



Character Development through Dance Learning in an Early Childhood Setting

Rakimahwati✉

DOI 10.15294/ijeccs.v3i2.9490

Department of Early Childhood Teacher Education, Padang State University, Indonesia

Article Info

Received October 2014
Accepted November 2014
Published December 2014

Keywords:
Character Building; dance art

Abstract

The problems happening to school-age children have encouraged teachers' strong efforts to overcome them. Character based education becomes one of the solutions to handle those problems. Character based education should have begun since early ages. This research investigates how to build children's character in their early ages through the activities of learning dance art. This is a descriptive research with a qualitative approach. The data was collected through interviews, recordings, and photo or video shooting. The reliability and the validity of the data were done by verifying and cross-checking the data. In addition, the technique of data analysis was adopted from Spradley's (1997) steps in which the data were validated based on their credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The findings show that character-based education for early childhood through dance art learning is effective. The learning process can inculcate the character values such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, religious, patriotism, and environmental care.

How to cite

Rakimahwati, R. (2014). Character Development through Dance Learning in an Early Childhood Setting. *Indonesian Journal Of Early Childhood Education Studies*, 3(2), 102-107. doi:10.15294/ijeccs.v3i2.9490

INTRODUCTION

The problem of character building has become a central issue in the world of education. It takes a lot of attention from various sides of people. The emergence of character-based education is motivated by the incompatibility of education products with the vision and mission of education. National Education acts as a department responsible for building the national young generation with a good character as mentioned in the goals of national education. Character education becomes the most important activity in learning the process in the classroom. Character education should involve many parties in a system contributing one another to build the students' character. Parents, teachers and society are expected to be directly involved in the process of building national young generation's character.

The challenge faced by national education today is the weakened affection towards the nation. Many cases related to the efforts of being excluded from the unitary of Indonesian Republic are found in some places in Indonesia. The veiled separatist movements indicate that the sense of belonging of the country is obviously weak. Self-esteem as a nation's young generation has to be questioned.

The other problem is the weakness of the society's reaction to fight against various problems related to the decadence of teenagers' morals and characters. Fights between students from different schools have worried parents, teachers, society, and even government. Besides, the cases of drugs and free sex among teenagers also indicate the decadence of morals and the destruction of characters. Motor gangs movements followed by such rude actions as robbery, oppression, and destruction indicate how anarchist the school-age children are. This decadence of morals and characters certainly needs much attention in the activities of education.

Character education is provided to build the character of nation's young generation. Character building will give positive effects to the recovery of various problems in national education. The process of character building through education begun in adulthood may give a good effect, but character building since early ages is much better. Character building since early ages must be adjusted with the need and the level of thought of the children. One of the needs of young children is playing and exciting atmosphere. The education for early childhood is the effort to stimulate, guide, nurture, and educate children in order that they have ability and skills

compatible with their development. In relation to the growth and development of early childhood, education should be adapted to the development stages which can explore the environmental experience of the atmosphere compatible with where they are. Young children will learn faster, and well imitate new things recently taught to them. Hopefully, young children should have been given character education through exciting meaningful activities.

A human being lives individually and in a group, and this indicates kinds of activities they did. These activities reflect types of personality or characters they have both as an individual or as a group in a society context. Purwanto (1997: 145) says that character is the mental structure of human which appears in their attitudes and behaviors which are also their own individual identity.

According to Suryanto (2011: 77), character, attitude, and personality building is very important and very urgent, and its existence is absolute. This is quite reasonable because of the existence of the sustainable crisis experienced by our country which still has no clear and firm solution.

In addition, Puskar in Suryanto (2011: 26-27) states that character building is identified in 18 values based on religion, Pancasila, culture, and the aim of national education. They are (1) religious, (2) honest, (3) tolerant, (4) discipline, (5) hard working, (6) creative, (7) independent, (8) democratic, (9) curious, (10) nationalism spirit, (11) country affection, (12) appreciative, (13) friendly/communicative, (14) peace affection, (15) reading affection, (16) environmental care, (17) social care, and (18) responsible.

Based on the character principles mentioned above, this research is used to pay close attention to the character building of early childhood through dance art learning at Kindergarten Angkasa, Padang Utara, Padang.

According to Indonesian laws No. 20 Year 2003 about the system of national education in Indonesia, early childhood education is an effort intended to children since their birth until their sixth age or the age allowed to go to elementary school which is done by giving them education stimulant to help the growth and the development of their physical and spiritual. Sujiono (2009: 13) states that early childhood education needs a physical contact through playing and giving attention, and education plays an important role in encouraging the development of their physic, emotional health, affection to their teachers.

Furthermore, Herawati (2005: 7) says that

early childhood education is one of the forms of implementing an education that emphasizes on basic foundation towards the growth, the development of both soft and hard motoric physical coordination, and intelligence (thought, creativity, emotional intelligence, and spiritual intelligence).

Learning, in human life, is an individual activity to obtain knowledge, behaviour, and skill by doing learning activities. Learning is an activity and a process indicated by the emergence of changes in individuals as a result of observations and exercises reflected through knowledge, skill, and behavior. Higard (2002: 36) says:

Learning is the process by which an activity originates or is changed through responding to a situation, provided the change cannot be attributed to growth temporary state of the organism as in fatigue or under drugs.

The opinion above means that learning is a process of an activity, the reaction towards the environment on the responses shown towards the condition in which the changes are not the effects of growth nor tentative situation.

The term learning is a synonym of the word "instruction" which means a process of having someone learn. Its purpose is to help individuals learn, or to manipulate the environment to ease individuals while learning. Gagna and Briggs (1979) define learning as a series of events (events, moments, conditions, and so on) which are intentionally designed to influence the learners, therefore, the process of their learning can run easily. Learning is not only limited to the events done by the teachers, but it also covers all of the elements and activities which possibly have a direct influence on the learning process of the students.

Dance art learning for early childhood will contribute more if done through group learning or classical learning because early childhood tends to imitate their environment. Suryosubroto (1989: 141) says that classical learning is learning by using the classical method in which a teacher in the classroom faces a number of students at the same time, delivers the same learning materials, and even uses the same teaching method to all of the students. The purpose of classical learning is neither based on need evaluation nor clearly mentioned, but it can be caught from learning the process. Furthermore, Sastrawijaya (1991: 22-23) mentions that the learners' previous ability is not considered, all of the learners deserve to get the same materials or activities.

This learning system, according to

Vembriarto (1975: 4) has the following characteristics: (1) One or some teachers face a class containing a number of students; (2) The learners are at the same age; (3) At the same time, the teachers deliver the same lesson to the learners and they teach them with the same learning tasks; and (4) In the beginning of academic year, the class starts the learning process together, and at the end of academic year, most of them pass and come to the higher grade together, except for a few students who fail and have to stay in the same grade.

Based on the problems emerged in the society nowadays, and in relation to character education since early ages, the proper learning process is extremely required. The objectives of this research are to find out: (1) how character building is applied to early childhood through dance art learning at Kindergarten Angkasa, Padang Utara, Padang; and (2) what character can be inculcated from early childhood through dance art learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive research with a qualitative approach. Descriptive research is an effort to describe, record, analyze, and interpret the conditions taking place in the field at a particular time. Neither does this research test nor use the hypotheses, but this research describes whatever information found in the field, and then the information is analyzed based on the problems being researched.

This research uses Spardley's theory of qualitative approach. Spardley (1997) explains that qualitative research tends to use a model as following: (1) shaping a cycle, that is its process can be done over and over again, (2) recording the data, and (3) analyzing the data. In accordance with this, it is necessary to conduct a deep research on character building of early childhood through dance art learning at Kindergarten Angkasa, Padang Utara, Padang. The process of data collection needs to be done repeatedly in order to get accurate information and data about character building of early childhood through dance art learning. This can be done through observation, interview, and documenting the events taking place in the field. These are followed by taking a note of various data in every visit to the research location. All of the data that have been collected are then analyzed and the characters obtained through dance art learning is interpreted. These characters are discussed in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The movement in this Funny Butterfly dance is elaborated as follows:

- a) The movement in a song lyric "*Kupu-kupu yang lucu, kemana engkau terbang* (Funny butterfly, where are you flying)" is the children move by swinging their right hand to the position of their left hand. Meanwhile, their left hand is straight ahead with 4 x 1 count.
- b) In the song lyric "*Hilir mudik mencari, bunga-bunga yang kembang* (Back and forth looking for blossom flowers)", the children's hand changes, both of their hands are swung from top to bottom with 4 x 1 count.
- c) The next song lyric is "*Berayun-ayun pada tangkai yang lemah* (Swinging on the weak stem)". In this lyric, the movement that will be done by the children is swinging both of their hands to the right and to the left, whereas their body moves up and down with 8 x 1 count.
- d) In the song lyric "*Tidakkah sayapmu merasa lelah* (Don't your swings feel tired)", the movement that is done by the children is moving their right and left hands forward to form a cross, and both of their hands are opened and stretched out to the side with 8 x 1.
- e) In the song lyric "*Kupu-kupu yang elok, bolehkah saya serta* (Lovely butterfly, may I follow you)", the movement which is done by the children is similar to the first movement. The children swing their right hand from the right side to their left hand which is straight ahead. However, in this movement, the movement is added by the movements of their feet. When their right hand is swung, their right foot also moves crosswise and is a bit folded (right foot forward, left foot behind) with 4 x 1 count.
- f) In the song lyric "*Mencium bunga-bunga yang semerbak baunya* (Smelling the flowers with fragrant smell)", the children' movement is still similar to the first movement, but in this movement, when the children swing both of their hands, they also spin in their place with 4 x 1 count.
- g) In the song lyric "*Sambil berdendang, semua kau hampiri* (While singing, you approach all)", both of the children's hands swing backward and forward, and so do their feet with 8 x 1 count.
- h) In the song lyric "*Bolehkah kuturut bersama pergi* (May I go together with you)", the motion is similar to the movement done in

the song lyric "*Tidakkah sayapmu merasa lelah* (Don't your swing feel tired)". In this lyric, the children move their right and left hands forward to form a cross, and both of their hands are opened and stretched out to the side. This movement is followed by walking movement in their place.

This research observes the dance art learning at Kindergarten Angkasa, Padang Utara, Padang. The observation is done by observing three learning activities. Each of the activities in dance art learning at Kindergarten Angkasa, Padang Utara, Padang is done in three phases: (1) pre-teaching activities, (2) whilst-teaching activities, and (3) post-teaching activities. The first observation can be seen in the first meeting of learning.

Pre-teaching activities: (a) The teacher greets the students; (b) The teacher checks the students' attendance and coordinates the classroom used in the meeting; (c) The teacher leads the students to pray before studying; and (d) The teacher asks the students (about three students) to tell stories about animals in front of the class.

Whilst-teaching activities: (a) The teacher explains the topic and the subtopic of the today's meeting; (b) The teacher tells a fiction story about butterflies; (c) The teacher invites the students to sing a song entitled "*kupu-kupu yang lucu* (funny butterflies)"; and (d) The teacher tries to demonstrate various kinds of movements of the animals on the air and ask the students to repeat. All of the students follow the movements taught by the teacher.

Post-teaching activities: (a) The teacher together with the students discuss the movements they have just done; (b) The teacher and the students sing together for the final activity; (c) The teacher leads the students to pray together at the end of the meeting; and (d) The teacher says goodbye to the students.

In the second observation, the cycles of the observation are as follows. Pre-teaching activities: (a) The teacher greets the students; (b) The teacher checks the students' attendance and coordinates the classroom used in the meeting; (c) The teacher leads the students to pray before studying; (d) The teacher invites the students to sing a song entitled "*kupu-kupu yang lucu* (funny butterflies)" together; and (e) The teacher tells a story about the life of butterflies.

Whilst-teaching Activities: (a) The teacher reminds the students about the topic of their previous meeting; (b) The teacher explains the topic and the subtopic of the today's meeting;

(c) The teacher demonstrates the movements of butterflies referring to the continuance of the lyric of the song “*kupu-kupu yang lucu* (funny butterflies)”, and all of the students follow the movements taught by the teacher; (d) The teacher leads the students to repeat the movements that have been taught together; (e) The teacher gives individual guidance for those who are still not able to do the movements that have been taught; and (f) The teacher motivates the students to practice the movements at home.

Post-teaching activities: (a) The teacher together with the students discuss the movements they have just done; (b) The teacher and the students sing together for the final activity; (c) The teacher leads the students to pray together at the end of the meeting; and (d) The teacher says goodbye to the students.

The third observation is done in the third meeting of learning. Pre-teaching activities: (a) The teacher greets the students; (b) The teacher checks the students’ attendance and coordinates the classroom used in the meeting; (c) The teacher leads the students to pray before studying; (d) The teacher and the students sing a song entitled “*kupu-kupu yang lucu* (funny butterflies)” together; and (e) The teacher tells a story about the attitudes and the characters of butterflies.

Whilst-teaching Activities: (a) The teacher reminds the students about the topic of their previous meeting; (b) The teacher explains the topic and the subtopic of the today’s meeting; (c) The teacher together with the students repeat all of the motions that have been taught referring to the song lyrics that have been taught; and (d) The teacher trains the students in forming the position or the floor scheme; therefore, a dance is created with motions and positions which are not monotonous.

Post-teaching activities: (a) The teacher discusses dance that has already been taught; (b) The teacher and the students sing and dance together for the final activity; (c) The teacher and the students pray together at the end of the meeting; and (d) The teacher says goodbye to the students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data dan data analysis that has been done, it is found that: 1. Early childhood learning through dance art learning gives impact to the learning process which is conducive and full of cheerfulness. Moreover, by introducing the students to the real world, they will have more self-confidence and strong motivation. 2.

The scheme of character building emerges in the learning; consequently, some good characters appear such as honest, responsible, religious, country love, and environmental care.

REFERENCES

- Amir, M.S. (1997). *Adat Minangkabau Pola dan Tujuan Hidup Orang Minang*. Jakarta: Mutiara Sumber Widya.
- Djamarah, Syaiful Bahri and Aswan Zain. (2006). *Strategi Belajar Mengajar*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Gagne, R.M., L.J. Briggs and Wager. (1979). *Principles of Instructional Design*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Hakimy, Idrus. (1991). *1000 Pepatah, Petitih, Mamang, Bidal, Pantun, Gurindam*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Hasri, Salfen. (2004). *Sekolah Efektif dan Guru Efektif*. Makasar: YAPMA.
- Herawati, Netti. (2005). *Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. Pe-kanbaru*: BPKB Dinas Pendidikan.
- Hilgard, Ernest R. et al. 2002. *Pengantar Psikologi*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Imron, Ali. (1996). *Kebijaksanaan Pendidikan di Indonesia: Proses, Produk, dan Masa Depan*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Koswara, E. (1991). *Teori-Teori Kepribadian*. Bandung: Eresco.
- Lusita, Afrisanti. (2001). *Buku Pintar Menjadi Guru Kreatif, Inspiratif, dan Inovatif*. Yogyakarta: Araska.
- Lembaga Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau (LKAAM) Sumatera Barat. (1987). *Adat Minangkabau (Sejarah dan Budaya)*. Padang: Tropic Offset Printing.
- Mayetti. (2012). *Implementasi Tari Baruak dalam Pembelajaran di Nagari Salido Kabupaten Pesisir Selatan*. Unpublished Thesis. Padang: State University of Padang.
- Naisaban, Ladislaus. (2003). *Psikologi Jung: Tipe Kepribadian Manusia dan Rahasia Sukses dalam Hidup*. Jakarta: Grasindo.
- Nashir, Haedar. *Agama dan Krisis Kemanusiaan Modern*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Nasution, S. (2008). *Sejarah Pendidikan Indonesia*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Ngalim, Purwanto. (1997). *Psikologi Pendidikan*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Noah, Rarold J. and Max A. Eckstein. (1986). *Menuju ke Ilmu Mendidik Komparatif*. Jakarta: Sastra Hudaya.
- Pidarta, Made. (1988). *Manajemen Pendidikan Indonesia*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Putra, Nusa and Ninin Dwilestari. (2012). *Penelitian Kualitatif PAUD (Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini)*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Rooijackers, Ad. (1991). *Mengajar dengan Sukses: Petunjuk untuk Merencanakan dan Menyampaikan Pengajaran*. Jakarta: Grasindo.
- Sahertian, Piet A. and Sahertian, Ida A. (1992). *Supervisi Pendidikan dalam Rangka Program Inservice*

- Education*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Sastrawijaya, A. Tresna. (1991). *Pengembangan Program Pengajaran*. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta.
- Spradley, P. James. (1997). *Metode Etnografi*. Yogyakarta: PT. Tiara Wacana Yogya.
- Soedijarto. (1993). *Memantapkan Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Sujiono, Y. N. (2009). *Konsep Dasar Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*. Jakarta: PT. Indeks.
- Sulhan, Najib. (2011). *Panduan Praktis Pengembangan Karakter dan Budaya Bangsa: Sinergi Sekolah dan Rumah*. Surabaya: Jaring Pena.
- Sumardi, Y. Y. (2013). *Nilai-Nilai dalam Pertunjukan Topeng Mak Yong (Studi Kasus pada Masyarakat Mantang Arang Propinsi Kepulauan Riau)*. Unpublished Dissertation. Padang: Post Graduate Program of State University of Padang.
- Suryanto. (2011). *Pembelajaran Kontekstual dalam Membangun Karakter Siswa*. Jakarta: Dirjen Pendidikan Dasar.
- Suryosubroto, B. (1989). *Metode Pengajaran di Sekolah dan Pendekatan Baru dalam Proses Belajar-Mengajar*. Yogyakarta: Amarta.
- Tilaar, H.A.R. (2003). *Kekuasaan dan Pendidikan (Suatu Tinjauan dan Perspektif Studi Kultural)*. Magelang: Indenisiatera.
- Uno, H. B. (2011). *Model Pembelajaran: Menciptakan Proses Belajar Mengajar yang Kreatif dan Efektif*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Wiraatmadja, Rochiati. (2007). *Metode Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Yamin, Moh. (2009). *Manajemen Mutu Kurikulum Pendidikan, Panduan Menciptakan Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan Berbasis Kurikulum yang Progresif dan Inspiratif*. Yogyakarta: Diva Press.