SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

Integrated Creative Learning Model through Suket Puppet (*Wayang Suket*) for Elementary Students

Nugraheni Eko Wardani* and Endang Widiyastuti

Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia
Art Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Wayang suket is one of the nine types of *wayang* puppet found in the city of Surakarta, Indonesia (Wardani, 2014). *Wayang suket* can be described as *wayang* puppets made of grass (*suket*). These grass puppets are created to represent human beings or animals. *Wayang suket*, as a cultural product of Indonesia, is appropriate for introduction to students. Teachers, as classroom learning facilitators, can use creatively made *wayang suket* as a learning model, thus enabling students to better absorb the materials and character traits of the *wayang suket* stories. This article explains the use of an integrative-creative learning model that can be applied in Indonesian-language and culture education lessons for students in the fourth year of elementary school. This research finds that: (1) creative learning is learning planned by teachers to include a variety of activities that can meet the needs of students with varying capacities. This learning is conditioned by the teacher in a fun and entertaining atmosphere; (2) an integrative creative learning model, based on *wayang suket*, was implemented through lessons focusing on listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Activities included students making *wayang suket* and using these puppets for role-playing.

Keywords: Creative integrative, elementary school students, learning models

INTRODUCTION

Building the character of our younger generation is crucial for Indonesians. The noble values of the culture and nation, held for hundreds of years, have been eroded over time. Many cases of crime have involved the younger generation. Frequent

cases of assault, rape, bullying, internet pornography, sadism, and hate speech indicate the fragile state of the younger generation. This can be seen in data from the Indonesian Commission for Child Protection (Hendrian, 2016, p. 1), which indicated that in 2016, the Commission handled 3,581 reports of children's rights being violated. This included 1,002 cases involving children facing legal issues, 702 cases involving family and childrearing, 414 cases of cybercrime involving children, and 328 cases of children's right being violated in education. These cases involve cyberbullying, online prostitution, kidnapping, hate speech, rape, *tawuran* (inter-school fighting), etc.

This condition is concerning. The youth are easily exposed to negative influences, and these can have a negative impact on the children's character development and behaviour, which becomes increasingly apparent over time. Positive character traits such as honesty, social and environmental awareness, hard work, religiosity, responsibility, and friendship are slowly lost. Chan and Sidhu (2016, p. 555) stated that technology is the cause for the diminution of these positive character traits among the youth. This is reflected in the argument by Lickona (1991, p. 4) that character education has failed because "we live in a media-driven culture which promotes relativism and hedonism and undermines many of the values that are the foundation of good character. Families are more stressed and fragmented [more] than ever and often spend less time in the face-to-face communication

necessary for the transmission of values and the formation of children's character". A good character, according to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (IMEC) (2016), covers eighteen points: religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, love for the homeland, appreciation for achievements, friendliness, peacefulness, love of reading, environmental awareness, social awareness, and responsibility.

Facing these conditions, it is important to implement character education programmes for youths in schools. Character education can be realised through an Indonesian literary and cultural education. Good character traits can be conveyed to students through an innovative, creative, and fun learning model. Through such a learning model, good character can be taught to students. Such a learning model could use *wayang* puppets, or more specifically, *wayang suket*. *Wayang suket* is one of the nineteen types of *wayang* found in the city of Surakarta, Indonesia (Wardani, 2014). *Wayang*, in this sense, is selected because it serves as an educational medium. It serves not only as spectacle, but also as a guide for viewers. As explained by Marzanna Poplawska (2004, p. 1), *wayang* is a vital art form in Java. Its performances are still very popular and often staged for all kinds of celebrations, from family to state events. *Wayang* provides both good performance (*tontonan*) and guidance (*tuntunan*).

For teaching good character, an appropriate learning model is necessary

to ensure that lessons are well received by students. Character traits and values are not provided through advice, but rather taught to students through cognitive, affective, and psychomotor lessons that include writing stories, making *wayang* puppets, and role-playing. This is in accordance with Dalmeri's (2014) view that character education does not simply teach students right and wrong, but conveys specific character traits through the habituation of good behaviour. As such, students can understand, are capable of sensing, and wish to emulate these good behaviours.

Material for character education can be integrated through an integrative creative learning model, such as one used for fourth-year elementary students that integrates Indonesian literature and language. Through this integrative creative learning model, it is hoped that students can internalise positive character traits more easily than if they receive continuous advice from their teachers. This reflects Lickona's view that, throughout history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals; to help young people become smart and to help them become good (1991, p. 6). This article's goals are two-fold; (1) to explain the integrative creative learning model as one learning model implemented at Indonesian elementary schools; and (2) to explain the *wayang suket*-based integrative creative learning model and its use in Indonesian language and culture education for students in the fourth year of elementary school.

METHODS

This research is a qualitative research that applies an explorative approach. It is intended to answer questions formulated in accordance with this research method (Creswell, 2013, p. 22). The research subject comprised fourth-year elementary school students and their teacher. Data for this research came from: (1) informants (teacher and students); (2) documents (notes from observation and notes from interviews with teacher and students) for analysis; and (3) experiences with year-four classes using *wayang suket* in realising an integrative creative learning model. Data were collected through observations of the learning process, involving teacher and students. The learning process was observed beginning with the *wayang suket* stories being told by the *dalang* (puppet master), the stories being written, the *wayang* puppets being made, and the role-playing activities. Interviews were conducted with teacher and students regarding the *wayang suket*-based integrative creative learning model used. In-depth document analysis was conducted using observation and interview notes. Data were analysed using the interactive analysis approach of Miles and Hubermann (2014) that consists of: (1) data collection; (2) data reduction; (3) data presentation; and (4) conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Integrative Creative Model

Studies in Indonesia at the primary and secondary level follow the 2013 curriculum

(IMEC, 2016). This curriculum is intended to fully empower students and allow them to realise their greatest potential. This, in turn, is intended to allow students to attain the expected competencies and develop their own attitude, knowledge, and skills. Other qualities that must be developed and realised in the learning process include creativity, collaboration, solidarity, leadership, empathy, tolerance, and life skills, all of which are used to shape their personalities and thus improve the civilisation and dignity of the nation (Hosnan, 2016, p. ix). In order to attain the greatest quality of education, several principles must be realised: (1) learning must be student-oriented; (2) learning should improve students' creativity; (3) the learning environment should be fun; (4) learning should involve ethical, aesthetic, logical, and kinaesthetic values; and (5) diverse learning experiences should be offered through the implementation of fun learning methods.

Creativity is one quality that the 2013 curriculum intends to develop. Creativity can be defined as the ability to create something new, the ability to implement new ideas in problem solving, and the ability to see new, already existing connections (Munandar, 2012, p. 25). Creativity, according to Moustakis (as cited in Munandar, 2012, p. 19), is the experience of expressing and actualising individual identity in an integrated form, in one's relations with oneself, with nature, and with others. Creativity, in this understanding, is the development of one's innate potential. It is learning to use one's abilities optimally, to come up with new ideas. It is developing an awareness and sensitivity to issues of the environment, of other people, and of humanity.

The Indonesia National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education defines creativity as imaginative activities and values that produce new results (Craft, 2005). Fildman (as cited in Craft, 2005), identifies it as "the achievement of something remarkable and new, something which transforms and changes a field of endeavour in a significant way. The kind of things that people do that changes the world". Creativity will lead to a creative product.

Creativity must be stimulated from early childhood, be it in early childhood education or in primary education (Munandar, 2012, p. 12). Why must education be stimulated from early childhood? Munandar (2012, p. 31) identifies several factors for this, which include: (1) to allow them to actualise themselves through creativity; the need for self-actualization, as argued by Abraham Maslow, is the most important of humans' core needs; (2) creativity and creative thinking, as a way of identifying various possible solutions to problems, has not received sufficient focus in education; schools focus on students' knowledge, memory, and rational thought; (3) being creative not only benefits the self and others, but also provides individual satisfaction; and (4) creativity makes it possible for humans to improve their quality of life.

The stimulation of creativity is linked to the development of cognitive, affective, and

psychomotor competencies, in accordance with the 2013 curriculum in effect in Indonesia. Increasing students' creativity and creative thinking skills is closely linked to teachers' methods. To stimulate creativity, a fun learning atmosphere is required, in which educational methods and media promote students' enthusiasm for learning. Teachers must function as facilitators and offer students the greatest creative opportunities and allows them to build their confidence for thinking and voicing their opinions. In planning learning activities under the 2013 curriculum, these learning goals can be realised by developing students' creativity. Teachers, as facilitators, need only focus on the specific elements necessary for promoting the 5Ms in the 2013. These 5Ms consist of *mengamati* (observing), *menanya* (asking), *mengumpulkan data* (collecting data), *mengasosasikan* (associating), and *mengomunikasikan* (communicating).

The *wayang suket*-based integrative creative learning model can develop students' characters through student-centred learning and in a fun atmosphere. Students often conduct their learning collaboratively in groups, where they learn to voice their thoughts, respect the opinions of others, think critically and creatively, etc. The *wayang suket*-based integrative creative learning model also allows students to absorb various character traits and values by listening to stories, making *wayang* puppets, and role-playing. This is appropriate with Mulango's statement (2013, p. 157) that the goal for student-centred learning is to

bring students into the process of their own education.

A *Wayang Suket*-Based Integrative Creative Model for Elementary School Students

Creativity is an important need, one that must be developed among students because at school, in society, and (later) in the workplace, they will require creativity for knowledge, technology, and art. As such, an integrative creative model is necessary to increase students' creativity through lessons that integrate Indonesian language, art, and culture. The Indonesian language is taught by integrating listening skills, reading skills, speaking skills, and writing skills. These integrated strategies and interactive learning techniques require students to work in groups, thus helping them become more involved in the learning process (Delija, 2013, p. 13).

A *wayang suket*-based integrative creative learning model here involves: (1) teaching Year 4 students the Indonesian language by integrating listening skills, reading skills, speaking skills, and writing skills, and thus increasing students' creativity; (2) making *wayang* puppets suited to stories written by students in writing skill-building activities; the making of *wayang* puppets also encourages students to be actively creative; (3) the final step of the *wayang suket*-based integrative creative learning model is role-playing, in which each student must act as his or her character. The entire learning process applies mind-

mapping, role-playing, discussions, inquiry, demonstrations, assignments, and discovery learning strategies.

The stages of the creative integrative learning model, as applied to Indonesian-language classes, are as follows.

(1) Listening and observing:

Students were asked to appreciate a *wayang suket* performance directly by listening and watching a performance staged by a *dalang* (puppet master). The *wayang suket* story was written by the puppet master in collaboration with the researcher. This story focuses on the characters students are already familiar with and contains the eighteen character traits stipulated by the Ministry of Education. The researcher's intervention in the story writing included the integration of character traits and values in the story. As such, in viewing the *wayang suket* performance, students were not only entertained, but also learned and absorbed the character traits and values contained within the story. The Indonesian language was chosen to be easily understood by students in the fourth year of elementary school.

(2) Inquiry:

This activity involved students asking their teacher about *wayang suket*, about the story shown in the *wayang suket* performance, about the characters, about the character traits and values in the story, etc. Questions asked by the students included, "What is *wayang suket*?", "When was *wayang suket* first performed?", "Why did Arif help his friend?", "Why must we be nice to others? What happens if we're nice to them, but they're mean to us?", and "What must we do if we see our friends mistreating others?" Questions were asked to the teacher and discussed together. Students' active participation in asking questions to their teacher and in discussions was prioritised. The teacher served as the facilitator in the learning process.

(3) Data collection:

Based on their listening and viewing of the *wayang* performance, the students were asked to prepare a mind-map using paper, pencil, and colour pencils. During this mind-mapping activity, the students were asked to note keywords, draw, and colour. This mind-mapping activity was linked to the story presented to students.

(3) Association

Students prepared a mind-map by writing the main theme in the middle of the paper, with keywords positioned as branches of the main theme. The students used their imagination in diagramming the theme and keywords as a tree, and then coloured the tree diagram they made. The students used this diagram as a framework for writing a simple, imaginative piece.

(4) Communicating:

Students read their imaginative writing pieces. The integrative-creative learning model was used to integrate Indonesian language, art, and culture in a classroom setting. The learning process followed several stages, beginning with observation and inquiry as in the previous stage. Here, differences could be found in the data collection, association, and communication stages.

(1) Data collection and association (arts and culture):

After reading the stories they had written in groups, e tstudents in each group identified four characters that could be used in making *wayang* puppets. Based on their identification, and working with the teacher (as the facilitator), the students made *wayang* suket puppets. *Wayang suket* (meaning 'grass puppets') are made from napier grasses that are shaped to resemble human beings. The making of *wayang suket* puppets does not need any special equipment. It requires only the skill of weaving the grasses into a puppet.

(2) Communication:

Communication was conducted using the Indonesian language. The communication activity involved role-playing using *wayang* puppets and the stories written by the students. Every student held one puppet and, during role-play, conducted dialogue between the different characters in their stories.

These students were supported by other students, who provided music with specific musical instruments. This was intended to increase students' creativity.

This integrative-creative model of learning promoted students' creativity by having them write stories, read stories, make puppets, and role-play. Although it included productive activities such as speaking and writing, it did not ignore the importance of students' receptive abilities. It hones their listening skills and reading skills. Lessons capable of promoting students' creativity were one aspect character education, as they teach the value of creativity. The learning methods used were likewise able to promote character building among the students. The lessons here used several methods, namely discovery, inquiry, mind mapping, discussion, and role-playing. Through these methods, students absorbed several character traits that include the willingness to voice their opinions, ability to work in groups, discipline (the ability to complete tasks on schedule), democracy (the ability to accept other people/groups' opinions), responsibility for the tasks assigned to them, and ability to focus and work on assignments, etc. The character traits and values in these lessons are in-line with those voiced by Lickona (1991, p. 18), who writes that students must learn and absorb seven traits; honesty, compassion, courage, kindness, self-control, cooperation, and diligence or hard work. These traits are also reflected by the Indonesian Ministry of Education (2011), which identifies eighteen points:

religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, love for the homeland, appreciation for achievements, friendliness, peacefulness, love of reading, environmental awareness, social awareness, and responsibility.

The live performance of *wayang suket* used a story in which character building and character education had been included in a non-patronising manner. This performance lasted for two periods. Through this story, the students were able to absorb a number of values related to their interactions as students, children, and members of society. Values such as honesty, mutual respect, tolerance, responsibility, respect for the environment, and tenacity in facing problems are all presented through these *wayang* characters. This is also part of reinforcing the character traits absorbed by students in class. Students' moral feeling and moral action are explored through discussions and inquiries regarding *wayang*, the characters, and stories performed. The teacher tries to draw students' opinions regarding alternative actions, actions ill-suited to students' moral feelings and moral actions. This is in accordance with Lickona's (1991, p. 10) view that character education contains three core elements: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Through these lessons, students are not limited solely to moral knowing, but also reach the stages of moral feeling and moral action.

This lesson was contextual, in that students directly observed a *wayang*

performance and appreciated this performance by using the four language skills, making *wayang* puppets, and role-playing. In this contextual learning, the students underwent the processes of discovery and inquiry. In these lessons, the students were not the only ones who must be creative; teachers too had to show creativity in planning their lessons so as to ensure that character traits were not simply known, but absorbed and applied in students' everyday lives. This is indicated by the response of Teacher who stated that, before any lessons, she had always prepared a plan to ensure that her students developed not only their cognitive aspects, but also their affective and psychomotor aspects. As such, aside from the learning methods, learning media, and learning techniques, learning also requires a role model. This supports the finding by Sarimah Mokhtar et al. (as cited in Mohamed, 2016) that teachers improve their teaching techniques, become more aware of their students' drawbacks, and portray an ideal character for the students to role model.

CONCLUSION

Creative learning is a learning that is planned by teachers to include a wide variety of activities that fulfil the needs of students of various competency levels. Such learning is conditioned by teachers to use a fun atmosphere. Such creative learning is integrated with learning the four basic skills of language and culture.

The *wayang suket*-based integrative creative learning model is implemented

by teaching four basic language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. These activities also include students making *wayang suket* puppets and role-playing using the said puppets. Through such integrative creative activities, the character traits contained in *wayang suket* can be internalised by students.

REFERENCES

Chan, Y. F. & Sidhu, G. K. (2016). Students' perceptions of substance abuse among secondary school students in Malaysia. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities, 24*(2), 555-572.

Craft, A. (Ed.). (2005). *Creativity in schools tensions and dilemmas.* New York: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design.* New York: Sage.

Dalmeri. (2014). Education for character development. *Journal Al-Ulum, 14*(1), 271-272.

Delija, S. (2013). Integrating language learning strategies to promote active cooperative language learning. *Journal of Education and Practice, 17*(4), 13.

Hendrian, D. (2016, June 13). *Wajah perlindungan anak 2016* [The face of children protection 2016]. Retrieved from http://www.kpai.go.id/utama/wajah-perlindungan-anak-2016-2

Hosnan. (2016). *Pendekatan saintifik dan kontekstual dalam pembelajaran abad 21: Kunci sukses implementasi kurikulum 2013* [Scientific and contextual approach in 21st century learning: The key to successful implementation of the 2013 curriculum]. Jakarta: Ghalia Indah.

Lickona, T. (1991). *Educating for character: How our school can teach respect and responsibility*. New York: Bantam Books.

Marzanna, P. (2004). *Wayang* Wahyu as an example of Christian forms of shadow theatre. *Asian Theatre Journal, 21*(2), 194-202.

Miles, M. & Hubermann, M. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis.* London:Sage.

Mohamed, S., Jasmi, K. A., & Zailaini, M. A. (2016). Elements of delivering islamic education through islamic morality in several Malaysian schools. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 24*(4), 1267-1277.

Mulango, G. (2013). Effect of active learning teaching methodology on learner participatory. *Journal of Education and Practice, 4*(4), 157.

Munandar, U. (2012). *Pengembangan kreativitas anak berbakat* [Creativity development of gifted children]. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. (2016). *Curriculum Document 2013*. Retrieved from http://www.muna.staff.stainsalatiga.ac.id/dokumen-kurikulum-2013.pdf.

Wardani, N. E. (2014). Mapping *wayang* traditional theatre as a form of local wisdom of Surakarta Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2*(2), 319.