

Implementing Project-Based Learning to Enhance Creativity and Cultural Awareness in Randai Dance Education

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Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in teaching traditional Randai Kuantan dance within Cultural Arts education. The research aims to examine how PjBL enhances student engagement, collaboration, and cultural expression. A qualitative case study design was employed involving 28 students in one vocational high school class, with data collected through classroom observations, lesson plan analysis, student project documentation, and teacher interviews. The findings reveal observable behavioral changes, including increased active participation during rehearsals, more structured peer collaboration, improved performance confidence, and a deeper understanding of Randai's cultural values. Students demonstrated creativity in choreography adaptation and responsibility in completing group performances. Although time management and instructional media required adjustment, lesson design was largely aligned with PjBL principles. The study concludes that PjBL meaningfully supports artistic skill development and cultural appreciation in traditional dance instruction.

Keywords: *Project-Based Learning, Cultural Arts, Randai Kuantan Dance, Student Creativity.*

Article info

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural Arts is a compulsory subject for tenth-grade students in Vocational High School under the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes holistic development through artistic competence, cultural understanding, personal expression, and character formation. Within this framework, dance education is positioned as an experiential and socio-culturally grounded learning process. Traditional Randai Kuantan dance, as part of local cultural heritage, serves not only as an artistic practice but also as a medium for cultivating creativity, collaboration, discipline, and cultural awareness through embodied performance experiences (Kemdikbud, 2022; Purnomo et al., 2017). Thus, dance learning extends beyond technical mastery toward reflective engagement with cultural meaning and social interaction.

Despite this alignment, classroom practice in Vocational High School contexts often remains teacher-centered, limiting opportunities for collaborative creation and authentic performance-based assessment. Previous studies highlight challenges in aligning instructional modules with active learning principles and implementing evaluation strategies that meaningfully integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. However, these studies largely describe outcomes without critically examining how a structured pedagogical model can systematically address these gaps in traditional dance instruction. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that Project-Based Learning is effective in enhancing student engagement, critical thinking skills, and collaborative competence within arts education contexts. By positioning students as active participants in the learning process, project-based approaches encourage inquiry, problem-solving, and creative production through authentic tasks that reflect real artistic practices. In the field of arts education, this model enables learners to explore ideas, negotiate meanings, and collaboratively construct artistic works, thereby fostering deeper conceptual understanding as well as social and communicative skills. Consequently, Project-Based Learning not only supports the development of technical artistic abilities

but also promotes higher-order thinking and meaningful participation in culturally grounded learning experiences (Fathurrohman, 2015).

However, previous studies still indicate several limitations, including instructional module designs that are not fully aligned with the syntactic stages of Project-Based Learning, suboptimal implementation in classroom practice, and evaluation procedures that tend to emphasize final products rather than collaborative processes and rehearsal discipline. These gaps highlight the need for further investigation into the application of Project-Based Learning in traditional dance materials, particularly Randai Kuantan. A more in-depth examination is necessary to ensure that the planning, implementation, and assessment phases are consistently aligned with the core principles of Project-Based Learning, while simultaneously fostering students' competencies, creativity, and cultural awareness in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Traditional dances, such as Randai Kuantan, embody the noble values of the community that have been transmitted across generations. Through dance education in schools, students are not only introduced to choreographic techniques and performance skills, but are also encouraged to appreciate cultural diversity and to understand the symbolic meanings embedded within the performance. Such an approach strengthens students' sense of pride in their own cultural heritage while simultaneously fostering attitudes of tolerance and respect toward differences within a pluralistic society (Lenakakis & Sarafi, 2024).

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However, in school practice, several challenges frequently emerge. In many cases, dance instruction remains teacher-centered, with learning activities primarily focused on memorizing movements for performance assessments without sufficient exploration of cultural context or reflective discussion. Limited instructional time, inadequate learning resources, and students' varying levels of motivation often constrain the depth of engagement with traditional dance materials. As a result, learning may emphasize technical accuracy and final presentation, while the collaborative process, cultural interpretation, and character-building aspects receive less attention. These issues indicate the need for more structured and student-centered instructional strategies to optimize the educational potential of traditional dance learning in schools.

From the perspective of modern pedagogy, dance learning can be developed through variation theory, which emphasizes the importance of experiencing differences in order to deepen understanding. Through variations in movement, rhythm, spatial patterns, and expressive elements, students are guided to discern the distinctive artistic meanings embedded in each component of the dance. By encountering contrasts and similarities within choreographic structures, learners develop a more refined awareness of form, symbolism, and aesthetic intention. This approach positions learning as an active process of noticing and interpreting variation, enabling students to construct conceptual understanding through direct artistic experience (Ahlstrand & Andersson, 2023).

Accordingly, dance is not merely viewed as entertainment, but as a medium of cultural communication and a reflection of human life. Within this framework, traditional performance practices such as Randai Kuantan become meaningful pedagogical tools for cultivating creativity, cultural appreciation, and critical thinking skills. By engaging in interpretative, reflective, and collaborative activities, students are encouraged to analyze the cultural narratives embodied in movement and performance, thereby strengthening their artistic competence as well as their broader intellectual and socio-cultural development. Traditional dances, such as Randai Kuantan, embody the noble values of the community that have been transmitted across generations. Through dance education in schools, students are not only introduced to choreographic techniques and performance skills, but are also encouraged to appreciate cultural diversity and to understand the symbolic meanings embedded within the performance. Such an approach strengthens students' sense of pride in their own cultural heritage while simultaneously fostering attitudes of tolerance and respect toward differences within a pluralistic society.

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Another significant issue in the teaching of Randai Kuantan dance in schools relates to the planning and implementation of instructional modules. The module design is often not fully aligned with the teacher's instructional plan, particularly in the selection and formulation of Learning Outcomes, the sequencing of Learning Objectives and the allocation of instructional time, which is frequently inadequate or improperly structured. Several modules also do not consistently reflect the syntactic stages of Project-Based Learning, resulting in classroom practices that are not optimally implemented and do not systematically follow the essential phases of project-based instruction. Furthermore, assessment practices tend to focus predominantly on the final performance product, without adequately considering process-oriented dimensions such as collaboration, rehearsal discipline, active participation, and students' reflective engagement. These conditions indicate the need for a comprehensive examination of the Project-Based Learning model's implementation to ensure that planning, execution, and evaluation are coherently integrated and aligned with the fundamental principles of project-based pedagogy.

Despite this alignment, classroom practice in Vocational High School contexts often remains teacher-centered, limiting opportunities for collaborative creation and authentic performance-based assessment. Previous studies highlight challenges in aligning instructional modules with active learning principles and implementing evaluation strategies that meaningfully integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. However, these studies largely describe outcomes without critically examining how a structured pedagogical model can systematically address these gaps in traditional dance instruction.

Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to analyze the implementation of the Project-Based Learning model in the Randai Kuantan traditional dance material within the Cultural Arts subject at school, encompassing instructional planning, classroom implementation, and learning evaluation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in Randai Kuantan dance instruction at a Vocational High School in Pekanbaru (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study involved one Cultural Arts teacher and 28 tenth-grade students. The PjBL implementation was conducted over six weeks (12 instructional meetings), including project planning, rehearsal, and final performance presentation. Classroom observations were carried out throughout the implementation period to capture instructional processes, student collaboration, and performance development.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews with the teacher and selected students, and documentation analysis, including teaching modules, lesson plans, student project reports, rehearsal notes, and performance recordings. Triangulation was operationalized by comparing observational data, interview transcripts, and documented artifacts to ensure consistency across sources.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Open coding was first applied to identify recurring patterns related to engagement, collaboration, creativity, and cultural understanding. These codes were then organized into thematic categories aligned with the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of PjBL. To enhance trustworthiness, member checking was conducted with the teacher to validate interpretations, and prolonged observation strengthened

contextual credibility. Ethical considerations were addressed through informed consent from participants, assurance of confidentiality, and anonymization of student data in all research reports.

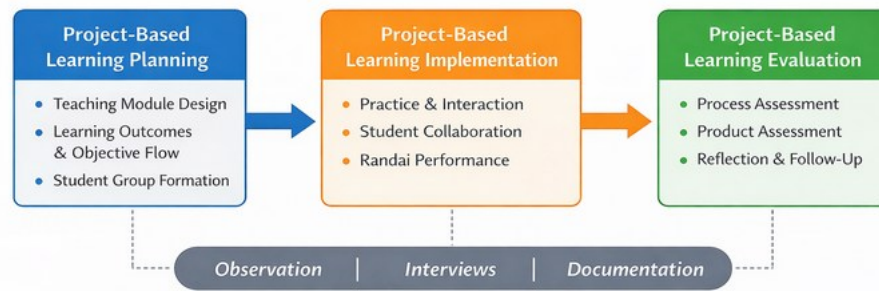


Figure 1: The Design of Project-Based Learning

Figure 1 illustrates the design of the Project-Based Learning implementation analyzed in this study. This design ensures systematic examination of each instructional stage, enabling comprehensive understanding of how PjBL is planned, enacted, and evaluated within the vocational school context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Planning Phase

The planning phase demonstrated structured alignment between Project-Based Learning (PjBL) principles and Randai Kuantan dance instruction. Document analysis of the teaching module showed that the lesson began with an essential question: *“How can we preserve the cultural meaning of Randai while presenting it creatively for contemporary audiences?”* This question guided the formulation of Learning Outcomes and the Learning Objective Flow. The teacher integrated collaborative choreography design, role distribution, rehearsal scheduling, and performance rubrics into the module.

Interview data supported this alignment. The teacher explained, *“I wanted students to understand that Randai is not only about movement, but about values and teamwork. The project format helped me structure that process.”* However, field observations revealed discrepancies between planning and execution. Rehearsal sessions frequently exceeded allocated time, and limited multimedia references constrained students’ contextual understanding of authentic Randai performances. These constraints indicate that while planning was conceptually aligned with PjBL syntax, practical calibration of time management and learning resources remains necessary.

Implementation Phase

Observation data confirmed high levels of student engagement during exploration and rehearsal activities. Students negotiated movement transitions, revised floor patterns, and assigned specific responsibilities such as lead performer, music coordinator, and costume organizer. One student noted during an interview, *“We had to discuss everything together because if one person made a mistake, the whole group was affected.”* This statement reflects the development of interdependence and collective accountability.

Nevertheless, implementation challenges were also evident. Some students initially showed hesitation in improvising movements due to fear of deviating from traditional forms. Others struggled with balancing rehearsal commitments and academic workload. These difficulties suggest that while PjBL fosters collaboration and creativity, structured guidance and scaffolding are required to support confidence and cultural sensitivity.

Analytical Reflection

Overall, the findings demonstrate that PjBL meaningfully structures rehearsal processes, collaborative choreography development, and reflective evaluation in Randai Kuantan instruction. Unlike purely theoretical affirmations of PjBL effectiveness, this case illustrates both its pedagogical strengths and contextual constraints. While the approach supports creativity, cultural awareness, and

social responsibility, its success depends on time management, resource availability, and sustained teacher facilitation. These results contribute to a more grounded understanding of project-based pedagogy within culturally rooted vocational arts education.

The implementation phase reflected the core characteristics of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), particularly active engagement, collaboration, and student-centered practice. Classroom observations across twelve meetings showed that students were directly involved in choreographic rehearsal, musical coordination (Rebab and Gong), and improvisation of thematic dialogue based on their assigned roles. Rather than delivering direct instruction throughout, the teacher functioned primarily as a facilitator providing corrective feedback, modeling rhythm patterns when necessary, and monitoring group dynamics using structured observation rubrics.

Field notes documented a recurring challenge in synchronizing dance movements with musical tempo. In one observed session, a group repeatedly fell out of alignment with the Gong cue. The teacher paused rehearsal and implemented scaffolded beat-counting exercises, followed by segmented rhythm drills in smaller clusters. After three iterations, synchronization improved noticeably, with students verbally counting beats before internalizing the tempo. This shift illustrates how structured scaffolding supported technical refinement rather than leaving collaboration entirely self-directed.

Interview excerpts further reveal student perspectives on the collaborative process. One student commented, *“At first, we argued about movement transitions, but after dividing roles clearly, practice became more focused.”* Another stated, *“Improvising dialogue was difficult because we were afraid it wouldn’t sound traditional enough.”* These responses indicate that although engagement was high, students initially experienced uncertainty regarding creative risk-taking within traditional boundaries.

Additional constraints emerged during implementation. Time management remained a significant issue, particularly as rehearsals overlapped with other academic obligations. Uneven participation was also observed in two groups, where dominant members assumed leadership roles while quieter students contributed minimally. The teacher addressed this by rotating responsibilities and requiring short reflective journal entries to encourage accountability. While not eliminating imbalance entirely, this strategy improved participation equity over subsequent meetings.

Overall, the implementation phase demonstrates that PjBL created a dynamic learning environment characterized by negotiation, revision, and iterative refinement. However, the process was not uniformly smooth; it required ongoing facilitation, scaffolding, and adjustment to sustain both cultural authenticity and collaborative balance.

The Evaluation Phase

Evaluation incorporated both formative and summative components. Process assessment focused on participation, rehearsal discipline, and teamwork, while product evaluation examined choreographic coherence, synchronization, and expressive quality. Reflective discussions conducted after the final performance revealed increased cultural awareness. As one student expressed, *“Before this project, I only memorized the movements. Now I understand why Randai tells stories about community and respect.”* Teacher reflections further confirmed observable behavioral changes, including improved rehearsal punctuality, stronger peer feedback practices, and greater performance confidence. However, evaluation data also highlighted uneven participation within certain groups, indicating the need for clearer individual accountability measures in future implementations.

Evaluation in this project extended beyond the final Randai performance to include continuous assessment of both process and product. Documentation analysis shows that assessment rubrics included indicators such as movement precision, rhythmic synchronization, expressive delivery, rehearsal discipline, teamwork, and cultural interpretation. Formative evaluation occurred during rehearsals through direct feedback and peer-review sessions. For example, when one group struggled to convey emotional intensity during a dialogue transition, peer observers were asked to identify unclear narrative moments. Students subsequently revised vocal projection and facial expression, resulting in visibly stronger character embodiment during the final presentation.

Process evaluation also captured notable behavioral development among students. Observation records indicated progressive improvements in punctuality, rehearsal preparation, and adherence to group responsibilities. At the start, three groups required repeated reminders to arrive prepared, but by the final week, most students consistently came ready with costumes and musical instruments. This shift suggests enhanced responsibility, self-regulation, and collective accountability.

Summative evaluation of the final performance showed generally strong choreographic coherence and better synchronization compared with early rehearsals. Nonetheless, not all outcomes were uniformly positive. Two groups exhibited minor inconsistencies in tempo stability under performance pressure, indicating that technical mastery was still in progress and required further consolidation.

Reflective discussions following the performance revealed increased cultural awareness. One student noted, *“Now I understand that Randai is about cooperation. If one person ignores the rhythm, the whole story feels incomplete.”* Such reflections demonstrate that students internalized not only the technical aspects of the performance but also the cultural and social values embedded in Randai.

Analytically, these findings confirm that evaluation in Project-Based Learning operates as an ongoing, multidimensional process. It encompasses both artistic outcomes and the development of collaborative behaviors, problem-solving skills, and cultural understanding. Observed challenges such as uneven participation and performance related anxiety highlight areas for further refinement in accountability mechanisms and rehearsal strategies in future implementations.

Procedures for Implementing Project-Based Learning

The procedures of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), as outlined by The George Lucas Educational Foundation (2005), comprise six core stages: identifying a meaningful problem or project theme, planning the project by defining objectives and allocating tasks, implementing the project through active and collaborative learning activities, monitoring progress and providing targeted guidance, presenting or showcasing project outcomes, and evaluating both the learning process and final results. These stages provide a structured yet flexible framework that allows students to construct knowledge actively while engaging in authentic, real-world tasks.

In practice, these stages at the vocational school implementing Randai Kuantan dance revealed both opportunities and challenges. Observation notes, interviews, and project documentation indicate that students engaged actively in collaborative rehearsals, role rotations, and reflective journaling, demonstrating growth in creativity, teamwork, and cultural understanding. For example, one student remarked during a reflective session, *“I didn’t realize how important it is to count the rhythm together; otherwise, our whole scene falls apart”*, highlighting the learning of collective responsibility. Observation records also noted that some groups initially struggled with synchronization and expressive dialogue, requiring teacher-led interventions such as peer feedback and rhythm drills. These scaffolded strategies allowed students to iteratively refine their performance, showing how monitoring and evaluation support ongoing learning within the PjBL framework.

Thus, the PjBL framework not only structured the learning process but also fostered critical thinking, problem-solving, and responsibility, while emphasizing reflective practice. These findings illustrate that implementing PjBL in traditional dance education requires both adherence to the six-stage model and adaptive strategies to manage real classroom constraints, ensuring meaningful engagement and holistic student development.

Table 1: The six stages of Project-Based Learning

No.	Procedure Stage	Description
1	Identify Project Theme	Students identify or are introduced to a meaningful, authentic problem or project theme aligned with learning objectives.
2	Plan the Project	Students define project goals, determine tasks, assign roles, develop timelines, and establish assessment criteria.

No.	Procedure Stage	Description
3	Implement the Project	Students engage in active and collaborative learning activities to complete the project tasks and develop the product.
4	Monitor and Guide	The teacher facilitates, monitors progress, provides feedback, and supports students in overcoming challenges.
5	Present the Outcome	Students present, perform, or showcase their final product to peers or a broader audience.
6	Evaluate and Reflect	Both the learning process and final product are assessed, followed by reflection for continuous improvement.

The explanation of each procedure is presented in detail in the following section, outlining the specific activities, roles, and objectives associated with each stage of Project-Based Learning to ensure systematic implementation and meaningful learning outcomes.

Start With the Essential Question

The initial stage of learning began with formulating an essential question to stimulate inquiry and active engagement. The question posed was: *“How do music, movement, and dialogue interact to create a cohesive and meaningful Randai Kuantan performance?”* Observation notes indicated that students actively discussed the relationship between traditional instruments, dance movements, narrative elements, and cultural values. One student commented during rehearsal, *“If the drums are off-beat, the story loses its meaning,”* reflecting reflective thinking and connection to cultural context.

At this stage, the teacher identified relevant learning content and prepared instructional modules, Learning Outcomes, Learning Objective Sequences, time allocation, and supporting media in accordance with national curriculum standards (Kemdikbud, 2022). Planning was conducted collaboratively, allowing students to contribute to performance themes such as community solidarity or moral responsibility. Field notes revealed that this collaborative approach increased students' sense of ownership and responsibility.

Supporting activities were systematically organized, including exploring basic Randai movements, practicing rhythmic patterns on traditional instruments, analyzing storylines, and identifying costumes and stage props. Students were grouped into functional roles—dancers, musicians, script developers, and stage coordinators and prepared necessary materials, including drums, rebab, costumes, and stage layout plans. Observational data showed that students demonstrated not only increased artistic competence but also growth in collaboration, planning, and problem-solving skills, essential for successful project completion (Fathurrohman, 2015; Zakaria et al., 2024).

Challenges were noted, such as initial difficulty synchronizing movements with musical cues and hesitation in improvising dialogue. The teacher addressed these by providing scaffolding exercises, peer feedback, and mini-rehearsals, illustrating that active teacher facilitation is crucial for overcoming early-stage project obstacles.

Design a Plan for the Project

The teacher and students collaboratively developed the project plan, emphasizing student ownership and active participation. Students contributed to setting ground rules, determining supporting activities, integrating interdisciplinary elements such as music and dance, and identifying the tools and materials required for the performance. Observation notes revealed that students negotiated rehearsal schedules, decided which traditional instruments would accompany specific dance sequences, and contributed ideas for costume and stage design. One student remarked during planning, *“We need to practice the drum rhythm first before adding the dance steps, so everyone stays in sync,”* demonstrating practical problem-solving and reflection.

The PjBL framework guided this planning phase, starting from an in-depth exploration of the essential question: how rhythm, movement, and storytelling interact in a Randai Kuantan performance (The George Lucas Educational Foundation, 2005). Students then designed a detailed project plan, developed rehearsal timelines, set performance deadlines, and proposed creative rehearsal strategies.

For example, one group experimented with synchronizing circular dance formations with drum patterns, while another refined dialogue delivery to enhance expressive clarity.

The teacher acted as a mentor and facilitator throughout, providing guidance in improvisation, monitoring group collaboration, and ensuring active engagement in both musical and dance practices. Field observations indicated that students faced challenges in aligning dialogue with music and coordinating complex movement sequences. The teacher addressed these by modeling rehearsal techniques, conducting small-group rhythm drills, and offering constructive feedback, reinforcing collaboration, accountability, and iterative problem-solving (Farizi, 2022; Lestari et al., 2024).

This structured yet flexible planning phase fostered a sense of co-design and responsibility among students, transforming them from passive participants into active contributors in shaping the learning experience and the final Randai Kuantan performance.

Create a Schedule

The teacher and students collaboratively established the project implementation schedule, including a structured timeline, clear deadlines, and agreed-upon completion strategies. Field observations indicated that students actively contributed to designing a four-week rehearsal framework for the Randai Kuantan performance, allocating sessions for movement exploration, musical synchronization, dialogue practice, and full-stage rehearsals. One student commented, *"If we practice dialogue before rhythm, it becomes confusing, so we need to follow the order we agreed on,"* demonstrating critical thinking and practical time management. This structured scheduling reflects the core principles of Project-Based Learning, emphasizing shared responsibility, authentic task management, and structured inquiry (Hastuti et al., 2023; Chen & Yang, 2024).

Students were encouraged to propose innovative rehearsal methods, while the teacher provided constructive guidance when strategies were less aligned with artistic or cultural objectives. For instance, one group suggested recording rehearsals to self-evaluate, while another experimented with rhythmic counting to improve coordination between dance and traditional instruments. The teacher observed these trials and offered scaffolding, such as modeling timing techniques and facilitating peer feedback sessions. Documentation from rehearsal notes showed improvements in synchronization and group coordination over successive sessions.

Moreover, students were required to justify their rehearsal strategies, explaining how their methods contributed to artistic coherence, effective teamwork, and overall performance quality. This reflective reasoning transformed scheduling into a metacognitive process, allowing students to anticipate challenges, adjust plans, and critically assess their own progress. Post-rehearsal interviews revealed that students became more aware of collective responsibility and the importance of strategic planning. Recent studies suggest that integrating reflection and student voice during project scheduling strengthens higher-order thinking, self-regulation, and ownership of learning outcomes (Liu et al., 2025). Consequently, collaborative scheduling coupled with reflective practices not only improved project organization but also deepened students' cognitive, social, and artistic development within the PjBL framework.

The teacher acted as a mentor and continuously monitored students' activities throughout the project implementation. Field observations documented students' engagement in rehearsals, improvisation exercises, and collaborative problem-solving. Monitoring was carried out systematically using structured rubrics to record learning behaviors, rehearsal progress, and artistic development, ensuring alignment with project objectives (Kurniawan et al., 2024). For example, during a dance rehearsal, one student struggled to synchronize circular movements with the drum rhythm; the teacher intervened by demonstrating step counts and pairing the student with peers who had mastered the sequence. Post-rehearsal reflection revealed that the student could then internalize the rhythm, showing measurable improvement in coordination.

The assessment rubrics captured multiple aspects of performance and collaboration, including role-playing, ensemble cooperation, creativity, artistic expression, and understanding of cultural values embedded in Randai Kuantan (Zakaria et al., 2024). Observations indicated that students portraying narrative characters developed greater emotional expression and clarity over time, while musicians improved consistency in maintaining tempo alongside dance movements. One group

remarked, *"We realized that if one person misses a beat, the whole scene loses its flow,"* demonstrating awareness of collective responsibility and teamwork.

Importantly, evaluation extended beyond the final performance to emphasize the entire learning process (Ferwati et al., 2023). Teachers observed discipline during rehearsals, initiative in proposing creative ideas, responsiveness to peer and teacher feedback, and collaborative problem-solving. Formative monitoring and reflective feedback strengthened students' engagement, responsibility, and higher-order thinking skills. As a result, systematic monitoring not only facilitated artistic improvement but also supported holistic development, fostering social, cultural, and creative competencies essential for mastery of Randai Kuantan performance (Selasmawati, 2023).

Assess the Outcome

Assessment is conducted on both the final project product and the overall learning process to ensure comprehensive evaluation of student development. In a Randai Kuantan project, the teacher evaluates students' performance skills, including the accuracy of dance movements, synchronization with traditional musical instruments, clarity of dialogue delivery, and stage composition. For example, a group may be assessed on how effectively they harmonize drum rhythms with circular dance formations, while individual performers are evaluated on their emotional expression and ability to communicate the moral values embedded in the narrative. In addition to summative evaluation of the final performance, the teacher provides formative feedback during rehearsals to refine technique, improve coordination, and strengthen artistic interpretation. Such authentic and performance-based assessment practices are widely supported in contemporary PjBL research for enhancing meaningful learning outcomes (DongJin et al, 2024).

Moreover, the focus of assessment extends to measuring growth in creativity, collaboration, artistic expression, and cultural understanding. For instance, students who creatively adapt staging techniques while preserving the authenticity of Randai traditions demonstrate higher-order thinking and cultural sensitivity. Likewise, groups that show improved teamwork such as negotiating role distribution or resolving synchronization challenges reflect strengthened collaborative competence. The evaluation results are then used to inform subsequent instructional planning, such as organizing targeted workshops on rhythm mastery or reflective discussions on cultural symbolism in Randai. Research indicates that integrating reflective evaluation within PjBL significantly enhances student engagement, critical thinking, and long-term retention of knowledge (Ayu, H. D., et al, 2024). Therefore, assessment functions not merely as a measurement tool but as a strategic component for continuous pedagogical improvement.

The final stage of the Project-Based Learning process emphasizes reflection and discussion, conducted both individually and collaboratively. Field observations and interviews revealed that students actively reflected on their learning experiences, challenges, and insights gained throughout the Randai Kuantan project. For instance, one student shared, *"At first, I kept missing the drum beats, but after practicing with my group and receiving feedback from the teacher, I could finally synchronize my movements with the rhythm."* Another student noted, *"Playing the role of a storyteller helped me understand the moral values behind Randai, such as cooperation and respect."* These reflections illustrate the internalization of both artistic and socio-cultural competencies.

During guided discussions, the teacher facilitated analysis of effective strategies, obstacles encountered, and connections to the essential question. Students collaboratively evaluated the coherence of movements, music, and dialogue, while identifying areas for improvement and proposing adaptive solutions for future performances. For example, groups suggested using video recordings for self-evaluation and experimenting with alternative rhythm patterns to better align dance with musical cues. This process encouraged metacognition, critical thinking, and shared responsibility, core outcomes of Project-Based Learning (Firdausih & Aslan, 2024).

Reflective practice also reinforced cultural understanding. Students recognized how Randai integrates local musical, narrative, and movement elements, and discussed ways to preserve traditional features while making performances engaging for contemporary audiences. One student reflected, *"We need to maintain the traditional essence even if we try new movements or dialogue expressions."* Insights from these reflections enabled the teacher to adapt instructional strategies for subsequent projects, ensuring continuous improvement in pedagogy and learning outcomes.

Overall, implementing Project-Based Learning in Randai Kuantan dance enhanced not only technical skills but also creativity, collaboration, cultural awareness, and social responsibility. Structured stages from the essential question to planning, scheduling, monitoring, assessment, and reflection ensured that students were consistently engaged in a student-centered learning process. Compared with prior studies focused primarily on technical mastery, this approach fostered holistic development, integrating performance quality, reflective thinking, and character formation. These findings demonstrate that arts education, when guided by Project-Based Learning, serves as a transformative medium that cultivates both 21st-century skills and meaningful appreciation of cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model in teaching Randai Kuantan dance demonstrated tangible improvements in students' creativity, collaboration, cultural awareness, and social responsibility. Empirical evidence from observations, interviews, and documentation indicated that students actively engaged in planning, rehearsing, and performing while reflecting on their decisions, overcoming challenges, and internalizing cultural values such as cooperation and respect. Reflection on the learning process, rather than solely on the final performance, emerged as a key factor supporting deeper understanding and ownership of learning outcomes.

However, this study has limitations that should be acknowledged. It involved a single vocational high school, covered a limited implementation period, and focused on a specific traditional dance, which may limit generalizability to other contexts or art forms. Future research could examine the impact of PjBL on students' critical thinking, empathy, and long-term skill retention, as well as explore the integration of digital technologies to enhance cultural arts learning.

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