

Student-Centered Approach in Piano Study for Teenagers: Is it possible?

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Abstract—Most of music education students who learn piano in Indonesia play the instrument based on teachers' instructions. Teacher-centered approach is commonly found in the learning process in which materials and strategies are determined by the teachers. Fortunately, such learning model is not found in Adorakids Music as one of music learning centers in Bandung. This is due to learning approach by encouraging students' participation in their learning process. Therefore, this study aims to investigate a student-centered approach employed in Adora Kids Music. A descriptive qualitative was chosen as a research design. Meanwhile, data were collected through several instruments namely: interview, observation, and document analysis. Some stages to analyze the data were done through describing, reducing, triangulation, until presenting the data. The results of this study refer that during the learning process, the teacher used student-centered approach through implementing some strategies: *discovery learning, exploration, collaboration, and self-evaluation*. To develop learning material, the teacher consider students' need and interests so that all components in learning process including learning, method, media and model were also made appropriately with the students' need.

Keywords—*student-centered learning; learning; piano*

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning piano in several countries have gone through several developments in method, strategy, and learning approach. In China, a teacher would consider student's ability in preparing teaching materials, look at several sources, and the student has a chance to choose topic that they like [1]. Learning methods are also vary, depend on student's need. Still in China, there are also several piano teachers who have their own way of teaching, which is collaborating with student. When student is learning to play the right hand part, the teacher would play the left hand notation and vice versa. This is aimed to develop student's interest in learning [1].

In Washington (USA), developing student's interest on playing piano is accomplished through an interesting learning situation. The process then triggers student's interest, sustains that attention which leads to learning motivation, and ends in student trying to develop that particular interest [2].

Normally, piano learning at various music school in Indonesia is still teacher-centered [3,4]. Usually the teachers chooses the material that they mastered then based it on student's ability, and then they construct the learning material from several books which are available in Indonesia [4,5]. For example, Alfred's Basic Piano, Duvernoy, Burgmuller, Kleine Etudent [1,4]. There are also teachers who only use material from one book till the end, and then continue with different book till it ends [6]. Take for example Yamaha Music School, a music course which provides books that would be used by teachers for teaching material, but then the teachers add other materials that are suitable with students' ability. Then, the students try to read and play it. That is the norm of most music school in Indonesia.

However, one of the music schools in Indonesia creates an innovation related to piano teaching approach, by using student-centered approach. The use of this approach in that music school is to develop student's creativity by matching student's interest with their need in learning piano.

This research is aimed to investigate student-centered piano teaching in Indonesia. This is due to the fact that this type of approach is considered as rare. Specifically, this research is aimed to study students' activity, materials given to students, and teacher's effort in developing piano learning experience through student-centered approach.

This work is focusing on students' activity and material which use student-centered approach as well as teacher's effort in developing piano learning experience using that particular method. This is carried out in order to analyse strength and weakness of learning piano using student-centered approach.

The student centered approach is generally learning that involves students to play an active role in the learning process. In this approach, teachers are only mediators and directors and guidance in the learning process. Flexible learning systems with the selection of material and learning methods must be adapted to the interests and learning styles of students because it influences intrinsic motivation [7,8].

The student centered approach is closely related to the development of students' interests and creativity. Student interest can be created [2]. The development of student interest

can be developed from situational interests into individual interests through 4 phases, namely triggered, maintaining that interest, emerging and developing skills based on developed students' interests [9].

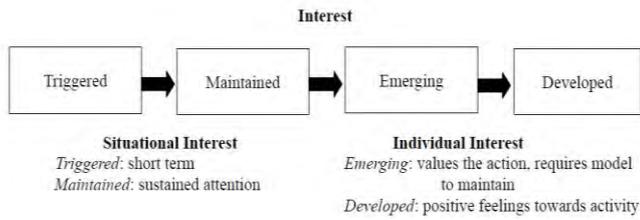


Fig. 1. Hidi & Renninger's interest model.

Student centered approach in piano learning having characteristics, the teacher as a support to direct students to a flexible learning system, the teacher directs students to play an active role in developing teaching material, with the aim of deepening play ideas and techniques, interpreting skills, and developing emotions and character [1]. In contrast to teacher centered learning which is instructional process, students see the teacher demonstrating and students observing [6].

Piano learning using this approach also requires teachers to be creative in determining teaching materials, even teachers can draw students into learning situations while playing [1]. In addition, student centered aims to build trust and good communication between teachers and students and parents. In addition, using this approach, teachers train mentally students who are less confident to dare to play piano according to their interpretation and appear in public.

II. METHODS

Descriptive method was used to collect data through interview, observation, and document study. Data analysis was performed using description, reduction, triangulation, and data presentation.

The research subjects used in this study were 3 piano students at Adorakids Bandung whose ages ranged from 16-17 years old and included in the category of adolescents. These students are LP (16 years old), SP (15 years old), and DT (17 years old). LP students are students who have been tutoring in Adorakids for 6 months. SP have been studying for 4 months and March is the 5th month. In contrast to DT. DT is new students in Adorakids. March is the first month for DT in learning piano.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before the main activities, there were several activities that supported piano learning with a student centered approach. First is environmental recognition activities. The second activity is consultation. There are two types of consultations carried out, namely at the beginning of the student enrollment, and routine at the end of each learning meeting. Initial consultation is done when registering. This consultation aims to adjust the learning methods and strategies that are appropriate for students based on their respective goals. The second type of consultation is consultation that is carried out

regularly at the end of each learning meeting. Each Adorakids student is given each student's time of 45 minutes for piano learning in class, and 15 minutes for consultation with the Adorakids curriculum section. The activity basically aims as an evaluation material for teachers to further develop learning strategies in the piano learning process.

Based on the research result, one of the activities of learning piano for teenagers in Adorakids Bandung that uses student-centered approach is discovery learning. One of the activities in discovery learning is for students to find the scale concept and its fingering, and to find inversion concept and how to play it. The activity is guided by teacher through giving students stimulus to actively search the learning material.

The next activity is exploration. Exploration in learning piano is when students are asked to create their own melody from the chord given by teacher. Teacher plays chord progression repeatedly, then the students are asked to create melody from that chord with their sound and musicality experience. This is aimed to explore students' skill and give mental stimulus for students to creatively develop their musicality.

Then, it is collaboration. Learning using student-centered approach demands students to be active in learning, concluding learning material, and exploring it. Based on researcher's interview with teacher and the owner of Adorakids, learning activities are more effective if there is a group of piano learner so that students can gain learning experience from peers outside of their class. According to the owner of Adorakids, learning does not only performed in class, but also outside of class where meaningful learning commences. Students can share their experiences and evaluate themselves by comparing their skill with their peers'.

Learning together is carried out when students do a music project in Adorakids. Adorakids evaluates and tests students by asking them to make a music project which is an activity of making a music performance (by either using other's work with new arrangement or not), creating their own music and collaborating with other students or teacher in every 2 months or 6 month to be documented for parents.

As a preparation for music project, students are guided by teacher to find partner in creating the music project. They are free to find their own partners. After that, students arrange the schedule of learning with partner in Adorakids. The first step is for students to decide which work they are going to perform. A session of learning together with partner lasts for about 1.5 hour until every chord has been decided and played by using piano and other instruments.

The next activity is self-evaluation. Self-evaluation is a chance for students to evaluate themselves. Every student in Adorakids are allowed to self-evaluate after finishing a learning material. This process is always accompanied by teacher's motivation and sharing. Every student in Adorakids always do self-evaluation so as to know their weakness in learning related to technique, interpretation, musicality, and idea.

Student centered approach for piano learning affects material, media, and learning strategy that teacher uses.

Learning components must be adjusted with students' interest and need. Student is the center of learning. One of the examples is material. Teacher gives several choices of learning material based on students' ability. After that, students choose one of the learning material. Students are allowed to choose two learning material. The two materials are about classical piano, which is a piano play that performs classical work, and piano accompaniment material (pop, jazz, etc.). Learning material in Adorakids has a characteristic. The material is developed and adjusted based on students' interest and need. As an illustration, researcher will explain how the material is adjusted and developed based on students' ability.

The material learned on piano accompaniment is scales, tri notes, chord progressions, top voices, arpeggio, variation chords, and creating melody. In giving material, the teacher gives 2 pieces of work for one of them to be selected by the students as the material to be studied. The teacher previously explained the difficulties of each work. In classical piano, the process of giving material is the same, namely the teacher gives two classic songs and is chosen by the student one of them. In classical piano it is about the technique of reading scores and notation.

Teachers as mediators in piano learning using a student centered approach in Adorakids have quite heavy duties and responsibilities in the learning process. Because the student centered approach is centered on the interests and needs of students, the teacher must always be prepared for student requests during the learning process, for example following the teaching material that students want. In addition, the teacher must always be active to update the method, media, and learning strategies in the piano learning process.

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by the author, the efforts of teachers in developing learning experiences, one of which is the development of learning methods. Learning methods commonly used by teachers in piano learning in Adorakids are demonstration, imitation, question and answer, and drill (repetition) methods. The method of development by the teacher is memory singing and hearing methods. Based on interviews and observations with the teacher, memory singing and hearing methods is a learning method that instructs students to hear and sing melodies on songs that were never known before from music played from handphone, CD using speakers directly by paying attention to tone accuracy, beat, tempo, and dynamics so students can remember the melody of the song and play it on the piano. This method serves to train students 'sensitivity to music and increase students' musicality.

Other developmental effort administered by teacher was the improvement of teaching media. Teacher improved teaching media by adding and increasing the use of audio-visual media such as audio. The said video was either a tutorial video, pianist's performance, or motivational video. Teacher instructed students to use YouTube as a learning media, to find reference, and to appreciate music performance in videos especially those of piano. Teacher also used social media as a material for students' actualization by uploading their performance to social media. Thus, students would have more confidence and become more motivated.

Effort to develop learning experience by teacher in learning piano in Adorakids Bandung was by using student-centered approach. One of the ways was by developing learning model. Teacher developed a new learning model which was collaborative learning, a learning model in which students from various level of skills worked together in a small group toward one single goal. In the group, students helped each other. Learning atmosphere became collaborative, and there was a positive dependence aspect in order to reach success. In this activity, piano students had a collaboration with other Adorakids students of the same area or not every 2 months and every 6 months. They made an Adorakids music project together. It could be a rendition of a song performance, or creating a simple song. The result then documented and given to their parents.

Learning activities which interest the researcher the most were exploration and collaboration. The students explored melody on the chord progression given by teacher. Based on researcher's observation, students were very interested in the exploration process. The exploration activity was then combined with collaboration. Collaboration or collaborative learning conducted in Adorakids piano learning was when students had a collaboration with teacher in making a simple music work. Teacher made a simple and repeated chord progression while students explored melodies based on the chord. Based on researcher's observation, in collaboration, students and teacher each make use of each other's skill and resource. Teacher and students in turns filled the melody based on the chord VI – IV – I – V.



Fig. 2. Chord progression from the teacher.



Fig. 3. Development from the students.

It turned out that the activity was one of the factors that affect the development of students' creativity, interest, and skill [10]. The project commenced with giving students chances to create melody from the chord played by teacher. The activity was aimed to trigger students' interest (triggered). When students explored the melody, the students would want to play the activity again and again. The activity was intended to maintain their interest (maintaining). Then, the students were asked to play their own melody with teacher. At this stage, students' desire to develop their play emerged (emerging). After the students started to get excited, they would want to improve their play based on their own interpretation and melody (developed). After a bit of investigation, students stated that [11];

When I asked by teacher to explore the melody from chord progression, I'm very curious to improve my ability for create a better melody. What I expected and what I played is different. So I must repeat it until I find the melody that I want. (DT, based on the interview, May 7th 2018).

Based on the students' statement, the positive impact of exploration activity was that students were able to gain new learning experiences, to explore their ability, to practice their musicality, and to get used to participate actively in developing learning material given by teacher. Yet, the exploration might be inhibited if there were less stimuli and motivation from teacher. That is why, this activity must be supported by teacher's mastery in teaching [12]. Meanwhile, collaboration had a positive impact in educating students to work together, to have more interactions, and to share their experiences with other people [12]. The interaction leads to students' increased interest. In other words, this process encourages students' active role in their interest in learning piano [10].

IV. CONCLUSION

There are three kinds of evaluation performed by teacher for students: evaluation after very practice, monthly evaluation, and making music project, Based on the evaluations, students are having an increase in the knowledge and ability to play piano. Students who at the beginning are completely unable to play piano, now is able to play songs that they like using piano. Through the student-centered approach in learning piano, students are getting positive impact. Students are motivated to train regularly because the learning material is based on their interest. Aside from that, students become more open to teacher regarding their learning interest and difficulties. This approach also improve their actualization, creativity, and confidence. Yet, the use of this approach must be adjusted with the objective of learning. If the objective is to make students interested in learning piano and to practice, this approach is suitable. However, if the objective is to focus on developing their ability to become a skilled pianist, it is recommended to

combine this approach with a teacher-centered approach which has instructional nature.

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