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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIVERSITY-THEMED DISCUSSION LEARNING IN CIVICS SUBJECTS TO STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 5 BANDAR LAMPUNG

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Abstract

The low critical thinking skills of students in Civics (PPKn) learning is a problem that requires serious attention at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung. This situation has prompted the need for innovation in learning approaches that can actively engage students while fostering higher-order thinking skills. The diversity-themed discussion learning model in PPKn was chosen as an alternative designed to address this challenge through contextual and collaborative learning.

This research was conducted with a quantitative approach using a *quasi-experimental one group pretest-posttest design* . The discussion learning model was applied to the experimental class. Data were collected through critical thinking tests before and after treatment, then analyzed using various statistical tests, including effectiveness tests and tests of the model's contribution to learning outcomes.

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the discussion learning model is effective in significantly improving students' critical thinking skills. This model contributed 93.1% to the improvement of critical thinking skills, indicating that almost half of the students' achievements were directly influenced by the innovative learning approach through intense discussions among students. Thus, discussions are not only relevant but also strategic for implementation in PPKn learning to shape a generation that is critical, reflective, and respectful of diversity.

Keywords: Discussion Learning, Diversity, Critical Thinking, PPKn, SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung

I. Introduction

Learning today tends to be theoretical and places greater emphasis on understanding and mastery of subject matter. Daily learning activities often focus on the extent to which students can master information from the subject matter, with an emphasis on assessment to measure mastery of that material. Learning objectives appear to be limited to mastery of subject matter content. Learning must encompass three basic dimensions of humanity: the affective dimension related to faith, piety, and morals; the cognitive dimension involving thought and intellect; and the psychomotor dimension encompassing technical skills and kinesthetic competencies (Adha, 2011) . An imbalance in the development of these three dimensions can lead to low student participation, motivation, and interest in learning.

Learning must emphasize active thinking and student participation. Through active participation, students have the opportunity to explore concepts and ideas in greater depth (Mutiara, 2023) . The connection between subject matter and everyday life and its potential for problem-solving is often overlooked. Learning often seems disconnected from real-world contexts, so students don't always recognize the benefits of what they learn and often don't know how to

apply it in their daily lives. More meaningful learning must actively engage students, both physically and psychologically (Rinendah, IM, & Sihwinedar, 2014) .

One of the subjects that is closely related to critical thinking skills and developing students' knowledge in life is the Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) subject which is aimed at students so that they can face the competition of life in society and generally global competition (Ikhtiarti, E., Rohman, Adha, M., & Yanzi, 2019) . The essence of PPKn learning is more than just understanding the material presented, but it should also be able to formulate habits based on direct examples to students, so that high concern, awareness, and understanding are realized in the application of daily life (Santoso, R., & Adha, 2019) .

Critical thinking involves a systematic and logical analysis process to evaluate available information, identify strong or weak arguments and produce accurate conclusions for students. Wilson (in Sendong et al., 2024) stated that several reasons for the need for critical reasoning skills in students are knowledge based on memorization will not last long, the rapid spread of information so that individuals need skills that can solve complex problems; and modern society is able to combine information from various sources and make decisions. Critical thinking skills are needed by students to become reflective and independent learners .

Critical thinking is an important skill for students to face challenges and solve problems. Critical thinking is reflective thinking and the ability to make decisions (Ennis, 1996) . Anderson in (Ennis, 2011) states that educational goals are described in six process categories: "remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating." Anderson places the ability to remember, understand, and apply into the category of lower-order thinking skills. The ability to analyze, evaluate, and create is included in higher-order thinking skills. Based on this, critical thinking considers and evaluates information to make decisions. Critical thinking skills will enable students to make the right decisions and be able to face challenges in the era of globalization. Critical thinking skills are not only understood but also need to be practiced and accustomed to facing real problems. Students Those who are often faced with real problems in life will be stimulated to think critically, so that their critical reasoning character can improve.

Critical thinking skills are the ability to think logically, analytically, and critically in facing problems and situations. Based on data from *the Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA), there is a decline in student abilities which is an indicator of low critical thinking skills in Indonesia, especially students who are known to be passive. Passive students are caused by several factors, such as lack of motivation, lack of effective communication skills, and lack of awareness of their own role in the learning process. These students tend to only be spectators in the learning process, are not active in discussions, do not participate in activities, and do not have the ability to develop their own abilities. Educators must play more of a role as facilitators than as teachers, so that students can be more active and participate in the learning process. Educators must be able to create a conducive learning environment and enable students to have critical thinking skills in the learning process .

One learning approach that can improve critical thinking skills is the Discussion Learning Model. This approach is rooted in the concept of *learning by doing* by Dewey, J. (1964), which emphasizes active student involvement in the learning process through real-life projects relevant to their lives. This model encourages students to design, implement, and evaluate projects, as well as integrate knowledge through direct experience.

The Discussion Learning Method emphasizes project-based learning, where students actively participate in designing, implementing, and evaluating projects through discussions relevant to the Civics subject matter. Students not only learn theoretically but also apply their knowledge,

encouraging critical and creative thinking. Collaboration within groups also fosters communication and collaboration, essential skills for today's modern world.

Discussion-based learning is an active learning strategy that emphasizes direct student involvement in expressing opinions, exchanging ideas and solving problems together. Through discussion, students can develop critical thinking skills, argue, and respect the views of others. (Silberman, M, 2013) . This project activity includes complex tasks based on problems as the first step in collecting and integrating new knowledge, obtained from real experiences. This model encourages students to engage in designing, problem-solving, decision-making, and conducting investigations, while providing opportunities for them to work independently or in groups. The final result of this project activity can be a product, such as a written or oral report, presentation, or recommendation .

Similarly, Hosnan in (Evitasari, D., & Nurjanah, 2019) stated that project-based learning is an educational strategy that utilizes projects or activities as a medium to achieve competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills. A similar opinion was also expressed by (Hutapea, MA, & Simanjuntak, 2017) who stated that the project-based learning (PjBL) model is an approach that focuses on students. Students are invited to develop their potential by creating learning projects, so that it is expected to increase their creativity and critical thinking skills. The process of completing this project requires effort, hard work, and effective collaboration in groups. Based on this, it can be concluded that the project-based learning model is an approach that actively involves students in project implementation, which will ultimately produce work that is ready to be presented.

Based on the results of preliminary research conducted by researchers with PPKn educators at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung, it was revealed that students' critical thinking skills were still considered lacking. Students' difficulties were characterized by their lack of collaboration. Students also experienced difficulties in presenting lesson material, which hindered the learning process. When educators asked questions and gave students the opportunity to express their opinions, only a few students responded or provided feedback. Based on this, it indicates a lack of optimal critical thinking among students. Appropriate learning is needed to develop and shape students' critical thinking skills, therefore a method is needed to overcome the above problems .

Limitations in students' critical thinking skills caused by less interactive learning models can hinder the development of students' skills in dealing with civic issues. The lack of opportunities for group discussions, participation in collaborative projects, or simulations of real-world situations involving the community can make students unaccustomed to expressing opinions, working in teams, or contributing to decision-making processes that impact the public interest .

To address these issues, it is crucial to enhance students' critical thinking skills by implementing learning models that encourage open discussion, collaboration, and reflection. This approach will enable students to be more actively involved in learning, develop their citizenship skills, and understand the application of citizenship concepts in everyday life and in decision-making processes relevant to society. The use of active and participatory learning provides opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills.

The above problems are caused by the use of monotonous and uninnovative learning models, namely conventional or lecture methods, which result in inadequate learning. Interviews with several students at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung revealed that PPKn learning still relies heavily on lectures, note-taking, and assignments. This monotonous and minimally innovative approach is considered ineffective in helping students hone their thinking skills and, in fact, makes them bored and less interested in the lesson. Another problem revealed in this preliminary study is the teacher - *centered learning process* . When learning begins, students are asked to read and study the material from the provided textbook. Then, the teacher explains the material in front of the class while the

JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
Master of Social Science Education, FKIP, University of Lampung
Web Journal: https://jurnal.pbs.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/JIKSE/index
Volume 1, No . 1 , August 2025 || Page: 94-106

students listen and pay attention. This approach creates an imbalance, where the teacher is active during the learning process, but the students become passive. Not all students receive the textbook, which adds to the learning obstacles.

Based on the results of preliminary research and initial observations conducted by researchers at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung, the researchers feel it is important to research "The Application of Diversity -Themed Discussion Learning in PPKn Subjects on the Critical Thinking Skills of Students at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung", in order to see how the application of Diversity-Themed Discussion Learning in PPKn Subjects on the Critical Thinking Skills of Students at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung" is implemented. regarding the critical thinking skills of students at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung, which are very important for students to have .

II. Method

The type of research used in this study is a *quasi-experimental study* with a quantitative approach. Experimental research is a study that aims to determine whether there is an effect of treatment on the subjects studied (Arikunto, 2018) . In this study, students were grouped into one class, namely the experimental class. The experimental class was given treatment in the form of the use of Discussion Learning Applications with the theme of diversity in the subject of PPKn . This research design refers to *the one group pretest-posttest* experimental model as explained by (Sugiyono, 2018) .

III. Results And Discussion

1. Experimental Class Pre-test Results

Before being treated with the diversity-themed discussion learning model, grade XI F-7 students were given a pre-test to measure their initial critical thinking skills. The distribution of pre-test scores is shown in the following table:

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Pre-test Scores of the Experimental Class

Mark	Frequency
56–57	5
58–59	0
60–61	11
62–63	0
64–65	10
66–68	10
Amount	**36**

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that the pre-test score had **an average of 62.78** , with a minimum score of 56 and a maximum of 68. This indicates that students' initial critical

JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
Master of Social Science Education, FKIP, University of Lampung
Web Journal: https://jurnal.pbs.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/JIKSE/index
Volume 1, No . 1 , August 2025 || Page: 94-106

thinking abilities were in the **moderate category** . Most students were concentrated in the 60–68 score interval, which indicates a relatively homogeneous level of ability before treatment.

2. Post-test Results of the Experimental Class

After participating in a diversity-themed discussion model, students were given a post-test to measure the development of their critical thinking skills. The distribution of post-test scores is shown in the following table:

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Post-test Scores of the Experimental Class

Mark	Frequency
80–82	7
83–85	6
86–88	5
89–91	0
92–94	8
95–100	10
Amount	**36**

The descriptive analysis results showed a significant improvement. The **average post-test score for students was 89.22** , with a minimum score of 80 and a maximum score of 100. The standard deviation of 6.54 indicated a greater variation in achievement compared to the pre-test.

3. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Values

To see the development of critical thinking skills, here is a recapitulation of the pre-test and post-test results:

Table 3. Recapitulation of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for the Experimental Class

Statistics	Pre-test	Post-test
Number of participants	36	36
Minimum Value	56	80
Maximum Value	68	100
Average (Mean)	62.78	89.22

JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
Master of Social Science Education, FKIP, University of Lampung
Web Journal: https://jurnal.pbs.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/JIKSE/index
Volume 1, No . 1 , August 2025 || Page: 94-106

Statistics	Pre-test	Post-test
Standard Deviation	4.15	6.54

The data in the table shows that the average student score increased by **26.44 points** after implementing the diversity-themed discussion learning model. This improvement demonstrates that discussion learning can encourage students to think more critically and deeply.

4. Effectiveness Analysis with N-Gain Score

Learning effectiveness is calculated using the N-Gain Score, which shows the level of improvement in learning outcomes from pre-test to post-test.

Table 4. Results of the N-Gain Score Test for the Experimental Class

Category	Number of participants	Percentage
Tall	21	58.3%
Currently	15	41.7%
Low	0	0%

The average N-Gain Score for the experimental class was **71.61**, which is considered **quite effective** . The majority of students were in the high improvement category, indicating the success of the diversity-themed discussion learning model in developing critical thinking skills.

5. Independent Sample T-Test Hypothesis Test

Table 5. Independent Sample t Test Results with SPSS version 27

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-Test Score of Experimental Class	Equal variances assumed	.764	.369	15,259	64	.000	28,167	1,786	32,172	22,767
	Equal variances not assumed			15,219	60,621	.000	28,457	1,826	32,160	24,714

Source: Analysis of Independent Sample t-Test with SPSS version 27

Based on the table above, the *Sig. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances* is 0.369 (0.369 > 0.05), which means that the variance of the post-test data between the experimental classes is homogeneous or the same. Therefore, the interpretation of the *Independent Samples Test results* in this study is guided by the values in the table " *Equal variances assumed* ". The Sig. 2- *tailed value is 0.000 (0.000 < 0.05). Furthermore, the* calculated t value is 15.259 where the df value is 64 so that the t table value is 1.670.

Thus, the calculated t value of 3.683 > the t table value of 1.673, then as the basis for decision making in the *Independent Samples Test,* it can be concluded that H_0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. So that

JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
Master of Social Science Education, FKIP, University of Lampung
Web Journal: https://jurnal.pbs.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/JIKSE/index
Volume 1, No . 1 , August 2025 || Page: 94-106

it means that there is a significant or real difference between the average post-test results of the experimental class, which means that there is a difference in the results of critical thinking of students between the experimental class that uses the Discussion Learning Model with the theme of diversity in PPKn learning .

6. Test of the Coefficient of Determination

To determine the extent of the influence of the application of the diversity-themed Discussion Learning Model on PPKn learning. (X) as an independent variable on students' critical thinking (Y) can be determined through the coefficient of determination obtained through linear regression calculations (R square or R *square*). The calculation of R square to determine the coefficient of determination was carried out with the help of SPSS version 27 with the following results:

Table 6 Results of the Determination Coefficient Test with SPSS Version 27
Model Summary [b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.965 [a]	.931	.931	1,253

a. Predictors: (Constant), *Discussion Learning*
b. Dependent Variable: Critical Thinking

The results of the calculation show that the R square value is a representation of the influence of the application of the diversity-themed Discussion Learning Model on PPKn learning. (X) as an independent variable on students' critical thinking (Y) was obtained at 0.931. Based on these results, the coefficient of determination (R square x 100%) was obtained at 93.1% which shows the large influence of the application of the diversity-themed Discussion Learning Model on PPKn learning. (X) as an independent variable on students' critical thinking (Y) , the remaining 6.9% is influenced by other factors in the students' environment.

The results of this study also revealed that the diversity-themed discussion learning model significantly influenced the improvement of critical thinking skills of students at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung. This was proven through the results of the independent sample t-test which showed a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05), the average learning outcomes of the experimental class were 71.61 . In addition, the regression results showed an R^2 value of 0.931 which means that the discussion learning model contributed 93.1% to students' critical thinking skills, while the remaining 6.9% was influenced by other factors. Thus, discussion learning is not just an interactive method, but also an effective strategy in developing higher-order thinking skills.

In classroom implementation, the diversity-themed discussion model requires students to be active, express opinions, listen, ask questions, draw conclusions, and be tolerant (Lugini & Litman, 2019). This process aligns with the critical thinking indicators according to Ennis (1996), namely providing simple explanations, building basic skills, drawing conclusions, and providing further explanations. For example, when the discussion topic is about cultural diversity in Indonesia, students are not only asked to state facts but also to analyze the relevance of the value of tolerance in everyday life, build arguments with evidence, and draw conclusions together. This activity accustoms students to test information, question the validity of arguments, and express views logically.

Field findings also show that during discussions, students who initially tended to be passive became more confident in expressing their opinions after seeing their peers present arguments. This phenomenon aligns with Vygotsky's *social learning theory* , which emphasizes that social interaction

JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
Master of Social Science Education, FKIP, University of Lampung
Web Journal: https://jurnal.pbs.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/JIKSE/index
Volume 1, No . 1 , August 2025 || Page: 94-106

is a crucial tool for cognitive development. When students observe their peers' courage and logical argumentation, they are encouraged to participate, as the learning process is not only individual but also collective.

Figure 3. Classroom Discussion Atmosphere at SMAN 5 Bandar Lampung

The implementation of a diversity-themed discussion learning model in Civics at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung has proven effective in improving students' critical thinking skills. The increase in the average score from 62.78 in the pre-test to 89.22 in the post-test provides quantitative evidence supporting the model's effectiveness. However, more than just numbers, these findings demonstrate changes in students' thinking, communication, and social attitudes regarding diversity issues.

One concrete example observed by researchers was when the topic of intolerance in schools became a topic of discussion. A student posed a critical question: *"Does tolerance mean we have to agree with all differences, or are there certain limits?"* This question demonstrates that the discussion is not only a space for exchanging opinions, but also a laboratory for critical thinking. These students have entered the advanced clarification level , as described by Ennis (1996). At this stage, they are not satisfied with simple answers but seek to interpret concepts more deeply, question limitations, and explore the philosophical meaning of a value. This is a clear sign of well-developed critical thinking skills (Ennis, 1996). Furthermore, the discussion process develops essential communication skills. Lugini & Litman (2019) emphasize that a good discussion is characterized by the courage to ask questions, actively listen, and draw conclusions together. In this study, students demonstrated significant progress in these three indicators. They not only spoke but also practiced listening and processing others' arguments before responding. This attitude reflects the formation of reflective thinking habits, which, according to King (2002), are prerequisites for the birth of a critical generation.

John Dewey's (1964) theory of experiential education defines this discussion-based learning as providing rich, authentic experiences. Students do not learn PPKn solely from textbooks, but rather from dialogic experiences with peers. Dewey emphasized the importance of *learning by doing* , and in this context, diversity-themed discussions become a concrete means for students to test ideas, debate values, and draw conclusions based on collective understanding (Dewey, 1964). Thus, PPKn classes function as *mini-societies* or "laboratories of democracy" where students learn to live together amidst differences.

The results of this study can also be analyzed through six critical thinking indicators according to Facione (2011):

1. Interpretation.
   Students learn to interpret diversity issues presented in discussion materials. For example, when faced with differing opinions about tolerance, they are able to interpret the meaning of tolerance not only as "accepting differences" but also as "respecting without necessarily

agreeing with everything." This demonstrates the ability to interpret abstract concepts more concretely.

2. Analysis
   Students analyze their peers' arguments. They are able to distinguish between opinions and those with a logical basis. This process aligns with Paul & Elder's (2006) view that critical thinking requires the ability to systematically analyze argument structure.
3. Evaluation
   Students evaluate the validity of arguments based on relevant evidence. For example, when a participant argues that intolerance arises from a lack of communication, another participant provides an evaluation with empirical examples from school, supporting the argument with real-life experiences.
4. Inference
   The discussion encouraged students to draw tentative conclusions *from* the available information. For example, they concluded that tolerance does not mean complete agreement, but rather respecting the existence of differences within the boundaries of Pancasila values.
5. Explanation
   Students are able to restate their opinions with logical reasoning. Group discussions always conclude with a presentation, where each group explains the results of their debate in a coherent manner.
6. Self-regulation
   The discussion process also trains self-regulation. Students learn to control their emotions when disagreeing and to correct their own arguments if they prove inaccurate.

These skills demonstrate that diversity-themed discussions successfully develop students' critical thinking skills comprehensively, both cognitively and affectively (Facione, 2011). Linked to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, this learning provides space for students to learn through meaningful social interactions. Group discussions create *a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)* , where more critical students help their classmates understand more complex issues. This *scaffolding mechanism* is evident, for example, when students who are accustomed to reading political news help explain the context of intolerance to friends who do not yet understand. This supports the view of Mercer & Littleton (2007) that collaborative dialogue is a primary means of developing critical thinking.

Diversity-themed discussion learning can also be viewed from the perspective of *critical pedagogy* proposed by Paulo Freire (1970). Freire rejected the "banking education" style of education that merely crams information, and instead emphasized liberating dialogic education. In this study, students do not simply receive Civics (PPKn) material from educators, but become active subjects who construct knowledge through dialogue. Discussions provide space for them to voice their social experiences, negotiate meaning, and find shared solutions. In other words, the Civics (PPKn) class becomes a space for intellectual and moral liberation as idealized by Freire (1970). Furthermore, the chosen diversity theme is highly contextual to students' social lives in Indonesia. According to Banks (2008), effective multicultural education must be contextual and relevant to students' experiences. By discussing issues of diversity, tolerance, and plurality, discussions not only train critical thinking skills but also shape inclusive citizenship attitudes. This is in line with the objectives of PPKn as value education that aims to form citizens who are intelligent, democratic, and have a diverse character (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

This research is also consistent with other research findings. For example, Gokhale (1995) found that discussion-based collaborative learning significantly improved students' critical thinking skills. Similar results were reported by Rahman (2020), who found that group discussions in social

studies improved critical thinking skills while fostering tolerance. Moreover, Tsai's (2012) research showed that small-group discussions can improve students' scientific argumentation skills and social skills. Thus, these research findings strengthen empirical evidence that discussion is an effective strategy for developing *higher-order thinking skills* (HOTS).

From a practical perspective, the increase in the N-Gain score of 71.61 (fairly effective) indicates that almost all students experienced improved critical thinking skills. The majority were in the moderate to high category, indicating that this model was inclusive and able to reach a wide range of ability levels. Even students who were previously passive showed positive development. This supports Astin's (1993) research, which asserted that active engagement in learning is a key factor in students' academic success.

Thus, it can be emphasized that the implementation of diversity-themed discussion learning in the PPKn subject at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung has a significant contribution, both in improving cognitive achievement in the form of critical thinking skills, as well as affective achievements in the form of tolerance, communication skills, and respect for differences. This learning is not only a methodological strategy, but also an important instrument in realizing the national education goal, namely to produce a young generation with Pancasila character, democratic, and ready to live in a diverse society.

IV. Closing

Based on the results of the research and analysis that have been conducted, it can be concluded that the implementation of the diversity-themed Discussion Learning Model in the PPKn subject at SMA Negeri 5 Bandar Lampung has a significant influence on improving students' critical thinking skills. This is reflected in the average post-test score which is higher than the pre-test, as well as the results of statistical tests which show a significant difference between the experimental class and the control class. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 93.1% confirms that the diversity-themed discussion is a dominant factor contributing to the improvement of critical thinking, while other factors only contribute a small portion to the variation in learning outcomes.

Another important conclusion is that the success of this model is proven not only quantitatively but also qualitatively through classroom observations. Students who participate in discussion-based learning demonstrate greater active engagement, greater courage in expressing opinions, greater ability to construct logical arguments, and greater ability to listen to and appreciate differing perspectives. Furthermore, students become more tolerant, open, and accustomed to working collaboratively in groups. This means that diversity-themed discussions not only enhance critical thinking skills but also foster democratic values, collaborative attitudes, and national character, all aligned with the primary goals of Civics (PPKn) education.

More broadly, this research shows that diversity-themed discussions are able to integrate the cognitive, affective, and social aspects of students. From the cognitive aspect, students acquire critical thinking skills that include interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. From the affective aspect, they develop an open, tolerant attitude and the courage to admit the shortcomings of their own arguments. Meanwhile, from the social aspect, students learn to communicate effectively, work collaboratively in groups, and manage differences of opinion democratically. The integration of these three aspects demonstrates that discussion is not just a learning method, but also a holistic educational strategy.

This research also confirms that the diversity theme raised in the discussions provides a real-world context relevant to students' lives. By discussing diversity issues, students not only learn academic material but also develop social awareness and sensitivity to the realities around them.

This is crucial because Civics (PPKn) learning should not be confined to the theoretical realm but should also foster critical, democratic citizens with Pancasila-based character.

Thus, the main conclusion of this study is that the implementation of the Diversity-themed Discussion Learning Model is an effective, relevant, and contextual strategy for improving critical thinking skills while simultaneously shaping students' character in accordance with national values. The application of this model is worthy of recommendation for wider integration into Civics (PPKn) learning practices and other subjects that emphasize critical thinking skills and character education. This study also provides practical implications for educators and schools. Educators need to be more courageous in implementing participatory and dialogue-based learning models, as they have been proven to improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes. Schools also need to support the creation of a healthy and democratic discussion culture, so that the classroom truly becomes a fun, inclusive learning space that reflects a pluralistic society. In this way, PPKn education can achieve its true goal, namely to produce a young generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally, socially, and spiritually mature in facing the challenges of diversity in the global era.

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