

Mediation Exploring Multi-Sensory Elements Through the Use of Songs and its Effects to Pupils with Learning Disabilities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore multi-sensory elements through songs in learning and the impact on pupils with learning disabilities (PLD). This is a case study in which the data were collected through observation and triangulated with interviews and pupils' work. This study was conducted on six pupils, four teachers and six parents. The pupils, aged from 10 to 12, were chosen through purposive sampling from the Special Education Integrated Program (SEIP) in Perak. Data of the study were analyzed by using constant comparison techniques of multi-sensory elements, the use of songs and the effects on pupils using the Nvivo software. This comparison is to identify the themes of the use of songs in multi-sensory elements and the effects on pupils. The multi-sensory elements of Dunn and Dunn Learning Style Model was used as guidance in the observation and interviews because this model was the most suitable to be applied to pupils with learning disabilities. The results of the analysis showed that the use of songs can assist pupils with learning disabilities to memorize the content knowledge and participate in the discussion on the topics taught. The research had identified the triggers of learning for achieving learning outcomes for pupils with learning disabilities which could be used by teachers in the professional practice in the classroom.

Keywords: Songs, Multi-Sensory Elements, and Pupils with Learning Disabilities.

Introduction

A song is a tone or sound art in sequence, combination, and temporal relationships that is usually accompanied by musical instruments to produce musical compositions that have unity and continuity (containing rhythm). A rhythmic tone or sound is also called a song. The lyrics of a song are usually rhymed, but there are also religious or free verse songs. The use of songs in a lesson is to enable pupils to study through any forms of the song in the classroom. The use of songs in this study involves the multi-sensory elements of physiological stimulus which include the sense of sight, hearing and movement.

The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 and *Standard Guru Malaysia* (2009) emphasize on taking account into pupils' learning styles to achieve the effectiveness of learning. The studies conducted by Razali (2015), Latiff and Hassan (2013) and Udin (2009) found that the

use of rhythm and songs helped students memorize, enhanced understanding and encouraged full participation in learning. However, this study focuses on the use of songs to support PLD learning styles that involve the sense of sight, hearing and movement using various senses.

Statement of Problem

A previous study found that teachers were less familiar with IFT operations through multi-sensory elements (Husin, Bakir, Shukor & Jusoh, 2016). They taught to simplify the learning process and attract PLD to learn without knowing the true concept of multi-sensory elements. However the teachers' actions in implementing the learning process to PLD were geared towards implementation in accordance with multi-sensory elements even though they were unaware that the determination of IFT method should be based on multi-sensory elements. Teachers were found to be playing audio songs because they realized that students were happy to remember the information contained in the song and in accordance with the content of learning. The sequence of this study has revealed the multi-sensory elements used and their effects on the pupils.

Most other studies have explored about students undertaking music majors for the development and success of a person in the field of music. Previous studies also focused on skills and ability to present music without help and teacher's presence (Roesler, 2017). Such studies focused on students in the field of music and not about their use in education across curricula. However, in this study, the researchers are focusing on multi-sensory elements in the use of songs by teachers in IFT which are not pursuing subjects or music specialties as well as their effects on PLD.

Research Objectives

This study was conducted to:

- i) Explore the use of songs in multi-sensory elements in teaching and learning pupils with learning disabilities (PLD).
- ii) Evaluate the effectiveness of songs used in multi-sensory elements to pupils with learning disabilities (PLD).

Research Questions

Generally, the researchers would like to study the following questions:

- i) To what extent are the application of songs in multi-sensory elements in teaching and learning of pupils with learning disabilities (PLD)?
- ii) What are the effects of songs used in multi-sensory elements to pupils with learning disabilities (PLD)?

Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach that was case studies involving observations that has been triangulated through interviews and students' results to obtain the right and saturated information. The participants of this study consisted of six Special Education students in two selected schools in Perak, four teachers, and four parents. The selection of participants was based on purposive sampling that has been conducted in depth to ensure proper selection and meets the specific criteria on the research issues (Yin, 2003; Burns, 2000 & Meriam, 1998). This study used two data collection methods namely observations and interviews. Observations were recorded using fieldwork forms, observation notes and video

recorder. The interviews were conducted based on interview protocol. This analysis of PLD learning was carried out using Nvivo software that determines the findings of the research questions.

Findings

Applications of Songs in SLD Learning

Based The use of songs in the learning activity is the second option practiced after the association stimulus. Teachers acted on Instructing and Facilitating (IFT) to PLD by playing audio songs that were in line with the pupils' learning preference as they were happy with the rhythm and songs and remembered the information given as Mrs. Lina says;

(SLD: EE / SONGS): *"I put on a song because he likes .. if he's singing he's happy and would memorize the song .."*

(G2S2 TS2:050)

In addition, teachers always asked students to sing together the audio they were listening to. Teachers also had a lot of Arabic genre software used as resource materials for classroom use. The software contains songs of core subjects based on the following student's statement when asked about the software;

(SLD: EA / SONGS): *".. songs CD song 'alif' 'ba' 'ta' .. song of wuduk, solat .."*

(M1S2 TS2:013)

In this study, teachers often played the music activities using laptops. PLD would appreciate the song lyrics repetition shown to them using laptops based on the following statement;

(SLD: EV / SONGS): *"Teachers show music video clips using laptops. Hazim watched and heard the song. Teachers play the song for the second time. Hazim sang the song in accordance with its musical rhythm.."*

(M2S2 RVS2:052)

There are more such statements illustrating that the use of songs has become one of the main activities in the PLD classroom whether it involves audio, visual or singing experience. Teachers use an adequate 14-inch laptop for a class of three students only.

Benefits of the Use of Songs in Teaching and Learning to PLD

Some positive effects were identified with the use of songs in the PLD teaching and learning. They listened to the songs played by the teacher and loved to study in that way. They liked to sing along with the audio. They were also found to be fully involved in learning. Besides that, they could memorize the lessons easily, PLD could also express themselves well about the content of the songs in the classroom discussion. Table 1 shows the use of songs in the pupils' learning.

Table 1: Physiological Stimulus Elements of Participant 1 - 3 (P1-P3) in School 1 - 2 (S1 –S2)

Table 1

Shows Three Elements In The Physiological Stimulus Based On The Dunn And Dunn

ELEMENTS OF PHYSIOLOGICAL STIMULUS		Schools	DATA FREQUENCY						Total
			Observations (Recorded)			Interviews (Triangulation)			
			P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	
Perceptions	Audio Songs (EA)	S1	/	/	/				3
		S2	/	/	/				3
	Visual Track (EV)	S1	/	/	/	/	/	/	6
		S2				/	/	/	3
	Singing Experience (EE)	S1	/	/	/				3
		S2	/	/	/				3

Learning Style Models (1992). The element is saturated in the use of songs to PLD in the classroom. Interviews were conducted to support the visual track data which was not obtained during the observation on pupils in S2. The use of the song was found to have affected the pupils as described after this.

PLD explained that they really loved audio that involves songs and music. They were more focused when the teacher instructed in classroom supported with a song. For example, the statement of a student (M1S1) in the interview as follows:

(SLD:EA/LOVE SONGS): “.. just a little bit listened to the song ... love the song”.

(M1S1 TS1:011)

Another pupil (M3S1) was able to focus on learning when the teacher allowed him to listen to a song in the video. The PLD also could easily remember the information contained in the song. He could also answer questions given by teachers verbally regarding the contents of the music videos that were shown and discussed in class as Mrs. Lina said;

(SLD:EE/MEMORIZE LYRICS): “.. He's happy and memorize the song .. he's sing follow the song's rhythm that I'm installing because he likes it .. a lot of solat and ablution songs because that's a lot. Like others, he can answer in discussion ..”

(G2S2 TS2:026)

Furthermore, they had the tendency to learn through their own experiences that is learning through singing activities. They listened and were focused when the song was played for the first time and could sing together when it was played again. For example, Azam (M1S2) during the observation was described as follows;

(SLD:EE/MEMORIZE LYRICS): “Teachers play songs. Azam appreciated the rhythm of the song and sat silently. Then the teacher repeats the song. Azam follows the song singing together.”

(M1S2 RVS2:052)

The students also felt good when they heard the songs and were eager to sing the song together. For example, Hazim (M2S2) who had fun, could memorize easily and had better understanding when learning through songs as described by him;

(SLD:EE/FUN): “.. like .. the song hijaiyah .. fun .. remember and understand ..”

(M2S2 TS2:012)

Therefore, the use of songs that involves the tendency of learning is ideal as learning aids for PLD. The song used as a learning resource is a good indicator for the teacher to achieve the learning outcomes and to become the trigger of learning as the result of the findings as follows.

Prepared students to get ready for the lesson and not disturbing others.

Aroused students' interest in learning.

Assisted students to be focused in learning.

Acted as a 'bait' for activities that would be conducted later.

Enabled activities to be carried out smoothly.

Helped students to retain difficult information.

Kept pupils alert throughout the lesson.

Ensured that pupils did not feel bored.

Engaged pupils to be actively learning.

Helped students to remember easily.

Stimulated long lasting focus.

Imparted quality learning.

The use of the songs is one of the elements found in the category of perceptions in the physiological stimulus. Besides perceptions, other elements are intake, time and movement. In conclusion, teachers were not just merely playing songs to their pupils during the teaching and learning process, but the songs were very much loved by the pupils and were very helpful in their learning.

Discussion

Result Teachers always asked the pupils to sing along with the audio they were listening to. That way of singing together with the audio helped pupils in remembering the contents of the lessons and participating in class discussion after the singing activity. The study by Goh Min Lee (2011) found that the use of rhythm and songs was effective in helping pupils to memorize the multiplication table. Similarly, other findings have shown that taking part in singing and moving to the rhythm are significant with improved memory quality and students' achievement (Rahman & Rahman, 2012; Hasim, 2011).

PLD liked to study by watching and listening to songs shown by teachers through music video shows. This method involves a Multi-Sensory Stimulus learning style. They were able to answer questions of the music video verbally regarding the content of learning in class discussions. According to Mohamad and Hashim (2010), individuals with high auditory perceptions could learn effectively if exposed to special audio devices such as radio, cassette and video compact disc (vcd). This category of pupils would remember the information they heard, became highly focused and could describe the sounds they heard (Dunn & Dunn, 1992). In addition, the information presented to pupils by teachers using traditional methods before or after the use of songs, were accepted effectively (Hardaker & Sabki, 2012). According to La Lopa (2013), in explaining the learning style theory, students learn in a unique way, usually in auditory, visual, and kinesthetic modes. To improve student performance, all

educators need to do is to first identify the pupils' learning style and then match the way they teach for each style. Therefore, this study has found that the acceptance of pupils will be more robust and effective through a combination of audio and visual by experiencing the songs.

In addition to the elements mentioned earlier, there were also pupils who liked to sing together with the audio they were listening to. Besides being able to sing, these pupils could also express themselves well about the content of the song in class discussions. The findings of Razali (2015) supported the use of rhythm and songs whereby students could memorize lessons easily through singing. Latiff and Hassan (2013) found in their study that singing could help students in enhancing understanding of a concept. While Udin (2009) also found that students were not only proficient in remembering Idgham Maal Ghunnah letters through rhythm and song, but they were fully involved in learning. This involves auditory perception as individuals with high auditory perceptions can learn effectively if exposed to specialized audio devices. The song lyrics element is hardly explored in any study. Lyrics of songs are a source that have supported the performance of pupils in information retrieval. Therefore, the study of the effects of song lyrics in studies involving songs and music could be further explored.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have resulted in several effects of the use of songs such as improved pupils' focus and was fun with the various techniques. The use of songs that included multi-sensory elements were listening to songs, watching the video shows of the songs and singing along while the songs were played. Therefore, based on the study findings, it is suggested that teachers select the appropriate supporting materials in the implementation of using musical aids in their teaching.

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