



Problem-based civics learning to improve the argumentation skills of students of elementary school 2 handapherang

Riefki Fiestawa*, Elan, Muhamad Azri Hidayat, Na'il Fauzan

Elementary School Teacher Education Program, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

Corresponding author: riefkifies@upi.edu, elanmpd@upi.edu, hidayatzi@upi.edu, fauzannail.420@upi.edu

Received 28 April 2025; First Revised 24 May 2025; Accepted 28 May 2025
First Available Online 1 June 2025; Publication Date 1 June 2025

Abstrac

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the problem-based learning (PBL) model in improving students' argumentation skills in Pancasila and Civics Education (PPKn) subjects at SD Negeri 2 Handapherang. The research method used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation and interviews with teachers. The results showed that the application of PBL significantly increased students' involvement in the learning process. This model facilitates the development of argumentation skills through contextual problem solving, group collaboration, and critical thinking exercises. The implications of the findings indicate that PBL not only improves the quality of students' argumentation but also builds confidence, communication skills, and awareness of socio-political issues. This research recommends PBL as an innovative alternative to overcome low student participation in Civics learning at the primary school level.

Keywords: *Problem-based Learning, Argumentation Skills, Elementary School Civics, Citizenship Education*

INTRODUCTION

Arguments are closely related to everyday existence, especially in the realm of education. The argumentation process serves to anchor students in critical thinking, action, and communication, thus making argumentation an intrinsic component of the human experience (Yulianing et al., 2023).

In the context of everyday interactions, engaging in argumentation is considered a fundamental aspect. This is due to the fact that almost every activity undertaken requires or demands an argument. Arguments that produce substantiated facts, precise definitions, and strong evidence are considered strong and valid.

The capacity to engage in argumentation represents the ability to agree or oppose a point of view or idea, supported by logical reasoning that can be understood by the

audience (Lee, 2023).

As expressed by Nadliroh (2022), argumentation skills are essential as they empower students to express their opinions and challenge ideas, fostering a classroom environment where questioning and curiosity are encouraged.

In addition, argumentation skills can also help students to understand other people's points of view and appreciate different opinions (Kyei-Nuamah, 2024). Thus, students will be trained to be more open and tolerant of various opinions around them. This will certainly be very beneficial for the development of students' personality and social skills in the future. Therefore, the development of argumentation skills from an early age is very important in classroom learning.

Civics is one of the subjects at the

elementary school level. Civics is also one of the subjects tested in school exams. The material in Civics subjects includes knowledge about a sense of nationality, love for the country, attitudes and personalities of disciplined and actively participating citizens. The amount of material contained in Civics subjects is a factor in the difficulty in exploring and understanding these materials so that students have difficulty expressing their opinions (Surya, 2023).

Other factors of students' difficulties in arguing are internal and external factors. Internal factors cause students to find it difficult to accept learning, due to the lack of variation in the learning model provided by the teacher. The more creative the teacher is in delivering the material, the easier it is for students to understand the lesson and will increase student creativity in opinion. External factors if students do not understand the material taught by the teacher because the learning model is not varied, then students will find it difficult to concentrate on learning and hesitate in answering a question. This is in line with the findings of Anne (2021), who revealed that argumentation classrooms are underutilized due to curriculum constraints and lack of teacher training.

The results of initial observations conducted in class V of SD Negeri 2 Handapherang showed that many students were not active in the learning process. They tend to be passive, lack confidence in expressing opinions, and are not optimally involved in class discussions. One of the causes is the learning approach that does not facilitate the exploration of ideas and arguments.

Therefore, a learning model is needed that can spur the active involvement of students, such as Problem Based Learning (PBL). In PBL learning, students are given tasks or cases that require them to identify problems, formulate solutions, and work

together in finding answers. Thus, students can increase their involvement in learning and feel more confident in expressing their opinions and answering questions.

The PBL model centers learning on solving real and contextual problems. Through this approach, students are invited to analyze situations, find solutions, and discuss opinions rationally in groups. This is believed to improve students' argumentation skills in the context of Civics learning.

The *novelty* of this research lies in the contextual application of the PBL model in Civics subjects at the elementary school level, which has rarely been touched by empirical studies. This research integrates the PBL approach with measurable argumentative ability indicators, and uses data triangulation in the form of observation, interviews, and questionnaires as the main data collection method.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The research subjects were fifth grade students at SD Negeri 2 Handapherang, Ciamis Regency, West Java. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation of teaching and learning activities, interviews with class teachers, and documentation of student learning outcomes. The instruments used consisted of student participation observation sheets, interview guidelines, and rubrics for assessing argumentation skills.

Previously, observations and interviews were conducted with a teacher to find out the problems in Civics learning and after finding these problems, the author tried to find alternative solutions that could be used by the teacher to solve these problems, but before that the author had tried to directly apply the solution to the participants of SDN 2 Handapherang students.

Data were analyzed descriptively through

the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was obtained through triangulation of techniques and sources, namely comparing observation data, interview results, and learning documents.

According to Mappasere S. A et. all (2019) Descriptive methods aim to find theory. The main characteristics of this research method are that the researcher is directly involved in the field, acts as an observer, makes categories of actors, observes phenomena, records them in an observation book, does not manipulate variables, focuses on natural observation.

DISCUSSION

According to the national education goals, the effectiveness of education should be improved because the teaching process is crucial to producing high-quality outcomes. (Anya & Yumna, 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to get more attention to create fun and effective learning process activities. One of the efforts that can be made is the renewal of learning models that can touch the ability of students in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

Through a learning model that familiarizes students to be active, so that it can develop the ability of students to be able to learn independently by looking at contextual issues that are relevant to everyday life (Sinaga, 2023). Thus, it is expected that the learning process can provide a memorable experience and encourage learners to continue learning and developing.

The use of ineffective Pancasila and Citizenship Education (Civics) learning models can have a negative impact on the speed of implementation of learning activities, and this will have a negative impact on student learning outcomes and motivation (Arik & M., 2024). Therefore, it is important for educators to choose learning methods that suit the needs and interests of students so that the learning process is not only effective but also fun. Thus, learners

will be actively involved in learning and create a conducive learning environment.

Problems that occur in learning activities include the application of learning models used by educators that are less effective and do not foster democratic learning (Mohammad & Wuri, 2017), so that innovation is needed in learning by applying learning models that can foster learning motivation and students get maximum learning outcomes, especially in Civics subjects.

Efforts that can improve an effective learning atmosphere, so that it involves students more in ongoing learning activities, namely through problem-based learning models.

The goal is to improve argumentation skills, students' skills to work together, foster critical thinking skills, and be able to solve problems in everyday life, especially in Civics learning.

Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) has a very important role as a vehicle for developing argumentation skills or the potential of students to think critically in response to existing issues or problems (Novita et al., 2022).

Some indicators to measure students' argumentation skills, indicators are used that are adjusted to the argumentation assessment rubric developed based on Toulmin's theory and adjustments in the context of elementary school (Atma, 2023; Jamiluddin et al., 2024)), namely:

1. Expressing claims or opinions clearly
2. Provide logical reasons to support opinions
3. Use data or examples as supporting evidence
4. Respond politely and critically to others' opinions
5. Draw conclusions from the discussion in a coherent and meaningful manner

Consequently, in order to foster the competencies already realized by learners, it is imperative to implement a pedagogical framework that facilitates problem-centered tasks, thereby stimulating learners' learning

motivation and improving learning outcomes through solving challenges encountered in everyday contexts.

The problem-based learning model is a paradigm that uses real-world problems as a contextual framework for students to foster critical thinking skills, improve problem-solving competencies, and assimilate knowledge and concepts related to the subject matter. (Amril & Abu, 2023).

The problem-based learning model is one type of learning that is based on the constructivism paradigm and is very beneficial for student learning and their orientation towards the learning process. The focus is on the problem, the teacher acts as a facilitator, and students seek information, enrich insights from various sources, and skills to be active in problem solving (Hendracipta, 2021).

Problem-based learning in the classroom can stimulate communication skills, metacognitive skills, lifelong learning skills, and content knowledge is practiced by focusing on problems (Nunuk, 2021).

The application of the *problem-based learning (PBL)* model in the context of Civics learning in primary schools has a strong relevance to the goals of national education, namely creating students who are not only superior in knowledge, but also in critical thinking skills and national values. PBL encourages students to be more active, participatory and reflective in the learning process, which indirectly strengthens their ability to argue.

In its implementation, PBL places students as the center of learning. This is different from conventional models which are still dominated by a *teacher-centered* approach. PBL requires students to be directly involved in solving contextual problems that are closely related to real life. In Civics learning, topics such as diversity, citizen responsibilities, and social issues can be used as relevant problem contexts. Activities such as group discussions, debate simulations, and presentations of problem solving results have proven to be able to increase students' confidence and ability to convey arguments in a logical and structured

manner.

Observations at SDN 2 Handapherang showed a significant increase in student participation after the implementation of PBL. Students who previously tended to be passive began to show courage in expressing opinions, responding to friends' arguments, and defending their point of view with reasonable reasons. This shows that the PBL approach not only improves students' cognitive skills but also has a positive impact on their affective and social-emotional aspects.

Based on the results of interviews with fifth grade teachers, it is known that before the application of PBL, the majority of students tend to be passive in learning activities. The teacher delivered:

"Students only listen to the explanation, rarely anyone wants to raise their hands, even when I ask for opinions, they are mostly silent. But after learning with PBL, the class atmosphere is more lively. They began to dare to express their opinions and discuss with each other."

In addition, the teacher also noted an improvement in the quality of students' answers.

"During the group presentation, the children started to be able to give reasons for their opinions, not just saying 'agree' or 'disagree', but being able to explain why." This shows the real development of critical thinking and argumentative skills.

The observation results during the learning process showed that students' involvement increased significantly, marked by the increasing number of students who actively asked, answered, and gave responses in the group. Students seemed more confident when presenting the solutions to the problems given.

Data from a questionnaire distributed to 30 students after the implementation of PBL reinforced these findings. As many as 78% of students stated that they felt it was easier to understand Civics material through group discussions and real case studies. 82% felt more confident expressing their opinions in front of the class.

This study is in line with the findings of

Arifin (2021) who emphasized that a problem-based approach can improve students' argumentation discourse patterns. In addition, PBL also contributes to improving collaborative skills, such as the ability to work in teams, active listening, and respect for other people's opinions (Hasibuan, 2025). These aspects are very important in civic education which emphasizes active and democratic participation in social life.

Furthermore, according to Pereira et al. (2023) argumentation skills built through PBL are an important provision in building the character of smart, critical and responsible citizens. Argumentation is not just a speaking skill, but an indicator of conceptual understanding, analytical skills, and social skills. In the context of the 21st century, this ability is part of important new literacy skills: critical, collaborative and communication literacy.

In this study, the use of problems as discussion triggers became a starting point for students to explore issues in more depth. For example, students were invited to discuss issues such as the importance of tolerance in a pluralistic society or the role of students in protecting the school environment. This activity not only fosters curiosity and engagement, but also helps students connect learning to their real lives. The application of PBL also allows students to learn from experience, where they can reflect on the process and results of the discussion and problem solving that has been done. So that in line with the findings of Zulaifah & Fauzi (2023) with PBL can create a more dynamic and interesting classroom atmosphere, thus increasing motivation and overall student learning outcomes.

Thus, the application of PBL in Civics learning is not only able to improve argumentation skills, but also develop various other important competencies needed in 21st century life, such as critical, creative, collaborative, and communicative thinking. Teachers are expected not only to be material deliverers, but also facilitators who are able to design challenging and

meaningful learning contexts for students.

CONCLUSION

Education in schools must create a conducive learning atmosphere and an effective learning process to develop the potential of students. Learning Pancasila and Civics Education (PPKn) requires innovation by applying a problem-based learning model to improve argumentation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

This research shows that the problem-based learning (PBL) model is highly effective in improving argumentation skills of primary school learners, especially in the context of Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) subjects. Through this approach, learners are not only encouraged to think critically and solve problems, but also to collaborate, listen and convey ideas in a logical and persuasive way.

PBL creates an active and democratic learning environment, where students feel they have the space to express their opinions and learn to appreciate different points of view. This is very important in civic education which aims to form smart, critical, tolerant and responsible citizens.

The argumentation skills developed through PBL include aspects of critical thinking, logical, analytical, communicative, and awareness of social and national issues. This ability not only contributes to academic learning outcomes, but also to the development of students' character and social skills. Therefore, this model is highly recommended to be widely applied in learning Civics and other fields of study.

The recommendations that can be proposed from the results of this study are:

1. Teachers need training and assistance in designing and implementing problem-based learning effectively.
2. Schools need to provide adequate supporting resources for PBL to be implemented optimally, including learning media and flexible time for discussion.
3. Further research can examine the application of PBL at various grade

levels and in other subjects to enrich the data and assess the generalizability of this model more broadly.

With the right approach, problem-based learning can be a superior pedagogical alternative in growing learners who are not only academically intelligent, but also competent in facing the complex challenges of the times.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author expresses gratitude to God Almighty for His mercy and grace so that the article with the title "*Problem-Based Civics Learning to Improve the Argumentation Ability of Students of SD Negeri 2 Handapherang*" can be completed properly. Gratitude is expressed to the Principal and teachers at SD Negeri 2 Handapherang who have given permission and support in the implementation of this research. Appreciation is also addressed to all students who have been willing to become respondents and make important contributions in the data collection process.

The authors would also like to thank the UPI Gemilang Program for providing training and assistance in writing scientific articles, as well as Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia for the facilities and academic support provided during this research process.

The author realizes that this article still has limitations. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are very expected for future improvements. Hopefully this article can provide benefits for the development of Civics learning and character education at the elementary school level.

REFERENCES

Atma, F. I. (2023). *Pengaruh Metode Debat Aktif Menggunakan Media Gambar Terhadap Kemampuan Berargumentasi Peserta Didik Pada Mata Pelajaran Pkn Kelas V Di Min 1 Pesawaran* (Doctoral Dissertation, Uin Raden Intan Lampung).

Mualifah, D. F. (2023). *Penerapan Model Problem Based Learning Pada*

Pembelajaran Ppkn Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berargumentasi Siswa Mi Ma'arif Polorejo (Doctoral Dissertation, Iain Ponorogo).

Wahyudi, A., Hidayat, S., & Utari, E. (2018). Pengembangan Modul Berbasis Masalah Untuk Meningkatkan Pola Wacana Argumentasi Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jtppm (Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran): Edutech And Intructional Research Journal*, 5(1).

Amril, & Abu. (2023). *Pembelajaran kontekstual dan pembelajaran problem based learning*. <https://doi.org/10.55606/lencana.v1i1.881>

Anya, & Yumna. (2023). *Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi hasil belajar peserta didik (literature review)*. <https://doi.org/10.38035/jpsn.v1i1.14>

Arik, & M. (2024). *Implementasi pembelajaran pendidikan Pancasila dalam kurikulum merdeka SMP di Kota Blitar*. https://doi.org/10.28926/riset_konseptua1.v8i1.911

Hasibuan. (2025). *INOVASI GURU DALAM PEMBELAJARAN IPS DI ERA SOCIETY 5.0*. <https://ejournals.com/ojs/index.php/ipn/article/view/885>

Hendracipta. (2021). *Model Model Pembelajaran SD*. <https://eprints.untirta.ac.id/5468/1/Buku%20Ajar%20Model%20Pembelajaran%202021%20%282%29.pdf>

Mohammad, & Wuri. (2017). *Pengaruh model pembelajaran berbasis masalah terhadap motivasi belajar dan hasil belajar PPKn*. <http://doi.org/10.21831/civics.v14i1.14558>

- Novita, Kodrat, & Selvi. (2022). *Analisis Keaktifan Belajar Siswa Pada Pembelajaran Ppkn Melalui Penerapan Metode Kerja Kelompok Di Kelas Iv Sd Negeri 50 Kota Ternate*. <https://doi.org/10.33387/j.edu.v20i.4476>
- Nunuk. (2021). *Peran guru dan strategi pembelajaran dalam penerapan keterampilan abad 21 pada pendidikan dasar dan menengah*. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/539837536.pdf>
- Sinaga. (2023). *Peranan teknologi dalam pembelajaran untuk membentuk karakter dan skill peserta didik abad 21*. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/568058929.pdf>
- Sutrisno, T. (2019). Pengaruh Pembelajaran Berbasis Masalah (Problem Based Learning) Terhadap Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Siswa pada Mata Pelajaran PKn Kelas VI di SDN Kota Sumenep. *ELSE (Elementary School Education Journal): Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar*, 3(2), 98-110. <https://doi.org/10.30651/else.v3i2.3394>
- Adawiyah, F. R., Andini, M., Maghfiroh, L., Dita, Y. S., Lifadilillah, A. A., Mabrurroh, R. A., & Kuswinarni, H. (2022). Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berpikir Kritis Siswa SD Dalam Pembelajaran PPKn Melalui Pembelajaran Berbasis Masalah. *SNHRP*, 4, 1119-1125. <https://doi.org/10.30762/sittah.v3i1.157>
- Arifin, E. G. (2021). *Problem Based Learning to Improve Critical Thinking*. 3(4), 98–103. <https://doi.org/10.20961/SHES.V3I4.53288>
- Akbar, A. (2019). Implementasi Model Pembelajaran Berbasis Masalah Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Pkn Di Sma Negeri 1 Batukliang Utara. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian dan Kajian Kepustakaan di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran* (2019) 5(1) 1 DOI: 10.33394/jk.v5i1.1386
- Pereira, V. V., Samsudin, A., & Utama, J. A. (2023). Mengkaji keterampilan berpikir kritis siswa menggunakan model problem based learning berbantuan teknik probing prompting (pbl-pp). *Jurnal Muara Pendidikan*, 8(1), 170–179. <https://doi.org/10.52060/mp.v8i1.1175>
- Zulaifah, F., & Fauzi, Z. A. (2023). Meningkatkan Aktivitas dan Keterampilan Berpikir Kritis Menggunakan Model PBL Dibantu JGC, Media Yasinan Serta Permainan Tradisional Bubuta'an. *JUPEIS : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial*. <https://doi.org/10.57218/jupeis.vol2.iss4.859>
- Yulianing, F. R., Suyono, S., Sukarmin, S., Thoriq, F. N., Auliya, N., & Fauziah, R. U. (2023). *Are Argumentation Skills Can Describe Understanding Concepts?* <https://doi.org/10.53621/ijocer.v2i2.241>
- Lee, M. (2023). *Skills of Argument* (pp. 277–305). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108859639.011>
- Kyei-Nuamah, D. (2024). *Learning Argumentative Capacities at the Primary and Junior School Levels: A Practical Teaching Pedagogy*. 5(1), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.54026/crpbs/10111>
- Surya, H. (2023). *PENINGKATAN PRESTASI BELAJAR PPKn MELALUI METODE NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER*

*PADA SISWA KELAS VII D SMPN 1
DURENAN.*

<https://doi.org/10.51878/teaching.v3i3.2510>

Jamiluddin, J., Bahri, S., & Zaini, M. S. (2024). *Analisis argumentation skills siswa melalui pengembangan instrumen penilaian berbasis toulmin's argumentation model sebagai upaya peningkatan mutu pembelajaran abad 21.*

<https://doi.org/10.20414/society.v15i1.10396>

Anne, K. J. (2021). Can Argumentation be Taught in School. *Resonance*, 26(1), 129–132.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/S12045-020-1110-Z>