



Enhancing Students' Interest in Poetry Writing Through the Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach at Vocational High School

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to improve junior high school students' interest in poetry writing through the integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) within a Classroom Action Research framework.

Methodology: The study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles involving planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected using a learning interest questionnaire, observation sheets, and student interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively with percentage gain, and qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Main Findings: The average interest score increased from 59.2% in the pre-cycle to 83.0% in Cycle II, with an overall gain of +23.8%. All indicators—attention, perseverance, enjoyment, and activeness—showed improvement, with activeness having the highest gain (+25.8%). Qualitative data revealed enhanced motivation, confidence, and creativity in connecting cultural themes to poetry writing.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study introduces a culturally contextualized, problem-based approach to poetry writing that merges CRT and PBL principles. It advances existing knowledge by demonstrating how integrating cultural relevance with collaborative problem-solving strategies can significantly increase student engagement and creativity in literary education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching poetry writing in vocational high schools presents unique challenges, as students generally come from diverse backgrounds with varying interests and areas of study that are not always oriented toward literature. This condition often leads to suboptimal student engagement in poetry writing lessons. Preliminary observations in Class X Geology A at State Vocational School 8 Palu indicate that students' interest in learning poetry writing remains low. This is evident from minimal participation, a lack of enthusiasm during lessons, and poetry works that tend to be less creative.

In fact, poetry writing is a form of literary expression that can simultaneously enhance language skills and foster students' creative thinking abilities. This aligns with Ramseier's [1] assertion that learning interest is a key factor influencing student engagement and learning success. Through poetry writing, students not only learn

to select and arrange words but also sharpen their sensitivity, imagination, and ability to convey messages aesthetically, skills that contribute to character building and creativity development, as emphasized by Kristiantari et al. [2].

Therefore, poetry writing skills hold a significant role in Indonesian language learning, including in vocational high schools, as a means of fostering comprehensive literacy competencies encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects [3]. Unfortunately, some students perceive poetry writing as a difficult activity with limited relevance to their daily lives, which becomes a barrier to their participation. Consequently, there is a need for a learning approach that can build students' emotional engagement, motivate them to participate actively, and connect poetry content with their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds, as emphasized by Gay [4] in the theory of Culturally Responsive Teaching. The main issue encountered in teaching poetry writing to Class X Geology A students at State Vocational School 8 Palu is their low learning interest. Observations revealed that most students demonstrated low participation, lacked enthusiasm during learning activities, and produced poetry works that were less creative. This low level of interest aligns with the indicators of learning interest described in previous studies [5], [6], which include attention to lessons, persistence in learning, enjoyment of the material, and active participation in learning activities - indicators that, in the initial condition, had yet to show optimal results.

Although Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) has been widely applied to language learning in various countries, most research focuses more on receptive skills such as reading and listening, or productive skills such as speaking [7]-[9]. Similarly, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has been shown to be effective in improving critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills [10]-[12], but its application in the context of learning creative writing, especially poetry, is still rare. Research that combines these two approaches in vocational education in Indonesia is almost unfounded. This research gap underscores the urgency of the study to present pedagogical innovations that not only emphasize cognitive skills but also validate students' cultural identity as a source of learning.

One contributing factor to this low interest is the use of teaching methods that tend to be monotonous, lack variation, and fail to connect poetry material with students' real-life contexts. According to Gay [4], contextual learning that is relevant to students' cultural backgrounds can enhance their motivation and engagement in the learning process. The inability of the current method to accommodate the diversity of students' cultures and experiences has made poetry learning less engaging and unable to foster broader creative exploration.

Students' interest in learning is one of the important factors that determine the success of the learning process. Learning interest can be seen from indicators of attention to lessons, perseverance in learning, enjoyment of the material, and activeness in learning activities [5], [6]. When these indicators are at a low level, learning tends to be ineffective and student learning outcomes decrease. In the context of learning to write poetry, various studies have shown that learning approaches that are relevant to students' experiences and backgrounds can improve engagement and learning outcomes. Gay [4] said that Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is an approach that deliberately integrates students' culture, experiences, and perspectives into the learning process, so that students feel that the material learned has a direct connection to their lives. This approach emphasizes acknowledging students' cultural diversity and utilizing it as a learning resource.

In addition to CRT, the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model has also been shown to be effective in improving students' participation and critical thinking skills. PBL places students at the center of learning through the provision of contextual problems that encourage collaboration, discussion, and exploration of creative solutions [13]. The application of PBL to literary learning, including writing poetry, allows students to not only understand the structure and aesthetics of poetry, but also relate it to real issues and experiences.

Thus, the combination of CRT and PBL has great potential to overcome the low interest of students in learning to write poetry in vocational high schools. This integration provides space for students to relate the material to their cultural identity, while also honing critical and creative thinking skills through problem-solving.

To overcome the low interest of students in learning to write poetry, this study proposes the application of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) combined with the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model as a learning strategy. The CRT approach places the cultural background of students as an important source of learning [8], [14]. Teachers utilize values, experiences, and cultural references that are familiar to students to make learning more meaningful and relevant. In the context of writing poetry, CRT allows students to express their identities and experiences through literary works, thereby increasing emotional engagement and learning motivation.

Meanwhile, PBL provides a learning framework that is oriented towards real problem solving. Through PBL, students are exposed to contextual and challenging situations or themes, which encourage them to collaborate, discuss, and develop creative solutions [15]. In learning to write poetry, PBL can be applied by providing certain problems or themes that students must explore in the form of poetry works. The integration of CRT and PBL is expected to create an inclusive, adaptive, and participatory learning environment. This strategy not only arouses students' interest and motivation, but also develops creative, critical, and collaborative thinking skills that are essential for students' academic success and personal development.

This research has a novelty value in the integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in the context of learning to write poetry in vocational high schools. Although

CRT has been widely applied to language learning in several countries, its specific application to poetry writing skills in vocational education environments in Indonesia is still rarely researched [8]. The innovation of this research lies in an effort to utilize the potential of students' cultural diversity as a source of inspiration in literary works, while combining it with a problem-solving approach through PBL. This approach not only targets improving writing skills, but also strengthens students' emotional engagement, learning motivation, and critical thinking skills. In addition, this research provides practical contributions for Indonesian language teachers in vocational high schools to develop learning strategies that are more contextual, inclusive, and adaptive to the needs of students. This strategy can be replicated in other language skills, so that it has the potential to expand the impact of increasing literacy in the realm of vocational education.

The integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in this study is framed as a balanced pedagogical approach in which each component offers distinct strengths to enhance students' interest and creativity in poetry writing. CRT contributes by embedding cultural relevance, integrating personal experiences, and fostering emotional engagement, while PBL emphasizes contextual problem-solving, collaboration, and the development of critical and creative thinking skills. As shown in Figure 1, both approaches complement one another in creating an inclusive, engaging, and problem-oriented learning environment that supports transformative poetry learning.

Balancing Cultural Relevance and Problem-Based Learning in Poetry

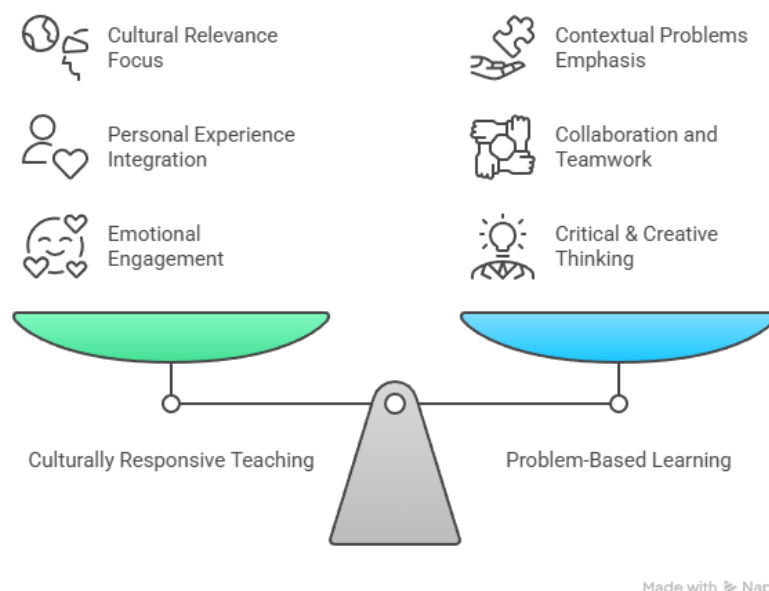


Figure 1. Balancing Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in Poetry Writing

Based on the research gaps that have been described, the purpose of this study is to test the effectiveness of the integration of CRT and PBL in increasing the interest of vocational school students in writing poetry, focusing on the indicators of attention, perseverance, fun, and activeness. This research also aims to explore how the local cultural context can be integrated with problem-solving strategies to encourage students' creativity in producing literary works. The novelty of this research lies in the methodological effort to combine two approaches that have been more often researched separately. The integration of CRT-PBL in the context of learning to write poetry in Indonesian vocational schools has not been widely studied, so these findings are expected to enrich literature while making a practical contribution to the development of inclusive, contextual, and creative language and literature learning [16]-[18].

Based on the background, problem statements, and theoretical studies above, this study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the application of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) combined with the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model in increasing students' interest in learning to write poetry in class X Geology A State Vocational School 8 Palu. Through the integration of these two approaches, it is hoped that contextual learning will be created, respect students' cultural diversity, and encourage their active participation, creativity, and motivation to learn. This research is expected to contribute to the development of Indonesian learning strategies in vocational high schools that are more relevant, inclusive, and oriented towards developing

students' literacy skills holistically. The integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in this study is conceptualized as a balanced approach, where each component contributes unique strengths to foster students' interest and creativity in poetry writing. Figure X illustrates the main focus areas of each approach, emphasizing their complementary roles in creating an inclusive, engaging, and problem-oriented learning environment.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Type of research

This study adopted a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, which was carried out collaboratively between the researchers and the classroom teacher. Classroom Action Research was chosen because it provides a practical and systematic framework for improving teaching and learning practices directly in the classroom setting. Unlike experimental designs that often require controlled conditions, CAR allows the researcher to intervene within the natural classroom environment, ensuring that the changes made are relevant to the actual needs of the students and feasible for teachers to implement in their daily practice.

The collaborative nature of this research played a crucial role in its design. The classroom teacher contributed a deep understanding of the students' learning characteristics, cultural backgrounds, and classroom dynamics, while the researchers brought in expertise in instructional strategies, data collection, and analysis. This synergy allowed for a richer, more contextualized approach to problem-solving in the teaching of poetry writing.

The CAR model used in this study followed the framework popularized by Kemmis and McTaggart, which emphasizes a cyclical process consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. During the planning stage, problems identified in the initial observation were analyzed, and intervention strategies specifically the integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) were developed. The action stage involved implementing these strategies in the classroom through structured poetry writing lessons. The observation stage focused on collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to assess the effectiveness of the intervention, while the reflection stage provided an opportunity to analyze the results, identify areas for improvement, and plan the subsequent cycle of actions.

This iterative nature of CAR made it particularly suitable for addressing the low interest in poetry writing among vocational high school students. It allowed for continuous refinement of the teaching approach after each cycle, ensuring that adjustments were based on real evidence from the classroom. By integrating CRT and PBL within this cyclical framework, the research design not only targeted measurable improvement in student interest but also aimed to create a sustainable instructional model that teachers could continue to apply beyond the duration of the study.

2.2. Subjects and research location

The participants in this study were 35 students enrolled in Class X Geology A at State Vocational School 8 Palu during the 2024/2025 academic year. This class was selected purposively based on the results of preliminary observations, which indicated a low level of interest in poetry writing, as reflected in minimal classroom participation, low enthusiasm during lessons, and the production of poetry works that tended to be less creative. The participants consisted of both male and female students aged 15–16 years, representing diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

2.3. Data collection techniques

This study employed three main instruments to collect both quantitative and qualitative data: observation sheets, a learning interest questionnaire, and documentation records. These instruments were designed to capture a comprehensive picture of the students' engagement, perceptions, and performance in poetry writing lessons using the integrated Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach.

1. Observation Sheets

Observation sheets were used to systematically record students' behavior, participation, and interaction throughout the learning process. The observation checklist focused on indicators of learning interest, namely: attention to lessons, perseverance in completing learning tasks, enjoyment of the material, and activeness in learning activities. Observations were conducted by the researchers and the collaborating teacher in each session, ensuring multiple perspectives to enhance the reliability of the recorded data.

2. Learning Interest Questionnaire

The learning interest questionnaire served as the primary quantitative instrument for measuring changes in student interest between cycles. The questionnaire was adapted from the instrument developed by Sardiman [1], with modifications to suit the context of poetry writing in vocational high schools. Responses were measured using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The instrument's content validity was established through expert review by two Indonesian language education lecturers, and reliability was assessed in a pilot test with Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70 , indicating acceptable internal consistency for research purposes.

3. Documentation

Documentation was used to support both observation and questionnaire data by providing tangible evidence of the learning process and outcomes. This included photographs of classroom activities, audio-visual recordings of poetry presentations, and copies of students' poetry works produced during the study. Documentation also included lesson plans and teaching materials, which served as references for evaluating the alignment of classroom activities with the intended pedagogical framework.

The use of these three complementary instruments ensured triangulation of data sources, enhancing the validity and credibility of the research findings. The combination of direct behavioral observation, self-reported interest levels, and tangible learning artifacts provided a rich dataset to evaluate the effectiveness of the CRT–PBL approach in increasing students' interest in poetry writing.

2.4. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection in this study was carried out systematically across the two cycles of the Classroom Action Research, ensuring that both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered in a consistent manner. The procedures followed the sequence of planning, action, observation, and reflection in each cycle, with adjustments made based on the results of the preceding cycle.

1. Pre-Implementation Phase

Before the first cycle began, preliminary observations were conducted to identify the baseline conditions of students' interest in poetry writing. This stage involved the use of the observation sheet to document students' attention, participation, and enthusiasm during regular poetry writing lessons. The initial learning interest questionnaire was also administered to capture students' self-reported attitudes toward poetry writing prior to the intervention. This baseline data served as a benchmark for measuring improvements in subsequent cycles.

2. Data Collection During Each Cycle

During the implementation of each cycle, three types of data collection took place concurrently:

- **Observation:** Both the researchers and the collaborating teacher observed student behavior and participation using the standardized observation sheet. Observations were conducted in real time during classroom activities, focusing on the four indicators of interest: attention, perseverance, enjoyment, and activeness.
- **Questionnaire Administration:** At the end of each cycle, students completed the learning interest questionnaire. The post-cycle questionnaire allowed for a quantitative comparison of interest levels between cycles, providing evidence of changes resulting from the CRT–PBL intervention.
- **Documentation:** Throughout each session, photographs, audio-visual recordings, and samples of student poetry were collected. These materials served as supplementary evidence to validate observation and questionnaire findings, and also provided qualitative insights into the learning process.

3. Post-Cycle Reflection and Adjustment

After each cycle, all collected data were compiled and reviewed during the reflection stage. Observation notes, questionnaire results, and documentation were analyzed to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas needing improvement in the instructional approach. Based on these findings, modifications were made to the lesson design for the subsequent cycle. For example, if students showed lower engagement in the reflective stage of CRT, additional prompts and cultural materials were integrated in the next cycle to enhance participation.

This systematic and cyclical data collection procedure ensured that the research not only measured the effectiveness of the intervention but also provided ongoing feedback to refine and optimize the learning strategies used. The triangulation of observation, questionnaire, and documentation data reinforced the validity and reliability of the findings.

2.5. Data Analysis

The data obtained in this study were analyzed using a mixed-methods descriptive approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) integrated with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in increasing students' interest in poetry writing. The mixed approach ensured that both measurable changes and contextual insights were captured throughout the research cycles.

1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were derived from the learning interest questionnaires administered before and after each cycle. The responses were scored using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree). The scores for each indicator—attention, perseverance, enjoyment, and activeness—were then converted into percentages using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\% \dots (1)$$

Where:

P = Percentage score for each indicator

f = Total score obtained by students for the indicator

n = Maximum possible score for the indicator

The resulting percentages were compared between the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II to determine the magnitude of improvement in student interest. The quantitative analysis also involved calculating the gain score to assess the rate of improvement between cycles.

2. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were obtained from observation sheets and documentation (photographs, video recordings, and student poetry works). The qualitative analysis followed the stages proposed by Miles and Huberman, namely:

- Data Reduction: Filtering and focusing on relevant information related to student engagement, participation patterns, and responses to the CRT–PBL activities.
- Data Display: Organizing data in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, and selected excerpts from observation notes to facilitate interpretation.
- Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Identifying recurring patterns, themes, and changes in student behavior across cycles, then cross-checking them with quantitative results for consistency.

3. Triangulation

To enhance the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing results from multiple data sources: questionnaire results (quantitative), observation records (qualitative), and documentation evidence. For example, an increase in the questionnaire score for the "activeness" indicator was validated by observational notes of students' active participation in discussions and by video recordings showing more frequent poetry presentations in class.

By combining statistical percentage analysis with in-depth thematic interpretation, this data analysis approach ensured a holistic evaluation of how the integrated CRT–PBL model influenced students' interest in poetry writing, both in measurable terms and in the richer context of classroom interactions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Overview of Research Implementation

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) was implemented in two cycles, with each cycle systematically following the four stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection as proposed by Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) [19], [20]. The purpose of this cyclical design was to enable continuous improvement of the learning process through iterative refinement. Each cycle was conducted collaboratively between researchers and the classroom teacher to ensure contextual alignment with the students' needs and the school's learning environment.

Cycle I served as the initial introduction to the integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in poetry writing lessons. The learning design in this phase emphasized connecting poetry themes with students' cultural backgrounds and daily life experiences. The process began with identifying culturally relevant themes, such as local traditions, personal memories, or community events. Students were then grouped to engage in collaborative discussions aimed at solving contextual problems—such as expressing emotions about a local event or interpreting a cultural proverb—before drafting their poetry. The goal was to build a sense of relevance and ownership in the writing process, while simultaneously encouraging critical and creative thinking.

Cycle II was developed based on the reflection results from Cycle I, which identified three key areas for improvement. First, the variety of cultural stimuli was enriched by incorporating local proverbs, folk tales, visual media depicting cultural festivals, and current events within the community. This expansion aimed to deepen cultural connections and inspire more diverse creative expressions. Second, clearer scaffolding was provided for problem-solving activities, including step-by-step prompts and guiding questions to help students move from idea generation to poetic expression more effectively. Third, more structured opportunities were created for sharing and performance, allowing students to present their poetry orally, receive peer feedback, and reflect on their creative process. These enhancements were strategically designed to strengthen emotional engagement, collaborative learning, and higher-order creative skills.

3.2. Quantitative Results of Students' Interest

The quantitative analysis of the learning interest questionnaire, administered at three different stages—pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II—showed a consistent and significant improvement across all measured indicators: attention, perseverance, enjoyment, and activeness. As summarized in Table 1, the data reflect both progressive

development from one cycle to the next and the cumulative impact of integrating Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) with Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in poetry writing lessons.

Table 1. Improvement in Students' Interest in Poetry Writing

Indicator	Pre-Cycle (%)	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)	Gain (%)
Attention	62.5	74.3	85.2	+22.7
Perseverance	60.8	72.1	83.5	+22.7
Enjoyment	58.4	70.7	82.4	+24.0
Activeness	55.2	68.9	81.0	+25.8
Average	59.2	71.5	83.0	+23.8

The results indicate that average student interest increased from 59.2% in the pre-cycle to 83.0% in Cycle II, yielding an overall gain of +23.8%. Among the four indicators, the highest improvement was recorded in activeness (+25.8%), which suggests that the integrated CRT-PBL approach was particularly effective in stimulating active engagement and dynamic participation during the learning process. This aligns with the theoretical perspective that culturally relevant contexts, when combined with problem-based tasks, create a more authentic and motivating environment for students to express themselves [4], [21]-[23].

The steady rise across attention, perseverance, and enjoyment also reflects how the approach not only captured students' initial interest but sustained it through meaningful activities and collaborative exploration. In Cycle I, students began to respond more positively to culturally familiar themes and problem scenarios, while in Cycle II, the increased variety of cultural stimuli and structured scaffolding further deepened their commitment and enjoyment in poetry writing. Overall, the data provide strong quantitative evidence that the CRT-PBL integration has a significant positive effect on fostering students' interest in creative writing.

3.3. Qualitative Findings from Observation and Documentation

The qualitative findings were derived from classroom observations, teacher field notes, and student reflections collected during each cycle. These data provide a deeper understanding of how the integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) influenced students' emotional engagement, motivation, and participation in poetry writing activities.

In Cycle I, the introduction of culturally relevant themes—such as local traditions, daily life experiences, and community events—immediately drew students' attention. Observational notes indicated that students appeared more eager to share personal stories related to the topics presented. For example, during the initial group discussions, several students volunteered to explain the meaning of local proverbs used in the lesson, linking them to real-life situations. This sense of cultural familiarity not only reduced anxiety but also created an inclusive atmosphere where students felt their backgrounds and experiences were valued. However, some students still hesitated to actively contribute during poetry drafting, indicating the need for clearer guidance in problem-solving and more opportunities for peer support.

By Cycle II, the refinements made based on the previous reflection—such as expanding the range of cultural stimuli to include folk tales, regional events, and local idioms—proved highly effective. Students were observed to be more animated during discussions, often exchanging ideas without prompting from the teacher. One notable observation was the increased willingness of quieter students to share their drafts during the poetry performance stage, suggesting that the iterative process had helped build confidence. In their written reflections, students frequently described the learning experience as “enjoyable,” “personal,” and “motivating,” highlighting that the activities allowed them to “express feelings through familiar cultural stories” and “connect learning to real life.”

Overall, the qualitative evidence supports the quantitative findings by showing that the CRT-PBL integration did more than just improve measurable interest scores—it also fostered a classroom culture of mutual respect, collaboration, and creative expression. Students' growing enthusiasm and willingness to take creative risks were consistently observed, confirming that combining culturally relevant pedagogy with problem-based inquiry can effectively nurture both affective engagement and sustained interest in creative writing tasks.

3.4. Integrated Interpretation of CRT-PBL Effects

The integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in this Classroom Action Research demonstrated a synergistic effect on enhancing students' interest and engagement in poetry writing. Quantitatively, the steady rise in average interest scores from 59.2% (pre-cycle) to 83.0% (Cycle II), with a total gain of +23.8%, indicates a significant improvement in the four measured indicators: attention, perseverance, enjoyment, and activeness. Notably, activeness showed the highest increase (+25.8%), suggesting that the combined CRT-PBL framework effectively stimulated more active participation and peer-to-peer interaction during classroom activities.

From a qualitative perspective, classroom observations, teacher field notes, and student reflections reveal that this improvement was driven by two mutually reinforcing factors. First, the culturally grounded content in

CRT—through the use of local proverbs, folk tales, and culturally familiar scenarios—created an emotionally resonant learning environment where students felt a sense of belonging and validation of their identities. Second, the problem-oriented nature of PBL encouraged analytical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and the practical application of ideas in the creation of poetry drafts. The iterative nature of the two-cycle implementation allowed for ongoing adjustments, such as enhanced scaffolding and diversified cultural stimuli, which in turn deepened both cognitive and emotional engagement.

Taken together, the data suggest that the CRT–PBL integration does not merely address the mechanics of poetry writing but also transforms the classroom into an inclusive, participatory, and creativity-rich space. The approach succeeds in bridging personal cultural experiences with structured problem-solving, fostering a dual engagement—emotional and intellectual—that sustains students’ interest over time. This dual impact aligns with prior research emphasizing that culturally relevant and inquiry-based pedagogies can reinforce one another, leading to stronger learning motivation and higher-quality student outputs in creative disciplines.

3.5. Discussion in Relation to Previous Studies

The findings of this study confirm and extend previous research on the pedagogical benefits of integrating culturally grounded approaches with problem-based learning. The significant increase in students’ interest—both in quantitative terms (+23.8% overall gain) and qualitative indicators such as heightened activeness and emotional engagement—supports [4] assertion that Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) fosters a sense of belonging and relevance in the learning process. By embedding poetry writing within students’ cultural contexts, this study, emphasizes that validating students’ cultural identities leads to deeper motivation and participation [24], [25].

The results also resonate with existing literature on Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which has been widely documented to promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative engagement [26]. In the context of creative writing, previous studies [27]–[29] have highlighted that problem-oriented tasks stimulate idea generation and increase the perceived relevance of writing activities. This study builds upon those insights by demonstrating that PBL, when intertwined with CRT, not only engages cognitive faculties but also amplifies affective engagement—particularly in the domain of activeness, which showed the highest improvement in the quantitative results.

The combination of the cognitive problem-solving elements of PBL and the empathy/cultural context of CRT provides a solid foundation for innovation in poetry learning in your vocational school to not only motivate but also appreciate the cultural background of students, an integration that has not been explored much in the literature before. Furthermore, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on integrated pedagogical models. While earlier studies often examined CRT and PBL in isolation, few have explored their combined impact in the creative arts, particularly poetry writing. The current study shows that this combination bridges the gap between personal identity expression and structured inquiry, producing a more holistic learning environment. This aligns with previous studies [18], [30] argument that culturally responsive instruction should be paired with rigorous, inquiry-driven tasks to optimize student outcomes. In this sense, the present findings not only corroborate but also extend prior work by offering a model of CRT–PBL integration that has proven effective in fostering sustained student interest in a culturally diverse classroom setting. In general, these results suggest that the integration of CRT and PBL has the potential to be an effective pedagogical model in increasing motivation and creativity in writing poetry among vocational students. This model can be generalized in the context of literary learning that demands creativity, especially in schools with high cultural diversity, with similar challenges and opportunities.

The findings of this study provide a number of important implications both pedagogically, curricularly, and theoretically. From the pedagogical side, the integration of CRT-PBL presents a practical framework for teachers in utilizing students’ cultural backgrounds as a learning resource so that poetry writing activities not only function as linguistic exercises, but also as a means of expressing local identities and values. This has an impact on increasing the relevance of learning for students while strengthening their intrinsic motivation. In terms of curriculum, this study emphasizes the need for a culture-based approach and problem-solving to be integrated into Indonesian learning standards in vocational schools so that students do not only write literary texts, but also relate them to their social and cultural realities. Meanwhile, theoretically, this study enriches the literature by presenting a hybrid CRT-PBL model that was previously rarely studied in the context of creative writing, especially poetry. This model can be a reference for the development of literary learning theories that are more inclusive, contextual, and responsive to diversity.

Although the results show a significant increase in interest in writing poetry, there are a number of limitations that need to be noted. First, the study only involved one class with a limited number of students so the results could not be generalized to a wider population. Second, the research design using Classroom Action Research (CAR) with two cycles only provides a short-term overview of the effectiveness of CRT-PBL integration, so it cannot answer whether the increase in student interest can be sustained in the long term. Third, the focus of this research is limited to poetry writing skills, so it is not yet known how effective the CRT-PBL model is if applied to other literary genres, such as short stories, dramas, or essays. These limitations are important notes to consider in interpreting the contribution of research results.

Based on these limitations, further research is recommended to involve a larger and diverse sample from various schools and regions, so that the results of the study have a higher level of generalization. In addition, longitudinal studies are needed to see the sustainability impact of the CRT–PBL model on students' writing interest and creativity over a longer period of time. Future research may also develop the application of this model to other literary genres, such as short stories and dramas, to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the model's contribution to literary learning. Furthermore, the integration of digital technologies, such as collaborative writing platforms and interactive digital media, can be explored to expand the space for students' creativity and collaboration in writing. Further research also has the potential to test the effectiveness of this model at other levels of education, such as junior high school or college, so that the scope of the application of CRT-PBL is wider and can make a significant contribution to the development of language and literature learning at various levels of education.

4. CONCLUSION

The integration of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in poetry writing lessons proved effective in increasing students' learning interest and creativity. Quantitative results showed a significant improvement of +23.8% in the overall interest score from the pre-cycle to Cycle II, with the highest increase in the activeness indicator. Qualitative data from observations and documentation further confirmed this trend, revealing more engaged classroom participation, richer cultural expressions in students' poems, and stronger connections between personal experiences and creative writing tasks.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the CRT–PBL combination creates a synergistic effect by integrating students' cultural backgrounds with problem-solving learning strategies. This approach not only validates learners' identities but also develops higher-order thinking and creative skills. Therefore, CRT–PBL can be considered an effective instructional model for enhancing student motivation and creative output in poetry writing, especially in culturally diverse classrooms. Future research is suggested to apply this model to other literary genres and examine its long-term influence on student engagement and achievement.

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