

# Singing the Regional and Western Songs as the Learning Model for Disabled Children at the SLB-A Karya Murni School in Medan

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**Abstract:** *The SLB-A Karya Murni was founded as the school for disabled children. This study is specifically concerned with the introduction of the regional and western songs as the learning model and has three major purposes: (1) to attract them to be familiar with regional and western songs, (2) to understand the singing technique and (3) to evaluate the impacts of such model. The study was conducted at the SLB-A Karya Murni School in Medan, North Sumatera Province (Indonesia). Data for this study was gathered from children with special needs who were determined as the subjects and all of them were then selected as samples. The method was carried out by asking them to sing individually and collectively which was meant to grow their self-confidence. The implementation was done orally or theoretically and practically. The theory and training were given with the following models, such as, singing with hands clapping, rhythm, melody, breath technique, vocal technique, saying words in song lyric singing and music learning (audio-visual). On the basis of the results of this study, it can be concluded that children were more active in the seeking of their self-confidence by singing regional and western songs and the results provide some support that such songs were appropriate in the learning process.*

**Key Words:** *Regional and western songs, collective, individual, children with special needs.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

### 1.1. Background

Songs for children with special needs are important to increase their mentally personal development. Why? Because while singing, children are able to express their feelings, thoughts, and imaginations, and with songs children build contact with many things that are wonderful. There are two matters that become my attention, namely, how to introduce regional and western songs as materials for children with special needs, or in Bahasa Indonesia this called *Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus* (ABK) and how do those songs motivate the ABK to involve in the singing activity that can become their soothing activities? The singing activity for the ABK have already been programmed by teachers at the School for Disabled Children (SLB)-A Karya Murni (SLB-A KM) since some years ago, but learning materials taken from regional and western songs (RWS) have never been applied before here.

The School Foundation of Karya Murni was built in 1950 and administered as the school for children with special needs, with the blind, with down syndrome, and with the deaf. This Foundation was located at Jalan Karya Wisata, Medan Johor and had given education for more than 52 ABK children. Those who are orphanages are given art activity program, for examples, singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments. They learned from and were taught by teachers from various fields of knowledge; one of them was Music Art lesson (MAL) which required their seriousness about theory and practice which forced tutors to always be in the class since they might help and accompany the ABK in the learning processes, for instance, (i) to help them to be active in the singing activity which was planned to be a pleasant one for them and to attract them to be close to music art with a purpose for an appreciation, (ii) to develop creative and accurate teaching methods, and (iii) to implement the process of pleasant singing activity.

Through singing, it is hoped, the ABK's communication ability and singing skills would be enhanced; moreover, they were previously introduced to regional and western songs. Singing is basically connected with psychological emotions and could touch their aesthetic feelings and musical taste will be improved (Pekerti 2010: 238). As singing activity can improve the skills of communication and singing of the children, moreover they were introduced to region songs and western songs that used poems from region language or other countries so methods of teaching regional and western songs are required, for example, singing through practice. There are some problems: (1) such songs have never been used by teachers in that school, (2) songs used by teachers were not proved to develop children self-confidence, and (3) parents suggested teachers to soon try to use regional and western songs because such songs are believed to influence their children's self-esteem.

It is not an easy to train the children with their specific condition. A teacher whose name is Nurse Beatris Sitinjak and became my second partner, argued that she was to sacrifice heart and feeling, time, extra patience, hard

work, and tenacity. The ABK do not need excellent intelligence but a genuine heart, purity, full of love and affection towards life as well as high dedication to train them. However, the ABKs come from a weak resources background, meaning their parents are economically poor and helpless. Some ABKs do not even have families and live in the orphanage services. The obstacle that was faced by the ABKs was that they required early treatment continuously so that they could develop their ability maximally. To develop their abilities, they demand special education services, such as, art activity, performing arts, and concert.

The art activity program includes singing, dancing, and playing music. The ABKs were taught by teachers from various fields of knowledge and one of them is art knowledge. The music art lesson needs big comprehension and requires practical fields. With this kind of situation, tutor must always be in the class to help and accompany the ABKs in the learning process. Some of their tasks are to help children to develop singing activity as a soothing activity and to create teaching materials suitable with the ABKs. Moreover, they develop creative and accurate teaching methods for the children and to implement singing process activity pleasantly.

Since the children are disabled, they commonly have distractions in communication, interaction and empathy. They also seem to be different physically, mentally and socially, and emotionally. They show slow motions because of their physics, mental, and cognitive.

### 1.2. Formulation

The problems could be formulated as the following statements: (1) How does the teaching method of using regional and western songs in the singing activity assist the ABKs? and (2) How to implement the pleasant procedures of applying regional and western songs for the ABKs?

### 1.3. Purpose

There were two purposes of observation, such as, to understand creative and accurate teaching method in singing regional and western songs and to know the implementation process of singing activity with the songs.

### 1.4 Contribution

This observation is hoped to contribute the teaching method that is more creative and accurate in singing activity for readers and the implementation process that is pleasant in the class with the ABKs children.

## 2. METHOD:

### 2.1 Basic Method

The basic method was descriptive. In other words, this research was meant to make complete and factual description regarding the facts, nature and the relationships between the phenomena investigated. Furthermore, this method underlied this study, especially in terms of data collection and data analysis.

### 2.2 Data Collection Method

There were several methods in the data collection, for instance, interview, observation, and library visits. Interview was carried to get information that might be confidential. Meanwhile, library site is expected to obtain written data on singing training in regional and western songs for the ABKs. Observation methods were applied to compare what informants mentioned and what they have done. The informants were Nurse Agatha, the Chief of SLB-A KM, Anton Sitepu, an artist, and Hendra, a vocal and choir coach. Data were also collected by audio-recording and music sheet/score.

### 2.3 Method of Analysis

The procedures of data analysis were carried out as the following: (i) data selection which was used to select and summarize the data, (ii) data classification which was applied by arranging the criteria of basic data and certain division, (iii) data description to obtain a clear and detailed picture of particularly relevant data, (iv) interpretation to find the relationships between facts that has been found, and (v) drawing conclusion which was done to emphasize briefly and concisely on the findings from previous discussions.

### 1.4 Research Team

Team was devided into two; the first team was headed Ance Juliet Panggabean, chairman, whose responsibilities were (i) to arrange field visits, (ii) to provide methods of education and knowledge of teaching methods which were very useful for teachers in particular to improve the skill / proficiency in the regional and western songs, (iii) to make the syllabus and plan a program of activities with training methods, and methods of mentoring for teachers, and (iv) to choose repertoire as a learning resource with educational methods and knowledge and mentoring methods for the singing repertoire. The second team was run by Aurora Septiana, university student and her responsibilities were covering: (i) to provide training skill / proficiency in singing techniques, (ii) to hold gradual singing training on the use of the poetic language, and (iii) to keep the mentoring and training methods for individual

and collective with the aim to foster a sense of trust among the ABKs to avoid not awkward, shy, and insecure attitudes.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

#### 3.1 Creative and Appropriate Teaching Methods for the ABKs

The methods that have been used were the mentoring and training during singing activity and they were appreciated by children and gave benefits and advantages for them. The methods covered five stages, such as, (i) singing with hands-clapping, (ii) pronouncing song lyric, (iii) earning rhythm, (iv) learning melodies, and (v) singing and listening to music (audio-visual). These methods seem to make the children feel fun.



*Figures 1. Research team's explanation about singing activity for the ABKs*

The research team was fully aware that theory or verbal explanation given to the ABKs has to be followed by practical activities in the form of training so that the results or the objectives are good. Therefore, after giving the theory or explanation regarding the singing activity, the team then resumed with training and mentoring by the team. The theory and training materials included: (i) singing while clapping hands, (ii) learning rhythm, learning melodies, (iii) breathing technique, (iv) vocal techniques, (v) pronunciation of words in song lyric, and singing and listening to music (audio-visual).

The ABKs were invited to learn and play at the same time. Through fun activities, they were hoped to perform singing joyously. The researchers believe that these condition and situation were specifically designed with a hope to make the learning process successful.

#### 3.2. Process of singing regional and western songs

The implementation of singing these songs were carried out by using the training and mentoring approaches. Each meeting was done by adjusting the subject/theme that had been planned by the team. Children played the rhythm patterns by clapping their hands. Figures 2 shows that teaching team was giving training and mentoring method in breathing techniques.



*Figures 2. Playing rhythm patterns with hands-clapping in the training and mentoring methods.*

Research team gained a lot of experience from the children way of singing during this research activity, and the team felt the need to develop this activity into another level of learning model in the years to come. In case of music colloquium activities, singing regional and western songs needed special colloquium. Music colloquium activities were planned to get attention and praise from the Chairman of the Foundation, the Principal and Head of the Orphanage. The team's success in the learning process was proved. The implementation of music colloquium was expected to gain satisfactory results from the ABKs. This colloquium became the symbol of success in the learning process and in the team's hard work in the implementation of teaching methods, training and mentoring activities. It can be seen in the documents of images and of video which were uploaded in the Youtube.





Figures 3. Training and mentoring method in breathing techniques materials.



Figures 4. The ABKs' interaction during keyboard and CD tape show

#### 4. CONCLUSION:

The implementation of singing regional and western songs were verbally, theoretically and practically proved to be quite successful. The indications were seen and evaluated daily through recording by the team and this recording was used as reference to determine the ABKs' development and progress when they took part in every activity. The evaluation was carried out individually and collectively. The research team was fully aware that theory or verbal explanations given to the children had to be followed by practical activities in the form of training to gain more results. The theory and training materials included singing with hands-clapping, learning rhythm and melodies, breathing and vocal techniques, pronouncing song lyrics, and singing and listening to music (audio-visual).

Music colloquium became the activity that the team did during learning, training and mentoring that were held for 7 months. Each meeting of the singing activity was based on the subject/theme planned in the teaching materials. In the process of training, teaching and mentoring the ABKs, the teacher and/or trainer should withstand their emotions in the face of the children; the outcomes can be achieved well.

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