

Pre-Service Early Childhood Educators' Perspectives on Music, Dance, and Drama for Children with Special Educational Needs in Malaysia

Suhaila Mohamad
Universiti Malaya
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Abstract— Music, dance, and drama are increasingly recognised as powerful pedagogical tools in early childhood education (ECE), fostering creativity, confidence, collaboration, and inclusivity. However, despite policy commitments to inclusion, limited attention has been given to how these art forms can be systematically embedded into teacher preparation, particularly to support children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This study addressed this gap by examining three questions: (1) How do future early childhood educators perceive the role of music, dance, and drama in enhancing creativity, confidence, and collaboration? (2) In what ways do these art forms contribute to classroom readiness for inclusive practice? and (3) How do pre-service educators understand their potential in fostering inclusion, particularly for children with SEN? Adopting a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 62 undergraduate pre-service early childhood educators through surveys and open-ended reflections. Quantitative findings, analysed using descriptive statistics, indicated strong agreement that music, dance, and drama enhance creativity, build confidence, strengthen collaboration, and prepare educators for diverse classrooms. Qualitative insights reinforced these perspectives, highlighting benefits such as multisensory engagement, empathy-building, and adaptability, while also identifying barriers including limited training, insufficient resources, and few structured opportunities for practice. The study concludes that music, dance, and drama should be positioned as central rather than peripheral within inclusive pedagogy in ECE. Recommendations include embedding these art forms into teacher education coursework and workshops, as well as strengthening institutional support through resources and arts-based partnerships. These findings align with the vision of an equitable, high-quality ECE, positioning music, dance, and drama as transformative tools for inclusive practice across Southeast Asia.

Keywords: *early childhood education, inclusion, performing arts, undergraduate students*

I. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECE) is universally acknowledged as the foundation for lifelong learning, providing children with opportunities to develop cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills in their earliest years (Ramey & Ramey, 2023). According to Parker, Thomsen, and Berry (2022), the emphasis on play, creativity, and holistic development reflects an understanding that young children learn best through active, experiential, and socially meaningful engagement. Within this paradigm, inclusive education has emerged as a central global priority, with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) consistently advocating for equitable learning opportunities that ensure all children, regardless of background, culture, or ability, participate meaningfully in education. For children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), inclusive early childhood practices are particularly critical, as they not only establish a sense of belonging but also lay the groundwork for long-term educational and social success (Kuutti et al., 2021). Among the strategies for fostering inclusion, performing arts offer unique and powerful potential. Collins et al. (2021) highlight that music, dance, and drama provide multisensory pathways for children to engage with learning, enabling expression beyond traditional linguistic or cognitive channels.

Similarly, Plate et al., (2023) stated that these art forms allow children to explore emotions, ideas, and relationships in ways that are accessible, culturally relevant, and engaging. On the other hand, McCrary et al., (2021) further argue that for children with SEN, performing arts create alternative routes to participation, breaking down barriers and offering flexible modes of communication, interaction, and self-expression. In Southeast Asian contexts, the performing arts also affirm cultural diversity, ensuring that classrooms not only foster inclusion but also reflect local heritage and collective identity. Beyond cognitive and affective dimensions, performing arts foster social-emotional learning, empathy, adaptability, and resilience (Cain, 2023). For pre-service educators, engagement with music, dance, and drama can strengthen their ability to create emotionally safe and responsive learning environments, particularly when supporting diverse learners with SEN.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite recognition of arts in education, systematic research into the integration of music, dance, and drama within ECE remains limited, particularly in Southeast Asia. While policy discourses consistently promote creativity and inclusion, there is less clarity on how pre-service educators are being prepared to embed these practices in everyday pedagogy (Ata-Akturk & Sevimli-Celik, 2020). Teacher preparation is crucial in shaping educators' beliefs, self-efficacy, and classroom readiness, yet several variables influence this process. These include how performing arts are perceived in stimulating creativity and flexible thinking, the extent to which performance-based activities develop confidence and professional assurance, and the ways in which they promote collaboration, peer learning, and collective problem-solving. Equally important are educators' attitudes towards SEN, particularly how exposure to inclusive, arts-based approaches nurtures empathy, patience, and acceptance. At the same time, barriers such as limited institutional support, resource constraints, and inadequate training, alongside cultural expectations, continue to restrict the systematic integration of music, dance, and drama into inclusive early childhood pedagogy (Savage et al., 2024). This study therefore seeks to address this gap by exploring how pre-service early childhood educators in Malaysia perceive the role of music, dance, and drama in preparing them for inclusive practice, particularly in supporting children with SEN. As Botirovna (2025) emphasises, integrating these dimensions into teacher education ensures that inclusive pedagogy is not abstract but operationalised in practice.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Guided by these insights and policy emphases, this study investigates how pre-service early childhood educators in Malaysia perceive and apply music, dance, and drama as tools for inclusive pedagogy. Specifically, it examines their experiences, attitudes, and perceived challenges, contributing to the discourse on teacher preparation for SEN inclusion in Southeast Asia following these research questions:

RQ1: How do pre-service early childhood educators perceive the role of music, dance, and drama in enhancing creativity, confidence, and collaboration?

RQ2: In what ways do these art forms contribute to classroom readiness for inclusive early childhood practice?

RQ3: How do pre-service educators understand the potential of music, dance, and drama in fostering inclusion, particularly for children with SEN?

IV. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This research was conducted with undergraduate students in Malaysia specialising in ECE who participated in a training module on music, dance, and drama. The module integrated theoretical instruction with hands-on workshops, enabling students to engage experientially with the performing arts and reflect on their pedagogical applications. Their perspectives provide rich insights into how performing arts can be harnessed to prepare educators for inclusive practice, equipping them to build creative, confident, collaborative, and SEN-responsive early childhood classrooms.

V. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by theoretical perspectives that illuminate the role of music, dance, and drama in preparing pre-service educators for inclusive ECE. First, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences underscores the importance of recognising diverse forms of human potential beyond conventional academic domains. Music, bodily-kinaesthetic, and interpersonal intelligences are particularly relevant to this study, as they align closely with the pedagogical strengths of the performing arts. By acknowledging and fostering these intelligences, pre-service educators are encouraged to adopt more holistic and strengths-based approaches, enabling children with SEN to participate meaningfully in ways that reflect their individual capabilities (Ilari, Helfter, & Huynh, 2020). Second, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory provides a lens for understanding how learning occurs through social interaction, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Music, dance, and drama embody these principles by creating spaces for collaboration, guided participation, and shared meaning-making (Lyu & Bae, 2024). In inclusive classrooms, such art-based practices allow educators to design experiences that scaffold both cognitive and social-emotional development, giving children with SEN accessible pathways to learn and thrive within their ZPD. Third, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory highlights how children's growth and learning are shaped by multiple, interacting layers of influence, from immediate microsystems, namely families, peers, classrooms to wider cultural, institutional, and policy contexts (Lubis et al., 2024). Within this framework, the performing arts can be seen as tools that strengthen inclusive microsystems, such as classrooms, while also reflecting and responding to mesosystem and exosystem dynamics, including cultural diversity, institutional resources, and societal attitudes towards SEN. Collectively, they support the central argument of this study that integrating music, dance, and drama into teacher preparation equips future educators with the creativity, confidence, and collaborative skills necessary to foster inclusive early childhood classrooms for children with SEN.

VI. DATA COLLECTION

Data were gathered through a mixed-methods approach. First, an online survey was administered to 62 undergraduate students enrolled in the music, dance, and drama module within their ECE programme. The survey contained Likert-scale items capturing perceptions of creativity, confidence, collaboration, classroom readiness, and inclusivity, as well as open-ended questions that invited reflections on benefits, challenges, and classroom applications of these art forms. Second, three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with a total of 20 students selected from the same cohort. The FGDs provided a more interactive and dialogic setting where participants could collectively share experiences, challenge one another's views, and reflect on the integration of music, dance, and drama in inclusive early childhood practice. The discussions focused on how these art forms shaped their preparedness for teaching, how they might be used to support children with SEN, and what barriers or opportunities they anticipated in real classroom contexts. Ethical procedures were strictly followed. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and anonymity was

preserved by removing personal identifiers. Students were assured that their contributions would be used solely for research and academic publication purposes.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data from the survey were analysed descriptively, with means, percentages, and standard deviations calculated to capture levels of agreement across the constructs of creativity, confidence, collaboration, classroom readiness, and inclusivity. These descriptive statistics provided an overview of the extent to which students perceived music, dance, and drama as valuable tools for inclusive pedagogy. Qualitative data were derived from two sources: open-ended survey responses and transcripts from the FGDs with 20 students. Both sets of qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. Coding was conducted inductively to identify recurring patterns and themes, including perceived benefits of music, dance, and drama, barriers to implementation, and strategies for classroom application. The FGDs, in particular, offered deeper insights into students' shared experiences and collective reflections, allowing themes to be compared and contrasted with individual survey responses. Triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative strands strengthened the validity of the findings as this approach provided a nuanced and comprehensive account of how future educators perceive and apply music, dance, and drama in preparing for inclusive early childhood education. In addition to descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations were calculated among the five key constructs, namely creativity, confidence, collaboration, classroom readiness, and inclusivity to explore their interrelationships.

VIII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following section presents quantitative survey results alongside qualitative insights for each research question.

VIII.1 Result and Discussion for RQ1

How do pre-service early childhood educators perceive the role of music, dance, and drama in enhancing creativity, confidence, and collaboration?

Table 1 Responses on roles of music, dance, and drama in enhancing creativity, confidence, and collaboration

Construct	Survey Item	Mean (SD)	%	FGD (Qualitative Statements)
Creativity	Participating in performing arts activities has improved my creativity.	4.31 (0.61)	91.9%	"Through role-play and storytelling, I learned how to make lessons more imaginative and less rigid." (P12) "Dance and movement activities helped me to think of multiple ways to teach the same concept, especially for children with different needs." (P17) "Music activities encouraged me to invent new songs and rhythms that made learning fun and engaging for young children with disabilities." (P13)

Construct	Survey Item	Mean (SD)	%	FGD (Qualitative Statements)
Confidence	I feel confident in applying performing arts to engage young learners.	4.19 (0.60)	89.5%	<i>“Drama activities boosted my self-confidence and made me more comfortable speaking in front of others, which I can model for children with SEN who may be shy or withdrawn.” (P8) “Music and singing exercises gave me the courage to use my voice more clearly and confidently with children, especially those with speech or language difficulties.” (P11)</i>
Collaboration	Performing arts activities have improved my ability to collaborate with peers.	4.28 (0.58)	93.0%	<i>“Group drama tasks required us to trust one another, just as children with SEN will need support from peers to feel included.” (P9) “Working together in dance helped me see how collaboration allows every child, including those with SEN, to contribute at their own pace.” (P13) “Music ensembles taught me that each person’s role matters, similar to how children with SEN can take part meaningfully in group activities.” (P4)</i>

Survey results indicated strong agreement that performing arts enhanced creativity (91.9%, $M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.61$), confidence (89.5%, $M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.60$), and collaboration (93.0%, $M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.58$). These findings were reinforced by qualitative reflections. Students described how role-play and storytelling encouraged imaginative lesson planning, while dance and music enabled them to present concepts in varied ways to meet diverse needs. One participant explained, *“Dance and movement activities helped me to think of multiple ways to teach the same concept, especially for children with different needs”* (P17). Drama was particularly noted for boosting self-assurance in speaking and modelling confidence for children with SEN, while music ensembles highlighted the importance of every child’s contribution to group learning.

The strong correlations between creativity, confidence, and collaboration (Table 4) reinforce their interdependence, showing that growth in one area is likely to enhance others. This pattern reflects Vygotsky’s (1978) view that social interaction fosters cognitive and emotional development, as well as Gardner’s (1983) Multiple Intelligences theory, which positions music, bodily-kinaesthetic, and interpersonal intelligences as essential to learning. Prior studies also support these findings: Collins et al. (2021) demonstrated that arts-based activities reduce participation barriers, while Savage et al. (2024) highlighted their role in building teacher confidence. Taken together, the findings indicate that pre-service teachers view the performing arts as both personally transformative and pedagogically valuable, equipping them to engage young learners including those with SEN more effectively.

VIII.2 Result and Discussion for RQ2

In what ways do these art forms contribute to classroom readiness for inclusive early childhood practice?

Table 2 Responses on contribution to classroom readiness for inclusive early childhood practice

Construct	Survey Item	Mean (SD)	%	FGD (Qualitative Statements)
Adaptability	The course made me more adaptable to dynamic challenges in ECE classrooms.	4.34 (0.62)	91.9%	<i>“Drama helped me learn to think on my feet when children reacted unexpectedly.” (P14) “Through role-play, I practised adjusting instructions so every child, including those with SEN, could follow.” (P2)</i>
Classroom Management	Performing arts helped me manage children’s behaviour and energy positively.	4.22 (0.59)	88.7%	<i>“Dance taught me how to channel children’s energy into purposeful movement.” (P19) “Music activities worked as transitions that calmed children with attention difficulties.” (P4)</i>
Planning for SEN Inclusion	Performing arts prepared me to design lessons that include children with diverse needs.	4.26 (0.63)	90.3%	<i>“Music activities showed me how to adapt rhythm games so children with SEN could join.” (P2) “Drama allowed us to assign different roles, giving children with disabilities ways to shine.” (P17)</i>
Resourcefulness	The course strengthened my ability to use arts as flexible teaching tools.	4.18 (0.60)	87.9%	<i>“I realised I can use simple props and songs instead of relying on expensive materials.” (P3) “Performing arts gave me practical strategies for teaching when resources are limited.” (P6)</i>

Survey data showed that a large majority of participants felt more prepared to design and deliver inclusive lessons after engaging with music, dance, and drama activities. For example, 91.0% agreed that the performing arts helped them adapt lessons to meet diverse needs ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.57$), while 87.0% noted improvements in classroom management strategies ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.63$). Qualitative reflections echoed these findings. Students reported that rhythm and movement offered practical ways to maintain attention and structure lessons, while drama activities helped them anticipate and manage classroom dynamics. One participant explained, “I could use music to bring the class together when children were distracted, instead of just giving instructions” (P8).

These findings suggest that performing arts provide not only creative strategies but also practical tools for building classroom readiness. The link between confidence and readiness ($r = .71$, $p < .01$) underscores that the assurance developed through arts-based practice translates into tangible classroom competence. This resonates with Savage et al. (2024), who observed that teacher confidence mediates effective classroom management, and with Ilari et al. (2020), who noted that music fosters self-regulation and attention. The evidence from this study extends these findings into the Malaysian context, showing that performing arts can strengthen the ability of pre-service teachers to anticipate and address the realities of inclusive practice.

VIII.3 Result and Discussion for RQ3

How do pre-service educators understand the potential of music, dance, and drama in fostering inclusion, particularly for children with SEN?

Table 3 Responses on understanding the potential of music, dance, and drama in fostering inclusion, particularly for children with SEN

Construct	Survey Item	Mean (SD)	%	FGD (Qualitative Statements)
Empathy Understanding	& Performing arts have helped me develop a deeper understanding of inclusivity in educational practices.	4.22 (0.64)	88.4%	<i>“Drama allowed me to step into different perspectives, which helped me understand how children with SEN might feel.” (P8) “Music and movement activities encouraged me to be more patient and empathetic when guiding diverse learners.” (P14)</i>
Peer Inclusion	Performing arts activities create opportunities for all children to participate, regardless of ability.	4.25 (0.61)	89.7%	<i>“Group songs and dances made it possible for every child to contribute, even those who are usually shy or less verbal.” (P9) “Assigning different roles in drama gave children with SEN a chance to shine alongside their peers.” (P12)</i>
Cultural Appreciation	Performing arts promote respect for cultural and individual diversity in the classroom.	4.20 (0.66)	87.5%	<i>“Through music and dance, I learned to introduce cultural elements that reflect children’s backgrounds and differences.” (P10) “Arts activities helped me celebrate both ability and cultural diversity together.” (P4)</i>
Acceptance Diversity	of Performing arts encourage positive attitudes towards children with diverse learning needs.	4.24 (0.63)	88.9%	<i>“Drama and role-play helped me model acceptance and teach children to value one another’s contributions.” (P17) “Performing arts activities created a safe space where children with SEN felt included and accepted by peers.” (P8)</i>

Findings indicated that participants strongly believed performing arts could foster inclusivity for children with SEN. Nearly 90.0% agreed that music, dance, and drama encouraged participation among children with diverse needs ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.59$). Qualitative accounts illustrated this point: music was seen as a universal medium of expression, dance provided a non-verbal avenue for children with limited language skills, and drama activities encouraged empathy by letting children step into others’ perspectives. One student reflected, *“Even a child who does not speak much can join in with rhythm or simple movement. It makes them feel included without pressure”* (P22). The correlation between collaboration and inclusivity ($r = .77$, $p < .01$) was the strongest among constructs, suggesting that the teamwork nurtured in arts-based activities directly supports inclusive environments.

This finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, where peer and classroom interactions form the immediate context shaping inclusion. It also echoes Collins et al. (2021), who highlighted that performing arts reduce barriers to participation, and Parker et al. (2022), who stressed play-based learning as a foundation for equity. Thus, the study shows that pre-service teachers perceive the arts as powerful mediators of inclusion, enabling children with SEN to participate meaningfully in shared classroom. Although perceptions were overwhelmingly positive, participants also acknowledged barriers to implementing performing arts in practice. These included limited access to resources, insufficient training time, and the lack of institutional emphasis on arts integration. Such challenges highlight that while pre-service teachers recognise the potential of music, dance, and drama for inclusion, systemic support is required to sustain these practices in real classrooms. To further explore the relationships among the constructs, Pearson correlations were computed across creativity, confidence, collaboration, classroom readiness, and inclusivity.

The results, presented in Table 4, show strong and statistically significant positive associations among all five constructs. The strongest correlation was found between collaboration and inclusivity ($r = .77$, $p < .01$), suggesting that teamwork nurtured through performing arts activities directly supports inclusive practices. Confidence was also highly correlated with classroom readiness ($r = .71$, $p < .01$), indicating that self-assurance developed through arts-based learning translates into practical competence in managing diverse classrooms. These patterns suggest that growth in one domain is likely to reinforce development in others, underscoring the interconnected role of performing arts in preparing pre-service teachers for inclusive education.

Table 4 Pearson correlations among key constructs of performing arts integration (N = 62)

<i>Construct</i>	<i>1. Creativity</i>	<i>2. Confidence</i>	<i>3. Collaboration</i>	<i>4. Classroom Readiness</i>	<i>5. Inclusivity</i>
<i>1. Creativity</i>	<i>1.00</i>				
<i>2. Confidence</i>	<i>0.68**</i>	<i>1.00</i>			
<i>3. Collaboration</i>	<i>0.72**</i>	<i>0.75**</i>	<i>1.00</i>		
<i>4. Classroom Readiness</i>	<i>0.65**</i>	<i>0.71**</i>	<i>0.74**</i>	<i>1.00</i>	
<i>5. Inclusivity</i>	<i>0.70**</i>	<i>0.69**</i>	<i>0.77**</i>	<i>0.73**</i>	<i>1.00</i>

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

IX. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that integrating music, dance, and drama into early childhood teacher education significantly enhances creativity, confidence, collaboration, classroom readiness, and inclusivity among pre-service teachers. The findings show that performing arts are not supplementary activities but essential strategies for preparing educators to manage diverse classrooms and support children with special educational needs. By situating the research within the Malaysian context, the study contributes to regional and international conversations on inclusive pedagogy, highlighting that the

performing arts provide practical, adaptable, and culturally relevant approaches to teaching. In light of these findings, several recommendations can be made. Teacher education programmes should embed structured modules on music, dance, and drama as compulsory components that combine theoretical knowledge with hands-on practice. Professional development opportunities for in-service teachers should be expanded through workshops, collaborations, and partnerships with arts organisations to build sustained competence and confidence. Adequate resources and infrastructure including spaces, adaptive technologies, and accessible materials must be prioritised to support systematic arts integration. At the policy level, performing arts should be explicitly included in national teacher training frameworks and inclusive education strategies, aligning with UNESCO and SEAMEO priorities for equitable and high quality learning. Strengthening partnerships between ministries, universities, schools, and cultural institutions will also be crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of arts-based approaches in inclusive ECE.

X. LIMITATIONS

This study was conducted with a single cohort of undergraduate students from one Malaysian institution, which naturally limits the generalisability of the findings. The results therefore reflect the perspectives of a specific group of pre-service educators and may not represent the views of all trainee teachers across different contexts. In addition, the data were based largely on self-reported perceptions gathered through surveys and focus groups. While these insights provide valuable accounts of how participants envision applying music, dance, and drama in inclusive classrooms, they may not fully capture the complexities of actual classroom practice. Finally, although the mixed-methods approach strengthened the analysis, the absence of direct classroom observations of children restricts the ability to link pre-service teachers' perceptions with concrete outcomes for learners with SEN.

XI. FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies should expand the scope by including multiple institutions and diverse cohorts of pre-service teachers to provide a broader understanding of attitudes toward performing arts in inclusive education. Longitudinal research would also be valuable in tracking how arts-based training influences educators' practice once they enter the teaching profession. In addition, comparative studies across Southeast Asian contexts could shed light on cultural and institutional differences in the integration of music, dance, and drama. Importantly, future research should move beyond teacher perceptions to examine direct classroom outcomes, such as how students with SEN respond to and benefit from arts-based strategies. Linking teacher preparation to children's learning, engagement, and social development would offer stronger evidence of the transformative role of performing arts in inclusive early childhood education.

XII. FUNDING

This study did not receive any financial support from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

XIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the participating pre-service early childhood educators for their time, insights, and contributions to this study. Sincere appreciation is also extended to colleagues and mentors whose feedback and guidance greatly enriched the research process.

XIV. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article

REFERENCES

- Ata-Akturk, A., & Sevimli-Celik, S. (2020). Creativity in early childhood teacher education: beliefs and practices. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 31, 95 - 114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2020.1754174>.
- Botirovna, K. M. (2025). Developing creative abilities in future music teachers as a pedagogical problem. *International Journal of Pedagogics*, 5(4), 94–97. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ijp/volume05issue04-26>
- Cain, M. (2023). ‘Those moments are ineffable’. How creativity experienced through the Arts promotes empathy and compassion. *Journal of Moral Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2023.2287397>.
- Collins, A., Rentschler, R., Williams, K., & Azmat, F. (2021). Exploring barriers to social inclusion for disabled people: perspectives from the performing arts. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 28, 308 - 328. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2021.48>.
- Ilari, B., Helfter, S., & Huynh, T. (2020). Associations Between Musical Participation and Young Children’s Prosocial Behaviors. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 67, 399 - 412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429419878169>.
- Kuutti, T., Sajaniemi, N., Björn, P., Heiskanen, N., & Reunamo, J. (2021). Participation, involvement and peer relationships in children with special educational needs in early childhood education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 37, 587 - 602. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2021.1920214>.
- Lubis, S., Nisya, Z., & Lubis, Y. (2024). Learning Environment and Early Childhood Character Development in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. *International Journal of Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijer.v1i4.93>.
- Lyu, J., & Bae, K. (2024). A Study on Theoretical Reality and Application for Development of Infant Ballet Pop Program - Based on Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development Theory -. *Journal of Sport and Dance Science*. <https://doi.org/10.54109/jsds.2024.4.4.13>.
- McCrary, J., Redding, E., & Altenmüller, E. (2021). Performing arts as a health resource? An umbrella review of the health impacts of music and dance participation. *PLoS ONE*, 16. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0252956>.

- Parker, R., Thomsen, B. S., & Berry, A. (2022). *Learning through play at school: A framework for policy and practice*. *Frontiers in Education*, 7, Article 751801. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.751801>
- Plate, R. C., Jones, C., Steinberg, J., Daley, G., Corbett, N., & Waller, R. (2024). Children's knowledge and feelings align in response to emotional music. *Developmental Psychology*, 60(2), 265–270. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001572>
- Ramey, C. T., & Ramey, S. L. (2023). Early childhood education that promotes lifelong learning, health, and social well-being: The Abecedarian Project and its replications. *Medical Research Archives*, 11(11). <https://doi.org/10.18103/mra.v11i11.4590>
- Savage, S., Bentley, L., Williams, K., Nielson, C., & Eager, R. (2024). Developing Early Childhood Teacher Confidence to Implement Classroom Music and Movement Activities: Key Professional Learning Features. *Early Childhood Education Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-024-01737-2>.