

Teaching Civic Education in Elementary Schools: Learning Strategies, Instructional Media, and Classroom Implementation Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Civics Education (PKn) is an important subject that plays a significant role in developing the character, attitudes, and civic values of elementary school students. The success of Civics learning is greatly influenced by the learning strategies, learning models, and learning media used by teachers in the teaching and learning process. This paper aims to identify Civics learning strategies and models, the use of learning media, the obstacles encountered, and the application of civic values in everyday life. The method used in this paper is a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through interviews with elementary school teachers and several students, as well as through literature review of various relevant books and journals. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to provide an overview of the implementation of Civics learning in elementary schools. The results of the study indicate that effective learning strategies in Civics Education include group discussions, role-playing, and problem-based learning. The use of learning media such as videos, images, posters, role-playing stories, and presentation slides helps students understand abstract concepts more easily. However, several obstacles were found, including low student interest in learning, limited learning media, and a lack of variety in teaching methods. Therefore, teachers are required to be more creative in choosing appropriate learning strategies and media to make the learning process more interesting and meaningful. Thus, Civics Education learning is expected to produce students who have character, attitudes, and behavior that reflect the values of Pancasila in everyday life.

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INTRODUCTION

Civics (PKn), a vital subject in elementary schools, aims to shape students' character to become good citizens, foster a sense of nationalism, and understand their rights and responsibilities in society, the state, and government.

To prevent students from getting bored during civics learning, teachers must use engaging learning tools and models. This is crucial because civics content often involves abstract concepts of values, standards, and character, which require innovative learning approaches.

Interviews with elementary school teachers revealed the implementation of civics learning methodology in the classroom, the media used, student participation, and the difficulties encountered during the learning process (D. Budimansyah, 2010).

Beyond imparting knowledge, education plays a crucial role in fostering moral principles and character. Civics Education (PKn) is a crucial component of democratic education and character education in formal education in Indonesia. By focusing on mindsets and behaviors aligned with the mandate of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, this subject aims to develop students into knowledgeable, competent, and moral citizens devoted to the nation and the Indonesian region. (Muchlas Sumani dan Hariyanto, 2011).

At the elementary school level, civics education forms the initial foundation for developing a child's identity. During elementary school, children are at a critical stage of cognitive development, where they begin to absorb fundamental values about society's rights, obligations, norms, and ethics. However, in practice, civics education is often seen as boring and overly theoretical. This is because the material is abstract and often requires memorizing government structures, laws, and moral values that are difficult for students to visualize.

Students' lack of interest in this subject largely stems from teachers' inconsistent use of learning models and tactics. Teachers often employ traditional teaching strategies, such as one-way lectures, which result in passive classroom engagement. However, in 21st-century education, educators must build innovative and dynamic learning environments. To ensure the principles taught are internalized in real-life behavior, rather than simply memorized for exams, teachers must act as facilitators who can connect the learning material to the realities of students' daily lives (contextualization) (Hamzah, 2011).

Accessibility and use of educational media present challenges in addition to methodological issues. Learning materials act as a bridge between students' concrete understanding and abstract ideas. Without interactive digital media, visual aids, or audiovisual aids, students will struggle to grasp key points of the subject matter. When teachers cannot deliver content in an engaging, relevant way that reflects current developments, student participation in the learning process often drops.

Furthermore, globalization's social dynamics make civic education even more challenging. If robust civic education is not provided in schools, the impact of other cultures and the rapid advancement of digital technology risk undermining the morals and nationalism of future generations. To help students apply civic ideals in daily life, it is crucial to investigate how elementary school teachers address these challenges and the tactics they use to maintain learning quality.

Based on initial observations and conversations with several educators, a gap was identified between the desired curriculum and actual practice. Finding the right media for specific materials and actively engaging students (student-centered learning) remains a challenge for many educators. To maximize civics education in elementary schools, this research paper will investigate learning methodologies, media use, student participation levels, emerging issues, and possible solutions.

METHOD

Type of Research

This research used a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative descriptive methods aim to systematically describe and explain a phenomenon or situation based on facts found in the field. Through this method, researchers can obtain in-depth information regarding Civics Education (PKn)

learning strategies implemented in elementary schools, the use of learning media, obstacles encountered during the learning process, and the application of civic values in everyday life.

A qualitative approach was chosen because this research places greater emphasis on understanding the learning process and experiences gained through interviews with teachers and students. Thus, the data obtained can provide a clearer picture of the implementation of civics learning in elementary schools.

Data Sources

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data.

1. Primary data was obtained directly through interviews with elementary school teachers and several student respondents. The data included information on the learning strategies used, the learning media utilized, the obstacles encountered, and the application of civics values in everyday life.

2. Secondary data was obtained from various written sources such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other references related to Civic Education learning strategies. Secondary data was used to support and strengthen the results obtained from the primary data.

Data Collection Techniques

In this study, the data collection techniques used include:

1. Interview

Interviews were conducted directly with elementary school teachers and several students to obtain information related to the Civics learning process. Through these interviews, researchers were able to determine the learning strategies used, the media utilized, the obstacles encountered, and the efforts made to improve students' understanding of the Civics material.

2. Literature Study

A literature review was conducted by gathering various relevant reference sources, such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other sources related to Civic Education learning strategies. The purpose of this literature review was to obtain a theoretical foundation and strengthen the research findings obtained from interviews.

3. Documentation

Documentation techniques are used to collect data in the form of notes, photographs, and other documents related to the implementation of civics learning. Documentation is used to supplement and support data obtained through interviews and literature studies.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data obtained was then analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. The analysis was conducted through several stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The collected data was systematically organized to provide a clear picture of civics learning strategies, the use of learning media, obstacles encountered, and the application of civic values in everyday life.

Through this analysis, it is hoped that accurate and in-depth information can be obtained regarding the implementation of Citizenship Education learning in elementary schools so that it can be used as evaluation material and input for teachers in improving the quality of learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Strategies and Models

Teachers have served as role models for their students throughout the history of education, therefore they need to possess teaching skills and techniques. As an instructional system, teaching and learning activities involve interactions between students, other elements, and the teacher, who oversees

the learning process to make it more dynamic and productive. Learning presentation skills, also known as teaching methods, is a step toward mastering these strategies. Knowledge of the teaching strategies instructors use in the classroom to help students remember, understand, and apply lessons effectively is known as lesson presentation techniques.

In reality, teachers use different teaching strategies or presentation tactics to enhance students' mastery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes rather than to communicate information or verbal messages to students. Thus, considering and striving for consistency in the component elements that make up the activities of a learning system with specific techniques is referred to as a teaching and learning approach. To achieve predetermined goals, teaching and learning techniques are broad patterns of teacher and student activities.

Every teacher begins their participation in educational activities by learning Teaching and Learning Strategies. Teacher-student interactions are influenced by educational values. Because teaching and learning activities focus on achieving predetermined goals, these encounters are instructive. Teachers deliberately organize their lessons methodically, utilizing all available resources to foster learning.

This ensures that students can fully understand and apply the material the teacher provides. (R & Nurhasanah Hidayat, 2020 : 1)According to interviews, active and interactive learning with direct student involvement is the best method for teaching civics to elementary school students. Role-playing, problem-based learning, and group discussions are some popular learning techniques. These tactics have been proven to maintain student interest and prevent boredom during the learning process.

Instructors explain that conducting group discussions gives students the opportunity to voice their opinions, discuss with peers, and develop an appreciation for diverse perspectives. Students are typically given a real-world issue to discuss in groups, such as the value of cooperation, tolerance, or respect for diversity.

Civics classes often incorporate role-playing in addition to group discussions. With this approach, students are asked to act out specific scenarios, such as class discussions, the election of a class president, or examples of behavior that exemplify Pancasila values. Because children learn through direct experience, this approach is considered beneficial in helping them grasp the meaning of the principles being taught.

The instructors also explained how problem-based learning can foster critical thinking and help students solve problems that arise in their environment. This way, students can apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios.

The instructor stated that to prevent students from losing interest during the teaching and learning process, it is crucial to use a variety of learning models. A more engaging and enjoyable classroom environment can be created by employing a variety of teaching strategies.

Utilization of Learning Media

The creation and implementation of learning strategies are heavily influenced by advances in science and technology, particularly information technology. These developments enable educators to utilize a variety of media tailored to their educational needs and goals. In addition to simplifying the learning process, the use of communication media also increases engagement.

Learning is a communication process. Three main elements are always involved in the communication process: the message itself, which is usually the topic of discussion; the sender (the teacher); and the recipient (the student). Communication breakdowns can sometimes occur in the learning process. This indicates that students are not receiving the teacher's message or topic in the best possible way. This indicates that students are unable to fully grasp the material. Even worse, students misinterpret the message because they are the ones receiving it. Teachers can develop learning techniques using various media and educational materials to prevent this.

Teachers emphasize that the use of educational media significantly helps students understand the sometimes abstract concepts of citizenship when teaching civics. Consequently, educators typically use a variety of educational resources to help students understand.

Some commonly used media include:

1. Educational films that show behavior that exemplifies the values of Pancasila or social life.
2. Posters or pictures of Pancasila values displayed in the classroom as visual aids to help students remember them.
3. Narratives or exemplary stories, usually taken from national figures or inspirational stories with moral lessons.
4. Presentation slides, which are used to convey content in a more organized and engaging way.
5. Question cards or quizzes, which use question and answer sessions to assess student understanding.

According to teacher interviews, students' understanding of abstract civics content is greatly aided by the use of educational materials, including films, images, posters, and role models. Students may find challenging content easier to grasp thanks to educational media.

Arsyad's research shows that learning media is crucial for increasing the efficiency of the learning process. Students can understand complex ideas in a more tangible and engaging way using educational media. Furthermore, by making learning more engaging and less repetitive, the use of media can increase student motivation. (U. Suryadi, A & Winataputra, 2018 : 120-29).

Another study published in the *Journal of Elementary Education* also demonstrated how the use of audiovisual materials, including instructional films, can increase students' motivation to learn and enhance their understanding of the subject matter. This is because audiovisual media can convey information both visually and auditorily, making it easier for students to understand. (Winarno, 2019)

Thus, the use of appropriate learning media can help teachers deliver civic education material more effectively and interestingly to students.

Learning media has functions and roles that must be played:

- a. Capturing a particular object or event

Photos, films, or audio or video recordings can be used to capture important events or unique items. These events can then be stored and used as needed. Teachers can use video recordings to explain how a rare solar eclipse occurs. Teachers can also use video playback and other methods to illustrate how the event unfolds in social studies classes.

- b. Manipulating a specific situation, event, or object

Teachers can eliminate verbal explanations and make learning material easier to understand through concrete presentations using learning media. For example, films are used in teaching about the human circulatory system. Furthermore, learning media can help display objects that may be too small to see with the naked eye without any equipment or too large to display in the classroom. Military equipment, celestial bodies, various wild animals, and others are examples of objects that are too large. Teachers can use sketches, drawings, or slide films to show these objects. Microprojectors and microscopes can be used to study objects that are too small, such as viruses, fungi, bacteria, and so on.

- c. Adding passion to student motivation

By using media, students become more attentive and motivated to learn. To spark student interest, teachers can show films about flood waste, industrial waste, and other topics before discussing pollution.

Obstacles in Civics Learning

Based on teacher interviews, students' low interest in civics education is a significant obstacle to learning it. Some students are less engaged because they believe civics classes are simply about memorization and theory.

Several issues beyond a lack of diverse teaching strategies and low student motivation can affect the effectiveness of civics education. The lack of up-to-date and engaging educational materials is one

such obstacle. Students who learn directly from textbooks often lose interest, which can decrease their level of engagement with the material.

Furthermore, students' perceptions of civics education (PKn) also pose challenges. Students struggle to gain a deep understanding of civic values because they perceive it as purely theoretical material requiring memorization. Limited learning time exacerbates this problem, as teachers must concentrate on imparting knowledge rather than helping students internalize the values.

Lack of student participation in the learning process is another obstacle. Students are required to engage in teacher-centered learning approaches and have few opportunities to practice critical thinking. Furthermore, the effectiveness of civics education is influenced by an unsupportive learning environment at school and at home.

Learning becomes more meaningful, systematic efforts are made to overcome these various obstacles, for example in active learning techniques, the use of new learning media, and in connecting material with everyday life experiences. (Oemar. Hamalik, 2014)

Application of Civics Values in Daily Life

The application of Civics Education (PKn) principles is crucial for developing students' morals and character. The ideals taught in PKn classes must be realized in concrete behaviors and attitudes in everyday life, not just at the cognitive level.

Being responsible in carrying out household chores, respecting parents, and being disciplined and honest are examples of civics ideals that need to be implemented within the family. However, these ideals are reflected in the school environment by obeying rules, behaving respectfully with classmates, and actively participating in school organizations and extracurricular activities.

Participating in maintaining harmony, engaging in cooperative activities between communities, and respecting diversity are examples of civic ideals that need to be implemented in society. Furthermore, respect for state symbols, obedience to the law, and involvement in democratic life are examples of civic values in state and national life.

To enable students to develop these ideals as ingrained behaviors, they need to be consistently implemented. In line with prevailing social standards and Pancasila beliefs, civics education not only provides information but also fosters personality and character. (Lickona, 2013)

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that teaching civics (PKn) in elementary schools is essential for shaping students' character and attitudes. Using appropriate tactics, models, and media can encourage student participation and facilitate understanding of the subject matter, which can influence learning performance.

Teachers need to be imaginative and inventive, even when faced with repeated obstacles, including a lack of media and low learning motivation. Therefore, civics education is needed that can produce students who need to apply civics principles in their daily lives, in addition to simply understanding the subject matter.

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