



## Social Competence of Christian Religious Education Teachers: Effective Communication in Learning Evaluation at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya

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### ABSTRACT

*Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a pivotal role in shaping students' moral and spiritual character within Indonesia's pluralistic educational landscape. This study investigates how CRE teachers implement social competence through effective communication during learning evaluation at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya. Social competence, encompassing empathy, openness, and relational skills, is essential for transforming evaluation from a technical measurement of knowledge into a holistic process that supports cognitive, affective, and spiritual development. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving participant observation, semi-structured interviews with the CRE teacher, students, parents, and school administrators, as well as document analysis. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns of communication and evaluate their impact on learning. Findings reveal that the CRE teacher consistently demonstrated empathetic listening, constructive feedback, and dialogical engagement, enabling students to feel respected and actively involved in the evaluative process. Communication extended beyond grading to fostering trust, character formation, and Christian values such as honesty, love, and responsibility. Parent-teacher collaboration further reinforced evaluation outcomes, particularly in strengthening students' affective and spiritual dimensions. Nonetheless, challenges were identified, including limited time for personalized feedback, insufficient formal training in communicative strategies, and diverse student personalities requiring differentiated approaches. The study concludes that the enactment of social competence in communication not only enhances learning quality but also fosters resilience, integrity, and responsibility among students. These insights underscore the necessity of integrating communication-focused training into teacher professional development and affirm CRE's transformative role in preparing Indonesia's Golden Generation 2045.*

**Keywords:** Social Competence, Christian Religious Education, Communication

## INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a strategic role in shaping the moral and spiritual character of students in Indonesia, a country where education is expected to produce not only academically capable individuals but also citizens with integrity and resilience. In this context, the role of the CRE teacher extends beyond the mastery of subject matter; it requires the embodiment of social competence that supports meaningful interactions within the school community. Social competence, as defined in the Indonesian National Education Standards, involves the ability of teachers to build constructive relationships with students, fellow educators, parents, and society at large. Such competence ensures that the learning process is not merely cognitive but also dialogical and relational, where effective communication becomes the bridge between knowledge transfer and holistic character formation (Lickona, 2019). One crucial dimension of social competence in CRE teaching is effective communication during learning evaluation. Evaluation is not only a technical process of assessing students' knowledge but also a relational practice through which teachers provide constructive feedback, encouragement, and direction. Effective communication allows teachers to understand students' needs, potentials, and challenges, thereby enabling them to provide individualized guidance. When students feel heard and understood, they are more likely to engage in self-reflection and improvement. Studies have shown that teachers who demonstrate empathy and clarity in their communication significantly enhance student motivation and achievement (Noddings, 2013). For CRE teachers, this communication must also be rooted in Christian values of love, patience, and truth, ensuring that feedback is not only corrective but also nurturing in ways that strengthen students' faith and resilience (Groome, 2011). Despite its importance, the implementation of social competence among CRE teachers in evaluation practices still encounters various challenges. Research in Indonesian educational contexts indicates that teacher–student communication often lacks reciprocity, with teachers dominating conversations and students having limited opportunities for expression (Tilaar, 2004). This one-directional communication reduces the effectiveness of evaluation, as students are less able to share their perspectives and difficulties. Furthermore, teachers often struggle to recognize the psychological and emotional conditions of students, particularly in rural schools, where socio-economic factors significantly affect learning. Without sensitive communication, evaluation risks becoming a mechanical process detached from students' lived realities (Bandura, 1997). Another challenge lies in the limited involvement of parents in the evaluation process. Parent–teacher collaboration is essential for reinforcing learning outcomes, but cultural and structural barriers often hinder effective communication between teachers and families, thus weakening the impact of evaluation (Gay, 2010).

SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya represents a critical site for examining these dynamics. As a primary school that incorporates CRE as part of its curriculum, the institution recognizes the importance of strengthening teachers' social competence, particularly in communication. The school's commitment reflects a broader recognition that the quality of education is closely tied to the quality of teacher–student relationships. However,

there has been little research focusing specifically on how CRE teachers at this school implement social competence in communication during the evaluation process. Given the school's unique socio-cultural context, shaped by local traditions and Christian faith, such research is essential to identify both challenges and best practices that may inform wider educational policy and practice. This study, therefore, seeks to analyze the implementation of CRE teachers' social competence in effective communication during learning evaluation at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya. By focusing on the intersection of pedagogical practice and relational dynamics, the research aims to uncover how teachers navigate the demands of evaluation while remaining attentive to students' needs and well-being. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of strategies that enhance the social competence of CRE teachers, offering concrete recommendations for schools and stakeholders. In doing so, this study also aligns with Indonesia's broader educational agenda of character formation and the preparation of the Golden Generation 2045. Strengthening the capacity of CRE teachers to communicate effectively not only improves academic outcomes but also nurtures the moral and spiritual growth of students, equipping them to face the challenges of a pluralistic and rapidly changing society (Setyawan, 2019).

## **METHODS**

This study adopted a qualitative approach using a descriptive method to investigate how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers exercise social competence in fostering effective communication during learning evaluation at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya. A qualitative orientation was deemed most appropriate as it provides the flexibility to capture the complexity of human interactions within their natural setting, allowing the researcher to engage with the lived experiences of participants in a holistic manner (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participants included the CRE teacher, students, parents, and members of the school management team, reflecting the multiple stakeholders involved in the evaluation process. A purposive sampling strategy was employed, selecting participants based on predetermined criteria aligned with the research objectives, thereby ensuring the relevance and richness of the data collected. Data were obtained through three primary techniques: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation involved the researcher attending evaluation sessions conducted by the CRE teacher and closely observing communicative exchanges with students, providing direct insights into how social competence was enacted in practice. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher, selected students, parents, and school administrators to capture diverse perspectives on the effectiveness of communication during evaluation. Document analysis included the review of lesson plans, assessment records, and related documents, enabling a deeper contextual understanding of the evaluative practices implemented by the teacher. Data collection extended over a one-month period, during which the researcher adhered to ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for the rights of all participants. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data. This analytic process began with coding of transcripts, field notes, and documents, which were then organized into themes relating to social competence and communicative practices. Following an inductive logic, themes emerged organically from the data rather than being imposed by

rigid theoretical frameworks at the outset. Such an approach allowed the researcher to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and dynamics in teacher–student interactions during evaluation, illuminating both strengths and challenges inherent in the process. To enhance the trustworthiness of findings, triangulation was employed by cross-referencing data from observations, interviews, and documents.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The implementation of social competence among Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers represents one of the most significant aspects of effective teaching and learning in Indonesia's plural and value-oriented educational landscape. Based on classroom observations and interviews conducted with the CRE teacher, students, and school management at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya, it was evident that the teacher demonstrated mastery of social competence not only within the formal learning environment but also beyond it, particularly in the evaluative process. The CRE teacher consistently displayed empathetic, open, and collaborative attitudes in interactions with students. Such qualities are central to the teacher's role in creating a classroom culture marked by trust, inclusivity, and dialogue, all of which function as the bedrock of effective evaluation. Evaluation, within this framework, was not reduced to a mechanical process of scoring and grading but became a pedagogical space for reflection, feedback, and personal growth. The evaluative practices employed by the teacher also extended beyond the cognitive dimension to encompass affective and spiritual development. Rather than perceiving assessment as a unidirectional act in which authority flows solely from the teacher, the teacher encouraged dialogical spaces that allowed students to voice their concerns, express their emotions, and participate actively in reviewing their performance. This two-way communication reflects a deeper vision of evaluation as an integral component of Christian pedagogy, one that situates assessment within the horizon of discipleship, reflection, and the pursuit of integrity (Groome, 2011). Students were not passive recipients of judgments but were engaged as reflective partners in their own growth. This mirrors the argument of Lickona (2019) that true education must engage both the mind and the heart, enabling students to experience evaluation as a pathway to moral and spiritual formation rather than as a source of fear or anxiety.

### ***Strategies of Effective Communication in Learning Evaluation***

In achieving this inclusive and student-centered model of evaluation, the CRE teacher employed multiple strategies aimed at ensuring effective communication. The first strategy observed was the use of simple and friendly language. Recognizing the varied intellectual and emotional maturity of elementary school students, the teacher deliberately employed accessible vocabulary accompanied by a warm tone of voice. This practice significantly reduced tension during evaluation and encouraged students to perceive assessment not as a moment of intimidation but as a dialogue of growth. This echoes the findings of Noddings (2013), who argued that the language of care and encouragement is foundational to creating nurturing educational encounters. The second

strategy centered on the provision of constructive feedback. Instead of framing student mistakes as failures, the teacher repositioned them as opportunities for improvement. For instance, rather than bluntly telling a student that their answer was “wrong,” the teacher would respond with affirmations such as, “That is an interesting idea, but let us explore this part together again.” Such an approach encouraged resilience and problem-solving while protecting students from the discouragement that often accompanies evaluative processes. Constructive feedback, as highlighted by Hattie and Timperley (2007), has been proven to have one of the strongest impacts on student learning outcomes, particularly when it balances affirmation with clear guidance for improvement. A third dimension was the teacher’s deliberate effort to engage students’ emotions positively during evaluation. The consistent provision of praise for effort, even when results were imperfect, demonstrated an ethic of encouragement that built student confidence. Students who felt recognized for their perseverance, rather than solely for correct answers, were more likely to sustain motivation in the face of challenges. In this regard, the teacher mirrored Bandura’s (1997) theory of self-efficacy, which posits that encouragement and affirmation are crucial for developing students’ belief in their own capacity to succeed. The teacher displayed openness to receiving feedback from students regarding teaching and evaluation methods. This practice demonstrated a democratic orientation, in which the classroom became a participatory community rather than a hierarchical space. Students who were given the opportunity to voice their preferences about evaluation methods reported feeling more involved in their own educational journey. As Dewey (1938) asserted, education is most effective when it becomes an interactive and reflective experience that recognizes students as co-constructors of knowledge.

### ***The Role of Social Competence in Enhancing Evaluation Quality***

The teacher’s social competence served as a pivotal element in transforming evaluation into a formative and humanistic process. Evaluation was reframed not as a punitive or judgmental act but as an empowering learning moment. The establishment of healthy teacher–student relationships created an atmosphere where students felt safe enough to admit mistakes, ask questions, and take intellectual risks. This finding resonates with the work of Christiani (2022), who demonstrated that effective communication in evaluation not only enhances cognitive learning outcomes but also strengthens emotional engagement and affective growth. Observations revealed that students were far more willing to articulate their uncertainties and share their difficulties in an environment where the teacher demonstrated empathy and non-judgmental listening. For example, students reported that they felt comfortable disclosing when they had not understood particular lessons, because they trusted the teacher to respond with patience rather than ridicule. Such practices aligned with Palmer’s (2007) conception of the teacher as a living curriculum, wherein authentic personal presence forms the cornerstone of transformative education. One of the unique strengths of the implementation of CRE evaluation at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya was the teacher’s active effort to involve parents. Interviews revealed that the teacher maintained regular communication with parents through both face-to-face meetings and digital platforms. Importantly, the communication went beyond reporting numerical scores to include reflections on students’ character development, attitudes, and participation in religious learning.

Parents expressed gratitude for this holistic approach, stating that it provided them with a comprehensive understanding of their children's progress not only academically but also spiritually and morally. Such involvement reflects Epstein's (2001) framework of school-family partnerships, which emphasizes the importance of consistent collaboration between educators and parents in enhancing student outcomes. When parents are informed and engaged, they are better able to reinforce classroom values at home, thereby creating coherence between school and family expectations. Parents at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya reported greater discipline and motivation among their children, attributing it to the synergistic communication between teacher and family.

Despite the success of the CRE teacher's strategies, several challenges were noted that hindered the optimal implementation of effective communication in evaluation. One of the primary challenges was time limitation. With a packed curriculum and multiple responsibilities, the teacher often struggled to provide detailed feedback for each student, particularly in larger classes. This limitation underscores the structural challenge faced by many Indonesian teachers, where systemic demands often conflict with pedagogical ideals (Tilaar, 2004). A second challenge was the lack of specialized training in communication strategies specific to learning evaluation. The teacher acknowledged that most of their communication skills had been acquired through personal experience rather than formal professional development. This finding echoes the study by Sihombing (2020), which highlighted the absence of structured programs aimed at equipping teachers with interpersonal and evaluative communication skills. Without targeted training, teachers often rely on intuition, which may not always suffice in addressing the complexities of diverse student needs. The variation in student personalities also posed a significant challenge. While some students were outspoken and willing to participate in evaluative discussions, others were reserved and hesitant to express themselves. This diversity required the teacher to adopt differentiated strategies, a task that was both time-consuming and emotionally demanding. The challenge reflects the broader psychological reality noted by Vygotsky (1978), who argued that learners bring diverse social and emotional predispositions into the classroom, requiring teachers to exercise flexibility and sensitivity in their interactions. A key contribution of the CRE teacher's implementation was the way communication in evaluation extended beyond cognitive achievement to character formation. Evaluation was consistently linked to Christian values such as honesty, responsibility, and love. For example, when students engaged in misconduct or interpersonal conflicts, the teacher reframed these incidents as moments for reflection and moral growth rather than mere disciplinary infractions. Students were guided to evaluate their actions in light of biblical teachings, thereby internalizing lessons of forgiveness, empathy, and accountability. This integration of faith values with evaluation reflects Groome's (2011) vision of Christian education as shared praxis, where life experiences are critically reflected upon in dialogue with faith traditions. By embedding character evaluation within assessment practices, the teacher ensured that learning outcomes were not limited to intellectual skills but encompassed the moral and spiritual dimensions necessary for holistic education.

The findings of this study complement and expand upon earlier research in the field. For instance, Siregar and Manik (2021) found that effective teacher communication positively

correlates with student engagement and academic achievement. The current study confirmed these findings while also extending the discussion by emphasizing the spiritual and relational dimensions of communication in CRE evaluation. Unlike other studies that primarily focused on technical aspects of evaluation, this research highlighted the social and faith-based foundations of communication, offering a unique contribution to scholarship in religious education. By situating communication within the dual framework of interpersonal competence and theological values, this study demonstrated that effective evaluation cannot be divorced from the moral and spiritual commitments of the teacher. In this sense, the study supports Bevans' (2002) argument that religious education must always be inculturated, harmonizing universal Christian values with the local and relational context of learners. The practical implications of this research are manifold. First, it underscores the urgent need for continuous professional development for CRE teachers, particularly in the area of communication skills during evaluation. Schools and educational policymakers should design training modules that provide teachers with practical tools for constructive feedback, dialogical evaluation, and family engagement. Additionally, schools could establish collaborative spaces where teachers can share best practices and reflect collectively on their evaluative approaches. From a theoretical perspective, this study affirms the inseparability of teacher social competence from the overall effectiveness of education, particularly in character and religious instruction. Social competence, as this research demonstrated, forms the backbone of meaningful interaction, which in turn facilitates both cognitive growth and moral development. This aligns with the broader pedagogical principle that education is not merely transactional but transformative, aiming to shape students into whole persons capable of resilience, integrity, and spiritual maturity (Palmer, 2007; Tilaar, 2004). The implementation of social competence by the CRE teacher at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya illustrates the transformative potential of communication in educational evaluation. Through empathy, openness, constructive feedback, and parental involvement, the teacher succeeded in reframing evaluation as a space of growth rather than judgment. While challenges such as time constraints, lack of formal training, and diverse student personalities remain, the study highlights the powerful role of teacher social competence in fostering both academic success and moral–spiritual formation. The findings also affirm that effective evaluation in religious education is inseparable from relational trust and dialogical engagement. By embodying values of care, integrity, and inclusivity, CRE teachers can transform assessment into a holistic process that prepares students not only for academic excellence but also for life grounded in character and faith. This vision aligns with Indonesia's broader goal of cultivating resilient, morally upright citizens as part of the Golden Generation 2045.

## Conclusion

The present study affirms that the capacity of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers to embody social competence through effective communication during evaluative practices exerts a profound influence on both educational quality and the holistic development of learners at SD Negeri 091292 Simpang Raya. In this framework, CRE teachers assume multidimensional roles—not merely as conveyors of doctrinal knowledge, but as facilitators of dialogue, companions in the learning journey, and agents

of moral formation. Their empathetic disposition, active attentiveness, and transparent communication constitute the essence of social competence that transforms evaluation from a procedural requirement into a relational and formative practice. Within this paradigm, evaluation transcends the reduction of student achievement to cognitive scores. Instead, it emerges as a pedagogical moment where trust is cultivated, dignity is affirmed, and character values are nurtured. Students are recognized as dialogical partners, entrusted with voice and agency in reflecting on their progress. The teacher's deliberate use of relational strategies—kind and inclusive language, feedback that restores rather than condemns, and dialogic engagement—reframes evaluation as a participatory process that empowers rather than intimidates. The findings also highlight the indispensable role of parental collaboration. Communication between teachers and parents enhances the evaluative process by reinforcing its affective and spiritual dimensions. Through such synergy, evaluation becomes not merely an instrument of academic measurement but a bridge linking classroom experiences to the moral and spiritual cultivation of students in their familial and communal contexts. The study acknowledges structural and practical challenges. The demands of curriculum often restrict teachers' ability to provide individualized feedback, while the absence of sustained professional training in communicative competence hinders broader implementation. The heterogeneity of student dispositions further requires adaptive strategies tailored to diverse needs. These challenges signal the necessity of positioning social competence as a central pillar in teacher formation and continuous professional development. The enactment of social competence in evaluative communication reconfigures the learning environment into one that is dialogical, inclusive, and morally formative. Teachers who excel in this domain not only enhance academic learning but also inspire students to cultivate integrity, responsibility, and resilience—qualities essential for navigating contemporary challenges. This research contributes to the broader discourse of Christian education by underscoring that authentic evaluation must integrate relational, ethical, and spiritual dimensions, ensuring that education remains deeply humanizing in both present realities and future aspirations.

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