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PRACTICING STUDENTS' HISTORICAL THINKING SKILLS IN LEARNING PUBLIC HISTORY

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Abstract

Public history in Semarang has not been properly utilized to train students' historical thinking skills. This study aims to analyze the potential of public history in Semarang to train students' historical thinking skills. The method used in this research is qualitative with a descriptive approach. The results of the study show that the potential for public history in Semarang, especially the Dutch East Indies colonial remains, can be utilized to learn about the history of colonialism. The potential for public history can be exploited by applying the discovery learning model with the outing class method. This learning model can strengthen students' historical thinking skills and trigger an anti-colonial attitude. In conclusion, public history is a potential that can be used to train students' historical thinking skills.

INTRODUCTION

Sari (2012) in an article entitled "Semarang Old Town: Marginalized Historical Sites", explained that the Old City (Kota Lama) has the potential to be managed as an attractive recreation area as well as a fun learning place, if the city government and all levels of society have the concern to preserve it. as an important cultural heritage for the city. And it is the duty of the history teacher to introduce the history of the Old City through learning at school, in accordance with the purpose of teaching history, namely to instill awareness of history in the nation's next generation (Yuliati, 2019). After ten years have passed, learning about the history of the Old Town is still not much done, the existing sites are becoming increasingly marginalized.

The Kota Lama Semarang Cultural Heritage area contains important values in the realm of history, civilizational development, economic and political development, which have international network values. Within the Kota Lama area of Semarang there are still sites and many building heritages with various architectural styles originating from the Middle Ages, Baroque, Indische architecture, and modern architectural styles. The spatial layout of the Old Town is very unique, there are government central spaces, trade and business spaces (banking, brokerage offices, consular offices from various countries, shops), prayer rooms, defense and security rooms, public spaces, entertainment spaces, and the Semarang River which is a transportation route between the Java Sea and Semarang City and the surrounding areas (Amin & Kurniawan, 2020; Dewi et al., 2020; Yuliati et al., 2019). Due to its uniqueness and superior universal values, the Old Town of Semarang is one of the Cultural Heritage Areas listed on the tentative list as world heritage by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

The advantage of this location is not only part of the city's past, but also deserves to be preserved through the realm of education. The historical significance of buildings left over from the past can also be seen from an educational perspective which can be captured from history education itself (Güler-Bıyıklı & Aslan, 2013; Magro et al., 2014; Ocal, 2016; Puspitasari & Nugroho, 2021). The meaning that can be captured from history education can provide wisdom and wisdom for those who study it, by realizing the educational meaning of history means being aware of the past which is full of meaning which further means that lessons can be taken from history in the form of creative ideas and concepts as a source of motivation for students. solving current and subsequent problems to realize future expectations.

Teaching history in schools aims to make students acquire the ability to think historically and understand history. Through teaching history students are able to develop competence to think chronologically and have knowledge about the past that can be used to understand and explain the process of development and change in society as well as socio-cultural diversity in order to find and grow national identity in the midst of world community life (Chiponda & Wassermann, 2011; Samuel, 2003; Wineburg & Reisman, 2015). The purpose of learning history is to instill a spirit of love for the motherland, to know the process of the formation of the Indonesian state, to increase the sense of unity and oneness for students, and to know the process of human civilization in Indonesia and the world community from the past to the present. Indonesian history is a study of various events related to the origins and development as well as the role of the Indonesian people and nation in the past to become lessons in the life of society and the nation. Indonesian history can also be interpreted as a study of the splendor/excellence and values of the Indonesian nation's struggle to be transformed to the younger generation so as to give birth to a generation of superior nations with full wisdom.

Utilization of historical buildings as a source of learning history can be supported by utilizing objects in the environment around students (Ott & Pozzi, 2011). One effort to increase students' interest in history lessons is to create historical learning patterns that are related to the situation in their environment. History learning activities require a medium to develop a sense of concern and interest in their regional realm, so that they can further dig deeper into what has existed in the past in their area. One of them is the use of Old City Buildings. Semarang is synonymous with a colonial heritage city, one that contains suffering for the Indonesian people, which needs to be studied continuously so that it does not have 'historical amnesia'.



Several buildings that can be used for learning in the Old City, namely; Blenduk Church, Sri Gunting Park, Marba Building, and Spigel Building, these buildings are public historical sites that can not only be used as tourist attractions, but also as a vehicle for public history education. Utilization of historical sites as a source of learning history can provide a more real picture to students so that they are expected to be able to understand historical events in a more real way, not only in an artificial way.

Based on the background above, this study aims to analyze the potential of public history in Semarang to train students' historical thinking skills. This research focuses on the relevance of public historical sites in Semarang for learning and strategies that can be used, besides that it will also discuss relevant approaches and media for implementing public history-based learning. An important contribution of this research is that learning history with an insight into historical sites in the environment around students which is still not widely practiced will be a good start to create a link and match between public historical knowledge and historical heritage conservation activities.

METHOD

This research applies descriptive qualitative method in its process. This research method is based on the philosophy of postpositivism used to examine the conditions of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument for purposive sampling of data sources, collection by triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/descriptive qualitative, and the results of descriptive qualitative research are more Emphasize meaning over generalizations (Maxwell, 2012; Miles et al., 2018).

This study involved participants, namely five history teachers in the city of Semarang who came from several high schools. Data collection techniques used are interviews and observation. The researcher tries to dive into the world of teachers by having a dialogue at the research location, namely around the Semarang Old City site as a source of public historical knowledge. Data analysis in this study applies interactive data analysis owned by Miles et al. (2018) which explains that the data analysis techniques in this study include: a) data collection, processing and preparing data for analysis. This step involves interview transcripts, scanning documentation, typing data in the field or sorting and organizing the data into different types depending on the source of information; b) data reduction, is a form of analysis that classifies, directs, discards unnecessary and organizes reduced data to provide a sharper picture of the observations into themes; c) presentation of data, which is an analysis in the form of a matrix, network, cart, or graphic. In descriptive qualitative research, data presentation is done in the form of brief descriptions, tables, charts and relationships between categories. Through the presentation of the data, the data is organized and structured so that it will be easier to understand; and d) drawing conclusions, is drawing conclusions and verification. The initial conclusions put forward are still temporary, and will change if strong evidence is not found to support the next stage of collection. Conclusions in descriptive qualitative research can answer the formulation of the problem that was formulated from the start.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Kota Lama, Public History, and Cultural Values

During the Dutch colonial period, Kota Lama was also known as de Europeeshe Buurt and the spatial concept of the city was adapted to the spatial concept of cities in Europe, both in terms of regional structure and architecture. The layout in Kota Lama is centralized with the Blenduk Church and the government building as the center. The City Hall building is located on Oudstadhuis Straat (Old Town Hall Street – now: Branjangan Street). The City Hall building burned down in 1850, and then a new City Hall was built in Bojong Street (now: Pemuda Street). Almost all buildings in this area are heritage, have historical value, on one side only, for example in the Blenduk Church complex, there are several unique buildings, this area is



the most lively and distinctive, visited by many tourists, and is very suitable to be used as a recreational park educative.

The most recognizable and prominent building is the Blenduk Church, located on Jalan Letjen Suprpto (during the Dutch colonial period it was called: De Heeren straat), built in 1753. The church, which has the original name Nederlandsch Indische Kerk and is still used as a place of worship today, become a landmark of Semarang City. This church is called blenduk because it has a brick-red dome-shaped roof made of bronze and two twin towers in front of it. Indigenous people, who have difficulty pronouncing names in Dutch, call them blenduk. The name change also occurred at the Berok Bridge, which used to be the gateway to the Old City. The word burg which means bridge is pronounced as berok and that name continues to be used today.

In front of the church there is a building called Marba. This building was built by Marta Bajunet (Marba), a very rich Yunan. This Marba building is located on Jalan Letjen Soeprpto (Heeren Straat), which is the first modern shop in Kota Lama. Following the style of Renaissance architecture with various ornaments attached to this building, it gives color to the richness of architecture in the Kota Lama area. In front of Marba exactly, there is a park called 'Taman Sri Gunting', which is one of the landmarks in the Old City Area of Semarang, Srigunting Park during the Dutch colonial period took the form of a plein parade for the parade stage, now it is an open space in the form of a park which is one of the a place for gathering or community activities. Srigunting Park is located on Jalan Letjen Suprpto at Kota Lama area, on the south side there is the Marba Building, on the southwest there is the Jiwasraya Building, on the west side there is the Blenduk Church and on the east side there is the Kerta Niaga Building. Srigunting Park was once a field area that was used as a place for marching Dutch soldiers. Construction of this park began in the 1970s and early 1980s. Renovations began in 2001 and 2004.

What is quite iconic is the Spiegel Building. The Spiegel Building is a heritage building from the Dutch colonial era, located on Jalan Letjen Soeprpto. Formerly known as the NV Winkel Maatschappij Shop "H Spiegel" which sold everything from clothes from famous brands to home decorations such as oil lamps made in America. The company was first founded in 1895 by an Austrian-Hungarian business partnership of Jewish descent, namely Moritz Moses Addler (1854-1927), Herman Spiegel (d. 1911), and Ignacz Back (1873-1955). Not only establishing the Spiegel shop, the three of them also helped build the Adler Shop (Kutaraja, Padang and Surabaya), the Louvre Shop (Makassar, Surabaya). Shortly, Mr. H. Spiegel was appointed manager of this company and became the owner for a period of five years. In 1908, this company became a limited company. After the end of the Dutch East Indies leadership, this building increasingly shifted from its initial function. It even functioned as a warehouse in an abandoned and neglected condition. It was only on June 8, 2015, after a long period of restoration, that this building became Spiegel Bar and Bistro. Its function changed from a convenience store, then to a warehouse, and now a place to eat.

This area is not just a central heritage for Semarang residents, but has been widely recognized by the public as an area that has high historical and cultural values. From the condition of historical heritage buildings, we can take an issue regarding the two cultures that met, namely European and Javanese, the existing acculturation not only shows the architectural aspects of the area, but also the pattern of community development, that in the past this area was the main one, as the center of government and businesses, which are now places of stopovers and tours. In addition, this region developed rapidly in the colonial period, when all peoples of the world were experiencing resource exploitation, both natural and human. The existing buildings exude beauty, as well as the suffering of the people in the past, under the banner of colonialism. This is an important point, that historical reflection can be carried out here, so that the dark history of colonialism does not repeat itself, and as a society that was once colonized, the younger generation can learn from this painful history.

Kota Lama has a cultural, living and heritage nuance which has important and unique cultural values for the formation and development of the area. These important values are: a) its function as a political center, both the traditional Javanese government system (on the Southwest side of the Old Town) and the colonial



government system; b) the center of economic activity which includes industry and trade; cultural center (Indic culture, European culture, and local/Javanese culture); c) Shows a typical city layout, the center of government is close to places of worship, public spaces, and entertainment spaces; d) Having many Cultural Conservation Buildings and Sites; e) Still showing clear boundaries. Therefore, this Cultural Heritage Area is an important asset for the development of cultural tourism in Semarang, considering that tourists always want to visit places that have distinctive, unique and interesting values, which are different from what they already have in their area.

3.2 Strategy for Teaching Public History

The potential of public history in Kota Lama can be managed to be utilized in learning. How to manage it can use certain learning strategies, the most relevant is the discovery learning model. Anthony Robbins's view that learning is an active process in which students build (construct) new knowledge based on the experience/knowledge they already have. Learning is defined as a change in an individual that occurs through experience, and not because of the growth or development of the body or the characteristics of a person from birth (Druckman & Ebner, 2018; Ozdem-Yilmaz & Bilican, 2020). The discovery learning model has the potential to provide experience and changes to students' mindsets about the material they learn in learning, so it is very relevant to be applied to learning processes that utilize the environment as a learning resource.

Discovery is a learning model developed based on constructivism. This model emphasizes the importance of understanding the structure or important ideas of a discipline, through the active involvement of students in the learning process. Discovery Learning is learning based on discovery (inquiry-based), constructivist and theory of how to learn. The learning model given to students has learning scenarios to solve real problems and encourages them to solve their own problems (Safitri & Umamah, 2019). In solving their problems; because it is constructivist, students use their previous experiences in solving problems. Activities they do by interacting to explore, question while experimenting with trial and error techniques.

The discovery learning model according to (Ozdem-Yilmaz & Bilican, 2020) which is also referred to as the inquiry approach starts from a belief in the framework of independent student development. This model requires active participation in scientific investigations. The Discovery Learning model is to understand concepts, meanings, and relationships, through an intuitive process to finally arrive at a conclusion (Bruner, 1981). Discovery occurs when individuals are involved, especially in using their mental processes to discover concepts and principles. Discovery is done through observation, classification, measurement, prediction, determination and inference. This process is called the cognitive process, while discovery itself is the mental process of assimilating concepts and principles in the mind.

In Discovery Learning, to achieve the learning objectives (Bruner, 1981) suggests the following: a) provide assistance so that students understand the objectives and procedures for activities that must be carried out; b) check that all students understand the purpose and procedure of activities to be carried out; c) before the activity is carried out, explain to students about how to work safely; d) observing each student while they are doing the activity; e) giving students sufficient time to return the tools and materials used; and f) conduct discussions about the conclusions for each type of activity. The advantages that students get by learning to use Discovery Learning: a) developing intellectual potential; b) changing students from having motivation from outside to being motivated from within themselves; c) students will learn how to learn (learning how to learn); and d) retain memory.

Bruner views that a concept or categorization has five elements, and students are said to understand a concept if they know all the elements of that concept, including: a) name; b) examples both positive and negative; c) characteristics, whether principal or not; d) characteristic range; and e) principles. Bruner (1981) explained that concept formation is two different categorizing activities that require different thought processes. All categorizing activities include identifying and placing examples (objects or events) into classes on the basis of certain criteria.



In the learning process, Bruner (1981) emphasizes the active participation of each student, and is well aware of differences in abilities. To support the learning process, the environment needs to facilitate students' curiosity at the exploration stage. This environment is called the Discovery Learning Environment, which is an environment where students can explore, new discoveries that are not yet known or understandings that are similar to those that are already known. Such an environment is intended so that students in the learning process can run well and be more creative. In the end, the goal of the Discovery Learning method, according to Bruner, is that teachers should provide opportunities for their students to become problem solvers, scientists, historians, or experts in socio-cultural analysis. Through these activities students will master it, apply it, and find things that are beneficial to them.

In implementing public history learning to train students' historical thinking skills, Discovery Learning can be operated with the following guidelines; a) at historical sites, the teacher divides students into two groups; b) the teacher explains the problem of 'understanding of colonialism and its legacy in Semarang'; c) the teacher asks students to examine historical relics around the site; d) students take notes and formulate presentation material; e) presentations and discussions; and f) reflection and drawing conclusions. In Discovery Learning, assessment can be done using tests or non-tests. The assessment used can be in the form of cognitive, process, attitude, or assessment of student work. If the form of assessment is in the form of cognitive assessment, then in the discovery learning learning model can use a written test.

3.3 The Relevance of Learning History with a Conservation Insight

Regarding the potential of Kota Lama as a source of learning, teachers argue that "currently public history has not been utilized as a source of learning history, teachers are still fixated on the contents of textbooks and conventional learning resources", in addition, regarding the Discovery Learning learning model teachers argue "to get If the results are good, then public history learning must be directed to one particular strategy, such as Discovery Learning, I think the model offered is very relevant." This relevance can be seen from (Douch, 2021) through one of his books entitled *Local History* stating that in learning history, students should be able to see real life firsthand, not abstract subject matter. To achieve this aspiration, learning history can be sourced from the experiences of everyday student life. The emotional closeness of students with their environment is a valuable learning resource for the learning process in the classroom.

Regarding the management of public history learning resources, the teacher argues "to start teaching about public history with an orientation towards the conservation of historical heritage, what must be known is that there are issues that underlie learning. For example, the damage and threat of historical amnesia." Discovery Learning in an effort to grow the ability to think historically is explained by the teacher that, "learning means discovering, including in exploring historical truths, students must explore their own knowledge through the stages of learning, so Discovery Learning is very suitable for developing the instinct of researchers and collaborative work." The idea of discovery learning arose from the desire to give pleasure to students in discovering something by themselves, by following in the footsteps of scientists (Safitri & Umamah, 2019).

Regarding the strengthening of historical thinking skills, the teacher argues "students' historical thinking skills can develop, because in learning students are trained to examine, find sources of information, verify, and interpret, not only that, they are also asked to formulate knowledge and its implications for future life." now, for example regarding the importance of historical conservation to save historical sites which are a source of knowledge for a generation." These principles must be supplemented with various practical steps. (Wineburg et al., 2012) provide four excellent steps for teachers to use when developing historical thinking skills in history learning. The four steps are: a) identify essential topics, in this case are historical topics or subjects that concern various aspects of human life and have a high relevance to contemporary life. This principle is not exclusive with respect to contemporary history but can also relate to even ancient historical events; b) spend considerable time on these few topics, studying them deeply. This means that the teacher must provide a longer time allocation in discussing each topic. The ability to think historically in students is developed through these selected topics; c) approach the topics in a number of ways. The methods used relate



to the way students learn and develop abilities for each attribute of historical thinking skills. Based on the way students learn, the teacher determines the teaching method. The teacher's teaching method is determined after determining various ways for students to learn to develop the necessary competencies. The teaching method used by the teacher is not to achieve the goal but the way students learn is developed to achieve the goal. Teaching methods to help students develop ways of learning; and d) develop performances of understanding. Performances of understanding invite students to think with knowledge in multiple novel situations; they show whether students can actually make use of classroom materials once they step outside the door.

Public historical sources can be a fun source of learning if managed properly by the teacher, utilizing learning systems and learning standards to make activities fun. Historical thinking is the main goal, considering that the essence of learning history is to cultivate the ability to examine historical evidence appropriately. According to *the National Center for History in the School* (UCLA) The study of history lies in the knowledge of facts, dates, names, places, events, and ideas (NCHS, 2022). In addition, an understanding of true historical learning requires students to be involved in historical thinking. Historical thinking is required to ask questions and to gather solid evidence to support their answers, go beyond the facts presented in their textbooks and examine historical records for themselves, consult documents, journals, diaries, artefacts, historic sites, works of art, data quantitative, and other evidence from the past, and do so imaginatively taking into account the historical context. Records are created and compare the viewpoints of many people on the scene at the time.

Public history can trigger students to understand history in a more real way with deeper knowledge. Real historical thinking requires that students have the opportunity to create their own historical narratives and arguments (Wineburg & Reisman, 2015). The narratives and arguments can be obtained from various things, including: researching, taking notes in the form of essays, to debating. It can be initiated in a number of ways. To start thinking history can be studied from issues, past and present. Students are directed to enter into historical records and provide an analysis of the problems raised to provide an analysis according to what they have found and interpreted.

In the end the teacher agreed with the initial idea, that the potential for public history in Kota Lama was very likely to be used to train students' historical thinking skills. Public history will always be related to public collective memory, and collective memory also influences the formation of collective identity. Studying public history with Discovery Learning will help students to find real knowledge, which is close to students' daily lives. This is the advantage of applying Discovery Learning in public history learning, especially in buildings that have high historical and cultural value. Public history should be taken into account, learning will be very fun because it involves many aspects, educational tours and exploring old buildings, an activity that can arouse the passion of researching history and discovering new knowledge that comes from heritage buildings.

CONCLUSION

Public history is a potential that can be used to train students' historical thinking skills. Kota Lama is a site that is quite interesting and relevant if used as a learning resource. The learning process can be realized using a discovery learning strategy that places students at the center of learning activities. This learning model allows social reactions to occur, so that students can interact with each other to discuss the knowledge they have acquired. This learning model also has the advantage of being able to foster students' curiosity, in addition to developing independence and autonomy in students. Learning public history using this learning model can train the ability to think historically in terms of studying historical objects, historical dialogue, to analyzing historical phenomena and historical conservation. An important recommendation from this study is that a media is needed to complement public history learning tools in an effort to strengthen students' historical thinking skills.



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