

Transforming Civic Learning: How Mind Mapping Enhances Student Literacy

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to improve literacy in Civics lessons through the mind mapping method for class IX students in the even semester of the 2023/2024 school year at SMP Negeri Satu Atap Tambun Utara. The method used was classroom action research which was conducted in 3 cycles and included 4 stages of research, namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This research was conducted from February 2024 to April 2024 with 28 students as the research subjects, while the data collected in this study were through tests, observations, interviews, documentation, and field notes. The results showed that there was a significant increase in the literacy of grade IX students in Civics material. This can be proven by the increasing results of literacy assessments carried out in each cycle, namely the average value of cycle I students reached 71.43 as much as 35.71%, the average value of cycle II students reached 77.5 as much as 57.14%, and the average value of cycle III students reached 83.93 as much as 92.86%. This study concludes that the mind mapping method is very effective in increasing the literacy of students on the material of harmony in the diversity of Indonesian society.

Keywords: Harmony of Indonesian Diversity, Literacy, Mind Mapping Method.

1 INTRODUCTION

Education has a big role in the life of every individual because through education, individuals can achieve their full and maximum potential to live a better life. Fatahillah & Afadh (2022) explain that education is a conscious and planned effort to provide guidance or help in developing the physical and spiritual potential given by adults to students to achieve maturity and achieve the goal that students can carry out their life tasks independently. This is in line with the opinion of Utami & Vioeza (2020) who said that the educational process means that it involves teaching and learning activities with all aspects and factors that influence it. One part of this education is the subject of Pancasila and Citizenship Education, which through Citizenship Education subjects is expected to provide an understanding of the rights and obligations of students in living in society and the state, fostering a sense of nationalism and moral values to all students from an early age.

The subject of Pancasila and Citizenship Education loses its meaning if students do not like the subject. This dislike is caused because according to students, the Citizenship Education material is too complicated so that there is a lot to memorize. Students have already considered Citizenship Education as a memorization subject, not understanding. In addition to the above factors, the cause of Citizenship Education not being popular is from the material provider itself, namely the Citizenship Education subject teacher. Explaining the material too quickly to slowly. In addition, the teacher's explanation does not make students clearer about the material presented, but instead confuses students. Sometimes teachers do not really master the material, so that sometimes when the teacher is teaching in class, most students do not pay attention and are busy with their friends

(Utami et al., 2021). Civic Knowledge is citizenship knowledge related to the content or what citizens should know including politics and government, constitution, goals, values and principles of democracy, the relationship between the state and other countries and the role of citizens (Bima & Barus, 2023). Implicitly, civic knowledge is described in and includes knowledge about 8 scopes of study, namely National Unity and Unity; norms; laws; and regulations; Human Rights; Citizens' Needs; State Constitution; Power and Politics; Pancasila; and Globalization. To show which studies are included in the realm of civic knowledge, it can be identified from the formulation of basic competencies from the scope. Each basic competency contains the word "operational work" which can be recognized as part of whether it is included in the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor domain Minister of National Education Regulation No. 22, 2006

The reality in the field of Civics lessons is still considered a lesson that is less interesting and even tends to be considered a boring subject by most students. This is indicated by the low literacy of students which causes 70% of students to have difficulty in understanding or mastering the material presented by the teacher, especially on subjects that require in-depth understanding of concepts, and this of course has an impact on the low average score of students in the subject, which is still below the Minimum Completeness Criteria (75).

Literacy, as a critical competency, is indispensable for equipping learners to navigate the increasing complexity of information in the present and future. It simultaneously cultivates the capacity to address multifaceted life challenges. According to Yuhasnir et al. (2022), effective educators are those who consistently explore innovative teaching strategies and employ diverse learning media to achieve optimal educational outcomes. This ensures students master the required competencies. The need for innovative approaches is particularly pronounced in subjects like Civics, where the content is inherently abstract, contextual, and deeply intertwined with the social and cultural fabric of society. However, current classroom practices remain largely confined to traditional approaches such as rote memorization and linear note-taking. These methods fail to foster deep learning, critical engagement, and practical application, leaving students ill-equipped to address real-world societal challenges rooted in Civics concepts.

The Gap in Literacy Conceptualization and Pedagogical Practices. The conceptualization and application of literacy within educational frameworks reveal critical limitations that have yet to be effectively addressed. Budiyo et al (2023) define literacy narrowly as the acquisition of information through reading and writing activities. While foundational, this perspective fails to address literacy's evolving role in cultivating higher-order cognitive abilities necessary for 21st-century learning. By contrast, Ade Zaenudin (2022) broadens the definition to include speaking and listening, emphasizing their integral role in literacy. Furthermore, Rizqiyah et al (2022) argue that literacy must transcend basic technical skills, serving as a foundation for fostering critical and creative thinking. They identify reading, writing, and reflective thinking as the triad of activities necessary for interpreting and synthesizing complex material.

These varying definitions underscore a significant gap in how literacy is understood and operationalized, particularly in education systems that aim to prepare students for a rapidly changing, interconnected world. This gap is especially evident in the context of Civics education, where traditional methods fail to align with broader literacy frameworks. Consequently, students struggle to engage with the subject's inherently complex and contextual content, diminishing their ability to critically analyze, internalize, and apply these concepts to their everyday lives.

Mind Mapping as a State-of-the-Art Pedagogical Innovation. To address this gap, mind mapping has emerged as a pedagogical approach with significant potential. Developed in the 1970s by Tony Buzan, mind mapping is a graphical technique that leverages both hemispheres of the brain, enabling learners to organize, visualize, and synthesize information more effectively (Simanjuntak et al., 2022). Unlike traditional note-taking, which often leads to cognitive overload and inefficient retention, mind mapping

facilitates memory recall, idea generation, and conceptual clarity through visual elements, symbols, and color-coded structures (Diana Putri et al., 2023).

This innovative method aligns particularly well with the requirements of Civics education, where topics like "harmony in diversity" demand not only factual understanding but also the ability to critically evaluate diverse perspectives and appreciate the interplay of sociocultural dynamics. Mind mapping provides students with a structured yet flexible tool to deconstruct complex material into manageable components, enabling deeper engagement and improved comprehension.

Relevance in the Indonesian Context. Indonesia, with its extraordinary cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, serves as a compelling backdrop for this research. The nation's strength lies in its ability to maintain unity amidst diversity. However, this diversity also poses challenges, particularly the potential for social discord if not managed effectively. Yu (2022) highlights that Indonesia's harmony is reflected in mutual respect, non-discriminatory practices, and collaborative efforts among its citizens. Yet, sustaining this harmony requires ongoing efforts to foster multicultural understanding, tolerance, and respect, especially among the younger generation.

Civics education plays a pivotal role in this endeavor, as it serves as a platform for students to develop an awareness and appreciation of Indonesia's multicultural identity. However, traditional instructional approaches often fail to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Consequently, students may understand the importance of unity in diversity in abstract terms but struggle to apply these principles in their everyday interactions.

Study Contribution and Novelty. This study addresses a critical gap by investigating how mind mapping can transform Civics education and enhance student literacy in a way that integrates foundational skills with higher-order cognitive abilities. Existing research has largely focused on mind mapping's utility in improving basic literacy skills, such as reading and writing. However, this study expands the scope to include its impact on critical and creative thinking, specifically in the context of understanding complex social concepts like "harmony in diversity."

The focus on ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri Satu Atap Tambun Utara adds a layer of contextual specificity, providing insights into how mind mapping can be adapted to address the unique challenges of Civics education in Indonesia. By employing a qualitative research approach, the study examines not only the practical application of mind mapping but also its transformative potential in fostering deeper, more meaningful engagement with Civics content.

This research makes a novel contribution by bridging theoretical frameworks of literacy with practical pedagogical innovation. It underscores the importance of integrating visual and creative methodologies in Civics education to enhance students' ability to internalize, contextualize, and apply complex concepts. The findings aim to establish mind mapping as a state-of-the-art tool for advancing literacy and critical engagement in Civics, offering a replicable model for educational innovation in diverse sociocultural settings.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, specifically utilizing the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, as outlined by Kemmis and McTaggart. The research is implemented across three cycles, each of which comprises four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Utami et al., 2022). The central aim of this study is to improve student literacy in Civics, particularly focusing on the topic of "harmony in Indonesian diversity," through the application of the mind mapping technique.

The study was conducted with ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri Satu Atap Tambun Utara during the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. A total of 28 students participated as research subjects. The intervention focused on enhancing students' literacy in Civics by incorporating the mind mapping method, which encourages deeper

engagement, critical thinking, and creativity. The research took place from February to April 2024.

Data collection was multi-faceted, comprising tests, observations, interviews, documentation, and field notes. Pre- and post-intervention tests were used to evaluate students' comprehension of Civics material. Observations and interviews provided insight into the classroom dynamics, students' interaction with the mind mapping technique, and their overall learning experiences. Field notes and documentation further contributed to understanding the implementation process, capturing both successes and challenges throughout the study.

By employing this comprehensive approach, the study aims to assess the effectiveness of mind mapping in fostering improved literacy skills, with a focus on Civics education and the topic of harmony in Indonesian diversity.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted using a systematic approach based on the Classroom Action Research (CAR) model by Kemmis and McTaggart, comprising three distinct cycles. Each cycle followed a structured process, which included four key stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Utami et al., 2022). These stages were implemented to ensure continuous improvement in the literacy skills of the students, particularly in understanding the complex and abstract concepts related to Civics, such as the topic of "harmony in Indonesian diversity." The data collected during each cycle were analyzed and summarized in the table below, providing a comprehensive overview of the students' literacy development throughout the study.

Table 1: Recapitulation of Pre-Cycle and Cycle I-III Literacy Assessment Results

Criteria	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
Total Score	1870	2000	2170	2350
Average Score	66.78	71.43	77.50	83.93
Number of Students Completing	8	10	16	26
Number of Students Not Completing	20	18	12	2

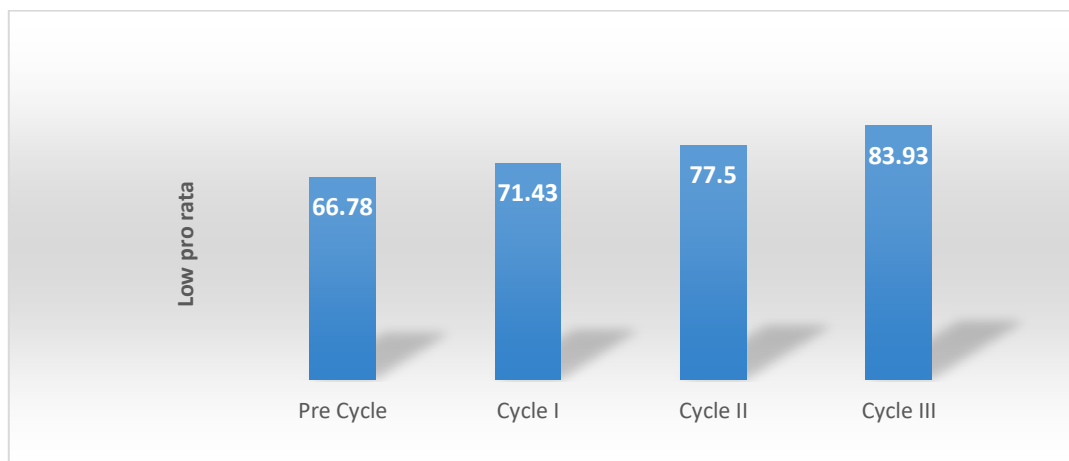


Figure 1: Recapitulation of Literacy Assessment Results for Pre-Cycle and Cycles I-III

As demonstrated in the table and figure above, there was a marked improvement in the literacy assessments throughout the research cycles. The average score in the pre-cycle was 66.78, with only 28.57% of students meeting the completion criteria. This initial data reflects the baseline level of literacy in Civics, prior to the intervention. The introduction of

the mind mapping technique in Cycle I resulted in an increase in the average score to 71.43, with 35.71% of students completing the assessment. This early improvement suggests that even a preliminary exposure to the method began to have a positive impact on student engagement and understanding.

The progression continued in Cycle II, where the average score reached 77.5, with 57.14% of students meeting the completion criteria. This represents a significant leap in both the number of students achieving the expected literacy level and their ability to engage critically and creatively with the material. The marked improvement in Cycle II highlights the cumulative effect of repeated exposure to the mind mapping method, allowing students to refine their skills and deepen their understanding of Civics concepts, especially regarding the intricate issue of Indonesian diversity.

By the final cycle, Cycle III, the results were even more compelling. The average score rose to an impressive 83.93, with a remarkable 92.86% of students completing the assessment successfully. This dramatic increase in literacy performance suggests that the mind mapping method, when applied consistently and effectively, has the potential to significantly enhance students' ability to comprehend and engage with complex subjects. The final cycle's results not only reflect a high level of individual student achievement but also indicate the overall success of the intervention in transforming the classroom learning experience.

The findings from this research strongly affirm the effectiveness of the mind mapping method in enhancing literacy in Civics education. The increasing average scores, along with the growing number of students who successfully completed the assessments in each cycle, underscore the method's ability to foster critical thinking, creative engagement, and deeper understanding of abstract concepts such as "harmony in diversity." These improvements highlight the method's potential as a transformative tool in education, particularly for topics that require students to integrate and apply knowledge from diverse perspectives. The significant progress observed in this study demonstrates that mind mapping is not just a technique for improving literacy but also a strategy for encouraging active, reflective learning that empowers students to connect and contextualize their learning in meaningful ways.

4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides compelling empirical evidence that the use of mind mapping significantly enhances student literacy in Civics, particularly in helping students understand and appreciate the complexity of Indonesia's diverse cultures, beliefs, and traditions. The findings suggest that when mind mapping is incorporated into classroom instruction, it not only improves students' ability to engage with challenging social issues but also cultivates critical thinking skills. These skills allow students to analyze, interpret, and reflect on these issues with greater depth and insight. Through this approach, students are able to process and apply knowledge more effectively, which contributes to their overall literacy development.

The results of this study underscore the critical role mind mapping plays in promoting a deeper understanding of Civics content. The research findings demonstrate that the method successfully enables students to access and retrieve information from the material on Indonesian diversity, thereby fostering a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Students were not only able to develop broad interpretations of the material but also engage with it on a deeper level, reflecting on and evaluating its relevance to their lives. This enhanced interaction with the material was key in improving their literacy skills, as it encouraged them to synthesize complex concepts and connect theoretical content with real-world contexts.

Moreover, the study illustrates that mind mapping facilitated a reflective learning process, where students were encouraged to evaluate the content critically. This reflective practice played a crucial role in increasing literacy, as it helped students internalize and

apply the learned concepts. By organizing information visually, students could engage in a more active learning process, making abstract and contextual topics, such as the harmony of Indonesian diversity, more accessible and personally relevant.

The significant improvement in students' academic scores further highlights the effectiveness of the mind mapping method in enhancing literacy. The data reveals that, by the final cycle, students achieved scores above the Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) value of 75, demonstrating that the method not only facilitated understanding but also led to measurable academic success. The improvement in literacy levels is a clear indicator that mind mapping helps students not only grasp fundamental concepts but also think critically and reflectively, contributing to their overall educational achievement.

In summary, the integration of mind mapping in Civics education has proven to be an effective tool for enhancing student literacy. It fosters deeper understanding, critical thinking, and engagement with complex societal issues, making it an invaluable pedagogical strategy. This study highlights the importance of incorporating innovative teaching methods, such as mind mapping, to enhance literacy skills and equip students with the ability to navigate the complexities of the world around them. By embracing such approaches, educators can prepare students to become informed, thoughtful, and responsible citizens capable of addressing the diverse challenges of contemporary society.

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