



Play-Based Learning With Games as a Dance Teaching Tool

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Abstract

This case study focuses on Play-based Learning with game elements as a new dance teaching tool for young children. The research objective is to verify that the majority of games used by teachers in Malaysian preschools are based on guided play, which includes adults' guidance and mentoring on a play, and that each game is designed to improve students' cognitive and psychomotor development, social abilities, and academic skills. Researchers also emphasize that Play-based Learning with game elements can be used as a new teaching method of dance for young children who cannot follow teaching contents. To achieve these objectives, researchers discuss how games are used as a teaching method by two different preschools, investigate how these games are suitable for all students aged 4 to 6 years old, and examine the effect of games as teaching tools in Music and Movement classes. Utilizing the qualitative methodology, researchers interviewed teachers to investigate how teachers incorporate games in Music and Movement classes. Researchers conducted participant observation in Music and Movement classes to identify whether or not the use of games in this case study belongs to free play or guided play. Researchers also gathered information through secondary written sources. The findings suggest that games as a teaching method in Music and Movement classes greatly emphasize students learning how to dance, where games create more excitement for the children and not worry too much about techniques. Games used by Malaysian preschools can be great examples and guidelines for teachers to incorporate games as a teaching method for preschool students aged 4 to 6 years old.

Keywords: play-based learning; game elements; dance education, music and movement class; preschools children

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INTRODUCTION

This research is based on a case study focusing on two preschools in Putrajaya, Malaysia. Most Malaysian preschools were found to have problems implementing games as a teaching method, particularly when it comes to teaching dance, as it is one of the compulsory activities for children in preschool where teachers use dance as a platform for children to show their talent and creativity throughout a

year of learning. However, before teaching children to dance, the first thing teachers need to teach them is about movement. In order to achieve this, Malaysian preschool teachers have taken the initiative to use games as a teaching tool, as suggested by the Ministry of Education. Games used by teachers in Malaysian preschools are categorized as play-based learning. This part can give you a sense of movement activity for children education and the use of games as Play-based Learning.

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Dance is a great activity for young children, and it involves a greater range of motion, coordination, strength, and endurance than most other physical activities (Copeland et al., 1984). Getting their feet and arms used to the rhythm movements is the most basic aspect of teaching dance. Exposing young children to movement activities helps them improve their physical awareness, coordination, and concentration and build relationships with those around them. Children who participate in movement activities can find it easier to move and progress through complex motor tasks. Movement activities are the best fitting activities for children as they learn by moving their bodies, exploring their world, and developing vital connections, leading to improved concentration and thinking skills.

Rebecca Hun Ping Cheung (2010) stated that movement activity is more than just a physical act; movement can be a powerful tool to promote children's creativity where they can express themselves through movement which allows them to communicate an image, an idea, or a feeling through their bodily actions (Hun & Cheung, 2010, p.4.). This means that movement activities encourage young children to explore and learn basic movement skills that can be used to create their own interpretation of their imagination and creativity. Gokhan Duman, Can Eda Alici & Tugba Kanmaz (2017) similarly mentioned that movement is the education in which an individual explores, experiences and learns various new movements (Duman, G., Alici, C.E & Kanmaz, T, 2017, p.345-349). This statement demonstrates that movement as an educational tool helps to develop physical and motor competencies and movement skills such as locomotor, object control, and balance. That is to say, promoting movement in children's education can be a key factor for children choosing to lead physically active and healthy lifestyles. It is because movement makes the body aware; such awareness becomes the sum of tactile sensations as the body moves within and through its immediate

surroundings. As Nikos C. Apostolopoulos (2019) argued, movement through physical exploration helps create collective intelligence and gather possibilities and is ultimately responsible for influencing thought (Apostolopoulos, 2019, p.9). Apostolopoulos continued to explain that through movement, the body orients in a manner allowing for the thought and sensation relative to the subjects.

According to Moulton (2020), movements are classified into three types: 1) simple involuntary movements (tremors or reflexes, have all of the previously mentioned defining characteristics), 2) simple voluntary movements (looking to the side, have all of the previously defined characteristics, as well as a cognitive component in which the individual makes a choice and consciously initiates the movement), and 3) complex movements (voluntary in nature, including running, jumping, and climbing) (Moulton, 2020, p. 20.). Through the explanation from Moulton, movement can clearly be related to every one of the above. Movement is more than just a physical act. It creates a cognitive understanding, an insight, and a primary qualifying aspect of human existence through experience. This shows that movement is more than just a physical act; it creates a cognitive understanding, insight, and a primary qualifying aspect of human existence through experience.

In some other countries, movement has been used in the preschool curriculum standard to provide another outlet to express children's emotions and creativity. For example, in Slovak and Poland, movement activities are an important part of the Music and Movement activities of preschool education, which contribute to the subsequent cultivation of movement, a sense of rhythm, and cooperation within a group, especially for children. Eva Kralova & Maciej Kolodziejski (2016) stated that Music and Movement activities provide children with many opportunities for proper motor and musical development, the harmonious development of their personality imagination, and they also contribute

to friendship reinforcement (Eva Kralova & Maciej Kolodziejski, 2016, p.187). Kralova & Kolodziejski proposed that in order to teach children both Music and Movement, teachers should coordinate their movement and develop their correct posture, sense of rhythm, elasticity, smoothness, and fluency of motion. A teacher should properly explain and demonstrate each movement activity. This is to ensure that the Music and Movement used are appropriate for the children's physical, mental, and social properties.

The same goes for Kenyan preschools, where Music and Movement play a great role in the provision of Early Childhood Development Education (ECE). The Ministry of Education in Kenya, through the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), has recognized that music and movement are important activities in early childhood education around the world. The KIE designated the scope of Music and Movement experiences from performing arts activities such as singing, dancing and listening to music as well as other fields such as language, mathematics, social studies, creative activities and religious studies. In the Kenya educational system, it is convinced that while participating in music and movement experiences, children can promote physical development as much as social interactions and development (Mwonga & Wanyama, n.d.).

In a similar vein, Malaysian preschools provide movement activities in Music and Movement classes, especially in private preschools. Unlike public preschools, every private preschool has its own specialty while promoting their preschool by offering additional programs upon approval from the Ministry of Education (MOE), such as language classes, music & movement classes, arts & crafts classes, drama classes, or martial arts classes. These preschools are required to use the National Preschool Curriculum as stipulated in the National Education Act 1996, and the curriculum focuses on communication skills, social skills, and other skills in order to prepare students for primary

(formal) education (Curriculum Development Centre Ministry of Education Malaysia Early Childhood Care and Education Policy Implementation Review, n.d, 2007).

Music and Movement class is an intensive class that teaches students how to dance creatively with music. It is also classified as a co-curricular activity for young children because it allows children to enjoy dancing freely. Kolodziejski, Králová & Hudáková mentioned that Music and Movement classes are frequently used for young children to practice counting and learning other concepts, as they combine a variety of sensory modalities such as vision, hearing, and movement to support learning in a fun way (Kolodziejski, Králová & Hudáková, 2014, p.660). In the Music and Movement classes, dance is taught based on the ideas or contents that the teachers want to teach. That is, Music and Movement classes in Malaysia are conducted mainly at a teacher's discretion. The ideas and contents may change for each class, and each teacher depends on what movement skills and dance concepts she or he wants to teach.

However, many preschool teachers in Malaysia have encountered problems with movement pedagogical knowledge. Because they do not major in dance or do not have a teaching certificate for music and dance, for this reason, the teachers have no skills to deliver do not know how to make the Music and Movement class look interesting for young children. This lack of teaching capability has caused unclear demonstrations that lead children with limited understanding of their age to have difficulties understanding and following the dance. Recognizing this situation, some preschool teachers in Putrajaya have combined games as a part of play-based learning into preschool education, especially in in Music and Movement classes.

In this research, 'play-based learning' or 'learning through play' can be an effective and popular method of imparting education to children at the preschool level, particularly when teaching dance. Through play-based learning, young children can

engage and interact with the world around them, allowing them to use their creativity to develop their imagination. Danniels & Pyle (2018) clarified play-based learning as an early childhood education that is based on child-led and open-ended play which provides opportunities for children to develop a sense of the world around them through inquiry, exploration, interaction, and problem-solving (Danniels & Pyle, 2018). Danniels & Pyle also explained that there are two types of play: 1) 'free play' and 2) 'guided play': 'free play' refers as child-directed, voluntary, internally motivated, and pleasurable play which is directed by the children themselves, whereas 'guided play' refers as activities that include some level of adult involvement in order to embed or extend additional learning opportunities within the play itself which is based on some level of teacher guidance or involvement. This statement shows that games can be either free play or guided play because there are many different types of games, each with its own structure, rules, and learning objectives.

Catalano (2018) defined games as free play is based on children's freedom to do whatever they want, when and how much they want, rather than focusing on the curriculum's objectives and content where children take the initiative while adults provide the necessary space and resources and respond to their needs (Catalano, 2018.) This statement demonstrates that games as free play refers to children's full freedom to play in whatever way they want, they can choose everything, and select their own play to express themselves. On the other hand, guided play refers to a type of play in which children explore within an environment prepared by adults or with adult guidance in which adults select play materials and encourage a certain type of exploration to help shape children's choices or push children to think about what they are doing. Weisberg, Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Kittredge & Klahr described guided play as learning experiences that combine the child-directed nature of free play with a focus on learning

outcomes and adult guidance (Weisberg et al., 2016). This explanation shows that games can be categorized as free play and guided play because they allow children to express their interests in their surroundings and encourage them to continue researching and investigating to find their own solutions in specific situations.

Another explanation regarding play-based learning explained by Vincent Iannelli clarified that some games are classified as free play, such as dress-up, drawing, coloring, and painting, because they allow children to pursue their own interests and create an environment that suits their experiences (Vincent Iannelli, 2021). On the other hand, guided play refers to a type of play in which children explore within an environment prepared by adults or with adult guidance in which adults select play materials and encourage a certain type of exploration to help shape children's choices or lead children to think about what they are doing. This explanation demonstrates how games can be divided into two types: free play and guided play. Games can be applied in guided play because children can express their interests and encourage them to continue investigating their solutions in specific situations of the suggested games.

In Western countries like the United States, Hungary, and Sweden, games have served a purpose in dance classes by giving students time to explore their surroundings. According to Melina Surya Dewi & Yufiarti (2021), games encourage young students to be creative by allowing them to use movements from the game as inspiration when creating dance (Melina Surya Dewi & Yufiarti, 2021, p.103). This demonstrates that students can use games as their base ideas to create movement and to develop new dances. Incorporating games into preschool education dance teaching and developing new dance teaching methods can increase students' enthusiasm and initiative, which will help young children enjoy learning (Zhang & Liu, 2020). From the statement, combining games into preschool education, especial-

ly dance teaching, can increase children's interest in learning, effectively cultivate children's imagination and interpersonal relationships, and enrich children's emotions.

The government promotes the use of games in Malaysia as educational tools, especially in early childhood education, as stated in the National Preschool Standard-based Curriculum (NPSC) in Malaysia. NPSC has been the current preschool curriculum since its implementation in 2010. Later that year, in 2016, the NPSC was revised in tandem with Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 which aims to develop preschool's potential in a comprehensive way such as emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects in line with the National Education Philosophy (NEP) (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, 2013). In addition, the NPSC states that learning through games is established as one of the developmentally appropriate approaches for effective and meaningful learning experiences, alongside child-centred Learning, integrated approach, and inquiry-based Learning (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, 2013). The development of creative and innovative thinking is also emphasized in the NPSC in tandem with the current demands of the 21st century, as stated in the Ministry of Education Annual Report 2017. This shows that the aim of developing a wholesome child under the NPSC is an important goal for the teachers to allocate adequate time for active and discovery Learning to ensure a balanced development encompassing all developmental areas. Although the use of games as educational tools is still practiced in Malaysian preschools, a couple of the preschools have begun to use games in teaching and verified that games include a good approach and direction for young children learning.

The application of games in Music and Movement class started in 2020 after Covid-19 pandemic. Since the existence of the Covid-19 outbreak, all education methods in Malaysia changed from physical to online classes. During the Covid-19 pande-

mic, teachers in some preschools relied on using games. In spite of the end-demic in current time, the use of game elements in Music and Movement class has continued after teachers found that the games attracted the interest of young children. The continuity of using games clearly indicates that incorporating games as teaching tools effectively aids in attracting the attention and interest of young children during Music and Movement class. Although the use of games as teaching tools is still in its early stages, various types of games have been tried in the Music and Movement class. In Putrajaya, out of 25 preschools that officially appeared in Google engine, two preschools attempted to incorporate game elements in Music and Movement classes. However, these preschools still struggle to conduct Music and Movement classes with game elements. Although these two preschools still lack the use of games elements in Music and Movement classes, their trials of incorporating games into teaching materials can be a good approach that improves Music and Movement classes in a better direction. Observing Music and Movement classes with game elements in Putrajaya, this project aims to examine how game elements in Music and Movement classes can be a great tool to teach dance to young children and then analyze what impacts teachers can contribute to the children. Apart from that, this project helps to clarify that play-based learning with game elements can be used as a new dance teaching tools for young children.

METHOD

The case study was designed by qualitative methods: 1) interviews, 2) participant observation, and 3) analysis of written sources. Based on these methods, researchers put weight on the insider's approach, known as the emic perspective. The data collected comes from both researchers and research participants. A total of (3) teachers from Cedekiawan Educare and (3) teachers from Atomic Kids Preschool were involved in

the interview. During the interview, these teachers were asked to share about how the teachers from these two preschools incorporate game elements in teaching dance to young children. The teachers were also asked to share their opinions about the effect of using game elements in music and movement classes for 4 to 6-year-old students. Through the interviews, researchers were able to investigate how the teachers from these two preschools incorporate game elements in teaching dance to young children.

Through participant observation, researchers directly experienced and observed Music and Movement classes in two preschools. Researcher utilized their own experience to provide experimental information to this case study as the researchers were involved as teaching assistants in Music and Movement classes of Cedekia-wan Educare and Atomic Kids Preschool. The participant observation lasted 30 to 45 minutes during the Music and Movement class to observe the class environment when teachers used games in teaching dance to children aged 4 to 6 years. The participant observation was carried out by involving 63 students from Cendekiawan Educare, aged 4 to 6 years old, and 26 students from Atomic Kids preschool aged 4 to 6 years old. Researchers also utilized their own experience to identify whether the teachers' games are free to play or guided play. Through the observation, both researchers were able to investigate how the teachers incorporate game elements in teaching dance to young children and observe the environment of the Music and Movement class when teachers use games in teaching dance to children aged 4 to 6 years.

In addition to the interviews and participant observation, analysis of written sources played an essential role in this case study as it is the key source to gather information that relates to this study. Researchers obtained information from Universiti Malaya Library and online databases such as Research Gate, JSTOR, Project MUSE, etc. to understand the potential

benefits of using games, the definition of Play-Based Learning, and the impact of Play-Based Learning in education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 helped researchers to investigate the teaching contents from two different preschools. Based on this conceptual framework, the word "game" refers to a variety of activities, including both physical and digital games.

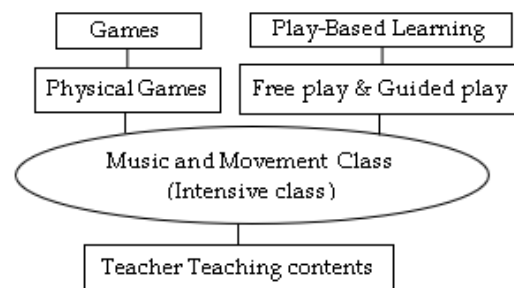


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

However, in this case study, researchers focus on physical games, as the games used in the Music and Movement class require students to move. Furthermore, the games used do not all belong to the same genre. Using various games can assist students in thinking more broadly and stepping outside of their comfort zone. Because it was discovered that the game element used is an effective and popular methodology for imparting education to children, particularly in the teaching of dance, this study om clearly demonstrates the concept of play-based learning. From there, researchers identified physical games as free or guided play. The use of games as educational tools is a method used by teachers in Music and Movement classes that play a role as a platform or base for the children to learn about movement, enabling them to move. Incorporating games in teaching dance instruction can increase student engagement in interactions with people, objects, and their surroundings. This somehow relates to what has been described by Danniels & Pyle, "when students play

games that involve strategy, they have an opportunity to make plans and then adjust those plans in response to what happens during gameplay” (Danniels & Pyle, 2018).

Danniels & Pyle theory about Play-Based Learning is mainly applied in this case study to discuss the game elements used by the teachers’ free play or guided play. However, in this study, researchers focus on guided play. Figure 2 is the theoretical framework to help researchers to look into teaching contents and effects through guided play. Through this theory, researchers look at guided play in more depth whether the involvement of adults in play activities really extends students’ learning opportunities. Furthermore, researchers discussed teacher teaching content used in Music and Movement classes and which categories teacher teaching content belongs to either free or guided play.

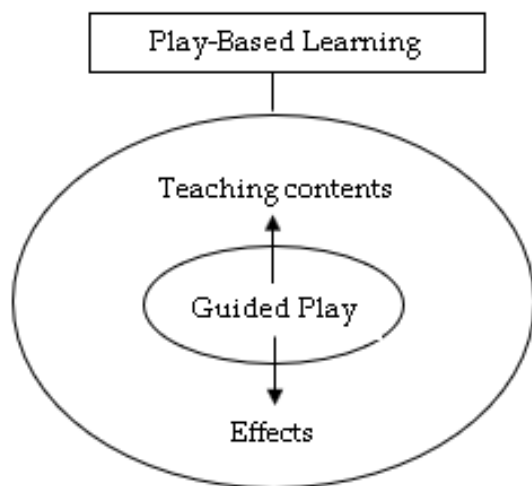


Figure 2. Theoretical Framework

The application of this theory is to see how this guided play is used in music and movement classes, which researchers look at in terms of teaching content. This is to identify whether the teaching contents used by the teachers are the same and in line with the definition of guided play described by Danniels & Pyle. What already have been explained previously, there are two types of play explained by Danniels & Pyle: 1) ‘free play’ refers to groups of children practicing imaginative role-playing through creating and follo-

wing social rules such as pretending to be different family members, and 2) ‘guided play’ refers to play activities with some level of adult involvement to embed or extend additional learning opportunities within the play itself. By looking at the definition of guided play, we understand that guided play appears to be more influential in the acquisition of academic skills. By structuring the environment, incorporating learning targets, and/or modifying pre-designed games, parents and educators can enhance young children’s learning opportunities.

In guided play, adults’ roles are to support children’s choices by gently shaping their behavior without taking control. Observing and participating in guided play allows adults to get to know children better, respond to their needs, and strengthen them more effectively. Adults in guided play must follow the children’s lead so that children truly have the freedom to explore as they please (Danniels & Pyle, 2018). This statement is also supported by Marie Masterson, who addressed that in guided play, learning opportunities focused on how well children can learn from a playful interaction depending on their mental state at the moment, including their level of knowledge, goal, attention, emotion and trust toward the play partner (Marie Masterson, 2022). Masterson added that guided play requires children to be involved in many activities and keep up with the structured schedule to prevent children from falling behind in the learning process.

Case 1: Games as a teaching tool in Cendekiawan Educare

It is not known when games were practiced at Cendekiawan Educare; however, games were used as a tool to teach movement in Music and Movement class. In the teaching process, the use of games focuses on activities that require children to move around such as physical games such as ‘Musical Chair’, ‘Musical Box’, ‘Simon Says’, ‘Dodge ball game’, ‘Movement game’, and ‘Freeze game’. These games are inserted with main subject topics such

as Bahasa Melayu, English, Mathematics, Science, Quran, and Arts & Crafts which are intended to evaluate children's ability to perform more than one task so that the lesson plan and teaching objective can be achieved whether they are 4 years old, 5 years old, or 6 years old. Based on interviews with the teachers, content and topic taught are different according to students' age and must according to KSPK Curriculum.

In the Music & Movement class, teachers are seen to have used games as a teaching method where games were used as exploration activities to teach dance. The implication of games in Music & Movement class started in 2019 by one of the teachers. 'Simon says,' 'Nenek Si Hungkok Tiga,' 'Pukul Berapa Datuk Harimau,' 'Zoo animal movement game,' 'Hopscotch,' and 'Freeze game' are an example of physical games used by the teachers to teach movement in Music and Movement class. The researchers found out from interviews that the teachers have a different set of games that will be played. This is due to the fact that using the same games will quickly bore students.

According to the teachers, Musical Box was the first game they incorporated into the Music and Movement class. Musical Box is a game that teachers often use to teach basic movement skills and movement concepts to 4-year-old students since they are in the process of learning new things. Basic movement skills are a type of common motor activity that is split into three categories: manipulative motion, non-locomotor motion, and locomotor motion. According to Safruddin, Nasaruddin, Arif Widodo, Muhammad Sobri, and Radiusman (2021), these categories are strongly tied to every individual to facilitate and support their daily activities. Movement concepts refer to exploration that includes four aspects: body, space, time, and force. This enables students to comprehend movement as a whole and to develop and arrange their knowledge of it (Safruddin et al., 2021). In the body aspects focuses on what the body is doing which

makes students become skillful in manipulative motion, non-locomotor motion, and locomotor motion. The space focuses on where the body is moving, and students develop skills in the use of personal space and general space. Time aspects focus on how the body moves in relation to rhythm and speed. Last but not least, force aspects concentrate on how the body is moving which helps students to develop the ability to use weight and energy. Anne Green Gilbert (2018) clarified that these four aspects are the integrated approach to developing students into skilled technicians, critical thinkers, collaborators, and creators (Anne Green Gilbert, 2018).

Musical Box is a type of game that not only focuses on movement skills and movement concepts but is combined with other main subjects such as English, Science, and Mathematics. During observation, the students can present their tasks very well as they can differentiate each movement skill even though they are still four years old. During the initial admission of 4-year-old students to Cendekiawan Educare, these children were unable to understand each movement skill and had difficulty moving their bodies even though the teacher has shown the movement. The teachers expressed that 4 years old students mostly have a low level of confidence since they are still small and still in the early stage of schooling. However, after playing the game, students were seen as able to improve their self-confidence as they slowly learned new knowledge and interacted with the world around them. In an interview with the teacher, she stated that she was surprised to see how well these 4-year-old children could perform every movement using the instructions she gave. The students are seen to understand and differentiate each movement skill as they were seen to be more daring to move and dance independently. They no longer seem shy about dancing and actively do every move they learn in the game. She also added that the students showed a cooperative attitude toward one another, especially when they helped each other memorize the songs and

movements they had to present.

The second game incorporated in Music and Movement class is Musical Chair, which is used to teach movement skills and concepts combined with the English subject. What can be seen through this game is that a rule of the game was set where all instructions and actions from the students are mentioned in English since this game is combined with an English subject. Plus, students who speak or say words in Malay also will be out of the game. For example, during the game, the teacher puts written picture cards of animals on one chair, and the students must find the chair with a picture card and sit down. To help students create movement, the teacher will ask students to imagine themselves as animals and use their creativity and ideas to produce animal-themed movements. Students are seen to have fun and excitement as they dance to the music with movement skills and concepts they have learned. In the interviews, the teacher in charge of this game explained that playing musical chair games also helps students get exposure to a variety of cultural songs because any song can be used to play this game. Different songs can give students different beats and rhythms, which help them use their creativity and ideas to create movement. She added that this game encourages higher-order thinking skills for preschool students because they need to think of the movements or actions they need to present according to instructions. Throughout the observation, the researcher also noticed that a variety of ideas and creativity can be seen from the students as they try to create movement based on the song played.

The third game used by the teachers as teaching tool is Simon Says game, a game to engage and enhance students' cognitive function where it enables students to play the game to make faster decisions and listen carefully. For this game, the teacher combined the Science subject by teaching movement vocabulary such as spinning, skipping, marching, crawling, and stomping. As a result of using this game, the researchers found that this

game is a good way to teach students movement vocabulary because it makes students active in the learning process. After using this game in the Music and Movement class several times, the researchers noticed that the students' concentration level increased, which was seen very differently when they first entered the 6-year-old class. According to an interview with a teacher, she stated that this game helps improve student body awareness and physical development where they can recognize and learn how each body part works. She also added that the students are seen to listen more and respond to the given instruction compared to before. Before this, the students could not concentrate on every Movement and Music class, which caused their motor development to be quite slow. However, through this game, students have improved their motor development, especially those students with poor motor development. Additionally, this game can make students active in the learning process as it requires a very high level of concentration, and students must fully participate in acquiring listening, direction-following, and movement skills.

Case 2: Games as a teaching tool in Atomic Kids Preschool

In the Music & Movement class, teachers are seen to have used games as a teaching method, where games were used as exploration activities to teach dance. The implication of games in Music & Movement class started in 2019 by one of the teachers. 'Simon says,' 'Nenek Si Hungkok Tiga,' 'Pukul Berapa Datuk Harimau,' 'Zoo animal movement game,' 'Hopscotch,' and 'Freeze game' are an example of physical games used by the teachers to teach movement in Music and Movement class. The researchers found out from interviews that the teachers have a different set of games that will be played. This is because using the same games will quickly bore students.

Animal Movement game is a game that focuses on learning movement skills and movement concepts where through this game students were able to work to-

gether to create and dance based on animal movement. What can be seen throughout the observation, the researchers noticed that the students were able to understand the rules and identify different movement skills like running, jumping, walking, hopping, spinning, and speed between fast and slow, especially for four and 5-year-olds. Students can differentiate movement skills like jumping and hopping based on an animal they imitated. Students can differentiate movement skills like jumping and hopping based on an animal they imitated. During the interviews, Teacher Kom shared that they received feedback from parents saying that she noticed her 5-year-old daughter is now more active in dancing and can do all the movements flexibly. This somehow shows that the 'Animal Movement Game' can be a great chance for students to work on their physical development. Adding on, the teacher shared that using animals to teach movement skills has been shown to accelerate learning and student comprehension; even at the beginning, she was unsure whether this activity could be classified as a game because she created it herself. However, from her point of view, this activity can be considered a game because it involves physical movement. Through the interview, she thinks that the 'Animal Game' helps students differentiate movement skills based on animal theme since the theme is applicable to their daily lives, making it easier to understand each movement skill taught by the teacher.

'Pukul Berapa Datuk Harimau' is one of the games that she and other teachers frequently use, as it is one of the students' favourite games in Atomic Kids Preschool. To incorporate this game in the Music and Movement class, the teacher made a slight change to the game where the students did not need to line up behind but instead made a circle. The changes were made according to the suitability of the teaching content, where the main objective of this game is to teach the sense of touch as well

as movement skills such as spinning and freezing. In this game, one student will blindfold while other students will make a big and small circle in turn around the person. After chanting, others will freeze at random places while the blindfolded will go around trying to catch them. In the interview, the teacher explained that she could see different types and actions shown by the students especially when they freeze. Some of them are sitting, some are standing, and some are even squatting. This somehow shows that the students understand the concept of freezing by doing different actions. Moreover, during observations, the students were also seen interacting with each other. The interaction clear can be seen when the blindfolded is trying to guess the name of the students caught by touching the body parts of the person. The teacher added that, the interaction between these students can help to improve their social abilities as well as their confidence in dancing because when they dance, they communicate with each other through eye contact. In addition, she noticed throughout this game four-year-old students, to some extent, able to use their sense of touch during learning and dancing even though they need a little time to understand the concept of the sense of touch.

Another game the teacher incorporated in Music and Movement class is Hopscotch game. Hopscotch is a type of game that can stimulate balance and coordination by practicing the activity of standing on one foot and jumping on one foot without holding on several times. In order to fit with the classroom surroundings and teaching contents, the teachers made some changes to the game where the teacher drew two hopscotch diagrams on the floor using markers where both diagrams faced a different direction instead of just one hopscotch diagram. The teacher drew a bridge to connect both diagrams, as seen in Figure 3.

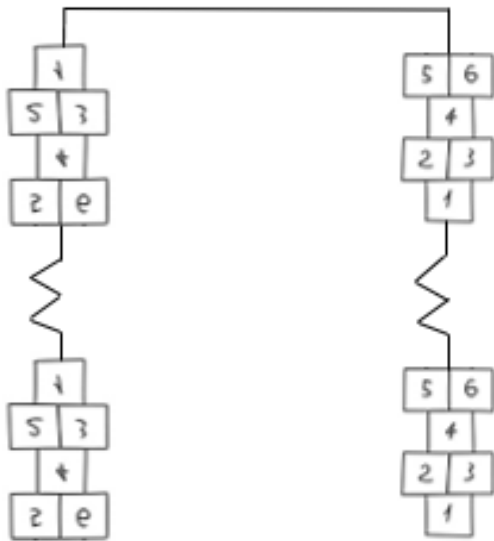


Figure 3. Hopscotch Diagram

According to the teachers' interviews, hopscotch game helps produces a range of movement and increase the flexibility of lower leg muscles. This game helps students develop their gross motor skills and counting skills and improve balance and coordination while teaching them how to wait their turn and follow directions. Balance and coordination are more focused when students jump from one square to another and during the bridge, while counting skills are developed when students count while jumping. One of the teachers clarified that hopscotch is one of the games they often use in Music and Movement class because through this game the teachers can see and evaluate the extent of the students' flexibility. Significant changes can be seen in a 5-year-old student, as shared by the teacher, who previously had a very low level of balancing. When engaging in balanced activities such as exercise or dancing, the student can only balance himself for 1 to 2 minutes at a time. Another teacher also shared that this game involves maintaining a regular rhythm as it repeats the same patterns and sequences during playing. Furthermore, through this game students can learn to navigate the social environment, especially when played in groups, as it is seen to

be more effective for social development because students can form friendships and learn cooperation and compromise according to the rules of the game, which require taking turns. From researchers' point of view based on observation, Hopscotch game helps the student to develop a good sense of rhythm which can be used for dancing. If compared during learning, there are still students who are seen facing balance problems, especially when the speed gradually becomes faster. However, while dancing, the students are seen to be able to balance their bodies and dance according to the type of song played. This somehow shows that Hopscotch is a perfect game to teach balancing, which teachers can incorporate into their music and movement classes.

The effect of games as teaching tools in Music and Movement class

Games have given a very deep effect on students, especially in improving the level of learning and introducing new knowledge to students. Students may not realize that they are actively participating in their learning. Most of the games used in learning are games played by more than two people, therefore, interaction between students will occur, which leads to enjoyment, passion, involvement, structure, motivation, creativity, social interaction, and emotion. According to Elias, game can be able to improve the cooperation and social ability of the members by providing values of teamwork and responsibility inside them (Elias, 2014). This statement demonstrates that games have an important role in realizing active learning because they include both interactive and distinctive elements such as boosting active learning and motivation and encouraging teamwork. After all, students can learn more effectively as they participate in their learning by interacting with other students and peers.

Another scholar also stated that games in education enhance students learning effectiveness. Parmjit Singh, Teoh Sian Hoon, Akmal Md Nasir, Adlan Md

Ramly, Syazwani Md Rasid⁵, Chew Cheng Meng (2021), explained that children learn best through action rather than instruction, which then leads to first-hand experience (Singh et al., 2021). The constructivist philosophy behind pedagogical approaches in mathematical learning places an emphasis on meaning and views the learner's role as one to construct knowledge. When children enjoy learning, the thirst and motivation for further knowledge come naturally without force, and acquisition of it in this manner is extremely important for kick-starting movement development (p. 201). They also give the same opinion (Tarja Krögera & Anne-Maria Nupponen, 2019). stated that the use of games in education has the potential to generate communication, support a positive classroom climate, enhance creativity, foster cooperation in and integration into a group, and change attitudes. This potential happens between children and teachers.

The improvement of cognitive ability through games is explained by Romine, saying that through the activities of games, students get motivated in an organized and creative way; according to their abilities, they get to know the world that surrounds them and their mental and other capacities and characteristics (McAllister & Bothman, 2004). This is because games in education have been used to inform and develop a range of skills, including decision-making, creativity, and problem-solving. Game provides different inputs depending on the game's learning purpose. Even though each student has a different ability level, using games as an educational intervention can improve learning outcomes and provide the same opportunities to each individual. By using games as a learning medium and method, students improve their deeper understanding, especially when they learned something new. This explains that games provide learners with opportunities to engage in decision-making and analyzing as games serve to make learning more memorable, especially for students. At the same time, students able to feel enjoyment as they play and participate in

each game. From there, it can increase students' interest and make them less stressed. Games are essential to attracting student satisfaction and have positive effects that reflect feeling such as pleasure, liking, and fun (Rahman et al., 2020).

Moreover, games are intended to help motivate students with sedentary lifestyles to become physically active because they require students to engage in physical activity such as cycling, dancing, or swinging. When students use their bodies to learn something new, it somehow allows students to experience a realistic situation with social interaction and observable outcomes. According to Selvi & Cosan, activities and games with repetitive movement patterns are ideal for stimulating the brain and building gross motor skills (Selvi & Çoşan, 2018). Playing games repeatedly or doing repetitive movement patterns helps students understand movement for deepening and the game's rules. This is because some games have rules that must be followed in order to be played. As a result, repetition in gameplay is critical in assisting children to explore more motor skills and maintain their physical health, as games can also be an exercise activity for them. This statement is also supported by Winda Puspita, Ikhsanudin Ikhsanudin & Eni Rosnija (2021), where games are an interactive technique to improve their understanding of receiving and following rules. This is because using games or playing games repeatedly helps children to interpret and store information in their memory. At the same time, repetition in gameplay also helps children improve their listening (Puspita et al., 2018). This is because students' participation in the classroom is not only oral participation but also non-oral meaningful acts related to the ongoing activity. From there, participation in the classroom can enable students to develop social skills, increase recall of information, improve presentation skills, and increase their scope for improving the quality of work.

However, too many games can somehow lead to some disadvantages to

the student's learning process and the teacher's teaching process. Throughout the observation, researchers see that combining games in Music and Movements class demands the teacher to act as a designer, especially in designing content or lesson plans. Each time a teacher wants to teach dance, they need to come up with new games, ideas, and learn how to relate the games with dance content. Students can get bored easily and lose focus if the teachers use the same activity or games for each class. Creating and designing games in teaching dance can be taken as teaching resources because teachers need to reflect on the mechanism of a game for students' dance learning. Teachers need to plan and choose the correct game elements that fit with learning contents that need to be taught. Teachers also need to make sure that games used are not too difficult for the students to understand, especially games with rules. This is to ensure that learning objectives can be achieved.

Too many games as a teaching method also can lead to games that take time to learn. The use of games that are too difficult or have many rules is seen as unsuitable for use as a teaching tool in Music and Movement classes. This is because more time will be spent playing games rather than teaching dancing. This makes it difficult for teachers to predict how much time students will need to complete all of the levels of a game and thus consider the educational game-related tasks completed. This has caused a bit of chaos for the teachers in teaching dance since they need to teach students in a whole group. Games that take a long time can cause other students to easily feel bored as they have to wait, making them lose focus and interest in the game.

From the observations and interviews that have been conducted, it can be seen that incorporating games into teaching materials can be a good approach and direction for students. Teacher Ida noticed that games increase their interest in learning. As for Teacher Farah, she noticed that learning through games promotes a

variety of aspects of student's development where games encourage students learning and inquiry through interactions that aim to stretch their thinking to higher levels. Before, the music and movement class only focused on one learning concept, teacher-centered learning, but everything changed when the teacher used games in music and movement class. The use of this game is more towards student-centred learning where students participate in the decision-making in their learning instead of getting instructions from the teachers. As for Teacher Kinah, she described that games as a tool in teaching movement or dance help students explore more movement skills and movement concepts because they create a community atmosphere and encourage teamwork.

CONCLUSION

Games as a teaching method in Music and Movement classes greatly emphasize students learning how to dance. The emphasis in the games creates more excitement for the children and not on worrying too much about techniques. The researchers discovered that game elements used by both preschool teachers are focused on guided play. This is because the games used are more structured and contain rules that need to be followed by students. Guided play is a child-directed and structured activity that involves adults' guidance and mentorships in their play where adults choose their play materials that encourage student creativity and materials that can give students the freedom to explore what they need. Teachers from both preschools choose games that fit the learning content that needs to be taught.

Choosing the right game for the classroom is more difficult than it appears because teachers must select games that are appropriate for the learning content. Too much focus on games during Music and Movement class can somehow lead to some disadvantages in students' learning process, such as not achieving the learning objectives, students will lose focus during

the dancing session, and students will easily feel bored. To maximize the advantages of game-based learning in the classroom, need for standardization and regulation of game use in teaching-learning-evaluating. Until such regulations are developed and implemented, games will continue to be a great, fun way to teach and learn in class, but only on occasion. This case study can be a good example for future research related to dance education for dance scholars and students.

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