

Internship as a Means of Developing Student Competencies at Nata Music Course Medan

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Abstract: Music education in non-formal settings is important for helping learners develop their thinking skills, emotions, and physical abilities. It also encourages creativity, self-discipline, and confidence in individuals. However, there is a lack of sufficient research on how internship programs in non-formal music education support the professional growth of future music teachers, especially in relation to understanding and addressing the varied needs of students and the challenges that arise in the classroom. This study is designed to examine how the internship program at Nata Music Course Medan is implemented and to assess its impact on enhancing the pedagogical, professional, and interpersonal skills of undergraduate students. The study used a qualitative descriptive method that involved observing participants, keeping records, and writing reflective notes based on experiences during the internship period. The internship activities included providing classroom instruction, guiding students through their learning, managing classroom activities, and taking part in institutional events as well as music performances. The results show that direct teaching experiences improved students' ability to instruct, communicate effectively, manage the classroom, adapt to different situations, and solve problems, especially when working with students who display a range of behavioral and emotional needs, such as tantrum behavior. Participating in institutional management and extracurricular performance activities helped students develop a stronger sense of professional responsibility and gain a better understanding of non-formal music education practices. The study finds that learning through internships in non-formal music settings successfully connects classroom theory with real-world practice, helping to develop skilled, thoughtful, and flexible future music teachers, and offering useful ideas for enhancing internship programs in music education.

Keywords: Experiential learning; Internship Program; Music Education; Non-Formal Education; Pedagogical Competence.

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INTRODUCTION

Music education is an important component of education because it contributes to the development of learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities. Beyond the acquisition of musical knowledge and technical skills, music learning provides opportunities for learners to develop creativity, communication, collaboration, self-expression, and social-emotional competencies (Galingging *et al.*, 2026; Isabirye, 2021). Consequently, effective music education requires learning experiences that extend beyond musical performance and incorporate meaningful interaction, active participation, and reflective learning. Community-based music training programs have similarly demonstrated that practical and participatory approaches can strengthen musical competence while encouraging confidence, collaboration, and active engagement among learners (Panggabean *et al.*, 2025).

Non-formal education institutions, particularly Course and Training Institutions (*Lembaga Kursus dan Pelatihan/LKP*), have an important role in providing flexible and competency-oriented learning opportunities for the community. Unlike formal schools, LKP can offer more specialized learning programs that are adapted to learners' interests and needs. One institution providing non-formal music education is Nata Music Course Medan, located at Jalan Gaharu–Amat Lama No. 13–14, Medan Timur District, Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The institution provides music instruction in piano, keyboard, guitar, drums, vocal, violin, and saxophone. Its learning programs are organized according to learners' ages, abilities, and interests and are supported by music instructors with experience in both performance and teaching.

Based on preliminary observation, Nata Music Course Medan has a relatively supportive learning environment, including musical instruments, learning facilities, and instructors with relevant musical competencies. The institution also provides opportunities for learners to perform through student performances and mini concerts held during various institutional and community events. These activities provide learners with opportunities to practice musical performance, develop confidence, and appreciate their learning achievements. Nevertheless, the implementation of music instruction at the institution also presents challenges related to the diversity of learner characteristics. In particular, instructors encounter learners who may experience emotional difficulties, difficulty maintaining attention, or tantrum behavior during learning activities. Such conditions require instructors to possess competencies that extend beyond musical expertise, including pedagogical competence, interpersonal communication, classroom management, emotional responsiveness, and the ability to adapt instructional strategies to individual learner needs.

The diversity of learner characteristics creates a practical challenge for prospective music educators because effective teaching requires the ability to connect musical content with appropriate pedagogical and interpersonal strategies. Instructors need to identify learner responses, modify teaching approaches, maintain a supportive learning environment, and communicate effectively with both learners and parents. Experiential learning can provide an important foundation for developing these competencies because it enables learners to construct knowledge through direct experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation (Kolb & Kolb, 2022). Experiential learning has also been associated with the development of reflective abilities, empathy, communication, and interpersonal competencies that are important in professional practice (Jacobs, 2022; Kong, 2021; Sembiring *et al.*, 2026).

Internship programs represent a practical form of experiential learning that can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in higher education and the competencies required in professional practice. Through direct involvement in authentic educational settings, university students can observe teaching practices, interact with learners, implement

instructional strategies, manage classroom situations, and reflect on their experiences. In music education, teaching practice is particularly valuable because prospective music educators need opportunities to develop not only musical and instructional skills but also the capacity to respond to diverse learner characteristics. Nugroho and Biasutti (2026) reported that teaching practice experiences among prospective music teachers can contribute to the development of pedagogical competence, professional reflection, and confidence in conducting learning activities.

Despite the importance of experiential learning and teaching practice, opportunities for prospective music educators to gain authentic experience in non-formal music education settings remain relatively limited. Previous discussions of internship and experiential learning have predominantly focused on higher education, formal school environments, or general professional preparation. Consequently, the potential of non-formal music institutions as authentic learning environments for developing prospective music educators' pedagogical, interpersonal, classroom management, and adaptive teaching competencies has received less attention. This situation creates a practical gap between university-based theoretical preparation and the complex demands encountered in actual music teaching, particularly when educators work with learners who demonstrate diverse emotional, behavioral, and developmental characteristics.

This gap is also relevant to the conditions encountered at Nata Music Course Medan. Although the institution has adequate learning facilities and instructors with musical expertise, the diversity of learner characteristics requires continuous development of adaptive teaching practices. At the same time, university students who are preparing for careers in music education need opportunities to apply their academic knowledge in authentic teaching situations. Therefore, an internship program can simultaneously address two needs: providing prospective music educators with direct professional experience and supporting the partner institution through additional assistance in music learning activities. The internship thus functions not merely as a student placement activity but as a collaborative intervention that connects academic learning with community-based educational practice.

Based on these needs, an internship-based experiential learning program was implemented at Nata Music Course Medan. The program employed a structured mentoring approach consisting of classroom observation, guided teaching practice, learner assistance, reflective activities, and participation in institutional music events. Through these activities, students were encouraged to apply theoretical knowledge obtained during university study to authentic music teaching situations while receiving guidance from experienced instructors. The program also provided opportunities for students to observe learner behavior, identify individual learning needs, select appropriate instructional strategies, manage classroom interactions, and communicate with learners and instructors. In this way, the intervention was designed to strengthen competencies that cannot be developed optimally through theoretical learning alone.

The social engineering dimension of the program lies in the collaborative process between university students, music instructors, learners, and the partner institution. Rather than positioning the institution merely as a location for student practice, the program involved the partner as an active participant in identifying learning needs, guiding students during teaching activities, and reflecting on the implementation of the program. This collaborative approach creates mutual benefits: students gain authentic professional experience, while the partner institution receives additional educational support and alternative instructional practices. Such an approach is consistent with the principles of experiential and participatory learning, in which

knowledge and professional competence are developed through active engagement with real-world contexts.

The novelty of this community service program lies in the integration of internship-based experiential learning with non-formal music education as a means of simultaneously strengthening prospective music educators' professional competencies and supporting the learning services of the partner institution. The program specifically emphasizes pedagogical competence, classroom management, interpersonal communication, and adaptive teaching strategies in responding to diverse learner characteristics. This focus distinguishes the program from internship activities that primarily emphasize technical teaching experience or placement in formal educational institutions.

Based on the identified needs and intervention strategy, this community service program aims to develop university students' professional competencies through internship activities at Nata Music Course Medan. Specifically, the program aims to (1) provide university students with authentic teaching experience in a non-formal music education environment; (2) strengthen students' pedagogical, interpersonal, communication, and classroom management competencies; and (3) develop students' ability to implement adaptive music learning strategies in responding to diverse learner characteristics. Through structured mentoring, teaching practice, reflection, learner assistance, and participation in institutional music activities, the program is expected to contribute to the development of more reflective, adaptive, and professionally prepared prospective music educators while simultaneously supporting the improvement of music learning services at Nata Music Course Medan.

METHOD

This community service program was implemented through an internship-based empowerment approach at Nata Music Course Medan, a non-formal music education institution located at Jalan Gaharu-Amat Lama No. 13–14, Medan Timur District, Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The program was designed as an experiential learning activity that involved university students in direct teaching practices, institutional activities, and educational assistance within the partner institution.

The main focus of this program was to strengthen students' professional competencies through active participation in music education services. The activities were conducted by involving students as internship participants, instructors at Nata Music Course Medan as mentors, and learners as beneficiaries of the educational services. Through this collaboration, the program aimed to create a reciprocal relationship in which students gained professional experience while the institution received support in improving the quality of music learning services.

Participants and Community Involvement

The participants involved in this community service program consisted of:

1. Internship students as the main participants who carried out teaching practices, classroom assistance, environmental management, and institutional activities.
2. Music instructors of Nata Music Course Medan as partners and mentors who provided guidance, supervision, and evaluation during the internship process.
3. Music learners at Nata Music Course Medan as beneficiaries who participated in learning activities conducted by internship students.

The community involvement process began with coordination between the university and Nata Music Course Medan. The institution participated in determining the needs, activities, and responsibilities of internship students based on the actual conditions of the learning

environment. This participatory approach ensured that the activities implemented were relevant to the needs of the partner institution.

Location and Time of Implementation

The community service program was conducted at Nata Music Course Medan, located at Jalan Gaharu–Amat Lama No. 13–14, Medan Timur District, Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The program was carried out through 16 meetings, starting from the internship introduction and placement activity on February 9, 2026, and ending with the completion and evaluation activity on March 2, 2026.



Figure 1. Location of Nata Music Course Medan, Jl. Gaharu–Amat Lama No. 13–14, Medan, Indonesia.

Program Activities and Implementation Strategies

The implementation strategy applied in this program consisted of observation, mentoring, direct practice, reflection, and evaluation. The activities were designed based on the needs of the partner institution and focused on improving teaching competencies, responsibility, communication skills, and adaptability of internship students.

The main activities included:

1. Participation in Institutional Music Events

Internship students were involved in activities organized by Nata Music Course Medan, including music performances and institutional events. The purpose of this activity was to provide students with practical experience in managing music events, understanding the dynamics of the music education industry, and observing technical preparation processes, including instrument arrangement and performance management.

2. Classroom and Learning Environment Management

Students participated in maintaining classroom cleanliness and preparing learning spaces before activities began. This activity aimed to develop students' discipline, responsibility, environmental awareness, and professional attitudes in supporting a comfortable learning environment.

3. Music Teaching Assistance and Instruction

The main activity of the program was providing music instruction, particularly piano lessons, under the supervision of instructors at Nata Music Course Medan. Students were involved in teaching children and adolescents with various learning characteristics,

including learners who required special attention, such as learners with emotional challenges or developmental differences.

Through this activity, students developed pedagogical competence, communication skills, classroom management abilities, and adaptive teaching strategies based on individual learner needs.

Implementation Stages

The implementation process consisted of several stages:

Stage 1: Preparation and Coordination

The initial stage involved coordination between the university and Nata Music Course Medan. Activities included determining the internship schedule, identifying institutional needs, introducing the learning environment, and preparing the responsibilities of participants.

Stage 2: Observation and Adaptation

Students conducted observations of the institution's learning system, teaching methods, classroom conditions, instructor roles, and learner characteristics. This stage helped students understand the actual conditions before conducting teaching activities.

Stage 3: Implementation of Empowerment Activities

Students actively participated in music teaching, learner mentoring, classroom preparation, and institutional events. During this stage, students applied theoretical knowledge obtained from university learning into real educational practices.

Stage 4: Reflection, Evaluation, and Monitoring

Evaluation was conducted through observation, discussions with instructors, and reflection activities by internship students. Monitoring focused on changes in students' competencies, including teaching skills, communication abilities, responsibility, discipline, and problem-solving skills. The evaluation results were used to identify improvements and provide recommendations for future internship and community service programs.

Data Collection and Evaluation Methods

Data were collected through:

1. Participant observation, conducted during teaching activities and institutional involvement.
2. Documentation, including activity records, schedules, and learning-related documentation.
3. Reflective reports, written by internship students to evaluate their learning experiences and competency development.
4. Interviews and discussions with instructors and institutional managers to obtain feedback regarding program implementation.

The collected data were analyzed descriptively by identifying changes in participants' competencies, effectiveness of activities, and contributions of the program to the partner institution.

Flowchart of Community Service Implementation

The implementation strategy was organized into a series of interconnected stages, beginning with coordination and identification of the partner institution's needs, followed by orientation and observation, implementation of internship activities, mentoring and supervision, reflection and competency evaluation, and finally monitoring and program evaluation. Each stage was designed to build upon the previous stage so that students could progressively translate their academic knowledge into authentic teaching practices while receiving continuous guidance from instructors at Nata Music Course Medan. The overall sequence and relationship among these stages are presented in the implementation flowchart in Figure 2.

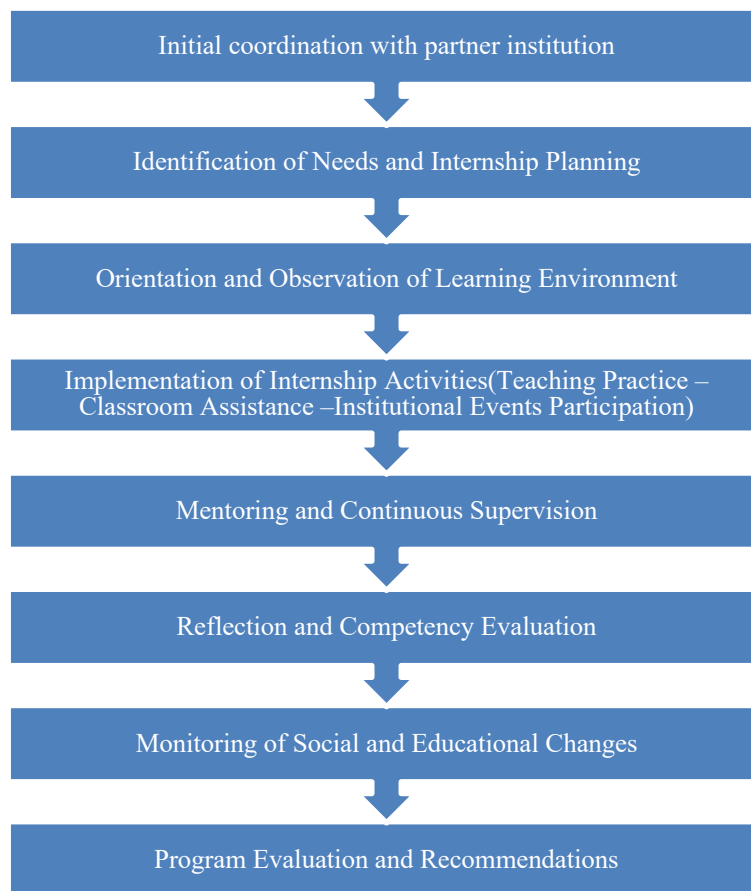


Figure 2. Flowchart of the Internship-Based Experiential Learning Program Implementation

Through this implementation process, the community service program was expected to create positive social changes by improving students' professional competencies while supporting Nata Music Course Medan in providing effective and quality music education services.

Table 1. Piano Teaching Activities During the Internship Program

Meeting	Main Activity	Target Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
1	Introduction to the piano learning environment and observation of teaching methods	Piano students	To understand classroom conditions, student characteristics, and piano learning systems	Students understood the learning environment and teaching approaches
2	Introduction to piano instruments, sitting position, and proper hand position	Beginner piano students	To provide basic understanding before playing the piano	Students were able to apply correct playing posture
3	Introduction to note names on the keyboard/piano	Beginner piano students	To introduce the basic location of musical notes	Students were able to

Meeting	Main Activity	Target Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
				recognize basic note positions
4	Basic scale practice (C Major Scale)	Piano students	To develop students' ability to read and play notes	Students were able to play simple scales
5	Right and left-hand coordination exercises	Piano students	To develop motor coordination in piano playing	Students were able to perform simple patterns using both hands
6	Learning rhythm, beats, and note values	Piano students	To improve students' understanding of basic music theory	Students understood basic rhythmic patterns
7	Simple music notation reading exercises	Piano students	To train students' ability to read musical notation	Students were able to read simple music notation
8	Introduction to basic piano chords	Piano students	To introduce basic chord formation	Students were able to play several basic chords
9	Chord transition practice in simple songs	Piano students	To improve chord transition skills	Students were able to change chords smoothly
10	Learning simple song melodies	Piano students	To develop students' ability to play songs	Students were able to perform simple melodies
11	Learning musical expression and playing dynamics	Piano students	To improve musical interpretation skills	Students understood the use of dynamics in music
12	Guidance in practicing students' selected songs	Piano students	To adapt learning activities to students' interests and abilities	Students were able to play songs according to their level
13	Evaluation of piano playing technique development	Piano students	To assess students' progress	Students' learning development was evaluated
14	Improvement of playing techniques and correction of basic errors	Piano students	To improve students' piano performance quality	Students showed improvement in playing techniques

Meeting	Main Activity	Target Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
15	Preparation for performance or final evaluation	Piano students	To develop students' readiness and confidence	Students were prepared to demonstrate learning outcomes
16	Final evaluation and reflection of piano learning activities	Students and instructors	To evaluate the overall learning process	Internship students gained comprehensive piano teaching experience

Table 2. Drum Teaching Activities During the Internship Program

Meeting	Main Activities	Target Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
1	Observation of drum learning activities and introduction to practice facilities	Drum students	To understand the drum learning process	Internship students understood drum teaching procedures
2	Introduction to drum set components and their functions	Beginner drum students	To introduce drum instruments and their functions	Students understood the function of each drum component
3	Learning sitting position and proper drumstick holding techniques	Beginner drum students	To teach basic drum playing techniques	Students were able to hold drumsticks correctly
4	Basic snare drum stroke exercises	Drum students	To train basic striking techniques	Students were able to perform basic strokes
5	Right and left-hand coordination exercises	Drum students	To develop hand coordination skills	Students were able to perform simple rhythmic patterns
6	Learning basic drum beats and rhythm patterns	Drum students	To introduce fundamental rhythmic structures	Students understood basic beat patterns
7	Hand and foot coordination exercises using drum pedals	Drum students	To improve body coordination skills	Students were able to perform basic hand-foot combinations
8	Slow and fast tempo exercises	Drum students	To develop tempo control	Students were able to maintain playing tempo

Meeting	Main Activities	Target Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
9	Learning simple drum fill techniques	Drum students	To introduce drum playing variations	Students were able to perform simple fills
10	Practicing drum patterns in simple songs	Drum students	To apply techniques in song performance	Students were able to follow song rhythms
11	Learning drum playing dynamics	Drum students	To improve musical expression	Students understood the use of dynamics
12	Guidance in practicing selected songs	Drum students	To improve song performance skills	Students were able to perform complete song patterns
13	Evaluation of basic drum techniques and performance	Drum students	To assess students' progress	Students' drum skills were evaluated
14	Improvement of techniques and rhythm reinforcement	Drum students	To improve playing quality	Students demonstrated improved abilities
15	Drum performance simulation	Drum students	To develop performance readiness	Students became more confident in playing drums
16	Final drum learning evaluation and reflection	Students and instructors	To evaluate learning outcomes	Internship students gained drum teaching experience

Table 3. Bass Guitar Teaching Activities During the Internship Program

Meeting	Main Activities	Target Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
1	Observation of bass guitar learning activities and introduction to instruments	Bass guitar students	To understand bass guitar teaching methods	Internship students understood the bass learning system
2	Introduction to bass guitar components and functions	Beginner bass guitar students	To introduce bass guitar instruments	Students understood bass guitar components and functions
3	Learning hand positions and basic bass holding techniques	Beginner bass guitar students	To teach basic bass guitar techniques	Students were able to hold and position the

Meeting	Main Activities	Target Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
4	Introduction to strings and notes on the fretboard	Bass guitar students	To introduce note positions	instrument correctly Students were able to recognize basic notes
5	Basic fingering technique exercises	Bass guitar students	To improve finger flexibility and technique	Students were able to perform correct fingering techniques
6	Learning basic scales on bass guitar	Bass guitar students	To develop understanding of bass melodies	Students were able to play simple scales
7	Practicing simple bass patterns	Bass guitar students	To introduce fundamental bass patterns	Students were able to perform basic bass lines
8	Learning the relationship between bass, drums, and rhythm	Bass guitar students	To understand the role of bass in music arrangements	Students understood the function of bass as musical accompaniment
9	Practicing simple chord progressions	Bass guitar students	To develop ability to follow song structures	Students were able to follow chord changes
10	Groove and tempo exercises	Bass guitar students	To improve rhythmic stability	Students were able to maintain groove and tempo
11	Introduction to simple bass improvisation techniques	Bass guitar students	To develop creativity in playing	Students were able to create simple variations
12	Guidance in practicing selected songs	Bass guitar students	To apply techniques in song performance	Students were able to perform simple songs
13	Evaluation of basic bass guitar techniques	Bass guitar students	To assess students' development	Students' learning progress was evaluated
14	Improvement of fingering techniques and rhythm skills	Bass guitar students	To improve technical abilities	Students showed improvement in playing skills

Meeting	Main Activities	Target Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
15	Preparation for final performance or evaluation	Bass guitar students	To develop performance readiness	Students were prepared for final presentation

Program Success Indicators

The success of the community service program was evaluated using both process and outcome indicators that reflected the achievement of the program objectives. The indicators included:

Improvement of Students' Teaching Competencies

1. Internship students demonstrated improved pedagogical competence, classroom management, communication skills, and adaptive teaching strategies as observed by supervising instructors during teaching practice.
2. Students were able to independently conduct music lessons and manage learners with diverse characteristics.

Active Participation in Institutional Activities

1. Students successfully participated in all scheduled internship activities, including classroom preparation, music teaching, learner assistance, and institutional music events.
2. Attendance and participation rates reached at least **90%** of the planned activities.

Positive Feedback from Partner Institution

1. Music instructors and institutional managers reported that internship students contributed positively to classroom learning, learner assistance, and institutional activities.
2. The partner institution expressed satisfaction with the students' professionalism, responsibility, and collaboration.

Development of Professional Attitudes

1. Students demonstrated increased responsibility, discipline, teamwork, initiative, and confidence throughout the internship program.
2. Reflective reports indicated increased self-awareness regarding their strengths and areas for professional improvement.

Benefits for Learners

1. Learners actively participated in music lessons conducted by internship students and showed positive engagement during learning activities.
2. Learners requiring additional instructional support received more individualized assistance under the supervision of instructors.

Program Sustainability

1. The collaboration between the university and Nata Music Course Medan was strengthened through recommendations for future internship and community service programs.
2. The internship model was considered feasible for continued implementation as an experiential learning strategy in non-formal music education.

These indicators were assessed through participant observation, mentor evaluations, reflective reports, interviews with instructors and institutional managers, attendance records, and activity documentation. The combination of these qualitative indicators provided evidence of the program's effectiveness in enhancing students' professional competencies while supporting the educational services of the partner institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Implementation of the Internship-Based Experiential Learning Program

The internship-based community service program at Nata Music Course Medan was implemented through direct involvement of university students in music teaching, learner assistance, classroom management, and institutional activities. The implementation followed an experiential learning sequence consisting of observation and adaptation, guided teaching practice, reflection and evaluation, and improvement of teaching strategies based on learner responses.

During the initial observation stage, internship students were introduced to the institutional environment, learning facilities, instructional procedures, instructor roles, and characteristics of music learners. The observation provided students with an initial understanding of the differences in learners' ages, musical abilities, motivation, learning pace, and behavioral responses. These observations subsequently became a reference for determining appropriate approaches during teaching practice.

The core activities involved students assisting and conducting music lessons in piano, drum, and bass guitar classes under the supervision of instructors. Students were involved in preparing learning materials, demonstrating basic musical techniques, guiding individual practice, providing feedback, and assisting learners in completing assigned exercises. Participation in institutional performances and other music-related activities also provided students with experience beyond classroom instruction, including learner preparation, instrument arrangement, performance support, and interaction with the institutional community.

The implementation process was accompanied by continuous mentoring from instructors. Students discussed teaching difficulties with instructors, received feedback regarding instructional approaches, and were encouraged to modify their strategies in subsequent sessions. This process allowed teaching practice to function as a continuous cycle of experience, reflection, feedback, and improvement rather than as a one-time teaching activity.

2. Development of Students' Professional Competencies

The results of observations, reflective reports, and discussions with instructors indicated that internship students developed several professional competencies during the program. The most visible developments occurred in pedagogical competence, communication, classroom management, adaptability, professional responsibility, and problem-solving.

In terms of pedagogical competence, students gradually became more capable of organizing learning activities according to learners' levels and abilities. Students learned to adjust the complexity of musical materials, provide demonstrations before practice, give individual feedback, and divide learning activities into manageable steps. The teaching activities also required students to distinguish between learners who could progress independently and those who required more intensive assistance.

Communication skills developed through continuous interaction with learners and instructors. Students were required to explain musical concepts and instrument techniques using language that could be understood by learners with different levels of prior knowledge. The interaction also required students to listen to learners' responses, provide encouragement, and maintain positive communication during practice.

Classroom management was another competency that developed through direct experience. Students encountered different learning behaviors, including learners who had

difficulty maintaining concentration or who displayed emotional responses during lessons. Under instructor supervision, students learned to respond more patiently and flexibly rather than relying on a single teaching strategy. These experiences encouraged students to consider learners' emotional and behavioral conditions when organizing learning activities.

The development of professional attitudes was also reflected in students' increased awareness of responsibility, punctuality, preparation, teamwork, and the quality of educational services. Reflective activities encouraged students to recognize their strengths and limitations and to identify aspects of teaching that required further development.

3. Adaptive Teaching in Responding to Diverse Learner Characteristics

One of the most important findings of the program was the students' experience in responding to diverse learner characteristics. The partner institution serves learners with different ages, musical abilities, levels of motivation, learning speeds, and emotional responses. Consequently, teaching activities could not always be implemented using the same instructional approach.

Students initially experienced difficulties when learners lost concentration, became less responsive, or showed emotional reactions during lessons. Through mentoring and repeated teaching practice, students began to implement more adaptive strategies. These included providing shorter and more focused instructions, demonstrating techniques directly, allowing additional practice time, using positive reinforcement, and adjusting the pace of instruction according to individual learner conditions.

This experience provided students with an understanding that effective music teaching involves more than transferring musical knowledge. It requires sensitivity to learners' individual characteristics and the ability to modify instructional strategies according to the learning situation.

4. Contribution to Music Learning Services at Nata Music Course Medan

The program also produced benefits for the partner institution. Before the implementation of the internship, music instruction and learner assistance were primarily handled by the institution's permanent instructors. The participation of internship students provided additional support during music lessons and allowed instructors to distribute several learning-support responsibilities.

Internship students assisted instructors in preparing learning materials, demonstrating instrument techniques, supervising practice, and providing additional attention to individual learners. This additional assistance was particularly useful in learning situations involving learners with different ability levels or those requiring more individualized guidance.

The involvement of students also introduced additional variations in learning activities. Under instructor supervision, students experimented with different ways of explaining musical concepts, demonstrating techniques, and engaging learners in practice. These activities provided the partner institution with additional human resources while giving students opportunities to develop their teaching competencies.

5. Institutional and Social Impact

At the individual level, the program contributed to the development of students' professional awareness and confidence as prospective music educators. Students gained a clearer understanding of the responsibilities associated with music teaching, including lesson preparation, learner interaction, classroom management, assessment of learner progress, and professional communication.

At the institutional level, the program strengthened the interaction between the university and Nata Music Course Medan. The partner institution was not merely a location for student

placement but became an active mentoring environment in which instructors contributed to students' professional development. The collaboration also created opportunities for the institution to receive additional assistance in delivering music learning services.

The program therefore generated a reciprocal benefit. University students gained authentic professional experience, while Nata Music Course Medan received additional educational support during the implementation period.

6. Documentation of Program Activities

The implementation of the program was documented through photographs and activity records. Figure 1 presents the orientation and introduction of internship students to the institutional environment and learning facilities. Figure 2 documents piano teaching assistance activities, including basic musical techniques, note recognition, rhythm exercises, and song practice. Figure 3 shows students' involvement in music performances and institutional activities.



Figure 1. Orientation and Introduction to Nata Music Course Medan



Figure 2. Piano Teaching Assistance Activities



Figure 3. Student Performance and Institutional Activities

The documentation provides visual evidence of students' direct involvement in the partner institution and supports the observation findings concerning the implementation of teaching and institutional activities.

7. Strengths and Limitations of the Program

The main strength of the program was its direct integration of academic learning with authentic teaching practice. Students were exposed to actual classroom situations and were required to respond to problems that could not always be anticipated through theoretical instruction. The continuous mentoring provided by experienced music instructors further strengthened the learning process by allowing students to receive immediate feedback and improve their subsequent teaching practices.

Another strength was the flexibility of the non-formal music education environment. The relatively individualized nature of music instruction provided opportunities for students to observe learner characteristics more closely and adapt teaching strategies accordingly. This condition was particularly valuable for developing students' interpersonal and classroom management competencies.

However, the program also had limitations. The relatively short implementation period limited the opportunity to observe the long-term development of learners and students' professional competencies. In addition, differences in students' initial musical and pedagogical abilities meant that the level of competency development was not necessarily identical among participants. The evaluation also relied predominantly on qualitative evidence from observation, reflection, documentation, and instructor feedback. Therefore, the program cannot be used to establish a statistically measured effect of the internship on student competencies.

Future programs should consider a longer implementation period and a more structured competency assessment instrument, such as a pre- and post-internship teaching competency rubric, to document changes in students' competencies more systematically.

Discussion

The results demonstrate that an internship-based experiential learning model can provide an authentic environment for developing the professional competencies of prospective music educators. The central contribution of the program was not merely the opportunity for students to teach music but the opportunity to experience the complete process of professional teaching, including observation, planning, instruction, interaction with learners, classroom management, reflection, and improvement.

This finding is consistent with the experiential learning perspective proposed by Kolb and Kolb (2022), in which professional knowledge develops through a continuous cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active

experimentation. In the present program, concrete experience was obtained through direct participation in music lessons. Reflection occurred through discussions with instructors and student reflective reports, while subsequent teaching sessions provided opportunities for students to experiment with improved strategies. Thus, the internship provided a practical context in which theoretical knowledge acquired at university could be tested and refined through authentic educational experiences.

The development of pedagogical competence observed during the program is particularly important because prospective music educators require competencies that extend beyond mastery of musical instruments. Music teaching involves explaining musical concepts, demonstrating techniques, observing learner progress, providing feedback, motivating learners, and adjusting instruction according to individual needs. The experience at Nata Music Course Medan exposed students to these multiple dimensions of teaching and helped them recognize that musical expertise alone does not guarantee effective instruction.

The experience of managing diverse learner characteristics also represents an important contribution of the program. Learners at Nata Music Course Medan demonstrated differences in age, ability, motivation, concentration, and emotional responses. These conditions required students to move away from uniform instructional approaches and develop more adaptive strategies. The finding supports the argument that experiential learning can strengthen reflective and interpersonal competencies because learners are required to respond to real situations rather than hypothetical classroom problems (Jacobs, 2022). Direct interaction with learners enabled students to recognize the relationship between learner characteristics and instructional decisions.

The development of communication and classroom management skills can also be understood as a consequence of repeated interaction with learners. Students had to communicate musical concepts using language appropriate to learners' levels of understanding and provide instructions that were sufficiently clear for practical application. At the same time, students learned that classroom management in music education involves maintaining attention and motivation while allowing learners to engage actively with instruments. These experiences strengthened the connection between musical competence and pedagogical practice.

The contribution of the program to the partner institution further demonstrates the reciprocal nature of community service. Internship students did not merely receive learning experiences; they also provided additional support for music instruction and learner assistance. The presence of student assistants enabled instructors to provide additional attention to learners during practice sessions. This finding indicates that higher education–community partnerships can be designed to generate mutual benefits, with students developing professional competencies while partner institutions receive additional educational resources.

The non-formal education context was particularly valuable because it provided a different professional environment from formal schooling. Music course learning is generally more specialized and may involve individualized instruction based on learners' interests and musical abilities. Consequently, students encountered teaching situations that required flexibility, individualized attention, and responsiveness to learner preferences. This experience complements formal teacher preparation by exposing prospective educators to alternative educational contexts.

The findings also reinforce the importance of mentoring in internship-based experiential learning. Students did not develop professional competencies solely through independent teaching practice. Instructor supervision provided an essential feedback mechanism that helped students interpret teaching problems and determine appropriate responses. This finding

suggests that internship programs should not simply place students in partner institutions but should establish structured mentoring, observation, reflection, and evaluation mechanisms.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the limitations of the program. Because the evaluation was based primarily on qualitative observation, reflection, documentation, and instructor feedback, the reported competency development represents descriptive evidence rather than statistically demonstrated improvement. In addition, the short duration of implementation limits conclusions regarding the sustainability of competency development. Future community service programs could address these limitations by using structured competency rubrics before and after the internship, combining student self-assessment with mentor assessment, and extending the duration of field experience.

Overall, the program indicates that non-formal music institutions such as Nata Music Course Medan can function as meaningful experiential learning environments for prospective music educators. The integration of direct teaching practice, mentoring, reflection, and adaptive instructional strategies enabled students to connect academic knowledge with authentic professional demands. At the same time, the involvement of students provided additional support to the partner institution. Therefore, internship-based community service can serve as a collaborative model for strengthening prospective educators' professional competencies while contributing to the improvement of music learning services in non-formal education settings.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the internship-based community empowerment program at Nata Music Course Medan demonstrates that experiential learning through direct engagement in non-formal music education environments provides significant contributions to the development of students' professional competencies. The program successfully connected academic knowledge with practical teaching experiences by involving students in piano, drum, and bass guitar instruction, learner assistance, classroom management, and institutional activities. Through these experiences, students developed not only technical teaching abilities but also pedagogical competence, communication skills, responsibility, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities in responding to diverse learner characteristics. From a community empowerment perspective, this program provided mutual benefits for both internship students and the partner institution. Students gained authentic professional experiences as prospective music educators, while Nata Music Course Medan received additional educational support to improve the quality of its learning services. The collaboration between higher education institutions and non-formal music education organizations represents an effective model for strengthening competency-based learning and developing practical skills through community engagement.

Theoretically, this program reinforces the relevance of experiential learning as an approach for preparing future educators, particularly in fields requiring both technical expertise and interpersonal competence, such as music education. The findings suggest that internship activities should not be viewed merely as professional training but as a transformative learning process that encourages reflection, adaptation, and continuous improvement. Future community service programs are recommended to implement longer intervention periods, develop structured competency assessment instruments, and expand collaboration with various non-formal education institutions to examine broader impacts of internship-based empowerment models. The implications of this program extend beyond music education, as experiential learning approaches can serve as a strategic model for improving professional readiness, social responsibility, and community-based learning practices in higher education.

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