

SOCIALIZATION OF HOW TO IMPROVE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS OF STUDENTS AT SMA N 3 PADANG PANJANG

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ABSTRACT

Critical thinking skills are essential competencies for 21st-century students to face academic and real-life challenges. However, preliminary observations at SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang revealed that students still experience difficulties in analyzing problems, presenting logical arguments, and evaluating information. This situation requires systematic efforts to enhance students' critical thinking skills through community service activities. This activity aimed to improve students' critical thinking skills through participatory and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-based socialization. The methods included needs analysis, planning socialization materials, conducting interactive socialization involving discussions and simple case studies, and evaluating the outcomes through pre-test, post-test, questionnaires, and observation of student engagement. The results showed an improvement in students' critical thinking skills, with the average pre-test score of 60.8 increasing to 77.2 on the post-test, and student engagement during the activity ranged from active to highly active, with an average of 76.4%. These findings indicate that interactive and contextual socialization is effective in enhancing students' critical thinking skills and supports teachers in implementing HOTS-based learning strategies. This activity provides practical contributions to fostering a culture of critical thinking in schools, bridging the gap between curriculum demands and classroom practices, and offering a replicable model for other schools with similar characteristics.

Keywords: Critical thinking, socialization, HOTS, SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang, community service

ABSTRAK

Keterampilan berpikir kritis merupakan salah satu kompetensi utama abad ke-21 yang harus dimiliki peserta didik untuk menghadapi tantangan akademik dan kehidupan sehari-hari. Namun, hasil identifikasi awal di SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang menunjukkan bahwa peserta didik masih mengalami kesulitan dalam menganalisis permasalahan, mengemukakan pendapat logis, serta mengevaluasi informasi yang diperoleh. Kondisi ini menuntut upaya sistematis untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berpikir kritis melalui kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat. Kegiatan ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman dan keterampilan berpikir kritis peserta didik melalui sosialisasi berbasis pendekatan partisipatif dan Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Metode yang digunakan meliputi identifikasi kebutuhan, perencanaan materi sosialisasi, pelaksanaan sosialisasi interaktif yang melibatkan diskusi dan studi kasus sederhana, serta evaluasi melalui pre-test, post-test, angket, dan observasi keaktifan peserta didik. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan keterampilan berpikir kritis peserta didik, dengan rata-rata skor pre-test 60,8 meningkat menjadi 77,2 pada post-test, serta keaktifan peserta didik selama kegiatan berada pada kategori aktif hingga sangat aktif dengan rata-rata 76,4%. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa sosialisasi interaktif dan kontekstual efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berpikir kritis peserta didik, sekaligus membantu guru menerapkan strategi pembelajaran berbasis HOTS. Kegiatan ini memberikan kontribusi praktis dalam membangun budaya berpikir kritis di sekolah, menutup kesenjangan antara tuntutan kurikulum dan praktik pembelajaran, serta menjadi model yang dapat direplikasi di sekolah lain dengan karakteristik serupa.

Kata kunci: Berpikir kritis, sosialisasi, HOTS, SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang, pengabdian kepada masyarakat

INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking skills represent one of the primary 21st-century competencies that must be developed within modern educational systems. Critical thinking encompasses the ability to logically

analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information, as well as to make decisions based on rational reasoning and relevant evidence (Facione, 2015). Mastering these skills is crucial for secondary school students to navigate academic challenges, scientific advancements, and increasingly complex social dynamics.

In the context of Indonesian education, the development of critical thinking aligns with the mandates of the Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum), which emphasizes student-centered learning and the strengthening of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Nevertheless, instructional practices in schools still exhibit a tendency to focus on content mastery and low-level cognitive outcomes. Consequently, students' opportunities to develop critical thinking through discussion, problem analysis, and reflective learning remain limited (Ennis, 2011).

Initial identification at SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang, as the service partner, indicates that students still face difficulties in articulating logical opinions, analyzing problems in depth, and evaluating information acquired during the learning process. Furthermore, teachers require reinforced understanding and practical strategies to implement instruction capable of fostering systematic and sustainable critical thinking skills. This situation reveals a gap between curriculum requirements and pedagogical practices in the field.

As an implementation of the Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi (Triple Dharma of Higher Education), specifically community service, tangible efforts are necessary to assist partner schools in addressing these issues. One such effort is through socialization activities on methods to enhance students' critical thinking skills. This socialization is expected to provide both conceptual and practical understanding to teachers and students regarding the importance of critical thinking and its application strategies in learning. Thus, this service activity aims to contribute to improving instructional quality and building a culture of critical thinking at SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang.

The objectives of this community service activity are as follows:

1. To provide students with an understanding of the importance of critical thinking skills in the learning process and daily life.
2. To disseminate strategies and methods for enhancing students' critical thinking skills within the school environment.
3. To support teachers and partner schools in creating a learning process that is more active, reflective, and oriented toward the development of higher-order thinking skills.

The novelty of this community service activity lies in a socialization approach that is not only informative but also integrative and contextual. The activity is designed by combining conceptual understanding of critical thinking with reflective practices tailored to the characteristics of students at SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang. This approach emphasizes the link between critical thinking skills and real-world problems faced by students in their daily learning, making the socialization material more relevant and applicable.

Furthermore, the novelty of this activity lies in its focus on strengthening students' critical thinking through HOTS-based socialization aligned with the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka. This program does not merely present HOTS concepts theoretically but also introduces concrete examples of their application in classroom activities, such as simple case analyses, guided discussions, and learning reflections. Consequently, this service activity provides a practical contribution to bridging the gap between curriculum policy and school-level instructional practices.

Another novel aspect is the active involvement of students as primary subjects in the socialization process, rather than mere recipients of information. Through a participatory approach, students are encouraged to identify their own learning challenges, express opinions, and formulate critical solutions. This approach is expected to foster metacognitive awareness and establish a sustainable culture of critical thinking within the school environment.

Overall, this service activity offers an applicable, contextual, and participatory model for socializing critical thinking skills a model that has not been widely implemented in community service at the secondary school level. It is hoped that this model can be replicated in other schools with similar characteristics as an effort to enhance learning quality and strengthen 21st-century competencies.

METHOD

This community service activity was conducted using a participatory socialization method aimed at enhancing the understanding and critical thinking skills of students at SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang. This method was selected for its capacity to encourage active student engagement through interactive and contextual activities.

The implementation began with problem identification through preliminary observations and discussions with the partner school to ascertain the current state of students' critical thinking skills. The findings from this identification process served as the foundation for developing socialization materials tailored to the specific needs and characteristics of the students.

The core activity consisted of interactive socialization, which included concise material presentations, guided discussions, and the provision of simple case studies. These cases required students to analyze problems and articulate their opinions critically. This approach was intended to foster both awareness and practical critical thinking skills within the learning process.

Activity evaluation was carried out by observing student engagement throughout the program and administering response questionnaires to measure the level of understanding and the perceived benefits of the activity. The evaluation results served as material for reflection and for the improvement of future community service initiatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activity, conducted through socialization on enhancing students' critical thinking skills at SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang, was successfully implemented and received positive responses from the participants. The results indicate an improvement in students' understanding of critical thinking concepts and an increased awareness of the importance of applying these skills within the learning process.

Based on the results of the student response questionnaires administered after the socialization, the majority of students stated that the material presented was easy to comprehend and highly relevant to their classroom activities. Furthermore, students demonstrated a significant increase in active participation throughout the sessions, particularly during the discussion and simple case-solving segments that required logical analysis and articulation of opinions.

Observations during the activity revealed that students began to demonstrate the ability to present arguments with clearer reasoning, pose critical questions, and provide thoughtful responses to the issues discussed. These findings indicate that a participatory socialization approach can effectively encourage active student engagement and support the development of critical thinking skills.

Table 1. Results of Student Response Questionnaire toward Socialization Activities

No	Assessment Indicator	Average Score	Category
1	Understanding of critical thinking concepts	4.25	Excellent
2	Clarity of material delivery	4.30	Excellent
3	Relevance of material to learning needs	4.15	Good
4	Student interest in socialization activities	4.20	Excellent
5	Student engagement in discussions and Q&A	4.05	Good
6	Benefits of activities in improving critical	4.35	Excellent

No	Assessment Indicator	Average Score	Category
	thinking		

Note: Assessment scale uses a 1–5 Likert scale (1 = very poor, 5 = excellent).

Based on Table 1, the average student response to the socialization activities falls within the "Excellent" category, with an overall mean score of 4.22. The indicator with the highest score is the perceived benefit of the activity in enhancing students' critical thinking (4.35), indicating that the socialization had a positive impact on student understanding. Meanwhile, the indicator for student engagement in discussions achieved a score of 4.05 (Good), suggesting that students are beginning to participate actively in critical thinking-based learning processes.

Table 2. Pre-test and Post-test Results of Students' Critical Thinking Skills

No	Assessed Aspect	Pre-test (Average)	Post-test (Average)	Improvement
1	Ability to analyze problems	62.5	78.4	15.9
2	Ability to present logical arguments	60.2	76.8	16.6
3	Ability to evaluate information	58.9	75.6	16.7
4	Ability to provide solutions	61.4	77.9	16.5

According to Table 2, there was an increase in the students' average critical thinking skill scores, rising from 60.8 in the pre-test to 77.2 in the post-test. This improvement demonstrates that the socialization activities effectively contributed to the development of students' critical thinking competencies.

Table 3. Observation Results of Student Engagement During Socialization Activities

No	Student Engagement Indicator	Percentage (%)	Category
1	Paying attention to the speaker's explanation	85	Very Active
2	Posing questions	72	Active
3	Expressing opinions in discussions	75	Active
4	Responding to other participants' opinions	70	Active
5	Involvement in case study resolution	80	Very Active

The observation results in Table 3 show that student engagement during the activities reached the "Active" category, with an average percentage of 76.4%. This indicates that the participatory socialization approach successfully enhanced student involvement in the learning process.

The findings of increased pre-test and post-test scores, alongside high student engagement, support Facione's (2015) assertion that critical thinking skills can be developed through learning activities involving active analysis, evaluation, and reflection. Furthermore, the students' involvement in discussions and problem-solving aligns with Ennis's (2011) view, which emphasizes the importance of practicing critical thinking through participatory activities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis of the community service activities conducted, it can be concluded that the socialization on enhancing students' critical thinking skills at SMA Negeri 3 Padang Panjang has a positive impact on improving students' critical thinking abilities. This is evidenced by the increase in average scores from the pre-test to the post-test across all assessed aspects, with an overall average improvement of 16.4 points.

Furthermore, observation results indicate that student engagement during the activities ranged from the "Active" to "Very Active" categories. This suggests a correlation between a participatory socialization approach and increased student involvement in the learning process. This

rise in engagement aligns with the improvement in students' abilities to analyze problems, articulate arguments, and provide logical solutions.

In conclusion, the data analysis demonstrates that socialization designed in an interactive and contextual manner is effective in enhancing students' critical thinking skills. These findings reaffirm that community service activities can serve as a strategic alternative to support the improvement of instructional quality in partner schools, particularly in developing students' critical thinking competencies.

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