



A Study of the Deep Learning Curriculum in Civics Learning to Improve Students' Critical Thinking

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji implementasi kurikulum deep learning dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan (PPKn) sebagai upaya meningkatkan kemampuan berpikir kritis peserta didik. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (library research) dan metode deskriptif. Sumber data diperoleh dari berbagai artikel jurnal nasional dan internasional, buku, prosiding, serta dokumen akademik yang relevan mengenai deep learning, pembelajaran PPKn, dan kemampuan berpikir kritis. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman melalui tahapan pengumpulan data, reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum deep learning dalam pembelajaran PPKn berorientasi pada pembelajaran yang bermakna, kontekstual, serta menempatkan peserta didik sebagai pusat pembelajaran. Implementasi pendekatan ini dapat dilakukan melalui model Problem Based Learning, Inquiry Learning, dan pembelajaran berbasis proyek yang mampu meningkatkan kemampuan analisis, refleksi, dan pemecahan masalah peserta didik. Meskipun demikian, penerapannya masih menghadapi tantangan berupa kesiapan guru, keterbatasan sarana pembelajaran, serta sistem evaluasi yang belum sepenuhnya mendukung pengembangan kemampuan berpikir tingkat tinggi. Oleh karena itu, kurikulum deep learning memiliki relevansi yang kuat dalam mendukung pembelajaran PPKn abad ke-21 yang berorientasi pada pengembangan kemampuan berpikir kritis peserta didik.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the implementation of the deep learning curriculum in learning Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) as an effort to improve students' critical thinking skills. The research uses a qualitative approach with library research and descriptive methods. Data sources were obtained from various national and international journal articles, books, proceedings, and relevant academic documents regarding deep learning, Civics learning, and critical thinking skills. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the deep learning curriculum in Civics learning is oriented towards meaningful, contextual learning and places students at the center of learning. Implementation of this approach can be done through Problem Based Learning, Inquiry Learning and project-based learning models which are able to improve students' analysis, reflection and problem solving skills. However, its implementation still faces challenges in the form of teacher readiness, limited learning facilities, and an evaluation system that does not fully support the development of high-level thinking skills. Therefore, the deep learning curriculum has strong relevance in supporting 21st century PPKn learning which is oriented towards developing students' critical thinking skills.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The deep learning curriculum is a learning approach that emphasizes deep understanding, active involvement of students, high-level thinking skills, and the connection of material to real life. In the educational context, deep learning is not only oriented towards mastering material by rote, but also on students' ability to analyze, reflect and solve problems critically (Suwandi et al., 2024). In learning Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn), this approach is important because PPKn has the aim of forming democratic, critical and responsible citizens. Critical thinking skills in Civics learning are needed so that students are able to understand various social, political and civic issues rationally and reflectively. Critical thinking develops through a learning process that provides space for data analysis, decision making, and reflection on real problems. Meanwhile, the deep learning approach is seen as capable of creating meaningful learning that encourages active involvement of students in the knowledge construction process (Noor & Masrukan, 2014).

Various studies show that Civics learning which is oriented towards developing critical thinking has a positive impact on students' analytical activities and abilities. Research by (Ismail et al., 2024) found that the controversial public issues model in PPKn learning was able to gradually improve students' critical thinking abilities through discussion and analysis of public issues. Research (M. Januar Ibnu Adham, 2021) also shows that the deep dialogue/critical thinking model can increase students' responsibility, honesty and civic participation in Civics learning. In addition, (Warye et al., 2025) revealed that the application of the inquiry learning model in Civics subjects is able to develop students' critical thinking abilities through an active investigation and problem solving process.

Other research shows that the use of problem-based learning models in Civics has a major contribution to improving students' critical thinking abilities. (Maria Margaretha Manik, 2025) states that the application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) in PPKn learning is able to increase students' courage in expressing opinions and train their critical thinking skills in solving social problems. Furthermore, research (Heron et al., 2025) shows that the application of the PBL model with the Group Investigation approach can significantly improve the critical thinking abilities of vocational school students in Civics subjects. Similar results were also found by (Kurniawan & Sanoto, 2024) who developed PBL-based LKPD for Pancasila Education learning and succeeded in effectively improving the critical thinking skills of elementary school students.

Apart from problem-based learning models, learning approaches that emphasize active involvement and social exploration have also proven effective in improving students' critical thinking abilities. Research (Raihan et al., 2025) shows that implementing the Inquiry Social Complexity model in Civics learning can improve students' critical thinking skills and learning outcomes gradually in each learning cycle. (Alya Ariyani et al., 2025) also emphasized that critical thinking-based PPKn learning is able to create more active, responsive and contextual learning so that students can more easily connect the material with the realities of people's lives. In addition, research (Jayanti et al., 2024) found that the development of learning tools based on Learning Cycle 7E in PPKn was effective in improving critical thinking skills and learning outcomes of elementary school students.

In recent developments, studies on deep learning approaches have begun to be linked to the development of students' critical thinking abilities. Research (Randita et al., 2025) shows that the implementation of the deep learning model in Civics learning is perceived as effective in encouraging interactivity, project-based learning, and developing critical thinking skills in elementary school students. Research (Sastrawati et al., 2025) also found that the deep learning approach was able to improve students' critical thinking skills through real problem-based learning, active discussions, and reflection on learning experiences. Furthermore, research (Rosiyati et al., 2025) confirms that the implementation of a deep learning approach in learning is able to support the development of HOTS abilities and strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile in the Independent Curriculum.

Based on various research results, it can be understood that Civics learning which applies an active, contextual and problem-solving-based approach has a positive influence on improving students' critical thinking abilities. Various models such as Problem Based Learning, Inquiry Learning, Learning Cycle, and critical thinking approaches have been proven to be able to encourage students to be more active in analyzing social and civic issues. In addition, the deep learning approach is starting to show its relevance in creating learning that is more meaningful, reflective, and oriented towards developing higher-order thinking abilities. However, most previous research still focuses on the application of certain learning models, while studies that specifically discuss the deep learning curriculum in Civics learning are still relatively limited. Previous research also has not studied the integration of the deep learning curriculum comprehensively in an effort to improve students' critical thinking skills in Civics learning. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in the study of the implementation of the deep learning curriculum in PPKn learning as an effort to improve students' critical thinking skills in a more in-depth and contextual manner. The aim of this research is to examine the implementation of the deep learning curriculum in Civics learning in order to improve students' critical thinking skills.

2. METHOD

The research method used in this article is a qualitative approach, incorporating library research and descriptive methods. This approach was used to in-depth review various previous studies related to the deep learning curriculum in Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) and its relationship to improving students' critical thinking skills. Library research was chosen because the primary data sources were obtained from various scientific literature, such as national and international journal articles, books, proceedings, and academic documents relevant to the research topic (Yahya et al., 2026). Through this approach, researchers can comprehensively understand the concept, implementation, and development of studies on deep learning in PPKn learning.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from scientific journal articles discussing the implementation of the deep learning curriculum, PPKn learning, and students' critical thinking skills, published within the last 10 years. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from books, curriculum documents, and other supporting references related to deep learning and civic education. Data collection techniques were conducted by searching various scientific sources through databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, and educational journals relevant to the research topic (Mazid et al., 2025).

The research instrument in this study was a literature analysis format used to identify, categorize, and analyze various previous research results (Dalman et al., 2022). The analysis covered several aspects, namely the deep learning curriculum concept, implementation strategies in Civics (PPKn) learning, the learning models used, and their impact on students' critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the researchers examined the similarities, differences, strengths, and limitations of each study analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic.

The data analysis technique in this study employed the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Latifah & Supena, 2021). The data obtained from various literature was then selected and focused according to the research objectives. Next, the data was analyzed descriptively and presented in narrative form to illustrate the implementation of the deep learning curriculum in PPKn learning and its contribution to improving students' critical thinking skills. The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on the synthesis of various previous studies to obtain a comprehensive overview of the study of the deep learning curriculum in PPKn learning.

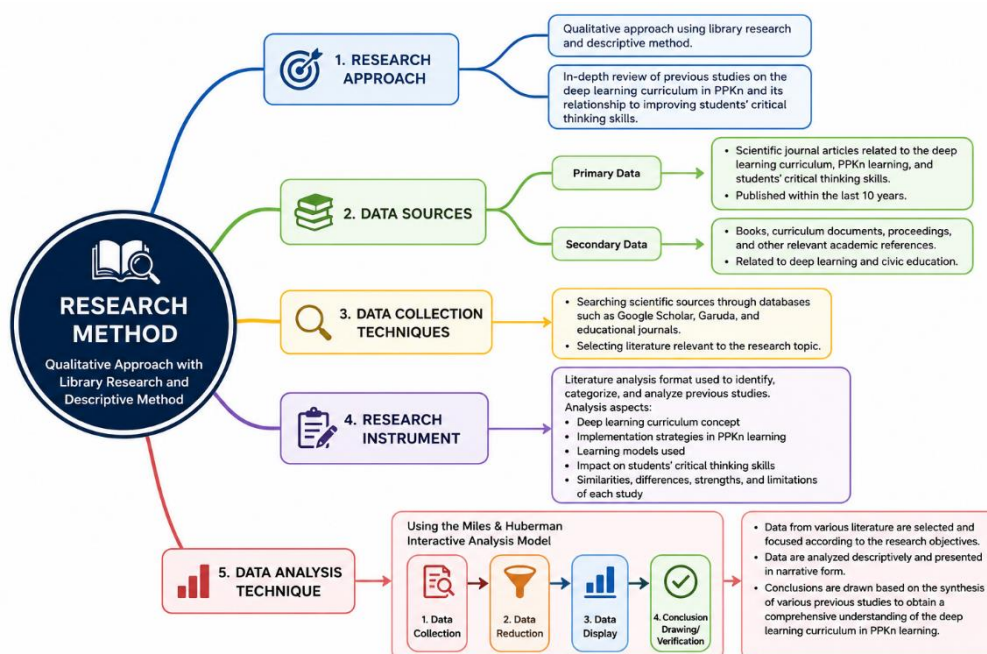


Figure. 1 Research Procedure

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Deep Learning Curriculum Concept in Civics Learning

Deep learning in education is a teaching concept that emphasizes understanding, active student participation, and high-level learning abilities. This is relevant to the Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) curriculum because it does not only focus on delivering material, but also on developing students' critical thinking skills and civic attitudes. According to (Harahap, 2026), deep learning helps students develop critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration skills. Furthermore, (Cojorn & Sonsupap, 2024) explains that learning activities based on problem solving techniques can improve students' analytical and reflective abilities.

The concept of deep learning in Civics learning places students as the center of learning (student centered learning). Students are given the opportunity to explore various social and civic issues through discussion, reflection and analysis of real problems. Research (Sutrisno et al., 2025) shows that the deep learning approach in Civics learning is able to increase students' active participation because students are involved in project-based learning processes and group discussions. Apart from that, (Rosyadatus Sabilah et al., 2025) stated that in-depth learning helps students understand the material more meaningfully because the learning process is linked to students' real experiences.

PPKn learning which is based on in-depth learning helps students understand the values of Pancasila contextually. Through active and reflective learning activities, knowledge about learning material can be applied in everyday life. Research (Saqjuddin et al., 2025) found that the in-depth learning approach was effective in supporting the development of higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. In addition, research (Susantun, 2023) found that a learning approach that focuses on thinking skills can improve students' critical thinking skills in Civics learning.

Teachers have an important role in creating a learning environment that supports the application of deep learning. Teachers must have the ability to create innovative, contextual learning and encourage students to participate actively. Research conducted by (Alya Ariyani et

al., 2025) shows that critical thinking-based learning in PPKn can effectively improve students' argumentation skills, problem-based learning can help students to actively study and solve social problems.

It needs to be understood that the deep learning curriculum in Civics learning has an important role in creating more meaningful learning and focuses on developing students' critical thinking skills. This approach not only helps students understand the subject matter conceptually, but also encourages them to think reflectively and contextually regarding various civic issues.

Implementation of Deep Learning in PPKn Learning

Deep learning in Civics can be implemented through various learning strategies that encourage students to actively participate in the learning process. According to (Hendrianty et al., 2024), the application of deep learning emphasizes learning that is able to create meaningful learning experiences so that students more easily understand learning concepts in depth. In addition, this approach allows students to connect material with the real world through analysis, discussion and social problem solving activities.

The Problem Based Learning (PBL) model is an implementation of deep learning in PPKn learning. Social and civic problem-solving activities help students learn to think critically. Research (Maria Margaretha Manik, 2025) shows that the application of PBL in Civics learning can improve students' critical thinking abilities. This happens because students are trained to find problems, find solutions, and express opinions logically. PBL-based LKPD is effective in improving students' critical thinking skills during Pancasila education learning.

Apart from PBL, inquiry-based learning models can also be used to apply deep learning. This model provides students with the opportunity to discover learning concepts through a process of investigation and problem analysis. Research (Raihan et al., 2025) shows that the use of question-based learning in Civics can improve students' critical thinking skills because students are actively involved in gathering information and drawing conclusions. Research (Alya Ariyani et al., 2025) also shows that the social question complexity model is effective in improving student learning outcomes.

The use of innovative learning media and technology also supports the application of deep learning in Civics learning. The use of technology-based projects and digital media helps students understand the material more contextually and interactively. Research (Thohir & Listari, 2025) shows that social media literacy projects in Civics learning can improve students' critical thinking skills because students are trained to think critically and be responsible in responding to digital information.

Thus, the application of in-depth learning in PPKn can be carried out through various active, contextual and problem-solving based learning models. Various studies show that these models are able to increase students' involvement in learning and help them develop critical thinking skills in understanding various social and civic issues.

The Role of Deep Learning in Improving Students' Critical Thinking

One of the important abilities that students must have in facing current developments and various social problems in society is the ability to think critically. In Civics learning, critical thinking skills are very necessary so that students are able to understand, analyze and evaluate various civic issues rationally. Holmes stated that learning that provides students with the opportunity to analyze and reflect on a problem can help improve critical thinking skills (Irawan et al., 2025).

Through problem-based learning activities and active discussions, the in-depth learning approach helps students develop critical thinking skills. This approach encourages students to find problems, express opinions, and find solutions to various social problems. Research (Ismail et al., 2024) shows that the use of the controversial public issue model in Civics learning is able to improve students' critical thinking skills through in-depth analysis of public issues. Apart from

that, (Alya Ariyani et al., 2025) found that the critical thinking approach in PPKn learning was effective in improving students' argumentation skills.

Apart from that, in-depth learning also helps students develop reflective thinking skills regarding the material being studied. Students not only understand theoretical concepts, but are also able to relate them to real situations in everyday life. Research (Amrain et al., 2024) found that active reflection and discussion activities can improve students' critical thinking abilities. Research (Sastrawati et al., 2025) also shows that the in-depth learning approach is effective in improving students' Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) abilities.

Collaborative learning strategies also support improving students' critical thinking abilities. Through collaborative learning, students work together to solve problems and exchange ideas so that their analytical skills develop. Research (Novita Sari et al., 2022) shows that the application of the Learning Cycle 7E model in Civics learning can improve students' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills. In this case, problem-based learning has a big influence on students' critical thinking abilities.

Thus, the in-depth learning approach has a very important role in improving students' critical thinking skills in Civics learning. Through problem-based, active and reflective learning, students can gain a deeper understanding of various social issues and have the ability to make decisions rationally and responsibly.

Challenges of Implementing the Deep Learning Curriculum in PPKn Learning

Although the deep learning approach has many advantages in Civics learning, its application in the educational environment still faces various challenges. One of the main challenges is the teacher's readiness to implement learning that focuses on higher level thinking skills. Many educators still use conventional teacher-centered learning methods so that the space for students to participate actively and critically in the learning process is limited. (Nurhidayati et al., 2025) stated that the success of implementing deep learning is greatly influenced by the teacher's ability to create innovative and contextual learning.

Apart from teacher readiness, limited resources and learning media are also obstacles in implementing the in-depth learning curriculum. Project-based learning, discussions and technology require adequate supporting facilities. Research by Kusnadi shows that one of the obstacles in learning based on social media literacy in Civics subjects is limited access to digital media and technology. This condition causes the learning process to not be fully able to support the development of students' critical thinking abilities.

Another challenge is the lack of student participation in the learning process. Some students tend to be passive during discussions and lack confidence in expressing opinions. (Rahmi et al., 2024) found that students need intensive assistance in the problem-based learning process in order to be able to understand the steps for solving problems systematically. Research (Alfita et al., 2025) also shows that students need familiarization and teacher support so they can be actively involved in critical thinking-based learning.

The application of deep learning also faces challenges in the learning evaluation system. Assessments that still focus on memorizing material cause students' critical thinking abilities to be less developed. Research (Widyanawati & Suprananto, 2025) shows that learning evaluation oriented towards thinking skills can help improve students' critical thinking abilities. Therefore, the evaluation system needs to be adapted to the needs of in-depth learning which emphasizes analytical and reflective skills.

Based on various research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of the deep learning curriculum in Civics learning still faces various challenges, both from the aspects of teachers, students, facilities and the learning evaluation system. However, these challenges can be overcome through teacher training, developing innovative learning media, and implementing an evaluation system that supports the development of students' critical thinking skills.

The Relevance of the Deep Learning Curriculum to 21st Century Education

The deep learning curriculum has strong relevance to the demands of 21st century education which emphasizes mastery of critical thinking skills, creativity, communication and collaboration. In the era of globalization and rapid technological development, students are not only required to master knowledge, but also be able to solve problems and make wise decisions. According to (Nadia Nadawina, Aswadi Jaya, Dina Ramadhanti, Imronudin Imronudin, Fatchiatuzahro Fatchiatuzahro, Amar Halim, 2025), the deep learning approach is designed to help students develop the global competencies needed to face the challenges of the modern world.

In Civics learning, the relevance of deep learning can be seen in efforts to form democratic, critical and responsible citizens. Learning that is oriented towards solving social problems and citizenship issues helps students understand the realities of community life in more depth. Research (Asyam et al., 2025) shows that learning that encourages analysis and reflection can improve students' critical thinking abilities. This is in line with Civics learning objectives which emphasize character development and civic participation.

Apart from that, the deep learning curriculum supports the development of HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) skills which are one of the main focuses of modern education. Learning based on analysis, evaluation and problem solving helps students develop high-level thinking abilities. Research (Komara et al., 2026) shows that the deep learning approach is effective in supporting the development of HOTS and the Pancasila Student Profile, thus deep learning helps students be more active in evaluating and understanding information.

The relevance of deep learning to 21st century education can also be seen from the use of digital technology in the learning process. Technology helps students obtain information quickly and widely so they need to have critical thinking skills in filtering the information obtained. Research (Sudianto et al., 2025) shows that learning based on social media literacy can help students understand digital information critically and responsibly. Therefore, the deep learning approach is considered suitable for learning needs in the digital era.

The deep learning curriculum has very strong relevance to 21st century education because it is able to help students develop critical thinking skills, social skills and global competencies needed in modern life. In PPKn learning, the application of deep learning is an important strategy in forming students who are intelligent, democratic, and able to face various challenges of current developments.

DISCUSSION

Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) learning based on the deep learning curriculum has an important role in improving students' critical thinking skills. Based on various previous studies, the deep learning approach is able to create more active, contextual and meaningful learning because students are directly involved in the process of analysis, discussion, reflection and solving social problems. (Suarnadi et al., 2025) explains that deep learning is oriented towards developing 21st century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration. In Civics learning, the implementation of this approach is carried out through various active learning models such as Problem Based Learning (PBL), inquiry learning, and project-based learning which are proven to be able to improve students' analytical skills on various civic issues. Research (Wahidah, 2019) shows that problem and inquiry-based learning can help students think more critically, systematically and objectively in understanding social and civic issues.

Apart from having a positive impact on students' critical thinking abilities, the implementation of the deep learning curriculum in Civics learning also still faces various challenges such as teacher readiness, limited learning facilities, and an evaluation system that does not fully support learning based on high-level thinking skills. (Suarnadi et al., 2025) stated that limited access to technology and digital media is still an obstacle in implementing innovative digital literacy-based learning. Nevertheless, the deep learning curriculum still has very strong

relevance to 21st century education because it is able to help students develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and democratic attitudes in social life. Therefore, the implementation of the deep learning curriculum in Civics learning needs to continue to be developed through increasing teacher competency, developing innovative learning media, and implementing learning strategies that support active student involvement.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the deep learning curriculum has an important role in improving students' critical thinking skills in learning Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn). This approach emphasizes meaningful, contextual and student-centered learning through analysis, reflection, discussion and problem solving activities related to social life and citizenship.

The implementation of the deep learning curriculum can be realized through various active learning models, such as Problem Based Learning, Inquiry Learning, and project-based learning which are proven to be able to develop students' high-level thinking abilities. Apart from improving analytical and reflective skills, this approach also supports strengthening 21st century skills and forming a Pancasila Student Profile.

However, the implementation of the deep learning curriculum still faces various challenges, including teacher readiness, limited learning facilities and media, and an evaluation system that is not yet fully oriented developing towards high-level thinking skills. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the competence of educators, develop innovative learning media, and improve the assessment system so that the implementation of the deep learning curriculum in PPKn learning can take place optimally and sustainably in supporting the creation of students who are critical, democratic and responsible as citizens in the 21st century era.

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