Development of Controversial Issues Learning Models in Improving Student's Critical Thinking Skills

*Raharjo1, E Solihatin1, M Maiwan1, Y Kardiman1
1Program Studi PPKN, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT
This research aims to develop a learning model for controversial issues in Civic Education at Jakarta State University to enhance students' critical thinking skills. The study follows the Development and Research (R&D) method and was conducted from March to August. The participants were students taking the Civic Education course at The State University of Jakarta, which is a mandatory course. Data on critical thinking skills were collected through observation, interviews, and assessments. The development of the learning model for controversial issues in the Civic Education course involved planning, processing, designing, material preparation, trials, and feasibility analysis. The research resulted in an efficient and effective learning model. Students' critical thinking skills and learning outcomes improved significantly, as observed through their active participation in discussions, analysis, and argumentation related to controversial issues. Students responded to these issues based on facts and data, thereby demonstrating their improved ability to engage in critical thinking. Overall, this research contributes to the enhancement of critical thinking skills among students by providing them with a structured learning model that enables them to analyze and respond to controversial issues based on reliable information.

INTRODUCTION
Theoretically, Civics is designed as a learning subject that contains cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions that are confluent or mutually penetrating and integrated in the context of the substance of ideas, values, concepts, Pancasila morals, democratic citizenship, and defending the country (Muhibbin & Sumarjoko, 2016). Most of the material still contains controversy in Civics learning, especially regarding the role of state institutions and citizen participation in government (Ajaps & Obiagu, 2021). In society, we often encounter controversial issues, where some people are in a pro or agree position while others people or groups are cons or reject the issue (Codagnone et al., 2020; Spector & Kitsuse, 2017). Controversial issues often arise in social life and statehood, requiring good reasons, arguments, and analysis based on facts and data. Students need to think critically about these issues, especially in the Civic Education course. Some controversial issues include the pros and cons of the Job Creation Law or the Omnibus Law, the death penalty, the KPK Law, the Mineral and Coal Law, the Criminal Law Draft, policies related to handling Covid-19, and many more have caused controversy in the community.

As students who are educated or intellectual community, of course, controversial issues should be able to respond well; pro or con positions are based on the ability to analyze and obtain data and facts, not just jump on the bandwagon with other people or groups. To develop
critical thinking skills, one of the things that can be done is to use learning models for controversial issues. Learning controversial issues is also a learning model by displaying controversial issues that arise in the community or students' lives, which are then raised into learning material in learning activities on campus (Fitriani & Hakim, 2022). Through this activity, students are invited to find, analyze, and solve problems based on their perceptions even though it will cause differences in perception with other students; precisely with this, students will be aroused to think critically (critical thinking), which is one of the demands of 21st-century humans.

The controversial issues learning model is a learning model that presents controversial issues that are easily accepted by a person or one group but also easily rejected by other people or groups (Dang et al., 2020). Through the critical thinking learning model, it is hoped that it can strengthen the applicable learning experience for students because it will provide more opportunities for students to predict, classify, and analyze problems in their environment. Thus, the cognitive aspects students develop are skills in memorization and remembering and analyzing, predicting, criticizing, and evaluating the information received (Stevani & Tarigan, 2022). This is in line with research conducted by Sulkipani et al. (2020), that after the implementation of a learning model based on controversial issues can improve the critical thinking skills of civic education students as evidenced by an increase in final grades of up to 30% (Goldberg & Savenije, 2018; Sulkipani et al., 2020).

Learning by raising controversial issues will train the student's mindset, so he will learn how to express opinions, express his experience and knowledge, learn to differ opinions, respect opinions, and even maintain opinions according to what he believes for reasons that are clear, logical and by the facts. Learning using the controversial issue learning model has several advantages (Choi et al., 2022; Sulistiyo, 2016) mentioned, namely: 1) training academic skills for students or learners to make hypotheses, collect evidence, analyze data, and present inquiry results; 2) training students to be able to face a very complex social life with skills in communicating, instilling empathy in others, influencing others, tolerant, able to cooperate, and others (Komalasari, 2019).

Learning models with controversial issues also have several benefits for students; namely, through learning models, controversial issues are important to prevent gaps and misunderstandings, which can lead to conflicts (Puspitasari & Mufit, 2021; Kusmaryono et al., 2021; Scavarelli et al., 2021). Lockwood further mentioned that this controversial issue model is needed to shape the ability of students to participate in solving problems that exist in a democratic society by conducting a discussion activity (Hung, 2020). This is, in line with previous research by (Avery et al., 2013), stated that learning citizenship education in tertiary institutions is very strategic in enhancing students' democratic attitudes and their implications for civil society. However, the reality on the ground related to the implementation of civics learning has not been ideal in developing students' democratic attitudes and their implications for civil society. However the democratic attitude that means to shape the critical thinking of students, like statement in the book of (He, 2016; Renatovna, 2021), that democratic there have many functions to shape some thinking skills. One of them that critical thinking has an implication to their civil society that was so benefit.

There needs to be a paradigmatic dynamic of civics learning in Higher Education and elements that can support the upholding of democracy or critical thinking which has implications for the creation of civil society (Strandbrink, 2017). Research conducted shows a significant influence of the controversial issue policy learning model on students' critical thinking skills (Reichert et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Winursiti et al. (2014) in their research, concluded that contextual learning based on controversial issues affects student social studies learning outcomes.

Based on the description above, it is known that there are several previous studies on how to implement learning models with controversial issues to train thinking skills, but this study is different. The novelty in this study is that it focuses on one topic that is very controversial at the
Development of Controversial Issues Learning Models in Improving Student's Critical Thinking Skills

https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v4i3.226

time, and the skills trained are critical thinking skills, while in other studies many trains
democratic skills, attitudes, and so on. The above shows the importance of development
research (R&D) on learning models of controversial issues for students in Civic Education
courses to improve students' critical thinking skills. This research aims to develop a learning
model of controversial issues in Civic Education courses at the State University of Jakarta to
improve students' critical thinking skills.

RESEARCH METHOD
This research uses a Research and Development research approach, which is a research method
used to produce a model and test the effectiveness of the product (Safitri et al., 2019). The
subjects of this research were students participating in the Civic Education course at Jakarta
State University. Data collection techniques used survey techniques, questionnaires, interviews
with students, learning experts, and material experts. The development steps carried out in this
study adopted the development steps (Sumardi et al., 2021) as follows: 1) Research and
information gathering (conducting an analysis process and literature study), 2) Planning, 3)
Developing the initial product form, 4) Initial field trial, 5) Revision of the main product, 6)
Main field trial, 7) Operational product revision, 8) Operational field trials, 9) Final product
revision, 10) Dissemination and implementation. Furthermore, the data analysis process is
carried out in research with stages, namely: 1) organizing and preparing data for analysis, 2)
reading data in outline carefully, 3) analyzing sequentially through the coding process, 4) using
the coding process to produce descriptions of findings in categories or themes, 5) presenting
descriptions and themes to make it easy to process data analysis and interpretation, 6) analysis
and interpretation of data in an integrated manner (Yasmin et al., 2020).

Figure 1. Research flow chart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Controversial issues raised in the Civic Education course are adjusted to the topic or theme of
the course. The chosen issue is also an issue that is close to student life (contextual) and factual.
Is controversial is something that already belongs to the surrounding community and is related
to issues or problems in the local, national, and international environment (Yeung, 2022).

This development research is carried out with the following stages. First, analyze the
problem (Scudder & Colson, 2019). Various controversial issues sometimes cause debate and
even often cause conflict. Some of the controversial issues students raised include the omnibus law, the transfer of the capital, the draft criminal law, the death penalty and so on. As a student, As a smart and good Indonesian citizen, he must respond to it with the ability to think critically about the problem.

Critical thinking is a way of thinking reasonably and reflectively, emphasizing making a decision R.H Ennis (Jambari & Ratnasari, 2019) so that it can position its position based on rational and scientific argumentation and understand the rationale of others who are pro or con based on the considerations and arguments they build. Can appreciate the differences in views and thoughts of others in the spirit of mutual respect and respect. It would help if you were habituated and trained to think critically and learn to express your views and thoughts accompanied by data, facts, and a good analysis of one position and why it should be pro or con to a controversial issue.

The second stage is to create a development design, how the design of the learning model for the controversial issue is implemented in the classroom (Beaudrie et al., 2021) The following design can be done in applying the controversial issue model online, namely, with the following steps: 1) Students are facilitated in the course of dividing students into two groups, where one group is for the pro group and the second group is counter to one group controversial issues. 2) Furthermore, lecturers facilitate students to determine themes/learning materials that contain actual and factual Controversial Issues in society. This presentation is carried out through explanations of lecturers or students reading, observing, and hearing controversial issues prepared by the lecturer. 3) give each group time to discuss and analyze the issue in their respective groups based on scientific data and facts to strengthen the argument. 4) Students continued both pros and cons and presented his controversial issue based on the scientific arguments he had obtained. Dosen pays attention to and records the results of each group in expressing opinions, arguing and conducting analysis related to the controversial topic/material; 5) Furthermore, in turn, the opportunity is given to other groups to respond to each other (asking, debating, arguing, giving suggestions or criticisms) of the work of the other group, 6) In the event of disagreement, the lecturer does not force an agreement. However, the teacher and the student can conclude the similarities and differences, weaknesses and advantages of each opinion, argument, fact, and data they have; 7) The lecturer guides students to conclude learning.

Third, implement a learning development model for controversial issues (Simanjuntak et al., 2022). Here is one of the topics that students are talking about, namely related to the Omnibus law, RKUHP, and the death penalty, which is indeed a debate amid society with a variety of arguments; of course, students both pro and con must be able to provide rational and critical arguments related to these controversial issues as well as students are required to be able to learn to accept differences, learn to respect opinions, thoughts from others as something that must be accepted well. This is in line with the research that has been carried out by Nguyen (2022), which in his research is in order to create student awareness of the problems faced society in which they live, problems with many controversial issues. They are required to have the capacity to think critically about media information, have public negotiating skills through individual arguments, and also how to exchange opinions with others (Nguyen, 2022).

In its implementation, at the first stage, the student group who are in a proposition or agree to a controversial issue explain the facts and data on why in a proposition, what arguments are built why they should agree, and why others should agree on the existence of the controversial issue analytically and critically. Here is one of the arguments built by a pro-controversial group on the controversial issue of the Omnibus law.
Table 1. The pro group explains the advantages related to the omnibus law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Advantages of Omnibus Law Enactment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Survivors of termination of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Free halal certification for MSMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Land provision through land bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leave and menstruation rights are not lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Acceleration of building houses for low-income people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After students explain why they should be pro or agree to one controversial issue, the next is an opportunity for the contra or disagreeing group to provide views, thoughts, and arguments related to the controversial issue with their critical arguments under the facts and data owned by the group. Students explain arguments, and analysis of why they should disagree or contra the controversial issue, by outlining opinions, thoughts, analysis and various thoughts about weaknesses or adverse effects of why the position of the contra or disagree. Here is one of the arguments given by the opposing group related to the controversial issue of omnibus law legislation.

Table 2. The contra group exposes weaknesses/shortcomings related to the Omnibus Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Weaknesses of Omnibus Law Enactment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There are many articles and unconstitutional and colonial rules recycled in the Cilaka draft law. An example is the plan to add the regulation of the president's authority to cancel local regulations in order to centralize permits. This provision was previously contained in the Law on Regional Government and has been declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The conclusion that the process was conducted behind closed doors, the socialization was not professional, and the involvement of the State Intelligence Agency and the Indonesian National Police showed that the government was actually opening up opportunities for authoritarian regimes to come to power.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the controversial issue learning model is to develop students' critical thinking skills (Muslimin & Abidin, 2023). Furthermore, students alternately respond to each other critically based on what facts and data have been submitted by groups that are pro-controversial issues and those who are pro or agree to respond to the arguments that the contra group has expressed. Lecturers facilitate pro-con debates while still paying attention to aspects of neutrality and balance, as stated by (Mohr & Höhler, 2023) that in controversial issues, lecturers must pay attention to balance (balance), neutrality (neutrality), and responsibility (Commitment). This is in line with on the results of Rokiahdini's research (2021) it can be concluded that students have spontaneous attention when learning about the issue of omnibus law due to interest and students' knowledge of national political issues, especially the rejection of the omnibus law on copyright work, can be seen from the students' interest and understanding problem on this political issue. This proves that this student is interested in following political news both on social media and in person directly by discussing political news with peers. This student has active participation because his participation arises with himself without being pushed or coerced by anyone because of this student have an interest in a political problem that occurs in the situation social or environmental (Agustia, 2021).

This controversial issue model as stated by Komalasari and Rahmat (2019), has the advantage of 1) training academic skills for students in making a hypothesis, collecting evidence, analyzing data, and presenting inquiry results; 2) training students to be able to face a very complex social life with skills in communicating, instilling a sense of empathy in others,
Development of Controversial Issues Learning Models in Improving Student's Critical Thinking Skills

studies in Learning and Teaching

https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v4i3.226

influencing others, tolerant, and also able to cooperate. With the learning of controversial issues, it is also important to prevent gaps and misunderstandings, which can lead to conflict.

Furthermore, due diligence or quality of learning models for controversial issues is carried out, and based on feasibility tests carried out through observations and feasibility test questionnaires are obtained a general idea that the learning model of controversial issues in the Civic Education course obtained an average figure of 4.27, which is in the range of the 4.20 - 5.00 category or with the very good category. This is shown by, among other things, that the learning model of debating controversial issues can encourage critical thinking; as much as 54% is said to be good, and as much as 30% is very good; this can be seen with students in expressing their pro or con ideas accompanied by argumentation, analysis, facts, and existing data.

The controversial issue learning model can also encourage students to learn more actively; this is illustrated by 59% being said to be good at encouraging more active learning, and 30% is said to be excellent at encouraging students to learn more actively (Malahayati, 2022). In addition, this model can also help students to understand the thoughts and ideas and arguments of other people who are different, which is shown by the fact that there are as many as 61% agree and 37% strongly agree that they can learn to understand other people's arguments on one public issue. Students also learned to appreciate the differences of views shown by 54% expressing agreement and 37% stating strongly agreeing with this model. Students can learn to appreciate differences.

However, like any other learning approach, this model also has some drawbacks. One of the main drawbacks is the possibility of unhealthy debates among students if not properly directed. Controversial issues can trigger strong emotions and conflicts if not managed wisely by the teacher. In addition, the implementation of this model requires careful preparation from the teacher. Teachers need to carefully select the issues to be discussed, organize relevant materials, and design questions that trigger critical thinking. This can consume considerable time and effort. Furthermore, the controversial issues learning model tends to take longer than other teaching methods. The process of in-depth discussion, drafting arguments, and analyzing complex issues requires sufficient time to ensure deep understanding. This can be a challenge in following a rigorous curriculum. Despite these drawbacks, the controversial issues learning model remains an effective tool to prepare students with critical thinking, ethical and argumentative skills. With proper management, potential negative impacts can be minimized, and its benefits in developing students' critical thinking remain valuable.

CONCLUSION

This research resulted in an efficient and effective learning model. Students' critical thinking skills and learning outcomes improved significantly, as seen from their active participation in discussion, analysis, and argumentation related to controversial issues. Students responded to the issues based on facts and data, thus showing an improvement in their ability to think critically. Overall, this study contributes to the improvement of critical thinking skills among students by providing them with a structured learning model that enables them to analyze and respond to controversial issues based on reliable information. The main implication of this study is that this approach can be used by teachers and other educational institutions to improve students' critical thinking skills.

Further research could involve a more in-depth analysis of how this model affects certain aspects of critical thinking skills, such as critical analysis, reasoning, or evaluation. This study focused on developing critical thinking skills at the individual level. Future research could explore how these critical thinking skills contribute to the understanding of controversial issues in a broader social context.
REFERENCES


Development of Controversial Issues Learning Models in Improving Student’s Critical Thinking Skills

https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v4i3.226


Development of Controversial Issues Learning Models in Improving Student's Critical Thinking Skills


**Author(s):**

*Raharjo (Corresponding Author)*
Program Studi PPKN, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial, Universitas Negeri Jakarta,
Gd. K. Kampus UNJ, Jl. Rawamangun Muka Jakarta Timur, Indonesia
Email: rharjo@unj.ac.id

Etin Solihatin
Program Studi PPKN, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial, Universitas Negeri Jakarta,
Gd. K. Kampus UNJ, Jl. Rawamangun Muka Jakarta Timur, Indonesia
Email: etinsolihatin@unj.ac.id

Moh. Maiwan
Program Studi PPKN, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial, Universitas Negeri Jakarta,
Gd. K. Kampus UNJ, Jl. Rawamangun Muka Jakarta Timur, Indonesia
Email: maiwan@unj.ac.id

Yuyus Kardiman
Program Studi PPKN, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial, Universitas Negeri Jakarta,
Gd. K. Kampus UNJ, Jl. Rawamangun Muka Jakarta Timur, Indonesia
Email: yuyuskardiman@unj.ac.id