



Development of Artistic Expression in Students with Special Needs through Batik Ciprat at SLB Beranda Istimewa Ngawi



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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan proses pelaksanaan kegiatan batik ciprat sebagai media pengembangan ekspresi seni bagi peserta didik berkebutuhan khusus di SLB Beranda Istimewa Ngawi, serta menganalisis dampaknya terhadap perkembangan motorik, sensori, kreativitas, kepercayaan diri, dan interaksi sosial siswa. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan enam siswa tunagrahita dan autisme usia 10–14 tahun. Proses pembelajaran meliputi tahapan menciprat lilin, pewarnaan bertahap, penguncian warna, melorot, dan penjemuran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa batik ciprat merupakan media seni yang efektif dan inklusif bagi siswa ABK karena tekniknya yang sederhana, bersifat eksploratif, dan melibatkan rangsangan multisensori. Data menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kemampuan motorik halus melalui gerakan menciprat dan mewarnai, peningkatan integrasi sensori, serta berkembangnya kreativitas melalui kebebasan memilih warna dan pola. Selain itu, kegiatan ini mampu meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa melalui pengalaman menghasilkan karya nyata serta mendorong interaksi sosial seperti kerja sama saat menjemur kain dan menunggu giliran. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada pemanfaatan teknik batik ciprat sebagai pendekatan seni berbasis budaya lokal yang berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai pembelajaran vokasional, tetapi juga sebagai sarana terapi sensorimotor bagi anak berkebutuhan khusus. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pembelajaran seni berbasis eksplorasi dapat menjadi alternatif pembelajaran yang efektif dan bermakna di lingkungan SLB

Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation process of the *batik ciprat* (splatter batik) activity as a medium for developing artistic expression among students with special needs at SLB Beranda

Istimewa Ngawi, and to analyze its impact on their motor, sensory, creative, social, and emotional development. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, using observation, interviews, and documentation involving six students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities and autism aged 10–14. The learning stages included splattering hot wax, gradual coloring, color fixation, wax removal, and drying. The results indicate that *batik ciprat* is an effective and inclusive art medium for students with special needs due to its simple, flexible, and exploratory nature, as well as its multisensory stimulation. The activity improved fine motor skills through wax splattering and coloring movements, enhanced sensory integration, and fostered creativity through free color and pattern exploration. Furthermore, students showed increased self-confidence after successfully producing their own artworks, and developed social interaction skills through activities such as taking turns and cooperating during the drying process. The novelty of this study lies in the use of *batik ciprat*, a culturally rooted Indonesian textile art technique, as both a learning medium and a sensorimotor therapeutic tool for students with special needs. These findings highlight that exploratory art-based learning can serve as an effective and meaningful instructional alternative in special education settings.



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INTRODUCTION

Art plays a crucial role in supporting children’s development, particularly in terms of creativity, motor skills, and emotional regulation (Telaumbanua, 2024). Art-based activities provide opportunities for children with special needs to express their feelings through more flexible and less rigid visual forms. In addition, art functions as a non-verbal communication medium that assists children with language or cognitive barriers in conveying ideas and emotions in a more accessible and meaningful way.

Art is inherently non-verbal and expressive. For children with communication and language difficulties—commonly observed in those with autism and intellectual disabilities—art serves as an alternative medium to express thoughts and emotions that cannot be articulated verbally ((Malchiodi, 2023). Art is inherently non-verbal and expressive. For children with communication and language difficulties—commonly

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Among students with special needs, particularly those with intellectual disabilities and autism, expressive art activities make a significant contribution to sensory system stimulation (Tunagrahita et al., 2024). Previous findings indicate that art activities that do not require high precision can reduce frustration and enhance student participation in the learning process. This is particularly relevant given that many students with special needs experience difficulty maintaining concentration over extended periods. Therefore, open-ended and exploration-based approaches are considered more appropriate for their learning needs.

Batik ciprat (splatter batik) can serve as a highly effective medium for students with special needs due to its simple and flexible technique. A non-formal program at Universitas Negeri Semarang (2023) demonstrated that batik, including splatter techniques, can empower individuals with disabilities through the development of skills and independence (Santoso et al., 2023). This activity is particularly relevant as it combines movement, color, wax texture, and dynamic visual elements. Such a combination encourages students to actively explore their learning environment, thereby enhancing their readiness to engage in subsequent learning processes (Batik et al., 2023). Furthermore, batik ciprat involves three primary sensory systems: Visual: interaction with bright colors and visual transformations during the dyeing process ; Tactile: experiencing the texture of warm wax, fabric, and dyes; Kinesthetic: movements such as splattering, dipping, and brushing

At SLB Beranda Istimewa Ngawi, preliminary observations revealed that six students with intellectual disabilities and autism experienced difficulties in following conventional instructional learning that demands precision. They were easily frustrated, exhibited short attention spans (on average less than 10 minutes), and tended to withdraw when faced with challenging tasks. Supporting teachers reported that lecture-based and one-way demonstration methods were ineffective, as students required direct, hands-on experiences and multisensory stimulation (Rahmawati, 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Art education for children with special needs has increasingly been directed toward expressive approaches that support freedom of expression. Numerous studies indicate that

visual arts such as painting, collage, and simple batik can help children with special needs express emotions, regulate feelings, and develop a sense of identity and pride in their work (Journal & Education, 2020).

In its development, simple textile techniques such as batik ciprat, which are characterized by spontaneity, flexibility, and minimal precision requirements, have been utilized as inclusive creative activities. For instance, community-based batik ciprat programs have been shown to enhance creativity, improve pattern-making skills, and provide emotional therapeutic benefits, ultimately contributing to a better quality of life for individuals with disabilities (Mumpuni et al., 2025).

Several studies also emphasize that expressive visual art approaches such as free drawing and painting can assist children with special needs in expressing emotions, developing creativity, and building self-confidence (Sutarjo, 2023). Therefore, art techniques that allow for exploratory freedom are considered more suitable for students with special needs compared to methods that require a high level of precision.

Furthermore, recent studies highlight that multisensory approaches are highly effective for children with special needs, including those with autism. Activities involving a combination of visual, tactile, and movement-based elements have been proven to enhance focus, reduce anxiety, and strengthen emotional regulation. This is consistent with the findings of Rini, Soesanto, and Lestari (Rini & Lestari, 2025) who reported that art activities based on texture and color can generate positive emotional responses while also creating a more calming and conducive learning environment for students..

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to explore in depth the implementation of batik ciprat activities and the development of artistic expression among students with special needs at SLB Beranda Istimewa Ngawi. This approach was selected as it enables the natural portrayal of students' behavior and interactions through intensive observation in real-life settings (Lexy J Moleong, 2016).

The study was conducted at SLB Beranda Istimewa Ngawi, East Java, over a one-month period in conjunction with a field practice program. The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling, consisting of six students with mild to moderate

intellectual disabilities and autism aged 10–14 years, as well as supporting teachers and an art instructor.

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations followed Spradley's stages (descriptive, focused, and selective) to examine fine motor skills, concentration, splatter patterns, color selection, and students' emotional responses. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with supporting teachers to explore student characteristics, creativity development, behavioral changes, and learning challenges. Documentation included photographs of activities, students' artworks, and field notes.(Albi Anggito & Johan Setiawan, 2018)

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking with supporting teachers. The qualitative indicators observed included behavioral changes, motor skills, artistic expression, student initiative, and consistency in completing each stage of the batik ciprat process (Sugiarto, 2015)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning in special schools requires approaches that are more structured, concrete, and flexible compared to those in general education settings. This is due to the characteristics of students with special needs, who generally require more time to understand concepts, benefit from gradual repetition, and need consistent visual support and sensory stimulation.

Students with intellectual disabilities typically have limited abstract thinking abilities; therefore, learning must be presented in concrete, tangible, and easily understandable forms. Positive reinforcement, direct examples, and repeated instructions are essential strategies, as these students tend to forget easily and require repeated stimuli to maintain attention and engagement (Ulandary & Shodiq, 2023).

In contrast, students on the autism spectrum face challenges related to focus, social interaction, and behavioral regulation. Research indicates that they respond more effectively to multisensory learning media (visual, tactile, and movement-based), as such stimuli help reduce stress while enhancing focus and social responsiveness (Model et al., 2025).

Accordingly, instruction should be delivered through consistent patterns, structured routines, and clear, concise directions. The use of visual schedules, picture cards, and demonstrations greatly assists students with autism in understanding activity sequences. Additionally, overly noisy, visually overwhelming, or crowded environments may cause overstimulation; thus, a comfortable and sensory-friendly learning space is essential. In practical activities such as batik ciprat, teachers must adapt each stage to students' needs and motor abilities. For example

- Students with intellectual disabilities require concrete guidance in handling tools, understanding the function of wax, and completing tasks step by step.
- Students with autism benefit from visual examples, sequential instructions, and opportunities for expression without social pressure.
- Students with motor impairments may require modified tools, special grips, or light physical assistance (hand-over-hand support)

An empathetic and humanistic approach is essential to ensure that students feel safe, valued, and confident. Learning should focus not only on final outcomes but also on process development, including the ability to follow instructions, discipline, hand-eye coordination, attention, and creativity. Through structured practical activities such as batik ciprat, students gain not only technical skills but also social-emotional development, improved interaction, and increased confidence in producing meaningful work (Rege & Patil, 2025).

A. Implementation of Batik Ciprat Learning Activities

The implementation of batik ciprat activities consisted of several stages: preparation, execution, and evaluation. In the initial stage, students were introduced to tools and materials. Visual approaches and hands-on experiences are essential for students with special needs, as they require sensory-based strategies to understand functions and procedures concretely.

Research by Dong and Sabran (2022) shows that visual art interventions play a significant role in supporting emotional, psychological, and rehabilitative development in children with disabilities. Art activities involving visual exploration and hand movement enable students to practice coordination, focus, and self-expression more naturally. (Dong & Sabran, 2022).

The core stage began with students splattering hot wax onto fabric. This technique does not require high precision, making it suitable for students with intellectual disabilities and autism. Observations revealed that each student produced unique splatter patterns, reflecting individual expression. These findings align with studies on expressive art in children with autism, which show that when given freedom to explore, children demonstrate spontaneous expression, visual discovery (aha-experience), and natural emotional expression without pressure for accuracy (No et al., 2023).

After the wax dried, students proceeded with coloring and color fixation. This stage provided multisensory stimulation through color, fabric texture, and visual transformation, which, based on art therapy literature, can support sensory exploration, creativity, and potential sensory regulation.

The wax removal process was conducted by the teacher for safety reasons, but students remained involved as observers. The next stage involved drying the fabric, during which students learned to take turns hanging the fabric and observing color changes. This activity fostered independence, discipline, and responsibility. After drying, a second coloring stage using yellow dye and final color fixation was conducted. Students showed increased enthusiasm when observing the final batik patterns.

Overall, the batik ciprat process from wax splattering to final results not only develops vocational skills but also provides holistic learning experiences. It supports sensory regulation, creativity, discipline, independence, self-expression, and confidence, making it an inclusive and meaningful learning medium.

B. Impact on Student Development

The analysis indicates that batik ciprat activities have a significant impact on the development of students with special needs, functioning both as skill training and therapeutic intervention.

Fine Motor Skills

Movements such as splattering, dipping, and applying dye have been shown to strengthen students' fine motor coordination. This impact is particularly significant for children with intellectual disabilities and autism, who commonly experience difficulties in motor control and precision. Repetitive and structured activities, such as wax splattering, provide stable motor stimulation that is easier for students with special needs to follow (Hasana et al., 2023). Batik-making activities also enhance finger strength and hand-eye

coordination among students with intellectual disabilities, as they involve structured and repetitive movements..

Systematic reviews of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) indicate that art therapy can improve motor skills particularly fine motor abilities and coordination in children with autism, as manipulating art media requires repeated finger use and visual–motor coordination (Zhou et al., 2024)(Wei et al., 2025). Furthermore, intervention studies using sensory-based materials (such as clay, straws, and sponges) demonstrate significant improvements in hand muscle strength, fine motor control, and hand–eye coordination among children with ASD after several months of intervention(Deng et al., 2025).

These findings are consistent with batik ciprat activities, which involve repetitive and structured movements such as splattering, dipping, and applying dye, making them highly relevant for children with intellectual disabilities and autism..

Sensory Development

Batik ciprat activities provide multisensory experiences through interaction with fabric textures, dye aromas, and visual transformations during the coloring process. For children with autism, structured multisensory stimulation is particularly beneficial in supporting sensory regulation, reducing overload, and increasing tolerance to tactile and visual stimuli.

The combination of tactile, visual, and auditory materials in art sessions has been shown to enhance communication and emotional regulation, while also reducing anxiety and increasing participation duration(Deng et al., 2025)

The use of soft and malleable materials, such as clay or sand, can further reduce anxiety, increase readiness to engage, and minimize resistance to new sensory experiences(Verma, 2023). Batik ciprat, with its fabric textures, temperature and viscosity of wax and dyes, and dynamic visual changes, aligns with these multisensory intervention principles and holds strong potential to support sensory regulation and tolerance to tactile and visual stimuli

Creativity

The open-ended nature of splatter patterns provides broad opportunities for children to express themselves. Students with intellectual disabilities typically require concrete media to express visual ideas; therefore, color splattering serves as an effective medium to directly stimulate creativity. For children with autism, the freedom to choose colors and

create patterns without rigid constraints helps reduce unproductive repetitive behaviors and channels their energy into structured yet creative activities. Exploration-based art learning has been shown to enhance creativity, emotional expression, and cognitive flexibility among students with special needs (Selatan & Selatan, 2025).

Reviews of art therapy in ASD further indicate that such approaches strengthen emotional processing and reduce repetitive behaviors by redirecting energy into structured but expressive creative activities (İnci & Sağlam, 2025)

The non-restrictive nature of splatter motifs—where there is no concept of right or wrong—supports these findings, allowing children to explore color, direction, and composition without perfectionist pressure while remaining within a guided framework.

Self-Confidence

- An increase in self-confidence is evident when students observe their splatter patterns transformed into complete batik artworks. This sense of accomplishment is crucial for children with special needs, who often experience feelings of inadequacy in academic tasks. Batik learning, particularly batik ciprat, fosters pride, intrinsic motivation, and self-confidence by enabling students to produce tangible and recognized works (Pascasarjana et al., 2024).

Social Interaction

- Activities such as taking turns dipping fabric, working side by side during the drying process, and collaboratively selecting colors provide natural opportunities for children with autism and ADHD to develop social skills. These simple interactions help improve communication, cooperation, and patience. Collaborative art activities have been shown to enhance social adaptation, sharing abilities, and communication responses in children with autism within structured and enjoyable learning environments (Riyadi & Aprillia, n.d.).

Overall, the batik ciprat program can be positioned as an innovative approach that adapts established principles of international art therapy multisensory engagement, expression, collaboration, and repetition into a traditional Indonesian art medium that is affordable, safe, and highly relevant for special education settings (SLB).

A. Achievement of Program Objectives and Research Novelty

The evaluation results indicate that the batik ciprat program successfully achieved all intended learning outcomes, including improvements in motor skills, creativity, sensory integration, and students' self-confidence. In addition, the artworks produced possess aesthetic value and can be showcased in school activities. The novelty of this study lies in the utilization of batik ciprat, a traditional Indonesian textile art form, as both a therapeutic and instructional medium. This approach is not only culturally relevant but also effective for students with intellectual disabilities and autism. Batik can serve as a cost-effective, safe, and contextually appropriate medium for art therapy within special education environments (Skills, 2025). This model offers promising opportunities for schools to develop art-based learning approaches that integrate local cultural values with the pedagogical needs of students with special needs..

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the artistic expression development program through batik ciprat activities at SLB Beranda Istimewa Ngawi has demonstrated success in enhancing motor skills, creativity, and expressive confidence among students with special needs. The learning process—comprising stages such as wax splattering, gradual coloring, color fixation, wax removal, and drying—not only produces aesthetically valuable artworks but also provides concrete, engaging, and enjoyable learning experiences aligned with the characteristics of students with special needs.

The findings of this study confirm that batik ciprat is an inclusive and adaptive art medium capable of stimulating sensorimotor development, strengthening hand–eye coordination, and promoting emotional and social growth through interactive learning processes. The primary contribution of this research lies in demonstrating that exploratory art methods can enhance students' independence and self-confidence, while also serving as an effective alternative approach to art education in special schools.

These results offer valuable opportunities for the further development of exploration-based art learning theories and practices for students with special needs, particularly in the context of simple yet meaningful activities such as batik ciprat. Future research may focus on examining the effectiveness of similar activities for different types of disabilities or on

developing more structured yet flexible art learning models tailored to students' individual needs

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