



Improvement of Deep Reading Skills and Local Cultural Metacognition Using Culturally Responsive Teaching for High School Students

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Abstract: The skills of deep reading and metacognitive skills through the utilization of local culture are becoming increasingly relevant in the context of education. The analysis of the use of culturally based materials shows that this integration enhances reading skills, but also positively impacts students' metacognitive learning. This study aims to examine improvements in deep reading skills and cultural metacognition through Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). The quantitative experimental method uses a one-group pretest-posttest design, which provides pre-test and post-test assessments. The sample for this study consists of 13 grade-10 students at SMA Al-Amanah in Lembang, West Java, using a total sampling technique. This research proves that the culturally responsive teaching approach (CRT) is effective in enhancing students' deep reading skills and cultural metacognition. In terms of deep reading, the average score increased from 70.00 to 78.08 and the median from 65 to 80, with test results indicating statistical testing ($p = 0.006$) and a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.919$). Cultural metacognition, including Cultural Awareness, Reflection, Self-Regulation, and Knowledge, also improved, with total scores rising from 63.75% to 78.8%. The dimension of Cultural Knowledge showed the largest increase, at 20.9%. The findings of this research confirm that CRT not only enhances deep text comprehension abilities but also strengthens cultural metacognitive awareness and skills.

Keywords: cultural metacognition; culturally responsive teaching (CRT); deep reading

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INTRODUCTION

The application of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) to high school students, particularly in the context of enhancing reading skills deeply and metacognition related to local culture. CRT aims to appreciate and integrate students' cultural richness into the learning process, thereby increasing their willingness and ability to learn (Snyder & Fenner, 2021; Te Ava & Devi, 2022; Abdalla & Moussa, 2024). Its relevance to the teaching of culture through CRT in high schools in Indonesia today is that culture is not just content material but an integral part of the learning process as a whole. The application of this approach not only enhances cognitive skills but also builds emotional connections between the subject matter and students' experiences, which is essential for helping them develop a deep understanding and linking the ability of cultural metacognition to the local culture surrounding the students through Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) learning.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) for high school students, particularly to enhance reading skills and metacognition related to local culture, has shown that a culturally oriented environment supports students in making connections between the subject matter and their personal experiences, resulting in deeper understanding (Cruz et al., 2020). Learning through CRT provides equity and inclusivity in education by respecting diverse cultural backgrounds. This certainly emphasizes cultural competence, integrates relevant content, encourages positive reciprocal relationships, and addresses structural bias issues in the learning environment. Keehne et al. (2018) also emphasize that this approach supports school success for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, allowing them to feel valued and actively engaged in. In the context of improving reading skills, Budiman et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of building strong relationships between teachers and students as part of a culturally responsive approach. This is consistent with Usca et al. (2016) and Cruz et al. (2020), who show that when teachers relate the content of instruction to students' cultural backgrounds, it not only enhances reading skills but also fosters students' interest and engagement in learning. Furthermore, the literature on teaching strategies indicates that the use of real objects and exploration of local culture in learning can optimize the process of understanding texts.

The enhancement of deep reading skills and metacognition through the use of local culture is a theme becoming increasingly relevant in education. This study analyzes the effectiveness of using materials grounded in local culture and finds that this integration not only improves reading skills but also positively impacts students' metacognitive learning. Furthermore, the cultural aspects of metacognition in learning receive more attention. The use of teaching materials appropriate to the local context can enhance students' emotional engagement and metacognitive skills (Gooden et al., 2017; Lesmana & Rarung, 2020; Yuwana & Angelianawati, 2024). In

this context, the research indicates that using materials relevant to local culture can enhance students' emotional engagement, which, in turn, can contribute to the development of their cultural metacognitive skills.

This type of learning model, which emphasizes cultural context in teaching, can create a learning environment that is not only enjoyable but also productive. However, the challenges of learning will persist, including resistance to change from teachers who may not be very familiar with the CRT method (McKoy et al., 2016; Nambiar et al., 2020; Ochoa et al., 2020). However, the most important thing in deep reading through the application of this CRT approach is to mitigate hatred towards tribal identity and reduce the structural barriers of cultural differences and systemic racism present in Indonesia. Optimizing the development of deep reading skills and cultural metacognition for high school students makes learning more relevant and meaningful in their local context and fosters mutual understanding of other cultures.

This study analyzes the effectiveness of integrating local cultural materials, showing that this integration not only improves reading skills but also positively impacts students' metacognitive learning. First of all, deep reading, a concept introduced by Sven in 1994, is characterized as a highly engaged, analytical reading practice that enables readers to understand and critically analyze texts rather than merely skim them (Peng, 2017). Deep reading in the context of learning is not just about reading, but about developing metacognitive skills that can enhance cultural understanding and student engagement. The relationship between deep reading and cultural metacognition, especially within diverse cultural contexts, offers insights into how readers engage with text that reflect their cultural identity and experiences (Mannheimer, 2016). Deep reading refers to a comprehensive, analytical approach that emphasizes understanding, interpretation, and critical thinking, and underscores the importance of integrating deep reading comprehension instruction into language learning in schools (Wanga & Weib, 2025; Roberts & Roberts, 2008).

Deep reading skills require students not only to understand the text at a surface level but also to analyze and evaluate deeper meanings and contexts (Parrott & Cherry, 2011; Bland, 2022). Cho and Christ (2022) emphasize that culturally relevant texts encourage students to draw on their personal experiences when concluding reading material, which supports the statement that metacognitive skills are enhanced through engagement with cultural context, thereby refining students' analytical and evaluative skills, particularly in a multicultural educational environment (Hall et al., 2015). Thus, the teaching of deep reading and metacognition of culture in this learning approach through CRT makes the relevance of cultural learning in schools complete. The students' pluralistic condition may be relevant to Indonesia's cultural and tribal diversity.

METHODS

This research is a quantitative experimental study with a one-group pretest-posttest design. It uses a one-group quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. In this design, the researcher measures the dependent variable before and after the treatment (intervention) to assess changes (Creswell, 2015; Fraenkel et al., 1993; Miller et al., 2020). It involves conducting a preliminary test (pre-test) before the treatment, and a final test (post-test) only after the treatment. By performing pre- and post-tests, the effects of the treatment can be assessed more accurately, as it allows comparison of the state after the treatment with the state before the treatment. The sample for this research consists of 13 10th-grade students from a high school, using a total sampling technique. This research is conducted at SMA Al-Amanah Islamic School in Lembang, West Java. Relation to Deep Reading: This competence encompasses the ability to understand implied meanings, detect cultural symbolism, and evaluate the credibility of information. The CRT implementation framework enhances students' deep reading skills and cultural metacognition in Lembang, West Java. This can provide limitless possibilities for students and teachers to create and improve learning.

The following is the framework for implementing CRT in schools, according to Ginsberg & Wlodkowski (2015): (a) builds inclusivity, (b) develops a positive attitude, (c) enhances meaning, and (d) creates competencies. In building inclusivity, teachers accommodate students' diverse cultural backgrounds so that every student feels they have space to participate actively. The content of deep reading material and the texts used must include representations of local Indonesian culture. The aim is to cultivate students' collective awareness of their values, norms, and perspectives. This awareness is the initial step in the formation of cultural metacognition, the ability to consciously understand and reflect on cultural views. In developing a positive attitude, the teacher builds intrinsic motivation by demonstrating the benefits of deep reading for understanding the real world. Thus, students have a positive attitude, fostering a commitment to read slowly, carefully, and reflectively, and to connect the text readings through critiquing, comparing values across cultures, and identifying biases or differing perspectives. In enhancing meaning, this stage aims to connect learning materials with students' personal experiences and life contexts in deep reading. Meaning enhancement can be achieved by asking students to relate the text to real situations in their cultural context or to personal experiences. Certainly, at this stage, students experience cognitive and affective engagement. Thus, connecting the text with personal experiences encourages deep reflection on the role of culture in shaping ways of thinking and acting. In creating competencies, teachers provide opportunities for students to practice deep reading skills with various types of texts about local culture, thereby improving their analysis, inference, and evaluation skills.

The data collection technique used in this study employs essay-based measures to assess deep reading skills and questionnaires to assess students' cultural metacognition. To examine differences in treatment between the pre-test and post-test, the researcher assesses the questions according to the assessment guidelines. Once the scores are obtained, normality tests can be performed to determine whether the paired-samples t-test is appropriate using SPSS 27. In this case, the researcher uses a confidence level of 95%. Normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk test with a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). This test aims to determine if the data used follows a normal distribution. The hypothesis formulation is as follows: H_0 states that the data follow a normal distribution, while H_1 states that they do not. If the significance value (Sig.) is greater than 0.05, then H_0 is accepted. Conversely, if the significance value is less than or equal to 0.05, then H_0 is rejected, indicating that the data are not normally distributed.

The research data were normally distributed, and a Paired Sample t-Test was conducted. This test was to determine the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test. The significance level used was maintained at 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$). If the Sig. value > 0.05 , then H_0 is accepted, indicating no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. However, if the Sig. value ≤ 0.05 , then H_0 is rejected, indicating a significant difference after treatment. Then the calculations were carried out using the deep reading instruments and cultural metacognition, with Likert scales and percentage tables, as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Item Criteria of the Likert Scale Instrument and Its Scores

Answer	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral / Ambiguous	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

Table 2. Percentage of Criteria

Score	Percentage Interval	Criteria
A	$81\% \leq X < 100\%$	Very Good
B	$61\% \leq X < 80\%$	Good
C	$41\% \leq X < 60\%$	Currently
D	$21\% \leq X < 40\%$	Not good
E	$0\% \leq X < 20\%$	Very Lacking

Table 3. Deep Reading Skills Instrument

Aspect	Score	Assessment Description
Understanding Text	1	Not understanding the content of the Culture text.
	2	Understanding part of the content of the Culture text
	3	Understanding most of the content of the Cultural text
	4	Understanding the overall content of the text thoroughly and accurately Culture
Critical Analysis	1	There is no analysis or the analysis is very superficial of the Culture.
	2	Limited analysis and less in-depth cultural analysis
	3	The analysis is quite sharp, and the cultural analysis is appropriate.
	4	In-depth, logical, and argumentative analysis of a perfect culture
Clarity of Argumentation	1	Unclear and unstructured writing of Culture
	2	Tulisan agak jelas tetapi tidak runtut mengenai budaya
	3	The writing is clear and coherent regarding Culture.
	4	The writing is very clear, systematic, and convincing regarding Culture.
Cultural Metacognitive Awareness	1	Not showing cultural self-awareness
	2	Limited and implicit cultural awareness
	3	The awareness is quite clear and well conveyed regarding Culture.
	4	Awareness is very sharp, deep, and reflective about Culture.

By Ang and Van Dyne (2015) and Bland (2022)

The instrument's validity is tested using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation, and internal consistency reliability is assessed using Cronbach's Alpha on essay tests. The cultural metacognition questionnaire is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Instrument of Cultural Metacognition Questionnaire

Indicator	Number of questions
A. Cultural Awareness	4
B. Cultural Reflection	4
C. Cultural Self-Regulation	4
D. Cultural Knowledge	3

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research can be described as follows, for each stage conducted. In the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) learning, measuring the deep reading skills and cultural metacognition of 10th-grade students at Al-Amanah Islamic School in Lembang, West Java. The validity test results show that most indicators tested exhibit significant correlations with other indicators, indicating that this research instrument is valid for measuring the intended construct. Indicator 1 and Indicator 5 have a perfect correlation (1.000), indicating a very strong relationship. This means that both may measure very similar, or even identical, aspects of the construct being tested. The correlations between Indicator 2 and Indicator 3, as well as between Indicator 3 and Indicator 4, are also quite high (0.548 and 0.692), and all are significant at the 0.01 or 0.05 levels. The correlation between Indicator 4 and Indicator 5 is 0.537, indicating a fairly strong positive relationship. The correlation between all indicators and the total is significant (0.659-0.877), indicating that this instrument is valid in measuring the intended aspects.

Reliability measures the consistency of results from research instruments. The reliability test used Cronbach's Alpha for five indicator items. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.844 indicates that this instrument has good reliability. Values above 0.7 indicate sufficient internal consistency. A value of 0.845 for Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items shows very similar results, indicating that the items in this instrument support each other in measuring the same construct. On the results of data from the pre-test and post-test before the treatment was given using the Cultural Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach.

Table 5. Data on Students' Deep Reading Skills

Respondent	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Score	Value	Score	Value
1	16	80	16	80
2	17	85	19	95
3	16	80	18	90
4	15	75	15	75
5	16	80	16	80
6	13	65	15	75
7	13	65	13	65
8	13	65	17	85
9	12	60	14	70
10	13	65	16	80
11	13	65	18	90
12	12	60	15	75
13	13	65	15	75

Based on Table 5, the pre-test scores for deep reading skills of grade-10 students range from 85 (highest) to 60 (lowest). Based on the acquisition results in the pre-test class, the highest score on the deep reading skills post-test was 95, and the lowest was 65. The overall results show a general increase in scores after the treatment. Additionally, the variability of scores increased, which may reflect that some participants gained more benefits than others. The distribution of data changed, indicating improved performance with a wider spread. Although the average increased, the more dispersed distribution of the post-test data shows an imbalance in results among individuals in the tests conducted during the post-test activities.

In the pre-test and post-test results, two students did not show any improvement, remaining in the same position. This is due to the students' condition caused by a lack of basic understanding or insufficient attention to the material being taught. This is influenced by cultural differences that students do not understand due to their limited knowledge of local culture, which significantly impacts test results. As a result, students' cultural sensitivity has not yet stimulated their knowledge and curiosity about cultural material (Abacioglu et al., 2020). Figure 1 presents the pre-test and post-test histograms.

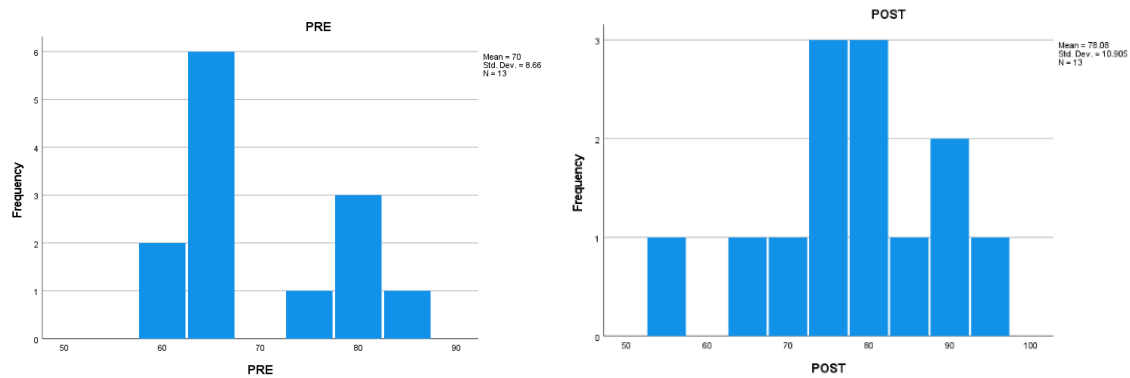


Figure 1. Frequency of Pre-Test and Post-Test

The frequency distribution of the pre-test shows that the score of 65 has the highest frequency with 6 respondents (46.2%). This indicates that nearly half of the participants obtained the same score, suggesting clustering or homogeneity in initial ability. The distribution of other scores is fairly even, with a score of 60 accounted for by 2 students (15.4%), a score of 75 by 1 student (7.7%), a score of 80 by 3 students (23.1%), and a score of 85 by 1 student (7.7%). The distribution shows that the majority of scores fall between 60 and 80, with a slight skew towards the middle score of 65. There are no very low scores (<60) or very high scores (>85), indicating that the score distribution is quite concentrated in the middle and not extreme. With a Cumulative Percent of 61.5%, respondents have scores ≤ 65 , indicating that the majority of participants are at or below 65. Only 38.5% of respondents have scores above 65, reinforcing the tendency towards moderate to low values.

Initial respondents' critical interpretation capabilities tend to be moderate to low. If this is pre-test data, it can be inferred that the participants have considerable room for improvement after the intervention or learning. The high frequency of scores of 65 might indicate the standard or minimum competency threshold for this group. The relatively narrow range of scores (60–85) suggests consistency in ability, although there is still some variation. Three students (23.1%) achieved the highest post-test scores in the group, with scores of 75 and 80. The other scores were relatively evenly distributed, with 55, 65, 70, 85, and 95 each achieved by 1 student (7.6%). This distribution indicates varying levels of understanding among students, underscoring the need for a tailored approach to address proficiency differences. 2 students (15.4%) achieved a score of 90. The post-test frequency distribution shows greater score variation than the pre-test. The highest score was 95, and the lowest was 55, indicating a wider score range (40 points) than the pre-test, which had only 25 points (60–85). This suggests a more evident achievement gap after the intervention, likely due to differences in understanding or varied responses to the teaching methods used during the learning process.

In the critical interpretation, the highest score increased from 85 in the pre-test to 95 in the post-test, accompanied by a shift in the score distribution towards higher values. The score of 65, which was previously dominant in the pre-test, is now achieved by only one student. This indicates a shift in the distribution towards higher scores. Scores of 90 and 95 appeared in the post-test, which were previously absent in the pre-test, reinforcing the suspected effectiveness of Culturally Responsive Teaching interventions. Although one student decreased from 55, overall, the majority of respondents maintained or increased their scores.

Table 6. Mean Pre-Test and Post-Test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRE	70.00	13	8.660	2.402
	POST	78.08	13	10.905	3.024

The average post-test score (78.08) is higher than the pre-test score (70.00). The distribution of scores from the standard deviation also increased from 8.66 to 10.91, indicating greater variation in post-test scores and supporting previous findings. Therefore, the increase in post-test scores after the Culturally Responsive Teaching treatment has a positive impact. The correlation between the tests: PRE and POST ($r = 0.618$, with significance ($p = 0.024$). There is a moderate, statistically significant correlation between the pre- and post-scores. This indicates that even though there was an improvement, participants with initially higher scores also tended to maintain good performance after the treatment.

Table 7. Test Analysis

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PRE - POST	-8.077	8.789	2.438	-13.388	-2.766	-3.313	12	.006

There is a significant average difference of 8.08 points between the pre-test and post-test. The p-value of 0.006 (< 0.05) indicates that this difference is statistically significant. This means the intervention has a positive impact on participants' scores. Then, in the students' cultural metacognition pre-tests, there are four indicators of this cultural metacognition assessment, namely: a) Cultural Awareness; b) Cultural Reflection; c) Cultural Self-Regulation; and d) Cultural Knowledge. The results of this pre-test are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Comparison of Total Scores of Pre-test vs. Post-test of Cultural Metacognition

Aspect	Pre-test	Criteria	Post-test	Criteria
Cultural Awareness	70,77%	Good	83,8%	Very Good
Cultural Reflection	68,08%	Good	85,8%	Very Good
Cultural Self-Regulation	68,08%	Good	82%	Very Good
Cultural Knowledge	64,10%	Good	85%	Very Good
Total	63,75	Good	78,8	Good

In the Cultural Awareness indicator, there was a 13.03% increase from the Good category to Very Good, indicating that students' cultural awareness has improved. In Cultural Reflection, there was a 17.72% increase, suggesting that students are better able to reflect on their cultural experiences after the treatment. Then, in Cultural Self-Regulation, there was a 13.92% increase, indicating improved self-regulation skills when facing intercultural situations. Cultural knowledge then showed a significant increase of 20.9%, indicating that cross-group cultural understanding is increasingly developing. Overall, there was a 15.05% increase in the total score of cultural metacognition. All dimensions experienced improvement and transitioned from the 'Good' category to 'Very Good'.

The data show that the interventions or treatments applied (which may include training, intercultural learning, or reflective activities) had a positive impact on enhancing students' cultural metacognition. The most notable improvement occurred in Cultural Reflection and Cultural Knowledge, which are important indicators in shaping understanding and attitudes towards cultural diversity. The enhancement of cultural metacognition along the educational pathway is indicated by significant improvements across several dimensions, including cultural awareness, reflection, self-regulation, and knowledge. Reports are indicating positive outcomes from intercultural training and learning in enhancing students' cultural capacities, facilitating understanding and attitudes toward cultural diversity (Olalla-Soler, 2019; Wall-Bassett et al., 2018).

All aspects show significant increases, indicating that the intervention (e.g., training, learning, or cross-cultural experiences) has a positive impact on the development of cultural metacognition. Cultural reflection saw the largest increase, showing that participants not only absorbed knowledge but also began to reflect on and internalize it. The total score increased by 23.7%. The score increases across the four aspects of cultural metacognition indicate that participants have developed awareness, understanding, self-regulation, and knowledge related to cultural differences. This suggests that the approaches implemented—whether through explicit learning, intercultural interaction, or self-reflection—are effective in enhancing participants' overall literacy and cultural competence.

Reflection activities, as an integral part of cultural competence, have been shown to enhance students' understanding of their cultural experiences. An analysis of reflective journals indicates that students develop cultural awareness and knowledge through cross-cultural interactions and learning, as reflection helps them understand the values and norms of other cultures (Hill & Omowale, 2023; Lanting et al., 2019). Cultural metacognition also reinforces the internalization of knowledge, which is important for application in more complex real-life contexts. Enhanced cultural knowledge indicates that students are beginning to recognize cultural differences and can bridge their experiences to a broader context. The emphasis on cultural knowledge in the learning process is crucial and involves both direct experiences and deep reflection on relevant cultural contexts, as shown in research (Moniz & Ng, 2024). This supports the argument that the Culturally Responsive Teaching approach, which integrates cultural reflection, will develop deeper cultural competencies than approaches that rely solely on information delivery. Overall, the increase in the total score for cultural metacognition indicates that Culturally Responsive Teaching learning—whether in the form of learning, cross-cultural experiences, or reflective activities—is effective in building students' deep reading skills and cultural

literacy. The most striking improvement in deep reading skills, cultural reflection, and cultural knowledge emphasizes the importance of the Culturally Responsive Teaching learning approach to create a more holistic understanding and attitude towards cultural diversity.

CONCLUSION

Learning with a culturally responsive teaching approach has been proven effective in improving students' deep reading abilities and cultural metacognition. Significant increases in scores, a broader distribution of data, and substantial practical effects indicate that this approach can address the challenges of deep reading-oriented learning and cultural metacognition. First, regarding deep reading skills, the analysis shows that the average score increased from 70.00 during the pre-test to 78.08 during the post-test. In the cultural metacognition aspect, which includes four main dimensions—Cultural Awareness, Cultural Reflection, Cultural Self-Regulation, and Cultural Knowledge—there was also a significant increase. The increase in scores across each dimension of cultural metacognition indicates that students are not only experiencing growth in recognizing and understanding cultural diversity, but also in reflecting on their own views and attitudes towards other cultures, and in adjusting their behavior in more adaptive ways in intercultural contexts. This demonstrates that the CRT approach can foster intercultural awareness and reflective competence, which are essential in today's global, multicultural educational context. The Culturally Responsive Teaching approach has proven effective in enhancing students' deep reading abilities and cultural metacognition; however, the generalizability of the results remains limited by sample size and research context. Strengthening teacher training and broader research is highly recommended to ensure the effectiveness of CRT in various educational settings. Thus, it can be concluded that Culturally Responsive Teaching-based learning is an approach that not only improves students' academic abilities in deep reading but also supports the strengthening of character, tolerance, and intercultural competence in facing an increasingly diverse society.

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