

THE NECESSITY ANALYSIS OF MAJALENGKA WISDOM-BASED TEACHING MATERIALS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

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Abstract

Critical thinking represents a core skill that students must master to face the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era. Teachers foster this skill by developing teaching materials rooted in local wisdom. Learning resources that combine visual elements with cultural values create more meaningful learning experiences. This study investigated the need for Majalengka-based teaching materials to enhance students' critical thinking. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the researchers conducted interviews and observations with eight teachers and fifth- and sixth-grade students from two elementary schools. The results show an urgent need to design teaching materials grounded in Majalengka local wisdom, since current resources remain generic and do not explicitly target critical thinking or cultural identity. Students require varied and innovative materials that can motivate learning while embedding local values. Incorporating Majalengka wisdom into instructional content strengthens both critical thinking and cultural identity. Future researchers should develop illustrated storytelling materials based on Majalengka local wisdom to advance critical thinking among elementary students.

keywords: Needs analysis; Teaching materials; Picture stories

Abstrak

Berpikir kritis merupakan keterampilan inti yang harus dikuasai siswa untuk menghadapi tantangan era Revolusi Industri 4.0. Guru menumbuhkan keterampilan ini dengan mengembangkan bahan ajar yang berakar pada kearifan lokal. Sumber belajar yang memadukan elemen visual dengan nilai budaya menciptakan pengalaman belajar yang lebih bermakna. Penelitian ini mengkaji kebutuhan bahan ajar berbasis kearifan lokal Majalengka untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berpikir kritis siswa. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, peneliti melakukan wawancara dan observasi terhadap delapan guru serta siswa kelas V dan VI dari dua sekolah dasar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya kebutuhan mendesak untuk merancang bahan ajar berbasis kearifan lokal Majalengka, karena sumber belajar yang ada masih bersifat umum dan belum secara khusus menargetkan pengembangan berpikir kritis maupun identitas budaya. Siswa memerlukan bahan ajar yang lebih bervariasi dan inovatif untuk memotivasi belajar sekaligus menanamkan nilai-nilai lokal. Integrasi kearifan lokal Majalengka dalam konten pembelajaran memperkuat kemampuan berpikir kritis sekaligus identitas budaya siswa. Peneliti selanjutnya diharapkan dapat mengembangkan bahan ajar berupa cerita bergambar berbasis kearifan lokal Majalengka untuk meningkatkan berpikir kritis siswa sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci: Analisis kebutuhan; Bahan ajar; Cerita bergambar

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Introduction

The 21st century encourages everyone, including elementary school students, to follow with the science and technological advancement. The demanded skills of the century include cognition, performance method, performance technology, and skill to cope with the world (P and E. 2015). Heretofore, critical thinking has developed into comprehensive educational innovation that prepares the important skills for 21st century (Manassero-Mas, Moreno-Salvo,

and Vázquez-Alonso 2022). These matters suggest students must master the skills, such as critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking is an intellectual ability that involves the process of reasoning, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating information scientifically and wisely. Its primary goal is to understand phenomena from multiple perspectives and make informed and effective decisions (Akpur 2020; Manurung et al. 2023; Rahmawati, Pujiastuti, and Cahyaningtyas 2023). Based on these understandings, critical thinking plays a vital role in education because it teaches students how to develop attitudes, acquire knowledge, integrate it, and solve problems. The goal is to enable students to compete globally and meet the demands of the times (Hasnan, Rusdinal, and Fitria 2020). In addition, critical thinking equips students to prepare for challenges in problem-solving and information filtering (Jamaludin and Rachmatullah 2017).

Because of its importance, educators can teach critical thinking directly through social studies learning, as social studies closely relates to critical thinking skills. The purpose of social studies is to foster curiosity, inquiry skills, and the ability to solve problems in everyday social life (Rahmawati, Maryani, and Mulyana 2016). In line with this, critical thinking enables students to solve problems rationally, which aligns with the nature of social studies that presents real-life issues (Rahayu, Nuryani, and Hermawan 2019).

However, PISA 2022 results revealed that more than 99% of Indonesian students could only answer Level 1–3 questions (lower-order thinking skills), while fewer than 1% answered Level 4–6 questions (higher-order thinking skills) (OECD, 2023). Field observations confirmed this condition: during lessons, students still struggled to express their opinions, most required teacher guidance, and not all participated actively as teachers continue to dominate the learning process. Lessons often became monotonous, and students frequently lost focus. When given Level 4–6 evaluation questions, students remained confused because teachers often provided only low-level tasks. These conditions indicated low critical thinking skills, such as the inability to evaluate decisions, explain the benefits of information, and the reasons for making decisions, or find solutions to problems (Restiaji 2021). This situation results from limited attention to critical thinking (Syafitri, Armanto, and Rahmadani 2021) and the use of inappropriate teaching materials and media that reduce learning quality (Maghribi and Ismaya 2024).

Teachers can introduce critical thinking and social studies content to students via teaching materials. Teaching materials are a collection of content that teachers organize in a specific sequence and provide to students in digital or printed form (Jamaluddin et al. 2020). One form of teaching material is a picture storybook. Illustrated teaching materials serve as supplementary resources that expand and enrich content so students can gain broader knowledge (Sari and Yustiana 2021). Teaching materials relevant to the student's environment can improve learning outcomes; when aligned with students' characteristics, such materials motivate them to learn (Rosilia, Yuniawatika, and Murdiyah 2020).

Teachers can develop teaching materials according to their needs and creativity (Gustiawati, Arief, and Zikri 2020; Rosilia et al. 2020). This aligns with the view that both teachers and students must play active roles during learning to maximize outcomes (Maghribi, Fajrie, and W Surachmi 2023). Teachers can create teaching materials that incorporate local wisdom. By utilizing local wisdom, students can reflect positive values and counter the negative impacts of scientific and technological advances (Vioreza et al. 2022). Preserving local wisdom is essential to maintaining cultural values and national morality, and one way to instill it is by integrating it into education (Budiarta 2023).

The local wisdom to be integrated is the local wisdom of Majalengka. Integration of Majalengka's local wisdom is crucial because, based on the analysis of the independent curriculum's science and science teaching materials, the discussion of chapter 5, "The Story of My Region," only covers it in general terms. Available teaching materials do not specifically address the local wisdom of the Majalengka region. This aligns with the statement that integration is a viable effort to address cultural loss among the younger generation while simultaneously preserving local wisdom so that students develop a love for their own culture (Asteka, Suwandi, and Slamet 2020). This is further supported by another argument that education that introduces local wisdom not only increases student motivation and engagement in learning but also strengthens cultural diversity and local identity (Andini and Sirozi 2024).

This study draws on three key theoretical perspectives to guide the development of Majalengka local wisdom-based picture storybooks aimed at enhancing elementary students' critical thinking skills. First, Ennis' (2011) Critical Thinking Theory frames critical thinking as "reasonable, reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do." The designed picture storybooks incorporate Ennis's dispositions, such as seeking clarity, being well-informed, and considering alternatives, to help students cultivate systematic and reflective reasoning. Second, Constructivist Learning Theory, as advanced by Piaget and Vygotsky cited by Chand (2024), views learning as an active process in which students build understanding through interaction with meaningful experiences. Embedding Majalengka local wisdom in the storybooks enables learners to connect new knowledge with prior experiences, fostering deeper engagement and retention. Third, Culturally Responsive Teaching, guided by Gay's (2010) framework, emphasizes the value of integrating cultural elements to make learning relevant and inclusive. By incorporating Majalengka's cultural narratives, the teaching materials not only preserve local values but also affirm students' cultural identities, creating a learning environment that supports both critical thinking and cultural appreciation.

Previous studies on critical thinking, teaching materials, and local wisdom used various methods. The findings revealed that picture storybooks based on Indramayu local wisdom could enhance students' ecoliteracy (Yonanda, Supriatna, K. A. Hakam, et al. 2022). Another study reveals that local wisdom-based teaching materials presented through objects, events, and problems relevant to children's lives make learning more meaningful and richer in values and lessons to daily (Vioeza et al. 2022). In addition, problem-based picture storybooks have proven effective in improving the critical thinking skills of fifth-grade elementary students (Susilowati, Setyadi, and Haenilah 2022).

Referring to previous research that has reviewed teaching materials in other regions, but there is still no study that develops and analyzes the needs of teaching materials for picture stories based on Majalengka local wisdom to support critical thinking of elementary school students. Based on the above explanation, the study aims to analyze the need for developing teaching materials for picture stories based on Majalengka local wisdom to improve critical thinking of elementary school students.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to identify and describe the needs for Majalengka local wisdom-based picture storybooks to improve students' critical thinking. The subjects in this study were eight elementary school teachers, five fifth-grade students, and five sixth-grade students, that had studied the topic *Cerita Daerahku* ("Stories from My Region"). The researchers selected data sources through purposive sampling, targeting schools that applied the 2013 Curriculum and had taught *Cerita Daerahku*.

The researchers used interviews and observations to collect data. They conducted in-depth interviews to obtain more comprehensive information (Sugiyono 2019). The main questions asked were 10. If any statements needed further clarification from the informant, the researcher asked further questions to obtain more detailed information. Observations were conducted over a two-week period, with a total of four meetings to observe the learning process. Data validity techniques used triangulation of sources and methods. Then, the data were analyzed through several stages: data reduction, data collection, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. These were described in detail to obtain conclusions about the teaching materials needed by elementary school students (Sugiyono 2019).

The first analysis process is data reduction. Data reduction is carried out by sorting, selecting, and simplifying information relevant to the research, namely the analysis of the needs of picture story teaching materials based on Majalengka local wisdom to foster critical thinking in elementary school students. Raw data from interviews with eight teachers, five fifth-grade students, and five sixth-grade students were then transcribed and analyzed to identify key themes. Irrelevant or repetitive statements were eliminated. Meanwhile, important statements were grouped by category and presented in this article as the results of the research. After the data was collected, conclusions were drawn.

Results and Discussion

Results

The analysis of needs for Majalengka local wisdom-based picture storybooks to enhance elementary students' critical thinking relied on observations and interviews. The researchers observed fifth- and sixth-grade classes in two elementary schools that had studied Cerita Daerahku. They also interviewed eight teachers and selected representatives from fifth- and sixth-grade students. The following presents the interview and observation guideline framework used in the study:

Table 1. Interview and observation guideline

Components	Indicators	Example Questions
Teaching materials	Teaching material provisions at school	a. Does the school provide teaching materials for the learning process? b. What types of teaching materials are available at the school?
	Utilizing the teaching materials	How do you utilize the available teaching materials in your daily learning process?
Picture storybooks Majalengka local wisdom	The applied teaching materials	What type of teaching materials do you usually use for the learning process?
	Local wisdom to teach	a. Do you teach local wisdom in class? b. What local wisdom do you teach?
Critical thinking	Methods of teaching the local wisdom	How do you teach local wisdom?
	Learning to support critical thinking skills	In your opinion, what kind of learning can improve critical thinking skills?
	Assessing critical thinking skills	a. What types of questions do you use to assess critical thinking skills? b. What indicators are used to assess critical thinking skills?

Referring to the indicators in Table 1, the researchers asked teachers and students ten types of questions. They conducted the interviews face-to-face using open-ended questions to obtain deeper responses for each question, enabling them to gather detailed answers.

Observation and interview results for the indicator of teaching material availability in schools indicated that both schools already have teaching materials provided by the government. During the learning process, teachers used these materials as teaching guides, and students also relied on them. Learning proceeded smoothly, and teachers delivered the material effectively. The interviews confirmed this finding: both teachers and students stated that the schools have government-provided printed teaching materials for teachers and students. In accordance with Mrs. A's statement, "The teaching materials are at school, like the ones we use every day. The ones we receive from the government." This was reinforced by the results of an interview with Student B, who stated that "the books we use are special textbooks for students."

Some teachers reported supplementing these resources with materials from other sources, such as the internet or modules. Before using them, teachers usually selected and reviewed the content. They maximized the use of teaching materials to expand students' knowledge. When the materials were available in sufficient quantity, each student received an individual copy; if the materials were limited, teachers distributed them by group. According to an interview with Mrs. B, "I first check whether the teaching materials, both the teacher's book and the student's book, are complete or not. If not, I look for them again on the internet or in library books." In line with the interview with a fifth-grade student, RA stated, "The teacher likes to teach using the teacher's book, we use the student's book. Sometimes the teacher also distributes paper containing materials or other books."

For the next indicator—types of teaching materials used in learning—observations revealed two main types: the teacher's book and the student's book. These books served as the primary resources; the teacher's book contained teaching guidance, while the student's book contained the learning content. The interviews supported this finding, showing that the teaching materials currently in use are government-provided printed resources. However, the schools did not yet have picture storybook-type materials. Teachers explained that the current teaching materials did not include full picture stories, containing instead only short conversation excerpts, main subject matter, practice questions, and some student activities. According to a statement during an interview with Mrs. A, "the type of teaching materials commonly used are government-provided teacher and student teaching materials." Mrs. C added, "They are not in the form of illustrated stories, only a few conversations as an introduction to the initial material, the main material, practice questions consisting of 5 questions, and student activities. There are pictures, but only a few parts."

For the third indicator—Majalengka local wisdom—observations indicated that neither the teacher's book nor the student's book included specific content on Majalengka local wisdom. The *Cerita Daerahku* (Stories from My Region) section provided only general explanations. Although the books mentioned the students' home region, teachers had not explained Majalengka local wisdom in detail. The limited availability of materials on this topic hindered teachers to introduce it to students, and students knew little about their own local wisdom. Interviews with teachers indicated that they had introduced Majalengka local wisdom to students, but not in detail or as a dedicated topic. For example, when teaching the history of Majalengka, they explained only that the name came from the rare maja fruit, without providing further details. Students confirmed that they had not received specific lessons on Majalengka's local wisdom; instead, teachers integrated limited content on

Majalengka into other subjects. According to an interview with Mrs. A, "there are no books specifically discussing local wisdom used in this school. Even if we teach local wisdom, we only include it in certain subjects." This is reinforced by the results of interviews with students who stated that "I don't know what Majalengka's local wisdom is."

For the fourth indicator—critical thinking—observations in both schools showed that learning activities had not yet supported the development of critical thinking skills. Teachers implemented discussion methods, but students still required guidance. Not all students participated actively, and teachers continued to dominate the learning process. Interviews revealed that cooperative learning was the model most frequently used, with students expected to discuss in groups. However, in practice, not all students could engage in discussions or express their opinions, and they still needed teacher assistance. Such learning activities, therefore, did not fully foster students' critical thinking. According to Mrs. C, "the learning process usually involves discussions, questions and answers, and presentations where students present their findings." Another teacher added that "I still have difficulty applying other learning models; the easiest is discussions, which can then be discussed together."

In addition, teacher assessments had not aligned with critical thinking indicators. The questions given to students still targeted lower cognitive levels: C1 (remembering), C2 (understanding), and up to C3 (applying). Interviews confirmed this, indicating that the assessment process had not fully focused on critical thinking indicators. Teachers provided questions according to the teacher's and students' books. The teacher also gave questions according to the teacher's textbook and the student's textbook provided. According to Mrs. D, "the questions given are usually multiple-choice and essay. There are 25 multiple-choice questions, and 5 essay questions." Mrs. E added that "the indicators used are descriptive and explainable."

Discussion

Based on these findings, the researchers concluded that Majalengka local wisdom-based teaching materials are needed to foster students' critical thinking. Teachers should design teaching materials that connect with local wisdom to make learning more meaningful. This aligns with the view that integrating local wisdom into lessons can engage students emotionally and intellectually, resulting in more contextual and meaningful learning (Anggraini, Nazip, and Andriani 2021). Students would also develop a greater interest in the culture of their surroundings (Didik Prawira Putra, Manu Okta Priantini, and Astra Winaya 2021) and, ultimately, preserve their culture (Chandra 2020; Yonanda, Supriatna, Kama Abdul Hakam, et al. 2022).

The teaching materials will take the form of picture storybooks, providing illustrations that help students understand the material more easily (Gusti Dewi, Jampel, and Parmiti 2022). These materials will serve as supplementary resources, supporting rather than replacing the main textbooks, and reinforcing students' understanding of the content taught in the main books (Rosilia et al. 2020).

To create effective teaching materials, the first step is to determine the competencies students should achieve (Susilowati et al. 2022). The current target competency is students' critical thinking. Teachers can improve critical thinking through student-centered learning and problem-solving approaches (Febliza, Afdal, and Copriady 2023). Critical thinking is essential because it enables students to analyze and evaluate information, integrate various viewpoints, and draw accurate conclusions (Hanggara, Qohar, and Sukoriyanto 2024). One

benefit of critical thinking is that it supports human growth and development, as it encourages creativity and innovation (Susongko et al. 2024).

Findings from this research reaffirm the theoretical premise that embedding local wisdom in learning materials enriches students' educational experiences. Aligning with Anggraini, Nazip, and Andriani's (2021) assertion, integrating local cultural content makes learning more meaningful by engaging students both emotionally and intellectually. This approach also sparks greater interest in local heritage (Didik Prawira Putra, Manu Okta Priantini, and Astra Winaya 2021) and contributes to cultural preservation (Chandra 2020; Yonanda et al. 2022). The use of picture storybooks, supported by illustrations, facilitates comprehension (Gusti Dewi, Jampel, and Parmiti 2022) while serving as a supplementary resource that reinforces, rather than replaces, the main curriculum (Rosilia et al. 2020). To ensure effectiveness, teachers should first define the target competencies (Susilowati et al. 2022), in this case, critical thinking—a skill vital for analyzing information, integrating diverse perspectives, and drawing sound conclusions (Hanggara, Qohar, and Sukoriyanto 2024). Nevertheless, some researchers caution that the impact of such interventions on critical thinking may be overstated without long-term longitudinal studies to verify sustained improvements (Shaw, MacIsaac, and Singleton-Jackson 2019). Beyond academic benefits, critical thinking fosters creativity and innovation, contributing to personal growth and societal advancement (Susongko et al. 2024), yet it remains essential to balance localized content with broader knowledge frameworks to ensure well-rounded cognitive development.

Furthermore, previous research has shown that analyzing the needs of teachers and students is also important, thus serving as a model for developing teaching materials in Majalengka to enhance critical and creative thinking (Fitriani, Hidayat, and Genisa 2024). The results of the second study also support the idea that teaching materials utilizing local potential can improve critical thinking skills and environmental awareness. This aligns with the development plan to enhance critical thinking and utilize locally-based teaching materials that can be adopted in Majalengka (Rahmi, Nurhidayati, and Samsuri 2023). Other research also indicates a methodological link, indicating that locally-based teaching materials can aid understanding and stimulate critical thinking (Astuti, Syarifuddin, and Vianty 2024).

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the study concludes that both teachers and students need more varied and innovative teaching materials. Although many teaching materials are available in various formats in the field, Majalengka local wisdom-based picture storybooks remain rare, especially those designed to enhance students' critical thinking skills. Providing teaching materials as picture storybooks that specifically address Majalengka local wisdom is expected to provide more meaningful value. Therefore, the study recommends that teachers and future researchers develop Majalengka local wisdom-based picture storybooks to support the improvement of elementary students' critical thinking skills. Furthermore, a trial of developing teaching materials based on Majalengka local wisdom and measuring their impact on students' critical thinking skills can be conducted. This is important given the limitations of this study, which did not directly cover the development and testing stages of the teaching materials, nor did it empirically measure the impact of the teaching materials on students' critical thinking skills. Therefore, further research is expected to address these shortcomings.

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