

Developing A Method of Learning Music Theory and Practice Integratedly.

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DEVELOPING A METHOD OF LEARNING MUSIC THEORY AND PRACTICE INTEGRATEDLY

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to develop a method of learning music theory and practice integratedly. The rationale for doing this is the fact that in general teaching and learning music is done separately between theory and practice. Consequently, students cannot deeply master the materials taught and they cannot feel the essence of music. Even, the teaching and learning music, which should develop creativity and beauty, only emphasizes on memorizing and cognition like in learning mathematics.

The learning method developed is based on the constructivism approach that requires students to build knowledge and skills holistically, integratedly, and continuously. The competency which is built is music creativity that includes the mastery of rhythm and improvisation of melody. Integrating theory and practice in music, besides giving opportunities to students to understand and to feel the essence of music, enables the students to achieve learning outcomes that are authentic, useful, and long lasting. It also gives the students a real and contextual condition. This condition intrinsically encourages the students to study music.

The learning method which is developed has a procedure as follow: 1) choosing core substance or theory of a lesson, 2) practicing the theory, 3) using media such as song model to increase the attractiveness of the lesson, 4) giving students opportunity to improvise, 5) students perform their improvisation in front of the class.

Introduction

Young generations in 20 and 21 century spend most of their time in schools. They go to school at the age of six or seven, even some start from the age of 4. They spend five to eight hours per day. Therefore, if they graduate from senior high school, they have spend 12 – 14 years in schools. It can be said that their childhood and teenage are spent in schools.

Those young generation relatively do not have time to play and to interact with their social environment because after going home from schools they have to

do the school tasks which are mostly academic. It can be said that the ideal young generations, those who obey the schools, spend most of their time to do the tasks given to them. It makes them have fewer chances to use their own creative ideas and initiatives. Based on my observation, students rarely feel happy at schools. Generally, they feel happy when the school hour ends. This is one of the indicators that young generations are not happy at schools. Young generations have less freedom to enjoy the life.

One of the school's objectives is to make students have competencies in cognition, skills, good attitudes, as well as to make them be able to enjoy the beauty of life so that they can enjoy the happiness in life. Conditioning learning process as an enjoyable process is a must. However, it does not mean that in the process there is no learning activities. Learning process should be made such that it is fun and meaningful. Mursell (2007) explains that learning process in the classroom becomes unpleasant and the result is not long lasting because of six factors namely abstract context, no clear focus, social relationship among students and between students and teacher which is not normal, less attention toward individual competence, and evaluation which is not thorough. Astuti, et al (2010) found that the process of learning music in Indonesia was generally emphasized on theory. It shows that many learning processes in schools are far from the essence of the subject taught. Learning music that should develop esthetic values so that the students can enjoy the beauty becomes learning that develops cognition because the learning is taught like mathematics. Astuti's research (2010) also shows that if there is a learning practice, it is done separately from the theory so that the practice and the theory are not really integrated. This causes the students' understanding about the materials is not really deep.

The students can memorize music definitions and terms well, but they do not really understand them. Moreover, they cannot practise them and enjoy the esthetic of the music. That is because the students get less experience in learning that integrates theory and practice. Integrating theory and practice in music learning is a must because the objective of teaching and learning music is to give an esthetic experience to the students so that they can enjoy the beauty of music. Theory and practice of music which is taught separately will reduce the students' esthetic experiences. Integrating theory and practice in teaching and learning music allows the students to enjoy the beauty of music so that learning music is not only a process to get knowledge but also an esthetic experience that can be enjoyed by the students.

Such learning process gives students opportunities to enjoy the beauty of life. If that can be done by teachers in every teaching and learning process, schools become a pleasant place and a place for students to grow to become mature. A school is not only a place to spend time to study cognitively but also a

place to study to enjoy life. The students go to schools not because they have to but because they need to.

Based on the explanation in the background of the problem, the research problem is formulated as follow: "How can we develop music learning method that integrates theory and practice so that students can learn music as well as feel the esthetic experiences?" The objective of this reseach is to develop music learning method that integrates theory and practice so that students can learn music as well as feel the esthetic experiences.

Discussion

The Influence of Learning Theory on Educational Paradigm Behavioristic Learning Theory and Lecturing Method

The development of basic research on learning theory affected the way on education. In the early of 20th century, the earliest learning theory, behaviorism, which was promoted by Skinner, Thorndike, and Pavlove (Woolfolk, 1984) appeared. This theory believes that learning is a conditioning process. This emphasizes on training that is given continuously to students so that they can master the knowledge demanded.

This learning theory leads to a process of mastering knowledge by memorizing. Hence, students who are considered having high achievement are those who are knowledgeable. This paradigm has the biggest effect on education, so the lecturing method is the most popular and mostly done. With lecturing method, students are expected to listen to the teachers and to memorize the materials taught. This way is the most common practice. Mursell (2007) states that lecturing which is done continuously pays less attention on psychological factors and is less humane. Both adults and children do not feel convenient if they have to sit for a long time eventhough they have to listen to an important thing.

For adults, the effective time to listen to talks is no more than 30 minutes, while for children, the span is shorter. Thus, only relying on lecturing method, the learning process is not effective. As stated before, lecturing method will produce response as memorizing by students. This causes the students to be able to just restate the materials that have been given by the teachers, but they have less competences to develop the materials.

Rationalistic Learning Theory and Inquiry Method

Rationalistic learning theory appeared after behaviorism. This theory appeared as an unsatisfactory reaction toward behaviorism because behaviorism cannot answer a new discovery or a new development. Rationalistic theory considers human being to have rational intelligence so that to get new understandings someone needs to his or her develop rationale.

This learning theory bears learning methods that emphasize on inquiry or discovery. Adopting experimental method and the like in learning process in the classroom becomes compulsory.

Constructivistic Learning Approach

The learning theory was began with behaviorism and then rasionalitic which was followed by further learning theories that bore other paradigm such as neo behaviorism that integrated behaviorism and rationalistic, humanism, cybernetic, and constructivism. Constructivism is a new learning paradigm which appeared at the end of 21st century. Constructivism emphasizes on constructing new understanding in learning process which is done continuously. With constructivism, there is always possibility of a new creation (Astuti, 2009). Basically, there is not any fix learning method used in constructivism approach. The most important thing in this approach is that learners can always construct understanding that is newer than the previous one.

Developing Music Learning Method Based on Constructivism

Music is expression of feeling that is conveyed through sounds. There are three main things that become central in developing music learning: appreciation, creation, and expression. To reach those things, it is imposible that learning music is only emphasized on theory or practice. Both must be developed in learning music. Besides, music is not just right or wrong. In music, there is an affective aspect that needs to be developed. Even, this becomes the main focus in learning music. By emphasizing the affective aspect, it is expected that students sensitivity can be touched and developed.

Theory and practice which are taught separately do not give description of music learning completely, so there is possibility that learners will forget a part of the theory that has been learned and they have difficulties to relate the practice and the theory.

Therefore, the appropriate music learning process is that theory and practice are taught integratedly. The learned theory facilitates practice, while practice strengthens theory that has been learned. With theory and practice which are in synergy, it will make it easier for students to develop materials which are in accordance with their creativity. Giving students opportunities to develop creativities will speed up the development of knowledge and self-confidence of the students.

A Method of Learning Music Theory and Practice Integratedly

Learning method which is developed in constructivism approach compels learning process to be holistic, integrated, and continuous. Holistic means that

students do not firstly learn music in detail on certain parts, but they learn the materials thoroughly before learning them deeply. If it is in analogy with Gestalt, the students study the material thoroughly before they learn it in detail. In learning music, musical elements such as rhythm, melody, and harmony are taught at once. At the time of learning rhythm, melody and harmony will follow, and vice versa. Integrated means that theory and practice are taught simultaneously. (Trianto, 2010). If generally a teacher teaches a theory thoroughly and in detail before it is practised, with this method theory and practice are taught simultaneously. The teacher does not need to explain the theory thoroughly first.

As in constructivism principles that compel the presence of building new understanding, students also have to get opportunities to develop the materials that have been learned in line with their creativities. That is done continuously so the students are ready to learn the materials in the next level. With this method students will obtain authentic learning achievement which is long lasting and useful because the students learn in concrete situation. Giving opportunities to students to develop creativities gives them chances to develop themselves in line with their capability. Learning process also runs pleasantly because the students can directly practise music theory so that the music learning really gives the students esthetic experiences. Thus, schools are pleasant places for students.

Procedure for Developing Method for Integrated Teaching and Learning Music

Implementing learning music as a learning that gives esthetic experiences as well as obtaining music knowledge and skills for students needs special strategies to reach it. This learning strategy has a procedure as follow: 1) choosing the core substance or theory from a learning material, 2) practising the theory, 3) using media to improve attractiveness such as song model and accord progression, 4) giving students chances to improvise, 5) students perform their improvisation in front of class.

A teacher must be able to choose the important substance of the lesson. The materials must be the basic that can be used by the students any time. The choosing of the materials that predictably can only be used on certain situations will limit the application of the materials learned. Understanding basic elements of music is an example of materials of music substances that can be used anytime. The materials which are chosen by a teacher must be practicable by the students. Understanding theories that can directly be practiced will strengthen the students' understanding about the theory. Good understanding about the theories will make it easier for the students to practise.

Learning music has certain levels. When students are still on the low level, they cannot yet express music beautifully, so the result cannot be enjoyed yet.

Therefore, it needs aids that can help the students to feel the beauty. The use of media such as company, song model, or accord progression that are given by a teacher can give situations of beauty so that the students learn music in a pleasant situation.

After the students comprehend and can practise a certain competency, they should be given opportunities to develop the competency that they have reached. One of the ways to do that is through doing improvisation. By doing this students will always develop new understanding and new skills.

Mursell (2007) states that the meaning of a learning result depends on the place where the learning takes place. Someone who learns for himself has weak courage if his learning result should be shown to public. Therefore, to motivate the students to study seriously, learning results should be presented in front of the class. The demand to present their learning result in front of the class will make them study more seriously because they will be ashamed if their learning result is not good.

Conclusion

The objective of teaching and learning music is to give students esthetic experiences through theories and practices. Music learning process which separates theories and practices does not maximally give the students comprehension, skills, and it cannot grow the feeling of beauty thoroughly.

Developing a method for music learning that integrates theory and practice is necessary to be done. This deepens the students' understanding and skills. Besides, students' learning results also last longer. With such competence, students will develop their creativity.

Developing learning method with constructivism approach is the right thing to do. This approach leads the students to build understanding and skills continuously. The learning strategy in this method has a procedure as follow: 1) choosing the core substance or theory from a learning material, 2) practicing the theory, 3) using media to improve attractiveness such as song model and accord progression, 4) giving students chances to improvise, 5) students perform their improvisation in front of class.

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