and only coordinate

two limbs in each range of motion. The range of motion created is also repetitive and without too much variation. The learning is done directly through mentoring and by using demonstration methods. Since, the children with intellectual disabilities have limitations in remembering, the learning is intensively done, which is three times a week and every day before the performance.

Based on these various considerations, the researchers felt the need to observe and analyze how the implementation of the dance learning process for children with mental retardation carried out at SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta. Hence, the implementation of the learning process can provide insight and knowledge about how to implement dance learning for children with mental retardation. As well as the extent to which the potential can have an impact on the interests and talents of SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta students, especially in the field of dance. The urgency of this study is to determine the ability of mental retardation students in studying dance. The results of this study can be used as a reference for dance teachers in SLB in implementing dance learning for children with mental retardation.

## II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The final goal of this research is to analyze the dance learning process for children with mental retardation of moderate category in the SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Dance Education

Art is anything resulted from an activity, expression or human feeling, coming from an experience, which then poured into a form of work that can be enjoyed by its meaning and beauty. This is in line with Sajoko's statement in [3] which states that art is a skill to make or do something that is used or intended as a stimulant of satisfying aesthetic experience. Besides, art can also be said as an educational media that can be used to teach moral values and messages to children, both in formal, informal and non-formal education. The function of art in education is different from the function of art in professional work. This need is considered by educators, especially in the assessment of children's work, so that children's creativity is not measured or compared to the beauty criteria according to adults. This is following the statement in [3], which states that the arts in education are functioned as media to meet the development of children, both physically and mentally. Besides, art education has a function as a fulfillment for the need of expression, appreciation, and recreation.

According to [4], art education is an important part of the overall education system; it is a strategic and functional element for humanity's glorification efforts. This is related to the properties inherent in art. Art is imaginative, that imagination will stimulate the people involved in it to combine various feelings that exist with reality abstracted in communication that gives aesthetic pleasure. Also, according to [3], art education is essentially a process of human formation through art. Learning art in schools facilitates children, providing opportunities for themselves through the experience

of art based on something close to the life and world of the children. Art is grouped into several parts, which are Fine Art, Music Art, Drama / Theater Art, Literary Arts, and Dance.

### B. The Character of Children with Mental Retardation

Mental retardation can be understood as a form of substantial limitation in functioning yourself which is characterized by the limited ability of mental functions that lie below the average (IQ 70 or less) and is characterized by the limited ability of adaptive behavior at least in two or more areas [5]. A similar theory was put forward by [6] which defines mental retardation or often referred as children with mental retardation is a condition related to limitations in performing various functions in life caused by low intellectual functions which cause limitations in making self-adaptations include the ability to communicate, the ability to help themselves, social skills, the ability to direct themselves, the ability to perform academic and vocational functions and fill the free time. Hence, it was concluded that mental retardation is not only categorized as someone who has intellectual retardation but also has mental retardation or adaptive behavior. So, in education, an educator needs to understand the importance of developing multiple intelligences in students so that the intelligence of children who have been identified can be pursued and developed optimally.

The American Association on Mental Retardation classifies mental retardation in 3 groups. Those are mild mental retardation, moderate mental retardation, and severe mental retardation [5]. Whereas [7] characterizes children with mental retardation as having unbalanced physical appearance, for example, the head is too big/small, unable to take care of themselves, delays in speech and language skills experience, do not care about the environment, lack of coordination of movement, and the mouth often comes out saliva. Also, Reynolds, in [8] mentions that mental disorders are non-adaptive or deviant behaviors. These abnormalities generally often appear at school, for example walking unbalanced presence of stiffness (spastic) on the fingers, like to babble, cannot be silent, often interfere with the friend, difficult to communicate verbally and irritable. Deviations from their adaptive behavior are what need to be provided with education services more effectively include how to communicate, how to socialize, movement skills and self-maturity and social responsibility. So, in the learning process, with these limitations, an educator needs to understand the special characteristics possessed by each student, so that the preparation of plans and learning activities can be tailored to the needs of everyone respectively.

### C. Implementation of the Learning Program

There are stages in the implementation of learning to achieve the goals set. That stage is the preparation of learning plans, implementation, and evaluation. Learning plans is made as a guide in implementing learning. Once it has been planned, the implementation of learning is carried out following the learning plan and has been previously designed. It should be carried out by adjusting the characteristics possessed by students. The steps of the learning implementation according to [9], at least there are preliminary, core, and closing activities.

The stages of implementing dance learning in SLB are certainly not much different from the implementation of dance learning in other public schools, but learning in SLB must be done by educators who are experts in their fields and are carried out specifically because students who study in these places have a variety of advantages and deficiencies that are different from normal children in general. The last stage is the evaluation which is the stage to obtain and analyze data in the process and results of learning that are carried out continuously.

#### *Relevant Studies*

1. Research conducted by [10] entitled "Tari Merak Modifikasi Terhadap Kemampuan Motorik Kasar Anak Tuna Grahita Ringan di SDLB ". Learning of the modification of Merak dance on the gross motor abilities of mild children with mental retardation had a significant effect on the gross motor abilities of mild children with mental retardation. This could be seen through the graph of the recapitulation of the results of the pretest / Initial Observation and Post Test / Final Observation. The gross motor abilities of mild children with mental retardation based on the research conducted in the SDLB shows that the gross motor abilities of mild children with mental retardation experience changed and became better. The gross motor abilities of mild children with mental retardation were increased because modification of the Merak dance could stimulate gross motor skills.
2. Research by [11] entitled "Pembelajaran Tari Kreasi Anak Tuna Grahita Ringan Melalui Proses Imitatif ", the results of the study indicated that learning "Burung Dance" dance created by children for mild children with mental retardation through the imitative approach, while the meaningfulness and function of this creative dance learning is to foster the values of character building for children with mild mental retardation in SLB Pembina Yogyakarta.
3. Research by [12] titled "Pengaruh Penerapan Pembelajaran Tari Kreasi Terhadap Kemampuan Motorik Kasar Siswa Tunagrahita di Sekolah Dasar Luar Biasa " which aimed to describe: (1) the gross motor skills of the mental retardation students at SD Jaya Putra Jaya before intervention (A). (2) During the intervention (B). (3) After the intervention (A ') (4) the difference in the gross motor skills of mental retardation students at SDLB Putra Jaya between before and after the intervention. The results of this study are (1) change level of baseline conditions (A) = + 17.85%; (2) condition level change (B) = + 17.86%; (3) condition level change (A ') = + 3.58%; (4) condition level change (B) to condition level change (A) = + 3.57%; (5) condition level change (A ') against condition level change (B) = -17.86%. Overlapping between conditions does not exist between the data (0%).
4. The research of [13] entitled " Peningkatan Keterampilan Menari Melalui Metode *Drill* Pada Siswa Tunagrahita Tipe Ringan Kelas VI di SLB Tegar Harapan Penelitian " showed the results that students' dancing skills can be

significantly improved through the drill method toward mental retardation students of mild category in class VI at SLB Tegar Harapan.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a qualitative method and descriptive approach. The researcher attempts to find the fact and phenomenon according to the interpretation of people who involved in the research related to dance learning in Elementary School at Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta on children with mental retardation. The data collected in the academic year 2019/2020 on April-September 2019, adjusting the dance learning lesson time. The research subjects were chosen through purposive sampling technique. As stated by [14], in the purposive sampling, the researcher purposely chooses someone and place to learn or understanding a central phenomenon. The subjects as the data source in this research were mental retardation pupil, dancing teacher, dancing coordinator, and headmaster. The research object focused on the dance learning lesson on mental retardation pupils at SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta, especially for Elementary School students. In qualitative research, the data collected in the natural condition. The primary source and the collecting data technique were mostly done by using observation, deep interview, and documentation. In this research, the validity of the data was obtained by triangulation and technique, in which the researcher inquired the data through some sources and techniques, including crosscheck technique. To analyze the data, the researcher used data analysis by [15] that consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

#### V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Dancing is a compulsory lesson for all students in SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta. According to the research, here are the stages of the implementation process.

##### *A. Dance Learning Program Plan*

According to the interview, the planning process started with a coordination meeting between the headmaster, art coordinator, and art teachers at the start of the new academic year. The meeting discussed the learning activity process and its improvement. Before the meeting was conducted, the teachers assessed the pupil to see their ability and condition. Then, the result of the assessment will be taken up in the meeting. During the meeting, they are not only talking about the learning proses, but the teachers also made a syllabus and lesson plan that consulted with the student coordinator and got the headmaster's approval to see its properness as a learning reference. That early stage is done to decide the next stages that will be done in the implementation of dancing learning according to the appointed references and rules. Here is the interview result with Mrs VS, the art coordinator, on 6 August 2019:

"Dance learning design is done together with the art coordinator, headmaster and dance teacher, with the teacher from other subjects. We will hold a meeting together, not only the coordinators. One of the tasks of

the art coordinator here is giving authority to the dance teacher to create syllabus and lesson plan, after that the dance teacher consults the result and ask for approval from the headmaster. Afterwards, we will create a design for one year, but we are also flexible because the performance is unpredictable so we will adjust for the performance outside. All of that was done at the beginning of the academic year after the teacher does the assessment towards their students. After that, we do the meeting together.” (VS, 2019).

According to the learning design plan, besides designing a syllabus and lesson plan, teachers also decides which strategies they used in the learning process. Those strategies used a direct individual approach which were implemented through a classical assessment. The teachers also used media, facilities, and infrastructure to make the learning process easier such as fully-equipped building with glass, sound system, tape player, LED TV, disk, VCD’s, flash disk, dance costume, makeup, property such as umbrella, fan, tambourine, and other facilities provided by SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta are quite fast in the development of its procurement.

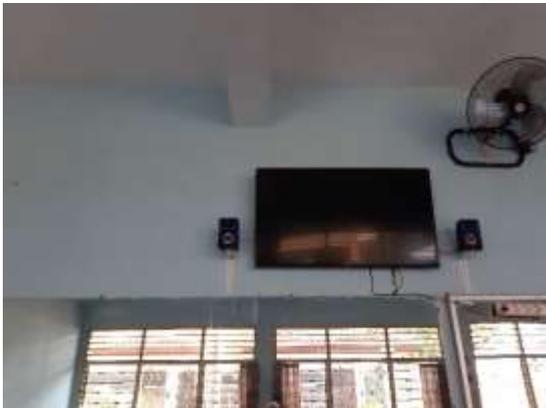


Fig. 1. LED TV placed at the glass room (source: Mira’s documentation, 2019)

**B. Implementation of Dancing Learning Program**

The implementation of the learning was started with the teacher readiness in giving service and delivering the material according to the rules and lesson plan that was made in the meeting. Then in the implementation, the teacher divided the boys and girls into separate groups. It was done because usually, the dance material were different between that given to boys and that given to girls.

The learning started when the teacher opened the class with greetings and prayer, after giving apperception, the teacher continued it with warming-up activity. Then, the teacher invited the learners to recall the previous material. For the main material, the teacher and learners listened to music together. After that, they continued to practice started with an example from the teacher. In the whole learning process, the

teachers did not always follow with the lesson plan as it was. However, the teacher always adjusted the learning with the learners’ characteristics and capability, because giving dance material to the basic learners are quite hard to do seeing from the learners’ condition.

“Then to the main activity we are listening to dance accompaniment music together. After that, we go to the practice. The struggle of elementary learning for children with mental retardation is giving basic for children with mental retardation with elementary level. Making the pupils happy is not easy, sometimes when are tired they will be bored, go in and out like that. But when they are happy, they always looking for the teacher sometimes asking frequently “miss when we will dance? Can we do it now?” like that.” (NR, 2019)

This statement was supported by the observation on the main learning that was held on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The result showed that dance learning was held for 2 hours, but not all pupils were willing to join the dance learning from the beginning until the end. It was because the pupils felt tired easily and changed their desire many times. That the teacher always tried to invite the pupils back to the learning. When the students could not be forced, the teacher gave another activity to the children based on their interest.



Fig. 2. Teacher gives guidance to the pupils so they able to dance correctly (source: Mira’s documentation, 2019)

The method that teachers used in delivering materials in the dance learning for the children with mental retardation was the same with the general dance method. The differences were in the training process and the performance. The teachers used demonstration methods and drill on the training process, and used the demonstration method and audio-visual in the performance preparation process. The teachers expected that by choosing the demonstration method in delivering material, then the students with mental retardation would absorb it better. Figure 2 above shows the process of dance learning when the teacher demonstrated some moves in a dance.

Before the class ended, the teacher evaluated the result of the learning by asking the pupils to repeat the hard moves (drill method). Besides, the teacher assessed the students by

seeing their talent and interest. If there was a pupil who had a talent and interest in dancing, the teacher would guide the pupils to join the dance extracurricular to channel the potential that they have. At the end of the learning, the teacher provided an overview of the learning for the next meeting and closed it with prays and greetings. This statement was based on an interview stated by Mrs. NR on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019 as follows:

“Close it with prayers and give a little overview material but before that I ask the pupils to repeat the moves that has been given together, sometimes individually. Drill is one of the methods to repeat the hard move, demonstration method as well, so, yes it has to be repeated. Because their ability to remember still low, they will forget, evenmore on long holiday. We expect by implementing the method, the move and material can be accepted by the pupils. The evaluation all this time at least the pupils can remember the move and rhythm accuracy, the expression was still hard for mental retardation pupils, so for the movement is only basic, they can’t be like regular pupils of course, at least the pupils can remember the dance move in the rhythm, that’s not bad. And a lot of them were passive; sometimes they refuse to stand up and following.” (NR, 2019)

The teacher gave an assessment based on the observation during the learning. The teacher regularly made some notes and assessment results of the dance learning process at the end of the lesson to distinguish the students’ improvement in each dance class meeting.

### *C. Evaluation of Dance Learning Program*

Learning evaluation is an important stage in the implementation of dance learning. The evaluation of the learning program based on the performance that will be held on 2nd semester after the final examination finishes. The headmaster, school coordinator, and all teachers in the school arranged a meeting to give the evaluation. All teachers would deliver their students’ assessment results in each lesson. Therefore, they would see the students’ learning result and the succession of the lesson performance with the lesson plan. Whenever they found an obstacle, it would become a revision to all the teachers in the making of the lesson plan and its implementation. The statement strengthened by the result of the interview of the researcher and Mrs. VS, the dance coordinator on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

“We will hold an evaluation in the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester after finishing all school activity. Then, it will be done by the teachers’ analysis towards the lesson succession with the lesson plan and how success the learning process is. If there is found some obstacles, it will be an evaluation in the next learning activity. The improvement will be held in the new academic year and make a whole year activity program plan” (VS, 2019)

The headmaster of SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta, Mrs. SW, also delivered a similar statement, that is:

“(It) will be held in the end of the academic year after all school activities are finished. (It) will be held by seeing how the learning process reach the goal of the lesson is. If it is not appropriate, we will do some revision. If it is, we will try to maintain and improve our education quality. In addition, we will make some modifications or enlarge our education system to get a better achievement. After that, we will conduct a meeting to talk about it together with the lesson plans and the assessments in the new academic year of school.” (SW, 2019)

According to the results of those three sources interviews, it can be seen that one of the evaluation aims to improve the educational quality service through fixing the poverties based on the learning evaluation result. This activity will be held at the end of the academic year after all school activities done. The school always tries to improve its quality over a good quality of educational services towards children with special needs.

SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta applied a system of dance by giving dance training since elementary school. Afterward, the chosen students would take part in a dance competition when they become senior high school students. It is very effective and helps to guide the students through their talent and interest in dancing. The students that have a high enthusiast in dance learning show calmness whenever their teacher teaches dancing directly. Moreover, their responses can be seen at the beginning of the lesson that they are waiting for in the class.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected and analysed from the result entitled “Dance Learning to Children with mental retardation at SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta”, it can be concluded that the dance learning at SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta Special Elementary School level is an important subject and valuable for improving mental disabled students’ potentials and skills. The dance learning program consists of three important stages that have to be done as follows: designing a dance learning program, implementing dance learning program, and evaluating dance learning programs.

Designing a learning program at SLB was done at the beginning of the new school academic year, after the assessment by the teachers. In designing the learning program, it involved headmaster, school coordinator, subject teachers, and staff in SLB Negeri Pembina Yogyakarta. There were three processes in implementing the dance learning program: designing, implementing, and evaluating which were stated the in lesson plans. The learning activity was implemented according to the lesson plans that have been designed but, not always followed the basic competencies in the lesson plans. The teacher prioritized the pupils’ ability because mental retardation and intellectual in mentally disabled children makes the pupils struggled in absorbing stimulus and responding on the learning process. Therefore, the teacher was required to be able to give the education services related to the condition and ability of mentally disabled children. The

learning evaluation was done by assessing at the end of the learning, and also by semester exams whether it was written or practice.

The evaluation of the dance learning program was held at the end of the academic year. Evaluating program was intended to raise the quality of educational service based on the assessment and analysis towards the results of the activities for two semesters. The efforts in improving the quality of the education continue through the improvements made after the evaluation. The process runs consistently in every new academic year.

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