

LEARNING VISUAL ARTS CREATION FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AT SLB NEGERI PATI, INDONESIA

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Abstract. This study discusses two-dimensional art learning for autistic children at SLB Negeri Pati. The objectives of this research are to describe the process of learning two-dimensional art creation for autistic children, describe the two-dimensional artworks created by autistic children through art learning at SLB Negeri Pati, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of two dimensional art learning for autistic children at SLB Negeri Pati. The research method used is descriptive with techniques of observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The study shows that two-dimensional art learning is carried out through RPP (lesson plan) which includes planning, implementation, and assessment. The results include painting, collage, and graphic art with techniques such as plakart, collage, and stamping. Video media and demonstration techniques help children develop their skills in expressing imagination. Supporting factors include adequate facilities, student enthusiasm, and teacher support, while inhibiting factors stem from the difficulty autistic children face in controlling their mood, which leads to boredom and incomplete task completion.

Keywords: Autistic, Learning, Two-Dimensional Art

1. Introduction

Every citizen has the right to receive education, whether it is general or special education. As explained in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 5, paragraph (2), it states that "Citizens with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and/or social disabilities have the right to receive special education." The government has provided education for children with special needs through institutions that offer educational services for them. Society has gradually started to broaden its perspective and contribute to children with special needs as a phenomenon that is being noticed by the wider community. One example of this concern is the government's establishment of laws for children with special needs to receive their right to education. Therefore, the government has opened special schools (Sekolah Luar Biasa, SLB) to facilitate the learning activities of children with special needs, ensuring they receive their educational rights.

Special schools provide specialized services for children with special needs, with curricula, facilities, and infrastructure designed to meet their specific needs. Various educational methods can be applied at these schools for students with special needs. With the various skills of the teachers at special schools, they can provide support in the learning process. Children with special needs (ABK) are those who experience developmental delays in physical, mental-intellectual, emotional, and social aspects compared to the average development of normal children. The classification of children with special needs is adjusted to their physical condition and classification according to their mental and intellectual condition.

Among the classifications of children with special needs, there is one category that many people might already be familiar with and are interested in learning more about: autistic children.

Autism is a pervasive disorder in children characterized by communication and social interaction difficulties, with delays in vocabulary/language, difficulties in playing, behavior, emotions, interaction with others, and sensory feelings (Yatim, 2007). Most children with autism are unable to communicate using verbal language; instead, they use visual language such as picture exchange or sign language. When someone is able to understand something using visual media like pictures and videos, they can be called a visual learner. Through visual learning, children with autism can hone their thinking skills to understand images and try to train their imagination. Therefore, some children who have a deficit in imagination should be assisted with efforts to encourage them to imagine as they see fit, thus enhancing their creativity.

A person with creativity will try new things that are flexible/natural and enjoys expressing themselves through their imagination. (Wahyudin, 2007) states that creativity is the specific ability of an individual to create and discover something new (inventiveness) or original through ideas and tools. Creativity develops based on the potential within the individual, supported by experiences gained through interactions with their environment. Not only social environmental support but the most important support for autistic children to develop their creativity is from teachers. The ability to think creatively for optimal development is of course tailored to how teachers apply their teaching methods to students (S.C.U, 1977). Therefore, the skills of teachers in teaching are essential, as they can be a crucial factor in making learning enjoyable and engaging for autistic children.

In the learning process for autistic children, teachers will try to provide media that meet the needs of these children. One example is the use of art media that can help stimulate motor skills and creativity. Visual arts education offers many options in the art creation process, such as two-dimensional art forms like painting, collage, and graphics. In early childhood education, creative activities come in various forms, from 2D creations such as drawing, coloring, finger painting, and blowing paint, to 3D creations like building blocks, paper folding, and playing with clay (Fifiianti & Gunadi, 2025).

Engaging in art creation is vital in encouraging the development of imaginative and creative thinking. Because autistic children have different characteristics in receiving lessons from teachers, the choice of teaching methods and learning media must be carefully adapted to the abilities of autistic children. Learning, from planning to implementation, evaluation, and assessment, is essential to identify the potential and improvement of the child's learning progress. Therefore, a teacher's creativity plays an important role in making learning for autistic children more interesting and less boring. Creativity in teaching is not a talent it can be learned and must be practiced. The quality of education depends significantly on the teacher's ability to deliver effective lessons. Based on the issues discussed above, one of the efforts teachers can make is by modifying the visual arts teaching methods to be more innovative, making it easier for autistic children to understand the lessons. For example, providing practical art creation lessons can stimulate their imagination and motor skills. Additionally, the presentation of teaching media used in the learning process should be made more creative. The more flexible the teaching method, the easier it will be for autistic children to grasp the material.

To anticipate these problems from continuing, teachers can make efforts to handle and improve the learning process at school. These efforts can be implemented at schools from elementary to high school levels. One interesting school to examine is the Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB) in Pati Regency. The State SLB in Pati, located in Margorejo District, Pati Regency, is a government-provided special education school for children with special needs.

For autistic students at the junior high school level, the researcher is interested in providing two-dimensional visual arts education using various media and techniques. By offering visual arts education at the State SLB in Pati, autistic students are expected to be able to participate in two-dimensional visual arts lessons. In addition, several goals the researcher hopes to achieve include introducing enjoyable visual arts education, serving as art therapy to create a joyful atmosphere and provide new experiences for autistic children. By engaging in two-dimensional visual arts, autistic children who have drawing talents can further develop those talents, so they can participate in art-related competitions. For them, activities like drawing or painting are more enjoyable because they don't have to focus too much on thinking.

Therefore, the researcher chose two-dimensional visual arts education with the hope that autistic students at SLB Negeri Pati will be able to develop their creativity. The proposed title of the research is "Visual Arts Creation for Autistic Children at SLB Negeri Pati." By choosing two-dimensional art creation, including painting, collage, and graphics, the researcher hopes to increase the creativity of autistic students, leading to more innovative and creative art creations. The researcher chose SLB Negeri Pati because no previous research has specifically focused on autistic children in the special education classes at this school. Additionally, no previous research has applied two-dimensional visual arts education to autistic students at SLB Negeri Pati. The number of autistic children in Pati Regency attending school is relatively small. This is due to many parents still lacking understanding about autism, resulting in many autistic children not attending school. As a result, autistic children still receive insufficient attention. Several issues discussed above can form the basis for a research topic that will inform the public about the importance of education for autistic children, especially in the field of visual arts. The two-dimensional visual arts education for autistic children can provide positive benefits by enhancing students' creativity in producing and creating art. Thus, autistic children will have a more directed opportunity to receive education.

This study uses a descriptive research approach. Descriptive research aims to describe an existing phenomenon, whether natural, man-made, or used in describing or analyzing the results of a subject, without intending to offer broader implications (Adiputra, 2021). The data collection techniques used by the researcher include: (1) Observation, which is the direct observation of a physical environment or an activity in progress that involves paying attention to the object using all sensory tools (Arikunto, 2010). During the observation, the researcher uses a participatory observation technique, where the researcher actively participates in the observed activities at SLB Negeri Pati. Additionally, the researcher also applies a teaching method in the classroom, thus gaining more information for the research data. (2) Interviews, which are meetings conducted between two people for exchanging information or ideas through a question-and-answer process, resulting in a conclusion or meaning regarding a specific topic (Esterberg in Sugiyono, 2015). To collect data, the researcher uses in-depth interviews. An in-depth interview is a private process between the respondent and the researcher. The researcher prepares a list of questions in advance concerning the teaching

process. The results from several key informants help the researcher in processing the data. The data obtained from interviews during the research at SLB Negeri Pati are analyzed to support the findings. (3) Documentation, a method used to gather data and information in the form of books, archives, documents, written numbers or images, reports, and descriptions that support the research (Sugiyono, 2018). Documentation complements the use of interview and observation methods to enhance the credibility of the research proposal. Documentation includes taking videos of the learning process in class, photos of the class during lessons, students' works, and photos taken during interviews with teachers, the school environment, facilities, and notes from the teacher as supporting data. The data analysis technique is descriptive, with continuous data reduction throughout the research process, including stages such as data collection, data categorization, and data reduction.

2. Results and Discussion

SLB Negeri Pati is a state special education school located at Jl. Soediono, Gebyaran, Sukoharjo, Margorejo District, Pati Regency, Central Java 59163. It was established in 1983 under the name SDLB Negeri Sukoharjo, founded by INPRES (Presidential Instruction) to fulfill the mandatory education requirements for children with special needs or disabilities in Pati Regency. Due to the initially low enrollment, the government has continued to promote the importance of education for children with special needs across various regions, providing information to the public.

Currently, SLB Negeri Pati accommodates children with various special needs, including those with hearing impairments, visual impairments, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and autism. The school offers education across three levels: Sekolah Dasar Luar Biasa (SDLB) for elementary school, Sekolah Menengah Pertama Luar Biasa (SMPLB) for junior high school, and Sekolah Menengah Atas Luar Biasa (SMALB) for senior high school. Today, many students attend SLB Negeri Pati, and the school has improved its facilities and infrastructure due to increasing public awareness about the importance of education for children with special needs. The total number of students, from elementary to senior high school, is 385, representing various categories and backgrounds. These categories include students with visual impairments (A), hearing and speech impairments (B), intellectual disabilities (C), physical disabilities (D), and autism.

2.1 Learning Two Dimensional Visual Arts at SLB Negeri Pati

Art and culture learning in the 2013 Curriculum (K13) includes visual arts, music, dance, and theater. Of these four sub-subjects, only three—visual arts, dance, and music—are taught at the junior high school level (SMP) from grades VII to IX. At SLB Negeri Pati, the art and culture curriculum follows the 2013 Curriculum as the foundation for instructional implementation. In the junior high level at SLB Negeri Pati, three art and culture sub-subjects are offered: visual arts, music, and dance. These are further divided by class categories. Visual arts and dance are taught to students with hearing and speech impairments (Category B), intellectual disabilities (Category C), physical disabilities (Category D), and autism. Meanwhile, music is taught to students with visual impairments (Category A). The selection of sub-subjects at SLB Negeri Pati is tailored to the condition, context, and needs of each student.

In this study, the researcher focused on a grade VII junior high school class with an autism background. The researcher conducted art and culture lessons, particularly in visual arts, focusing on the

basic competency of creating two-dimensional visual artworks. This visual arts learning was scheduled for 2 hours per session (2 x 40 minutes), once a week. Since this study applied Basic Competency (KD) 4.1, which requires practical activities that produce an artwork product, the researcher chose two-dimensional visual arts as the learning material. Two-dimensional art is a form of art that every student in a school learning environment can study. By learning visual arts, students receive stimulation to develop creativity and generate new ideas or concepts. The researcher's implementation of two-dimensional visual art learning at SLB Negeri Pati included three types of art activities: painting, collage, and printmaking. These three learning types were selected and adapted to meet the individual needs and capabilities of each student.

2.2 The Learning Process of Creating Painting Art

Painting art is one of the branches of art that falls under the category of two-dimensional visual art. It is a more developed and comprehensive form of drawing. Painting involves manipulating media that can be applied to a two-dimensional medium or the surface of a three-dimensional object (Sp, 1990). Painting is a widely used form of two-dimensional visual art in the process of artistic creation, utilizing various media, models, styles, and techniques.

The use of painting activities in visual art education offers significant benefits for the development of children's creativity, particularly in expressing imaginative ideas through specific themes. Painting activities can also train children's motor skills through the act of drawing or painting. Moreover, the use of various colors during painting sessions provides visual stimuli for children with autism, helping them become more sensitive and responsive to recognizing different colors.

In this study, painting art education is carried out through three stages outlined in the Lesson Plan (RPP): lesson planning, lesson implementation, and assessment. The first step in implementing the learning activity is creating an RPP, which includes the learning process starting from the Basic Competency (Kompetensi Dasar), learning objectives, teaching methods, instructional media, learning steps, and teaching materials. Several project assignments are also prepared for the students during the painting art lesson sessions.

According to the lesson plan, the learning process is divided into three phases: introduction, main activities, and closing. The introductory phase begins with greeting the students, asking how they are, praying together, checking attendance, and introducing the day's lesson material. The main activity, which lasts for 60 minutes, takes place in the classroom. This setting is chosen because the researcher uses media involving the presentation of instructional videos. The lecture method is used, where the researcher explains the lesson content directly. The closing phase involves giving students positive reinforcement or appreciation to motivate them to participate actively in future learning sessions. This is followed by a closing prayer, adapted to each student's beliefs.

The assessment process is conducted individually by the researcher, acting as the teacher for this session. Numerical scores are used to evaluate students' project assignments. Each student submits their completed work on the teacher's desk. The assessment instrument includes a scoring rubric aligned with Basic Competency 4.1, focusing on painting through practical application. The instrument includes specific questions for that day's lesson session. The painting assessment considers several aspects, such as theme relevance, technical mastery, and visual aesthetics.

2.3 The Learning Process of Creating Collage Art

Collage art is a branch of painting that has a unique characteristic, using a pasting technique with materials such as paper, plastic, leaves, and fabric scraps as the medium. According to Syakir (2013), collage is a technique that involves attaching various material elements into a single frame to produce a new work of art. Collage art is a highly suitable subject for students with special needs because the creation process helps train fine motor skills, including cutting, tearing, and pasting. In this collage art lesson, the researcher used paper as the primary material, chosen for its bright, clear colors, easy availability, and safety and comfort for the students.

The learning process was carried out based on the lesson plan (RPP) previously prepared by the researcher. This RPP was developed with the main learning objective in mind: to enable students to successfully participate in creating collage artwork using paper with the correct technique and composition to produce aesthetically pleasing works. The basic competencies and learning indicators were tailored to the content, and the plan included key components such as methods, media, models, materials, instructional steps, and assessment. The lesson was conducted over 80 minutes per session in the classroom to ensure a comfortable learning environment. The researcher utilized an LCD projector and a laptop to support the learning process. Videos were used to show students how to properly create collage art. Like the previous lessons, this session followed the structure of introduction, core activity, and closing.

Assessment was conducted after all students submitted their project work. The researcher evaluated each piece by assigning scores or levels to identify which works ranged from good to excellent. This assessment aimed to support students' learning development and was based on specific rubrics tailored to each student's abilities. The collage assessment rubric included indicators of theme relevance, technical mastery, and visual aesthetics, each broken down into specific scoring criteria.

2.4 The Learning Process of Creating Graphic Art

Graphic art, or printmaking, is the transformation of images through manual printing techniques using specific materials to reproduce artworks—at least two identical prints (Susanto, 2011). Often, monotype printing allows mass production, as one of the main goals of graphic art is to reproduce art without recreating it from scratch. Types of graphic printing include screen printing, intaglio, relief printing, and planographic printing. In this study, the researcher used the relief printing technique. The media were selected based on comfort and safety for autistic children. The materials used were root vegetables, specifically carrots and potatoes—chosen because they are familiar, safe (soft texture, not sharp), easy to obtain, and help broaden students' understanding of diverse art media.

The main goal of the lesson was for students to successfully produce graphic art aligned with the designated theme, using proper stamping techniques and achieving aesthetically pleasing compositions. The lesson plan (RPP) was designed to support these objectives. The researcher adopted a Project-Based Learning (PBL) model, as the competency standard focused on creating a product. Teaching methods included stimulation, question and answer, demonstration, and assignment. A PowerPoint presentation was used to explain the material and provide examples of graphic art. The demonstration method helped students follow the procedure, and the same materials were used both by the researcher and the students. The researcher demonstrated the process directly in front of the class. The total lesson time was 80 minutes, divided into 10 minutes for the introduction, 60 minutes for the core activity, and 10 minutes for the closing.

Assessment followed the same structure as the previous lessons. Students submitted their works on the teacher's desk and allowed the ink to dry before evaluation. The researcher not only assessed the final artwork but also observed the students' creative process. Evaluation was guided by indicators for theme relevance (e.g., printing according to the theme, selecting various objects), technical mastery (e.g., proper use of materials and tools), and visual aesthetics (e.g., clear shapes, unique forms, and rhythmic composition between objects).

2.5 Two Dimensional Artworks of Grade VII (Autistic) Students at SLB Negeri Pati

Learning outcomes are obtained to measure how successfully students have absorbed and engaged with the learning process. These outcomes help students understand how well they have grasped the material presented during lessons. In turn, learning outcomes also assist educators in determining the most appropriate strategies for future learning sessions.

This study employed a practical, skills-based approach to learning, where students were required to create art products as project assignments. These assignments aimed to evaluate whether students' skills were developing through hands-on practice. Through two-dimensional art learning activities, the researcher assigned projects that allowed students to develop their skills in creating artistic or craft-

based works. The resulting products were then assessed as indicators of the students' skill development and learning achievements.

To determine the quality of an artwork, several assessment indicators must be considered. These include theme relevance, uniqueness and character, and technical mastery. Each type of two-dimensional artwork has its own specific assessment criteria, which are tailored to the skill levels and capabilities of autistic students. Therefore, the assessment rubric is designed with indicators appropriate to the type of artwork being created.

2.6 Painting Artwork Results of Grade VII (Autistic) Students

The artworks created by the students in the painting activity lessons each have their own unique characteristics, reflecting the individuality of each student. Some students already possess a talent for painting, enjoy the activity, while others tend to get bored easily during the creative process. As a result, the artworks produced meet different assessment criteria.



Figure 1. Bima's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*



Figure 2. Safira's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*



Figure 3. Rahma's Work**Source:** *Personal Documentation 2024***Figure 4.** Viky's Work**Source:** *Personal Documentation 2024***Figure 5.** Feivel's Work**Source:** *Personal Documentation 2024*

The painting results above are the works of five students who participated in the painting art activity in class. Each student demonstrated their own abilities during the creative process. The theme used in these paintings was "Mountain Scenery." The theme presented in each painting aligns with the assigned topic. The students understood what they were supposed to paint and applied it to their artwork.

Judging from the visual aesthetic, the works show a fairly good level. Some students managed to present artwork that included visual elements through bold, expressive strokes and appropriate color choices. The composition principle used in the students' work is asymmetrical, with different elements on the right, left, top, and bottom sides of the image. The proportion of the drawings is quite good, as the objects were drawn in appropriate sizes. From a technical perspective, some students showed fairly good skills in drawing. Based on the artwork, the lines and colors appeared spontaneous. The paint was applied evenly to the objects, although there are still some areas where the application appears thin or thick, making the brush strokes visible.

2.7 Collage Artwork Results of 7th Grade Students (Autistic)

The collage artworks created by the autistic students in this learning session were quite good. Each student had a fair understanding of the collage artwork they were making, as they had previously done a similar activity. Therefore, there was no difficulty in explaining the material. Each student's artwork featured different object forms, as they were given the option to choose the subject they wanted to create within the given theme.



Figure 6. Bima's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*



Figure 7. Rahma's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*



Figure 8. Safira's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*



Figure 9. Feivel's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*

Each student was asked to choose one of the objects shown by the researcher in the instructional video. As a result, each student created an artwork featuring different object shapes. Upon observation, all students fulfilled the assigned theme. They depicted sea animals along with additional supporting

elements. The composition of the images was fairly good, with the main object placed in the center. The primary subject was created in a sufficiently large and clear size. Some students added objects in appropriate proportions not too big and not too small. However, the neatness of the work still needs improvement, as some parts of the images were not fully covered with paper pieces. In terms of technique, students were already able to control their hands well while gluing the paper. They could use the tools properly according to their functions. However, during the gluing process, some students were still hesitant and afraid to press the paper down, resulting in overlapping pieces and an uneven texture.

2.8 Collage Artwork of Grade VII Students (Autism)

The implementation of the graphic art learning session this time was attended by only four students. Each student was guided to listen to the presentation of the graphic art material. In this session, the researcher used a demonstration method, in which the researcher showed or demonstrated how to create graphic artwork. As a result, the students became more enthusiastic because they could see the process directly. The technique used was relief printing, with tuber vegetables such as carrots and potatoes as the medium. The students' artworks had various characteristics, as they were free to compose their own patterns and choose colors according to their preferences.



Figure 10. Bima's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*



Figure 11. Viki's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*



Figure 12. Safira's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*



Figure 13. Aklis's Work

Source: *Personal Documentation 2024*

The students' artworks shown above are completed pieces. Based on the results, the students were able to create artworks according to the given theme, which was "Flora." The students demonstrated their creativity by using various patterns to apply on paper. Technically, the students were able to use the stamping technique correctly. They showed good control of their hand movements when pressing the stamp onto the paper. In terms of neatness, the students were able to maintain the cleanliness of their work, with no ink drips present. However, in terms of composition, some students still struggled to arrange the patterns in a rhythmic and balanced way. For coloring, the students used several colors that matched the real-life objects for example, flowers were colored red, yellow, and blue, while leaves were colored green with blue gradients.

2.9 Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Two Dimensional Art Learning at SLB Negeri Pati

The implementation of two-dimensional art learning for autistic students at SLB Negeri Pati is certainly influenced by several factors, including supporting and inhibiting factors. The supporting factors in two-dimensional art learning include the availability of facilities that can be used during the learning process, such as an LCD projector. The enthusiastic presence of autistic students also contributes positively to the learning activities. Another supporting factor is the presence of a teacher who assists during the research process in the classroom. During the learning activities, the teacher consistently stays in the classroom to supervise the students as they participate in the research-based learning sessions.

The inhibiting factor identified by the researcher comes from the students themselves. Since the students involved in this research are children with autism, it is quite challenging to establish classroom rules and maintain consistent learning routines. Children with autism often experience mood swings that are difficult to control. They also tend to get bored and lose focus easily during the learning process, which can affect their learning outcomes and result in incomplete project work.

3 Conclusion

Based on the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that the process of teaching two-dimensional art creation must be implemented in accordance with the lesson plan (RPP) that has been prepared and adapted to the conditions of children with autism. This ensures that during the planning stage, the chosen methods, learning models, and media are appropriate to the abilities of autistic children. Moreover, using innovative methods and creative media can provide stimuli that help children with autism participate in lessons more enthusiastically and absorb the material more easily. The various learning concepts and video media used also contribute to the children's final artworks, as they tend to imitate and develop what they observe. From the assessed results, it becomes evident which students have a talent

for creating visual art. Each child has their own characteristics in producing artwork, and all were able to understand the assigned theme. Thus, the visual aesthetics of their work can be evaluated using predetermined indicators, such as object form, image composition, and coloring. In addition, the students' technique was also assessed. The techniques used were generally good, aided by demonstrations conducted by the researcher at the front of the class, allowing students to better grasp the stimuli provided. Therefore, the technical assessment indicators could be applied to evaluate the students' artworks.

However, there were both supporting and inhibiting factors in this learning process. Supporting factors included the presence of enthusiastic students and the assistance of the classroom teacher, who was always present during the learning sessions. This was especially helpful for managing students who were more difficult to handle. A sufficiently spacious classroom and adequate facilities also supported the art-making activities. On the other hand, inhibiting factors included a lack of some necessary facilities and technical obstacles that occasionally arose. Additionally, disruptions were sometimes caused by the students themselves—some easily became bored during the lessons, which affected the completion and quality of their work.

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