

# Improvement of Student Critical Thinking Skills Through Multicultural Learning

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**Abstract.** The objectives of this research are to describe the effectiveness of multicultural learning and to improve students' critical thinking skills in elementary schools. The type of this research is Research and Development (R & D). The steps of this research are potential problems, data collection, product design, design validation, design revision, product trial, and product revision. This research was conducted in class IV SD 1 Tritis and SD 1 Karangnongko, as an experimental group and SD 1 Daren and SD 3 Nalumsari as a control group in Nalumsari sub- District Jepara Regency. Based on the result of this research is the classical average value in the experimental and control groups it can be said that students' critical thinking skills are still low and its needed to improve students' critical thinking skills. In this case multicultural learning can improve critical thinking skills and instill multicultural education.

**Keywords:** Critical thinking, Multicultural.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education must be oriented to the development of all aspects of student potential, including cognitive, affective, and implications on psychomotor aspects. Susanto (2016: 2), explains that "Elementary schools always make improvements and improvements in the quality of education to be able to achieve educational goals optimally, one of them through improving the quality of learning activities" [10]. The process of education has developed according to the process of the times. The development of education in the globalization era requires experts in the field of education to develop various innovations to advance students of high quality and character. The learning system must place students as subjects in learning. It aims to demand intellectual, emotional, knowledge, action, and direct experience involvement in the context of forming motor, cognitive and social skills and internalizing values in forming attitudes. Hamalik (2015: 171), states that "Effective teaching is teaching that provides opportunities for self-study or self-activity" [3]. Meaningful learning that is student-centered learning, learning systems that direct student centering will be able to foster and develop creativity and train students' critical thinking skills in learning as well as in solving problems encountered in daily life.

Fisher (2008: 13), states that "Critical thinking is a skilled activity, which can be done better or vice versa, and good critical thinking will meet a variety of intellectual standards, such as clarity, relevance, adequacy, coherence, etc" [2]. Further Susanto (2016: 121), explains that "Critical thinking is an activity through the way of thinking about ideas or ideas related to the concept given or the problem presented" [12]. Critical thinking relates to the assumption that thinking is a potential that exists in humans that need developed for optimal abilities. Further Surya (2016: 123), explains that "Critical thinking is one cognitive strategy in solving problems that are more complex and require higher patterns".

Susanto (2016: 125), "explained five indicators of each aspect of critical thinking related to the subject matter, namely (1) Providing simple explanations, (2) Building basic skills, (3) Concluding, (4) Providing further explanation, and (5) Managing strategies and tactics" [12]. Critical thinking skills of students need to be developed starting from elementary school of habit in learning, habit in the learning process will improve students' critical thinking skills. One of the learning materials that need to be inserted is the students' critical thinking skills in learning, namely the Indonesian subject in Theme 4 of Various Occupations in class IV. The material in theme 4 is very close to all daily community activities as well as the environment of students. Based on observations and interviews conducted, it is known that there are still many students who have not been able to understand the material taught by the teacher, which makes students feel burdened in learning and inhibits the development of students' critical thinking skills. Passive students in learning activities, it can be the learning process has not been centered on students as objects. The teacher has innovated in developing learning activities using a number of learning models but they have not been maximized, and the teacher has not used the learning media optimally. In terms of reading material and supporting texts available in student books and teacher books are still not in accordance with the environment faced by students. Reading material and supporting texts do not insert multicultural education and do not reflect real problems that exist in the environment around students, this result in less contextual learning with actual student life experiences. Judging from the diversity, found gender diversity of men and women, white and black races, straight and critical hair races, and social strata, this certainly requires an understanding of the diversity that arises in each student.

As an alternative to overcome weaknesses in increasing critical thinking skills related to the learning process, it requires a development of learning, one of the developments of learning that can be done is to develop teaching materials as a support in improving students' critical thinking skills. Interesting teaching materials can encourage students to improve their critical thinking skills. Susiana (2017: 176), explains "Teaching materials are learning materials used in learning activities in the classroom for the achievement of learning objectives" [11]. Development of teaching materials as a source of learning in learning activities is needed. Teaching materials have a central role in learning, including thematic learning. Thematic learning is basically a combination of various disciplines, so this learning requires more complete and comprehensive teaching material. Prastowo (2014: 138), explains "Teaching materials are all materials (be it information, tools, or texts) that are arranged systematically that displays a complete figure of the competencies that students will master and are used in the learning process with the aim of planning and reviewing implementation learning" [7]. The development of Indonesian language learning by using teaching materials must be adapted to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of students with the characteristics and social environment of students.

Prastowo (2014: 141), explains the benefits and the making of teaching materials can be divided into two types, namely the uses for teachers and students. For teachers, the use of instructional materials is at least eight kinds, namely (1) Obtained teaching materials according to curriculum requirements and according to student needs, (2) No longer depends on textbooks that are sometimes difficult to obtain, (3) Teaching materials become richer because it was developed by using various references, (4) Adding to the teacher's knowledge and experience in writing teaching materials, (5) Teaching materials will be able to build effective learning communication between teacher and students because students will feel more confident in their teacher, (6) Obtained teaching materials that can assist in the implementation of learning activities, (7) Can be submitted as a work that is assessed to add credit points for the purposes of promotion, and (8) Increase teacher income if the results of his work are published. For students themselves, if teaching materials What is made is varied, innovative and interesting, so there are at least three uses of teaching materials for students, namely (1) Learning activities and become more interesting, (2) Will get more opportunities to learn independently with the guidance of the teacher, (3) Will get ease in learning each competency that must be mastered [7]. Ardianti (2018:83) describes teaching materials divided into 2 types namely printed materials and non-printed teaching materials. (1) Printed teaching material, as teaching material printed in printed form on paper for the purpose of delivering learning information kinds of printed teaching materials, namely modules, LKPD (Student Worksheets), and handouts. And (2) Non-printed teaching materials, as a collection of learning information printed in non-print technology. Types of non-printed teaching materials are audio teaching materials, video teaching materials, as well as computer-based teaching materials [1].

The development of learning in this research is based on multicultural educational, it is important to realize that the educational process is the process of civilizing and the ideals of national unity are elements of national culture. Saptono (2011:122) states that "Prescriptively, multiculturalism is a model of public policy to manage cultural diversity in a pluralistic society whereas descriptively, multiculturalism refers to the condition of diverse cultural communities in a particular region and period" [8]. Multicultural education is a relatively new phenomenon in the world of education needs to be applied early on both in formal and non formal education, the implementation of multicultural education is considered one of multicultural education is considered one of the right ways to be able to instill the ability of people to live in diversity and a sense of mutual tolerance. Mahfud (2006, 169) explains "multicultural education includes all students without discriminating groups such as gender, ethnicity, race, culture, social strata, and religion" [5]. In principle, multicultural education is education that respects differences. Suryana (2015: 199), explains the purpose of multicultural education is (1) to help students, (2) understanding the background of self and groups in society, (3) respects and appreciate ethnic cultural and socio-historical diversity, (4) resolving ethnocentric and prejudiced attitudes, (5) understanding the social, economic, psychological, and historical factors that cause ethnic polarization and ethnic alienation, (6) increase the ability to critically analyze routine problems and issues through a democratic process through a vision of a better, fairer and free society, and (7) developing a meaningful identity for all people [9].

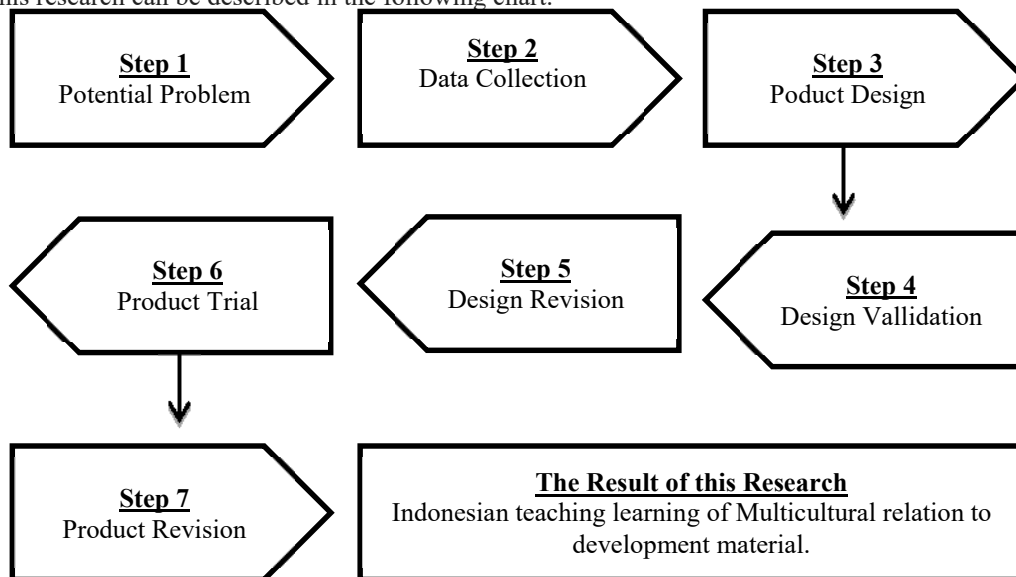
Based on this, the researchers was conduct a research with the title "improving Students Critical Thinking Skills through Multicultural Learning" The development of multicultural learning is a learning development solution that is suitable for improving students' critical thinking

skills. This study aims to describe the effectiveness of multicultural learning to improve students' critical thinking skills in elementary school.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This types of this research is Research and Development (R & D).the purpose of this research is developing multicultural learning to improve critical thinking skills. This research was conducted in class IV SD 1 Tritis and SD 1 Karangnongko, as an experimental group and SD 1 Daren and SD 3 Nalumsari as a control group in Nalumsari sub district, Jepara regency. The data collection techniques in this research and development were conduct through observation, interview, questionnaire, and documentation.

Observation is used by observing learning by teachers and grade IV elementary school students in Nalumsari sub district, Jepara regency. Interviews in this research are aimed at teachers and grade IV elementary school students. The questionnaire in this research was used to collect assessment data regarding teaching materials, data about the effectiveness of teaching materials addressed to teachers and students in relation to the development of multicultural learning. Then the documentation method is used to strengthen the data obtained in observation. The design of this research can be described in the following chart.



Picture. Research Procedure Chart

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of observation and interviews note that students need learning development, one of the developments that can be done is to develop teaching materials that are appropriate to the characteristic so that learning can be more interesting and enjoyable. Then from the teacher's point of view states the development of teaching materials is very necessary in the world of education, especially in Indonesian subjects so that learning is more interesting and not monotonous, with the development of teaching materials students can be motivated to be active in learning, as well as students can improve critical thinking skills and understand multicultural education. Some of the findings that researchers found when conducting observations and interviews include, there are still many students who have not been able to understand the material taught by the teacher, which makes students feel burdened in learning and inhibits the development of students' critical thinking skills. Passive students in learning process have not been centered on students as objects. The teacher has innovated in developing learning activities using a number of learning models but they have not been maximized, and the teacher has not used the learning media optimally. In terms of reading material and supporting texts available in student's books and teacher books are still not in accordance with the environment faced by students. Reading material and supporting texts do not adequately incorporate multicultural education and do not adequately reflect existing problems in the environment around students, these results in less contextual learning with actual student life experiences. Judging from the diversity, found gender diversity of men and women, white and black races, straight and critical hair races, and social strata, this certainly requires an understanding of the diversity that arises in each student.

**Table 1.** Analysis of the need for multicultural-based learning development to improve students' critical thinking skills

No.	Group		Average	Percentage	Criteria
1.	Exspermental Group	SD 1 Tritis	69	69%	Sufficient
		SD 1 Karangnongko	68	68%	Sufficient
2.	Control Group	SD 1 Daren	68	68%	Sufficient
		SD 3 Nalumsari	68	68%	Sufficient

Based on the analysis table of multicultural-based learning development needs to improve students' critical thinking skills, the average value of critical thinking in Indonesian language lessons at SD 1 Tritis as an experimental group obtained a classical average value of 69 with a percentage of 69% with sufficient criteria, then at SD 1 Karangnongko as a control group obtained a classical average value of 68 with a percentage of 68% with sufficient criteria. While the average value of critical thinking in Indonesian language lessons at SD 1 Daren as a control group obtained a classical average value of 68 with a percentage of 68% with sufficient criteria. Then in SD 3 Nalumsari as a control group obtained a classical average value of 68 with a percentage of 68%

with sufficient criteria. Judging from the classical average values in the experimental and control groups it can be said that students' critical thinking skills are still low and a development is needed to improve students' critical thinking skills.

As for some research that is relevant to this research and development, including research and development conducted by Lestariningsih (2017), about the development of thematic-integrative teaching materials based on local wisdom to enhance the character of care and responsibility [4]. This research and development was carried out in class IV MIN Jejeran. The results showed that the teaching material developed was feasible to use. This teaching material is effective to improve the character of caring and responsibility of students. There is a significant difference between the caring characteristics and responsibilities of students before and after participating in learning using integrative thematic teaching materials based on local wisdom. The similarity with the research that the author does is on the development of teaching materials, while the difference lies in the focus of improvement, the researchers focus on increasing the character of care and responsibility, while the writer focuses on increasing critical thinking skills.

Melindawati's research results (2016), in her research entitled the development of integrated thematic teaching materials with the model of problem based learning in grade IV elementary school [6]. This research and development aims to develop integrated and practical thematic teaching materials that are practical and effective. The results showed that the teaching material developed was valid and could be used in integrated thematic learning, integrated thematic teaching material with PBL models in grade IV elementary schools was declared practical, and student activities during learning were very good and learning outcomes showed effective results. The similarity with the research that the author does is on the development of teaching materials, while the difference lies in textbook based, that is, researchers develop teaching materials based on problem based learning models while the authors develop Indonesian language teaching materials based on multiculturalism.

From this explanation it can be concluded that the development of multicultural-based learning is very much needed in supporting the learning process and improving students' critical thinking skills. The development of learning by developing multicultural-based Indonesian teaching materials can also facilitate teachers in delivering material.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results and discussion that have been elaborated on increasing students critical thinking skills through multicultural learning, it can be concluded that the development of multicultural learning through Indonesian language teaching materials is effective in increasing students' critical thinking skills. The developments of multicultural learning is very much needed by teachers in providing a varied and enjoyable learning experience so that students are interested, active, and motivated to participate in learning in the classroom, and instill multicultural education as a form of tolerance and respect for differences that arise in the learning process. Based on these conclusions, the following suggestions can be made (1) Teachers are expected to be able to develop innovative learning in learning activities to improve students' critical thinking skills, and (2) Teachers are expected to be able to develop learning through teaching materials, media, and innovative models in Learning Activities.

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