



Improving Critical Thinking and Opinion-Expression Skills in Civic Education Through the BERANI Learning Model Among Fifth-Grade Students at SDN Kelayan Timur 12

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ABSTRACT

Civics Education (PPKN) learning in Grade V at SDN Kelayan Timur 12 showed low student engagement, which negatively affected students' critical thinking skills, ability to express opinions, collaboration, and learning outcomes. This condition prompted the implementation of the BERANI learning model to create a more participatory learning environment. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the BERANI learning model in improving both the learning process and student learning outcomes. The study employed a Classroom Action Research design using qualitative and quantitative approaches and was conducted over four meetings involving 27 fifth-grade students during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were collected through classroom observations and learning achievement tests, then analyzed descriptively using percentages and cross-tabulation. The findings indicated improvements across all observed indicators. Teacher activity reached the "Very Good" category, student activity increased to 81%, while critical thinking skills, the ability to express opinions, and collaboration each reached 85%. In addition, learning mastery improved from 63% to 93%. These findings indicate that the BERANI learning model is effective in enhancing the quality of Civics Education learning in elementary schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Civic Education (PPKn) is one of the core subjects that plays a strategic role in developing students into responsible citizens who possess knowledge, attitudes, and skills aligned with the values of Pancasila. These three domains should be developed in a balanced manner through the learning process so that students not only acquire conceptual understanding but also develop the character and competencies required for participation in society. At the elementary school level, Civic Education is designed to encourage students to think critically, express their opinions responsibly, and collaborate in solving various problems. These competencies are essential for creating active, meaningful, and student-centered learning experiences that contribute to improved learning outcomes (Qur'aini & Agusta, 2023; Shabirin & Agusta, 2023).

Numerous studies have shown that critical thinking is a fundamental competency that should be fostered from the elementary level because it enables students to analyze information, evaluate alternative solutions to problems, and make decisions based on logical reasoning. This competency extends beyond knowledge acquisition, involving reflective, systematic, and responsible reasoning in problem-solving processes (Suriansyah dkk., 2025; Zulaifah & Fauzi, 2023). In line with this perspective, critical thinking encompasses the abilities of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation, enabling students to develop a deeper understanding of information rather than merely memorizing learning materials (Facione, 2023). Furthermore, critical thinking is closely related to students' ability to express opinions. Students who can analyze information rationally are better equipped to present logical, systematic, and well-supported arguments. Conversely, the process of expressing opinions encourages students to consider multiple perspectives before drawing conclusions, allowing both competencies to develop in a complementary manner. The ability to express opinions also contributes to increased self-confidence, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal skills during classroom discussions and presentations (Cahyono dkk., 2020; Hidayat dkk., 2021). However, these studies also indicate that the development of critical thinking and opinion-expression skills among elementary school students remains suboptimal. Many students continue to experience difficulties in identifying essential information, evaluating arguments, constructing logical reasoning, and expressing their opinions confidently during classroom learning. This condition suggests that achieving 21st-century competencies in Civic Education still requires innovative instructional approaches capable of enhancing students' active participation.

Previous studies have consistently reported that innovative instructional models can improve the quality of Civic Education learning, particularly in fostering critical thinking, opinion-expression skills, collaboration, and learning outcomes. The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model has been shown to encourage students to identify problems, gather relevant information, analyze alternative solutions, and present systematic problem-solving outcomes, thereby promoting critical thinking through authentic learning experiences (Rahmawati, 2022). Other studies have demonstrated that the Jigsaw cooperative learning model provides students with opportunities to exchange information, assume responsibility for group learning, and participate actively throughout the learning process, resulting in improvements in critical thinking and academic achievement (Alfiyah & Widiyono, 2024). Meanwhile, the Talking Stick model has been found to enhance learning readiness, confidence in expressing opinions, concentration, and classroom participation because every student has an equal opportunity to share ideas and respond to questions during instruction (Abdan & Annisa, 2025). These findings are further supported by several studies concluding that PBL, Jigsaw, and Talking Stick effectively improve critical thinking, communication skills, collaboration, and student

engagement in elementary schools (F. N. Aisyah & Gumala, 2025; Alfiyah & Widiyono, 2024; Hikmah & A'yuni, 2025; Khatimah & Noorhapizah, 2023; Nurliyanti & Sari, 2024; Simaremare & Thesalonika, 2021). However, these studies have generally implemented each instructional model independently. Consequently, limited research has explored the integration of the strengths of these three models into a single instructional framework capable of simultaneously developing critical thinking, opinion-expression skills, and collaboration in elementary Civic Education.

These findings are consistent with the results of classroom observations and interviews conducted in Grade V at SDN Kelayan Timur 12 Banjarmasin. The observations revealed that many students still experienced difficulties in analyzing information, expressing their opinions confidently, and collaborating effectively during classroom activities. Student engagement was also less than optimal because instruction remained predominantly teacher-centered, learning models were insufficiently varied, and opportunities for discussion and idea sharing were limited. These conditions were reflected in students' low learning participation and achievement. Based on the first-semester learning outcomes, 9 out of 27 students failed to meet the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 70 in Civic Education. These findings indicate the need for an instructional model that actively engages students while simultaneously fostering critical thinking, opinion-expression skills, and collaboration within an integrated learning process. Therefore, this study developed the BERANI model, which integrates the key characteristics of Problem-Based Learning, Jigsaw, and Talking Stick, to improve teacher instructional activities, student learning activities, critical thinking skills, opinion-expression skills, collaboration, and learning outcomes in Civic Education among fifth-grade students at SDN Kelayan Timur 12 Banjarmasin.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research was conducted in a fifth-grade classroom at SDN Kelayan Timur 12, located at Jl. Tatah Bangkal Luar RT 32, Kelayan Timur Village, South Banjarmasin District, Banjarmasin City, South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The participants were fifth-grade students enrolled in the 2025/2026 academic year. The class consisted of 27 students, comprising 13 boys and 14 girls. The research involved the researcher and the classroom teacher, who served as the supervisor and observer throughout the study. The variables investigated in this classroom action research included teacher activities, student learning activities, critical thinking skills, and students' ability to express their opinions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Result

This classroom action research was conducted over four instructional meetings within one month. The observation results indicated that the implementation of the BERANI learning model in the fifth-grade class at SDN Kelayan Timur 12 led to continuous improvements in students' critical thinking skills and their ability to express opinions.

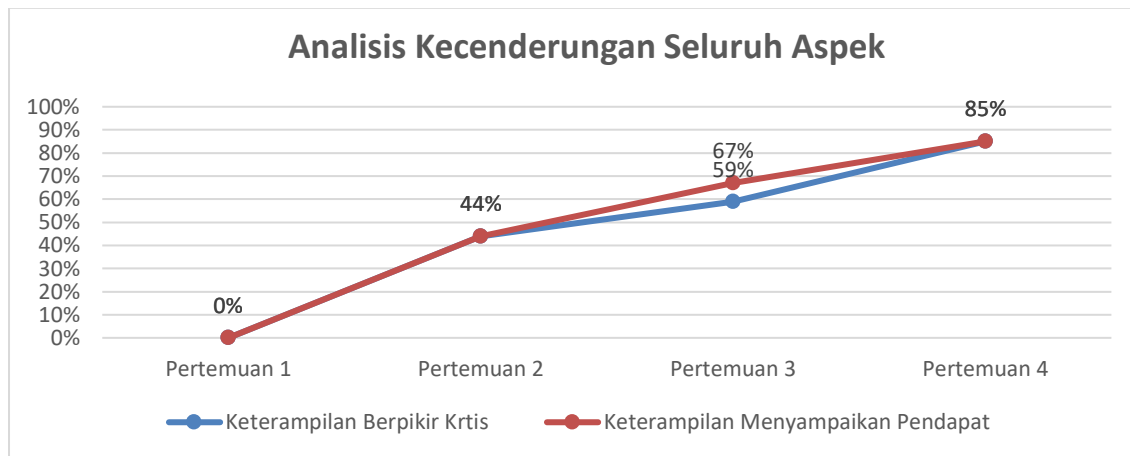


Figure 1. Trend Analysis of All Research Variables

Critical Thinking Skills

The learning activities were implemented across four instructional meetings. The percentage of students demonstrating excellent critical thinking skills increased consistently throughout the intervention. During the first meeting, no students reached the highly proficient category (0%). This percentage increased to 44% in the second meeting, 59% in the third meeting, and reached 85% in the fourth meeting, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Critical Thinking Skills

Meeting	Percentage (%)	Category
1	0%	No students reached the highly proficient category
2	44%	A small proportion of students were highly proficient
3	59%	The majority of students were proficient
4	85%	Nearly all students were proficient

The results demonstrate a gradual improvement in students' critical thinking skills across the four instructional meetings. The percentage increased from 0% in the first meeting to 85% in the fourth meeting, indicating that most students achieved a high level of critical thinking proficiency by the end of the intervention.

Opinion-Expression Skills

The observation results also revealed a consistent improvement in students' ability to express their opinions following the implementation of the BERANI learning model. This improvement was reflected in the increasing number of students who were able to present ideas, respond to their peers, and communicate the results of group discussions orally. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Opinion-Expression Skills

Meeting	Percentage (%)	Category
1	0%	No students reached the highly proficient category
2	44%	A small proportion of students were highly proficient
3	67%	The majority of students were proficient
4	85%	Nearly all students were proficient

As shown in Table 2, students' opinion-expression skills improved progressively across the four instructional meetings. During the first meeting, no students achieved the highly proficient category (0%). The percentage increased to 44% in the second meeting, reached 67% in the third meeting, and further increased to 85% in the fourth meeting. These findings indicate

that, following the implementation of the BERANI learning model, most students were able to express their opinions more clearly, systematically, and confidently.

b. Discussion

The improvement in students' critical thinking skills and opinion-expression skills indicates that the implementation of the BERANI learning model created a more meaningful, active, and student-centered learning environment. Throughout the learning process, students were no longer passive recipients of information delivered by the teacher. Instead, they actively participated in identifying problems, gathering information, engaging in discussions, exchanging ideas, evaluating alternative solutions, and presenting the outcomes of their discussions to their classmates. This active involvement enabled students to construct their own knowledge, thereby gradually enhancing their ability to analyze information, develop logical arguments, draw conclusions, and communicate their ideas effectively.

The improvement in both competencies was also influenced by the increasingly effective role of the teacher in implementing the instructional procedures of the BERANI model, as well as the steady increase in students' participation across the four instructional meetings. The teacher acted as a facilitator by providing opportunities for all students to think critically, engage in discussions, express their opinions, and respond to their peers' ideas within a supportive learning environment. Such conditions encouraged students to become more confident, actively interact with others, and develop the habit of expressing opinions based on logical reasoning, resulting in a collaborative and reflective learning process.

The success of the intervention can be attributed to the characteristics of the BERANI model, which integrates the instructional principles of Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Jigsaw, and Talking Stick. The Problem-Based Learning component encourages students to understand and analyze problems before determining appropriate solutions. The Jigsaw strategy facilitates information sharing, collaborative knowledge construction, and shared responsibility for group learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the Talking Stick strategy provides every student with an equal opportunity to speak, express opinions, and respond to the results of group discussions. The integration of these three instructional models creates a comprehensive learning experience that not only promotes higher-order thinking skills but also strengthens communication skills, collaboration, and students' confidence in expressing their ideas.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research demonstrating that innovative, problem-based learning approaches combined with active student participation can effectively improve critical thinking through activities involving analysis, discussion, reflection, and logical argument construction (S. Aisyah et al., 2024; Fatimah et al., 2021; Khatimah & Noorhapizah, 2023). Likewise, cooperative learning integrated with problem-based approaches has been reported to enhance critical thinking by encouraging students to evaluate information, defend their viewpoints, and independently determine appropriate problem-solving strategies (Hidayah et al., 2025; Naufal et al., 2024; Widiawati et al., 2024).

The improvement in students' opinion-expression skills observed in this study is also supported by previous findings indicating that active learning through discussions, presentations, storytelling, and collaborative projects enhances oral communication skills, self-confidence, and students' willingness to express their opinions (Fitriani et al., 2024; Nurhanifah et al., 2024). Providing every student with equal opportunities to participate actively also enables them to become more proficient in expressing ideas, responding to others' opinions, and presenting logical and persuasive arguments (Azzahra & Anggreani, 2026; Nurhaliza & Agusta, 2025).

Overall, the findings of this study, together with previous empirical evidence,

demonstrate that the BERANI learning model is effective in improving students' critical thinking and opinion-expression skills because it integrates problem-solving activities, cooperative learning, and active communication within a unified instructional framework. Through this integrated learning process, students gain meaningful learning experiences that encourage logical thinking, collaboration, and confidence in expressing their ideas, ultimately leading to improvements in both the quality of the learning process and students' learning outcomes.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted with fifth-grade students at SDN Kelayan Timur 12 using the BERANI learning model in Civic Education on the topic of Mutual Cooperation (Gotong Royong), it can be concluded that the implementation of the BERANI learning model successfully improved students' critical thinking skills. By the end of the intervention, students had achieved the predetermined success indicators and reached the highly proficient category in critical thinking. Furthermore, the implementation of the BERANI learning model also successfully enhanced students' opinion-expression skills during the learning process. The students met the predetermined success indicators and achieved the highly proficient category in expressing their opinions throughout the Civic Education learning activities on the topic of Mutual Cooperation (Gotong Royong).

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