

LEARNING DANCE ART THROUGH A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING APPROACH FOR GRADE 3 IN SDS ST. MARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)-based dance learning for third-grade students at SDS St. Mary Surabaya, a National Plus curriculum-based school with a majority of students from Chinese-Indonesian backgrounds. The problem formulation in this study is how the CRT approach is applied in dance learning and how the results of student engagement in the learning process through this approach. The research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews with teachers, principals, students, and parents, as well as documentation of learning activities. This research is also accompanied by coordination with external institutions such as the Department of Culture and local art studios to enrich the authenticity of the teaching materials. The results show that dance learning that refers to the six syntaxes of CRT: building cultural identity, creating inclusive classes, using culture as a learning resource, balancing academic and cultural skills, building critical awareness, and using authentic assessment, successfully increases student motivation and participation. Evaluation is carried out formatively and summatively, showing that students are not only able to perform dance movements well, but also understand the cultural values contained therein. Furthermore, there was a positive change in students' attitudes toward local culture, marked by an increased sense of pride and belonging in East Javanese culture. This study concludes that implementing the CRT approach in a multicultural school context can create meaningful, inclusive learning experiences and strengthen students' cultural identities within a National Plus-based educational framework.

Keywords: Culturally Responsive Teaching, dance, National Plus curriculum, East Javanese culture, multicultural education.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's multicultural education landscape, learning approaches that accommodate cultural diversity are becoming increasingly relevant and important. One prominent approach to supporting inclusive and meaningful learning is Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). CRT is not merely a pedagogical strategy, but an educational philosophy that places students' cultural identities as the primary foundation of the teaching and learning process. As stated by Ladson-Billings (1995), this approach has three primary goals: (1) promoting academic success, (2) fostering cultural competence, and (3) developing critical awareness of social injustice.

The application of CRT becomes even more significant when contextualized within an education system that integrates national standards with a global approach, such as the National Plus curriculum. This curriculum not only refers to the Indonesian national curriculum but also integrates international learning methods, foreign languages, and character building—opening up ample space for the application of learning approaches that adapt to student diversity.

One school that has implemented this approach in practice is SDS St. Mary, a private Catholic school in Surabaya under the auspices of the Yohannes Gabriel Representative II Foundation. This school accommodates students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, primarily students of Chinese-Indonesian descent. Using the National Plus curriculum, SDS St. Mary combines the Indonesian national curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) with international elements, including teaching

methods, a bilingual approach (generally in Indonesian and English), and global and contextual content. In this context, the CRT approach is concretely implemented in the Dance subject, specifically by introducing and teaching traditional East Javanese dance as part of the third-grade learning process.

The choice of East Javanese dance is not without reason. In addition to being a local cultural heritage rich in aesthetic and philosophical values, this dance reflects the cultural identity of the people of Surabaya and the surrounding area. Teaching East Javanese dance to students not only trains their motor and artistic skills but also instills a sense of belonging to a local culture they may not be familiar with. In this way, learning dance becomes not only a physical and aesthetic activity but also a medium for character and cultural identity development.

In practice, the CRT approach to dance instruction at SDS St. Mary is applied effectively. St. Mary Elementary School involves teachers understanding students' cultural backgrounds, adapting teaching materials to be contextually relevant, and creating a space for inclusive cultural dialogue. Based on an interview with a third-grade homeroom teacher at St. Mary Elementary School (July 12, 2024), this approach has increased student engagement, fostered curiosity about local culture, and created a more meaningful and enjoyable learning environment.

Thus, Culturally Responsive Teaching-based dance instruction in third-grade classes at St. Mary Elementary School is not only about teaching dance movements, but also about building bridges between local culture and student identities in a multicultural classroom. This study aims to describe the implementation of CRT in dance instruction as an effort to strengthen students' cultural identity amidst diversity, specifically through the exploration of East Javanese dance in a National Plus-based elementary education environment.

2. METHOD

This study was conducted in the field to obtain direct information and documentation, therefore, the researcher employed a qualitative descriptive method. This qualitative method was used by the researcher to examine phenomena occurring in the field to obtain the necessary data. This descriptive method was used to explain and describe the conditions of the object in the field. In accordance with Meleong in M. Insan & Bagus (2021: 218), to obtain results from informants, both written and oral, delivered by informants. The researcher chose this method because it aligns with the object of study, namely Dance Learning through the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) Approach in Grade 3 at St. Mary Elementary School. This method was used during the research process to observe objects in the field, specifically in the Grade 3 classroom as they are. Therefore, the researcher could not manipulate the data obtained purely from existing facts and the results were based on the field.

The object is the subject of the research, while the subject is the researcher. In this study, the object of research was learning activities using the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in Grade 3 at St. Mary Elementary School. The object and location of this research was St. Mary Private Elementary School, which has a teacher who is highly sensitive to traditional dance culture, particularly East Javanese. St. Mary Elementary School, with its students being predominantly of Chinese-Indonesian descent, required the provision of Indonesian culturally relevant materials. The researcher was also interested in the fact that several students there possessed skills in East Javanese traditional dance, despite being of both Indonesian and Chinese descent.

The data sources used by the researcher were three:

1. Person (person). This data source consists of answers or words. Person refers to the participants in dance lessons using the culturally responsive teaching approach, which are as follows:

Table 1. List of Informants

Nama	Posisi	Data
Guru Wali Kelas 3 SDS St. Mary (Agnes Shinta Berliana Oktarani, S.Pd.)	Penyelenggara pembelajaran dengan pendekatan CRT	Respon siswa dari sudut pandang guru
Wali Murid Kelas 3 SD St. Mary (Mama Rayner)	Orang tua yang terkait dengan peserta didik yang memiliki keahlian dalam berkesenian	Respon siswa dari sudut pandang orang tua/wali
Peserta Didik Kelas 3 (Rayner)	Peserta didik dengan pendekatan pembelajaran CRT	Respon siswa terhadap guru yang menyelenggarakan
Kepala Sekolah SDS St. Mary (Andreas Budi Santoso, S.Pd., S.Sn.)	Ketua dalam SDS St. Mary	Tanggapan mengenai CRT dari sudut pandang kepala sekolah.

2. Place: The data source is a third-grade classroom at St. Mary Elementary School. The researcher used a data source located at Jl. Menganti Lidah Kulon No. 29, Lidah Kulon, Lakarsantri District, Surabaya, East Java 60213.

3. Paper: The paper data sources in this study were journals and theses related to the CRT approach and dance learning, including:

- Barnes, T. N., & McCallops, K. (2019). Perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy in teaching SEL. *Journal for Multicultural Education*, 13(1), 70-81.

- Wrench, A., & Garrett, R. (2021). Navigating culturally responsive pedagogy through an Indigenous games unit. *Sport, Education and Society*, 26(6), 567-578.

- Siregar, L. K. (2023). Culturally Responsive Teaching-Based Learning Design as an Effort to Modify Student Behavior. *Hamka Islamic Education*, 2(1), 28-43.

- Salma, I. M., & Yuli, R. R. (2023). Building a Paradigm of Teacher Meaning in Culturally Responsive Teaching in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the 21st Century. *Journal of Educational Technology*, 1(1), 11-11.

Data collection techniques used in the study entitled "Dance Learning with a Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach in Grade 3 of St. Mary Elementary School" included observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The researchers conducted direct observations in the classroom to observe the implementation of dance learning using the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach, which aims to produce students who are not only skilled in dancing but also have cultural awareness, particularly of East Javanese dance. This observation was conducted in the school hall from August 1–17, 2023, and included an introduction to East Javanese Surabaya culture, student assignments related to CRT, observations of students who did

not use the CRT approach, monitoring dance practice, and class performances. According to Ristra (2017:14), observation is useful for obtaining valid and relevant data related to the problem being studied. The second technique, face-to-face interviews with key informants involved in the learning process, was used to gather information regarding the implementation of CRT-based dance learning, such as teaching strategies, implementation times, and student responses to the approach. The interview technique used was a structured interview, as explained by Sugiyono (2016:319), in which the researcher prepared systematic questions to obtain focused and in-depth data. Third, a documentation study was conducted to supplement the data by collecting supporting documents such as activity photos, learning videos, audio recordings, and student activity notes during the learning process, including documentation of third-grade dance learning at St. Mary Elementary School, which was used as evidence of the accuracy and validity of the research data. Data validity is the level of accuracy between the data obtained and the reality of the research object, which aims to ensure that the research results reflect the actual conditions (Sugiyono, 2012). In this study, data validation was conducted through triangulation methods, consisting of technical triangulation, source triangulation, and time triangulation. According to Moleong (2017), technical triangulation is the use of various methods to test the validity of data. In this case, the researcher used observation, interviews, and documentation. The interview results were then compared with the observation results, and if there were any discrepancies, the researcher reconfirmed with the sources. This technique was applied to dance lessons using the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in grade 3 of St. Mary Elementary School on August 1, 2, 3, and 4, 2024. Source triangulation was conducted

by comparing information from several sources, such as homeroom teachers, principals, students, and parents, to obtain consistent and valid data. All interview results from different sources were summarized into a single entity to strengthen the validity of the data. Meanwhile, time triangulation was conducted by interviewing informants at different times, such as during the day when they were more free to share information, and comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation conducted in classes implementing and not implementing the CRT approach, to obtain credible and comprehensive data.

Data analysis in this study was conducted in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher sorted and summarized the data obtained from interviews and field observations according to the research focus, namely dance learning using the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in third-grade classes at St. Mary Elementary School.

The reduced data included the CRT approach, dance learning before and after the implementation of CRT, and important notes.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 RESULT

A. Lesson Plan

The dance lesson plan for third-grade students at St. Mary Elementary School is designed using the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach to appreciate the cultural diversity of students, including those from Chinese-Indonesian backgrounds. The teacher begins by introducing local folklore and cultural symbols, then relates them to traditional dance movements. This aligns with the CRT principle, which emphasizes the importance of connecting learning materials to students' cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2010).

The principal stated that this approach helps students feel valued and more engaged in learning. The class teacher added that by learning about local culture, students can better appreciate diversity and strengthen their national identity.

The dance lesson plan for third-grade students at St. Mary Elementary School is designed by integrating elements of local culture, particularly East Javanese culture, into the curriculum based on the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach. The teacher creates a Dance Teaching Module

that includes an introduction to regional culture, an understanding of cultural values, and hands-on practice of traditional dance movements.

In an interview with the class teacher, it was explained that the lesson plan begins with a mapping of students' cultural backgrounds. "Because many of the children are not Javanese, such as those from Chinese families, I start with the most common elements, such as folklore and traditional clothing. Then I move on to dance elements," explained the class teacher (Interview, Homeroom Teacher 3, 2024).

This plan was developed based on Gay's theory (2010), which emphasizes the importance of building connections between students' cultures and the teaching materials to make learning feel relevant and increase engagement. With this approach, students not only learn about local culture but also feel that their culture is recognized and valued.

B. Learning Implementation

Learning implementation is carried out through a series of activities involving observation, dance practice, and cultural discussions. Students are encouraged to dance while understanding the meaning of the movements and the cultural values they contain. Observations show that students demonstrate increased motivation and active participation in each learning session.

According to research by Melchior (2011), integrating dance into learning can increase the connection between teachers and students, as well as between students themselves. At SDS St. At St. Mary Elementary School, this approach has proven effective in creating an inclusive and enjoyable learning environment.

The learning process took place over four sessions in August 2024. Each session was held in the school hall in an open and interactive atmosphere. The lesson began with an introduction to local

cultural elements, followed by dance practice, and concluded with a reflective discussion.

Observations showed that students were very enthusiastic about participating in the dance activities, especially when the teacher linked the dance movements to cultural values and students' personal experiences. For example, when introducing the Remo Dance, the teacher explained the meaning of the movements as symbols of courage and hospitality, then asked students if similar values existed in their family cultures. Students of Chinese-Indonesian descent began actively sharing stories about Chinese New Year culture and the values of respect for elders, which they then related to the meaning of traditional Indonesian dance.

In an interview, the third-grade homeroom teacher stated that arts learning using the CRT approach created an inclusive learning environment:

"Children who used to be awkward now join in the dancing. Even those who can't dance are enthusiastic about performing because they know this is part of their Indonesian culture."

Teachers also adapt their teaching strategies to suit the students' needs. For students who are less familiar with local culture, teachers provide additional explanations using visual media such **as videos, pictures, and examples of simple basic movements**

Ladson-Billings' (1995) theory states that culturally relevant learning helps students build social connections and identity, while also enhancing academic achievement and self-confidence. This is evident in practice, where students are seen to be more active, collaborative, and show pride in the culture they are learning about.

The implementation of dance lessons in third-grade classes at St. Mary Elementary School was designed collaboratively, involving various parties, both internal and external to the school. Teachers and the principal coordinated with the Surabaya City Culture and Tourism Office and several local dance studios to ensure the authenticity of the East Javanese dance materials and techniques taught to students. Furthermore, the school invited the school committee and parents to participate in planning learning activities, including supporting the provision of costumes and staging dance performances at school events. This cross-institutional collaboration strengthens the contextual dimension of learning, as recommended in the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach, which emphasizes the connection between school, culture, and community (Gay, 2010).

The entire learning process is structured based on the six main syntaxes of CRT. First, teachers build connections between students' identities and local culture by introducing East Javanese folklore as an introduction to dance practice. Second, teachers create a safe and inclusive classroom atmosphere by accommodating students' diverse backgrounds, particularly those from Chinese-Indonesian families. Third, teachers utilize students' cultural backgrounds as learning resources by encouraging them to share their family values, which are then linked to the meaning of dance movements, such as the symbol of courage in the Remo Dance. Fourth, academic and cultural skills are developed in a balanced manner through dance movement practices accompanied by narrative explanations of cultural values. Fifth, critical awareness is developed through reflective discussions on the importance of preserving local culture and tolerance for diversity.

Sixth, authentic assessment is used as part of the learning process, measuring not only movement accuracy but also understanding of dance meaning and attitudes toward local culture.

C. Learning Evaluation

Learning is carried out through a series of activities involving observation, dance practice, and cultural discussions. Students are encouraged to dance while understanding the meaning of the movements and their cultural values. Observations indicate that students demonstrate increased motivation and active participation in each learning session.

Evaluation is conducted both formatively and summarily. Formatively, teachers observe student engagement during the learning process, while summatively, students perform dances at Independence Day celebrations and other school events. Assessment is based not only on movement accuracy but also on understanding the cultural meaning of the lessons.

Research by Sari et al. (2020) shows that the CRT approach can improve students' cultural understanding and engagement in learning. At St. Mary Elementary School, CRT-based evaluations help students better appreciate cultural diversity and strengthen their identity as part of the Indonesian nation.

Learning evaluations are conducted both formatively and summarily. Formatively, teachers evaluate student engagement during the learning process through daily observation notes, movement skill assessments, and participation in cultural discussions. Summative evaluations are conducted during dance performances during Independence Day celebrations on August 17, 2024.

In interviews with teachers, it was stated that assessments emphasize not only movement accuracy but also understanding the meaning of the dance and students' attitudes toward local culture. "If a child can perform the movements but doesn't understand the meaning, I give them a note. But if someone doesn't know all the movements but knows the story and shows enthusiasm, I give them more points," she explained.

Parents were also involved in the evaluation by providing feedback on changes in their children's attitudes at home. Several parents revealed that their children were beginning to show pride in being part of Indonesian culture. One parent said:

"Now my child even asks to buy a dance costume. He says he wants to learn more about Indonesian culture, even though he wasn't interested before."

This approach aligns with the principles of authentic assessment recommended by Wiggins (1993), namely assessment that considers the process and product holistically in a real-life context, and provides space for students to demonstrate their competencies meaningfully.

Interview Results Table

Additional reasons include using visual media such as videos, images, and examples of simple basic movements.

Narasumber	Pernyataan Utama	Keterkaitan Teori
Guru Kelas 3 (Agnes Shinta Berliana Oktarani, S.Pd.)	"Kami memulai dengan cerita rakyat untuk mengenalkan budaya lokal, kemudian mengaitkannya dengan tari."	Gay (2010): Menghubungkan materi ajar dengan latar belakang budaya siswa.
Kepala Sekolah (Andreas Budi Santoso, S.Pd., S.Sn.)	"Pendekatan ini membantu siswa merasa dihargai dan lebih terlibat dalam pembelajaran."	Ladson-Billings (1995): Pendidikan yang menghargai budaya siswa meningkatkan keterlibatan mereka.
Orang Tua Siswa Tionghoa (Mama Rayner)	"Anak saya lebih bangga dengan budaya Indonesia setelah belajar tari tradisional."	Nieto (2004): Pendidikan yang menghargai keberagaman budaya memperkuat identitas siswa.
Siswa (Rayner)	"Saya merasa bangga bisa menari tari tradisional Indonesia, meskipun saya bukan orang Jawa."	Vygotsky (1978): Pembelajaran yang relevan secara budaya meningkatkan motivasi dan partisipasi siswa.
Guru Tari (Pendamping)	"Siswa lebih cepat menghafal gerakan tari karena mereka memahami makna di balik setiap gerakan."	Wiggins (1993): Penilaian otentik yang mempertimbangkan konteks budaya meningkatkan pemahaman siswa.

Evaluation of learning outcomes is conducted both formatively and summatively. Formatively, teachers observe students' engagement in each learning session, record their progress in mastering basic movements, and observe their active participation in cultural discussions. Teachers also provide direct feedback as students practice the dance to encourage improvement. Summative evaluation is conducted at the end of the learning program, through a dance performance to commemorate Independence Day on August 17, 2024. Assessment is based not only on the technical aspects of the dance movements, but also on students' understanding of the cultural values embedded in the movements and their enthusiasm in expressing them. In interviews, teachers stated that students who understand the meaning of the dance but are not yet perfect in the movements are still highly commended because they demonstrate a meaningful and reflective learning process.

Furthermore, parental involvement is also an important part of the evaluation. Several parents stated that their children have begun

to show a greater interest in Indonesian culture after participating in this learning. One mother

of a Chinese-Indonesian student, for example, said that her child is now more confident in expressing his pride in local culture and has even requested dance costumes for practice at home. This aligns with Nieto's (2004) view that education that values cultural diversity can strengthen student identity and increase student participation in learning.

These findings also support the theories of Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2010), who stated that CRT can increase learning motivation, student engagement, and academic achievement through culturally relevant learning. Dance teachers supported this statement by stating that students memorized movements more quickly because they understood the meaning behind them. Furthermore, observations showed that the classroom atmosphere became more collaborative and dynamic, with students from diverse backgrounds feeling valued and actively engaged. Overall, the implementation of the CRT approach in dance instruction at St. Mary Elementary School has been proven to not only strengthen students' understanding of local culture but also build mutual respect for diversity, strengthen national identity, and create authentic and meaningful learning experiences within the National Plus curriculum framework.

national, and create authentic and meaningful learning experiences within the National Plus curriculum framework.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and data analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach in dance instruction in third-grade students at St. Mary Elementary School was effective and relevant to the needs of students in a multicultural school context based on the National Plus curriculum. The learning process, designed with reference to the six CRT syntaxes, successfully created an inclusive learning environment, respecting students' cultural backgrounds, and connecting traditional East Javanese dance material with their experiences and cultural identities.

Through the integration of folklore, understanding local cultural values, dance practice, and reflective discussions, students demonstrated increased engagement, cultural understanding, and appreciation for Indonesian culture. Formative and summative evaluations demonstrated that students were not only able to dance but also understood the meaning behind the movements and demonstrated pride in their local culture. Furthermore, active parental participation and support from external institutions such as the Department of Culture enriched the learning process.

Overall, the CRT approach has proven effective in bridging cultural gaps in dance instruction in a heterogeneous environment. Implementing this approach not only strengthens students' cultural identity but also fosters tolerance, mutual respect, and critical awareness of cultural diversity in everyday life.

This research recommends that teachers, especially those teaching arts and culture,

better integrate the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach into their lesson planning and implementation to create an inclusive atmosphere and respect for students' cultural diversity. Schools are also encouraged to develop training and resources to support the implementation of CRT, as well as to enhance collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community to enrich students' learning experiences. Future researchers are encouraged to examine the implementation of CRT in other subjects and at different levels of education to broaden their understanding of its impact in the context of multicultural education.

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