International Journal of Education and Literature

E- ISSN: 2829-6249
P- ISSN: 2829-6656

The Effect of Using the SQ3R Method Assisted by Digital Story Texts on Improving Critical Thinking Skills in the 'World Window Book' Material for Grade V Students of SD Negeri 104202 Bandar Setia

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Abstract. This study aims to examine the effect of using the Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R) method assisted by digital story texts on students' critical thinking skills in the material "Book of the Window World" of grade V of SD Negeri 104202 Bandar Setia. The background of this study is based on the low critical thinking skills of students due to the dominance of conventional methods that are less varied and minimal use of learning media, especially in Indonesian subjects. This study uses a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method and a Nonrandomized Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design. The research subjects consisted of class VA (experimental, n = 22) who received learning with the SQ3R method assisted by digital story texts, and class VB (control, n = 23) who received conventional learning. The pretest results showed that students' initial critical thinking skills were in the moderate category (experimental $\bar{x}$ = 67.23; control $\bar{x}$ = 51.96). After the treatment, the experimental class' posttest average increased significantly to 82.41, or 15.18 points, while the control class did not experience any significant improvement. A t-test demonstrated a significant difference between the two groups (t count > t table). The study's conclusions indicate that the SQ3R method, aided by digital narrative texts, significantly improved students' critical thinking skills compared to conventional methods.

Keywords: Critical Thinking; Digital Narrative Texts; Elementary Students; Quasi-experimental Design; SQ3R Method.

1. Introduction

The development of adaptive, superior, and highly competitive Human Resources (HR) is a top priority for the Indonesian government, especially in achieving the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045 in the future. The quality of the nation's next generation is largely determined by the function of education as an essential foundation amidst the complexity of today's global challenges. The rapid advancement of technology and information has forced the world of education to adjust learning methodologies in order to produce graduates who are ready to adapt. In this scheme, education plays a strategically important role in shaping complete individuals, namely by mastering knowledge, skills, and character that are in accordance with the dynamics of the times. This noble goal of education is in line with the opinion of Luh, *et al.,* (2023) who stated that education focuses on optimizing the full potential of students. The legal basis regarding the emphasis on the formation of intelligent, noble-minded individuals and mastery of life skills is also reinforced by the provisions of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Hidayaturrohmah , *et al* ., 2024).

In the modern era (21st century), the need for logical reasoning competence (Critical Thinking) has been established as crucial and a top priority in efforts to develop Human Resources (HR). By mastering this ability, individuals are trained to analyze data neutrally, evaluate arguments, and make decisions based on sound logic and reasoning. In elementary education, the development of critical thinking needs to begin early so that it becomes part of students' thinking habits. One approach to optimizing critical thinking skills is through learning Indonesian. This subject intrinsically encompasses four language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing, which naturally involve higher-order thinking processes, including the activities of analyzing, concluding, and conveying ideas (Salsabila *et al* ., 2023). Therefore, the main goal of learning Indonesian is not only directed

Received: September 15, 2025
Revised: September 30, 2025
Accepted: October 28, 2025
Online Available: October 30, 2025
Curr. Ver.: October 30, 2025

at improving one's linguistic abilities, but also at instilling the habit of critical and reflective thinking (Fithriyah *et al.,* 2024).

Despite the emphasis on critical thinking skills, observations conducted by researchers during the Indonesian language learning process in fifth graders indicate a different reality. In the field, students' critical thinking skills are indicated to be still at a low level. More specifically, in fifth grade at SD Negeri 104202 Bandar Setia, Percut Sei Tuan District, it was found that the majority of students face significant challenges in processing and deeply understanding the content of the texts they read. Identified symptoms include: lack of teacher variation in teaching, low courage to express opinions, difficulty in identifying character motivations, lack of ability to summarize implicit information in the text, and a tendency to answer questions by rote without first conducting analysis. In addition, students are also unable to recognize important elements in narrative texts such as characters, settings, and plots in their entirety and are unable to find the main idea critically. The impact of this situation is a decline in student learning outcomes, particularly seen in the aspect of reading comprehension.

One contributing factor to low critical thinking skills is students' lack of interest and enthusiasm for fictional narrative texts. Consequently, they face significant obstacles in analyzing and understanding the intrinsic elements contained in the reading material. This occurs because the media and learning resources used are still limited to thematic books and a few supporting books. The limited use of thematic books and the lack of relevant learning media result in a suboptimal teaching and learning process, making it difficult to achieve the set learning targets. Due to the limited use of digital-based learning media, the learning style used tends to be conventional and traditional. The learning process still focuses on lectures and passive reading assignments without being accompanied by learning strategies that can stimulate active thinking and cognitive interaction in students. In this process, the teacher tends to be the center of information, while students play a passive role as recipients of information. However, developing critical thinking skills requires active interaction, information processing, and space to practice asking and answering questions reflectively.

To address these issues, a learning model is needed that specifically facilitates students' active involvement in the process of reading, thinking, and evaluating information. The SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) model has proven to be a highly effective strategy in developing critical thinking skills while improving students' reading comprehension. The model's effectiveness lies in its five systematic stages, which guide students through initial exploration of the text (Survey), formulation of questions (Question), active reading (Read), repetition of information (Recite), and subsequent review (Review) (Himawan *et al.,* 2021). Previous research has shown that SQ3R can improve comprehension retention and support the development of critical thinking skills (Maryono & Pamela, 2022). However, most applications of this model are still limited to non-fiction or informative texts.

This research offers novelty through the social integration of SQ3R with "Digital Story Text" as a learning medium. Digital story text is considered more contextual and interesting for elementary school students because it presents a narrative that is easy to understand and has emotional closeness and is rich in visual, audio, and interactive elements, it is expected to be a learning medium that is relevant to the characteristics of the "Digital Generation". The use of digital story text also provides ample space for students to analyze characters, conflicts, moral messages, and relationships between events, which directly trains critical thinking aspects (Anggarawati *et al* ., 2023). By combining questioning strategies, active reading, and reviewing the contents of the reading literally, but also being able to evaluate and reflect on more essential meanings.

Based on the problems identified in the background, the main focus of this study is to examine the extent to which the application of the SQ3R model supported by digital story texts influences the critical thinking skills of fifth-grade students at SD Negeri 104202 Bandar Setia, particularly on the Jendela Dunia Book material. Practically, the results of this study are expected to provide a real contribution in formulating a more contextual and participatory Indonesian language teaching strategy. Thus, this study contributes directly to improving the quality of students' critical thinking skills.

2. Theoretical Study

SQ3R Learning Method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review)

The SQ3R method is defined as a systematic and proactive reading strategy designed to facilitate in-depth understanding of the material while encouraging active student engagement (*Sinta* Dwi Rahayu *et al.,* 2023). This method has a fundamental goal of strengthening the reader's absorption of text material through five interrelated sequential stages: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. Each stage serves to train specific cognitive skills; for example, the Question stage trains analytical thinking and Recite trains the ability to construct arguments and self-evaluation (Maryono & Pamela, 2022). This method has proven to have strategic advantages because it explicitly encourages independent learning and helps students organize information in a more structured way (Himawan *et al.,* 2021). The link between SQ3R and the development of critical thinking lies in the demands of each stage that students do not only read passively, but also actively consider, analyze, and practice reflection on the information comprehensively.

Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking skills are defined as systematic, reflective, reasoned, and goal-oriented cognitive efforts (Halpern & Dunn, 2021). This process encompasses a complex set of competencies: interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating data or arguments objectively and rationally (Linda Elder and Richard Paul, 2020). In this context, the main indicators of critical thinking adopted from Facione (2020) include six essential components: Interpretation, Analysis, Evaluation, Inference, Explanation, and Self-Regulation. These skills are crucial in Indonesian language learning because they serve as the main foundation for developing in-depth understanding, improving reading comprehension, and preparing students to face the challenges of global disinformation (Nur Nafisatul Fithriyah & Ulawiyah Isma, 2024).

Digital Story Text as a Learning Media

Digital Story Text is a narrative text presented in electronic format, integrating various multimedia elements such as images, audio, and animation. The use of this media is very relevant because it is in accordance with the characteristics of the 21st century "digital generation", which tends to be responsive to visual and interactive content (*Jusman J, et al., 2025*). Digital story text functions essential in Indonesian language learning because it is able to foster voluntary reading interest, stimulate imagination, and encourage the development of social empathy. When combined with the SQ3R method, this digital media functions as a strategic tool to increase focus and facilitate deeper interpretation, thereby indirectly growing and honing students' critical thinking skills.

Relevant Previous Research

A review of previous research strengthens the empirical basis of this study and identifies research gaps to be filled.

a) Mangasi (2021), in his study, demonstrated that the SQ3R method not only impacts text comprehension but also significantly improves elementary school students' reading interest and critical thinking skills. These findings support the hypothesis that SQ3R has a dual effect that goes beyond literal comprehension.
b) Research by Siahaan *et al.* (2022) shows that conventional learning tends to result in students only mastering text content superficially, indicating that conventional learning is less effective in developing HOTS compared to structured methods. This underscores the need for innovative intervention methods such as SQ3R.
c) The ICEHoS (2023) study also confirmed the effectiveness of SQ3R in improving reading comprehension, especially because the method's structured stages, from survey to review, make it easier for students to identify main ideas.

Previous research has confirmed the effectiveness of SQ3R. This study focuses on integrating the SQ3R method with digital narrative text as a new variable, and statistically tests the significant difference in effectiveness between this media-method integration and conventional methods in the specific context of honing fifth-grade students' critical thinking skills.

Research Hypothesis

Based on theoretical review and support from previous research, the research hypothesis is formulated as follows: The application of the SQ3R method assisted by digital story text has a stronger influence in improving the critical thinking skills of fifth grade students of SD Negeri 104202 Bandar Setia compared to the group of students who use conventional learning methods.

3. Research Methods

This study uses a quasi-experimental design with a Non-equivalent Control Group Design pattern. This design was chosen to measure the difference in the effect of treatment (SQ3R method) compared to conventional learning (control) on students' critical thinking skills. The conceptual model used in this study is simple, namely X → Y. The X symbol represents the application of the SQ3R Learning Method assisted by digital story text as the independent variable, and the Y symbol represents students' Critical Thinking Skills as the dependent variable.

The study population was all fifth-grade students of SD Negeri 104202 Bandar Setia. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, dividing the fifth-grade students into an experimental group (receiving SQ3R treatment) and a control group (receiving conventional learning). Data were collected through written assessments in the form of pretests and posttests designed to measure students' critical thinking skills. The test instrument underwent validation and reliability testing, with the test results indicating that the test items were valid and reliable for measuring critical thinking indicators.

Statistical analysis begins with prerequisite tests (normality and homogeneity). Hypothesis testing is performed using the Independent Sample T-Test. Common statistical procedures, such as the t-test formula, are not detailed; instead, relevant references are sufficient. This section contains the research design, including the research design, population/sample, data collection techniques and instruments, data analysis tools, and the research model used. Common methods do not need to be detailed; references to references are sufficient (e.g., F-test formula, t-test, etc.). Validity and reliability testing of the research instrument does not need to be detailed; the test results and their interpretation are sufficient. Symbols in the model are written in sentences.

4. Results And Discussion

Implementation and Data Collection

This research was conducted at SD Negeri 104202 Bandar Setia, Percut Sei Tuan District, in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research subjects consisted of two classes, namely class VA (22 students) as an experimental class using the SQ3R method assisted by digital story texts, and class VB (23 students) as a control class using conventional methods. The implementation of the SQ3R method assisted by digital story texts on students in the experimental class was carried out in stages according to the syntax of the method (*Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review*). This implementation process aims to increase student involvement in learning Indonesian while developing their critical thinking skills.

Table 1. Summary of Mean Pretest and Posttest Scores

Class Group	Average Pretest Score	Average Posttest Score	Gain
Experiment	67.23	82.41	15.18
Control	51.96	66.30	14.34

The pretest results in Table 1 indicate that students' critical thinking skills before the intervention were in the moderate category in both groups. The average pretest score for the experimental class was 67.23, while the control class recorded 51.96, with quite a wide variation in scores. This initial condition aligns with the findings of Siahaan *et al* . (2022), which confirm the assumption that students' initial abilities are not evenly distributed, and some students still have difficulty identifying important information and drawing conclusions.

Data Analysis Results

Prerequisite Analysis Test

The data analysis prerequisite test was conducted to ensure that the research data (posttest scores of both groups) met the assumptions of parametric inferential statistics, namely normality and homogeneity.

a. Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test of the critical thinking ability instrument was conducted on 20 respondents by comparing the calculated r and r table values (r table = 0.444 at $\alpha = 0.05$). As a result, of the 15 items tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, 10 items were successfully declared valid because the students' calculated r values were greater than or equal to 0.444. These valid items were then determined as the main research instrument. After validity, a reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha formula.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Class	Shapiro-Wilk (Sig.)	Conclusion
Experiment	0.702	Normal
Control	0.150	Normal

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.801	15

The calculation results in Table 2 show a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.801. Referring to reliability criteria [your reference, e.g., Sugiharto & Setyaedhi, 2024], this value indicates that the research instrument has high reliability. Thus, the instrument is deemed suitable and consistent for use in data collection.

b. Normality Test

The normality test for posttest scores was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk method (because N<50) with the help of the SPSS version 25 program.

Table 3. Normality Test

Based on Table 3, the significance value of the posttest data for the Control Group is 0.702 and the significance value for the Experimental Group is 0.150. Since both significance values are greater than the critical limit of 0.05 (Sig.>0.05), it is concluded that the learning outcome data for both groups are normally distributed and meet the assumptions for parametric analysis.

c. Homogeneity Test s

The homogeneity of variance test was conducted using Levene's Test on the posttest scores of both groups to ensure uniform data variance.

Table 4. Homogeneity Test

Levene's Statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
3,018	1	44	0.089

The significance value obtained from the Homogeneity Test is 0.089. Because this value exceeds the critical limit of 0.05 (Sig.>0.05), it is concluded that the data variances of both groups are equal (homogeneous). With the normality and homogeneity assumptions met, the analysis can proceed to the hypothesis testing stage using the t-test.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to identify whether there were significant differences in critical thinking skills between the intervention group and the comparison group. Since the data met the assumptions of normality and homogeneity (Prerequisite Test), hypothesis testing was continued using the Independent Sample T-Test at a significance level of 0.05. This study established the following hypotheses:

- Alternative Hypothesis (): There is a significant influence of the application of the SQ3R method assisted by digital story texts on improving the critical thinking skills of fifth grade students.

- Null Hypothesis (): The application of the SQ3R method assisted by digital story texts does not have a significant effect on the critical thinking skills of fifth grade students.

The basis for making this hypothesis decision focuses on the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) obtained from the calculation.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Variance Assumption	t	df	Sig. (2-talled)
Equal variances assumed	-3,550	44	.001

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in Table 5, a significance value of Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.001 was obtained. The significance value of 0.001 is much smaller than the threshold of 0.05 ($p<0.05$). In accordance with statistical rules, this requires the Null Hypothesis (H0) to be rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis (Ha) to be accepted.

Discussion

Students' Critical Thinking Skills Before Implementing the SQ3R Method

Pretest data analysis captured the initial state of students' critical thinking skills in both groups. The range of scores in the experimental class was 45 to 93 with an initial mean of 67.23 (Standard Deviation = 13.83), while the control class had an average of 51.96 (Standard Deviation = 17.38) with a wider range of scores (10 to 90). In general, students' initial critical thinking skills were categorized as moderate. The large variation in scores across both groups, especially in the control class, reflects significant heterogeneity. Most students still showed difficulty in identifying important information, drawing conclusions, or providing logical reasoning from the texts they read.

This initial condition indicates that without a systematic learning approach, students' critical thinking development tends to be uneven. This finding is supported by a similar condition revealed in the study of Siahaan, *et al.,* (2022) [Include Siahaan's full reference in the Bibliography], which states that conventional learning often causes students to prioritize only superficial mastery of text content, without adequate guidance for developing higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Therefore, the pretest scores that are still in the moderate category provide an important foundation for the need for more structured treatment, such as SQ3R assisted by digital story texts, so that students' critical thinking skills can develop optimally and more evenly.

Implementation of the SQ3R Method Assisted by Digital Story Texts on Students' Critical Thinking Skills

The SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) method was implemented in the experimental class in stages, adapting to the method's syntax and using engaging digital story texts. This process aimed to increase student participation and develop critical thinking skills.

Each stage of SQ3R plays a crucial role in training HOTS:

a. Survey Stage: Helps students recognize the general framework of the reading, trains focus and prediction.
b. Question Stage: Encourages students to formulate critical questions. This stage transforms students into active subjects seeking information, practicing analytical skills.
c. Recite Stage: Students are instructed to re-express their understanding of the text's content in their own words. This activity explicitly trains complex cognitive aspects, including analyzing, evaluating, and drawing conclusions from the information they have read.

This effective implementation made the learning process more structured, interactive, and meaningful. Students in the experimental class were seen to be more active in asking

questions, discussing, and connecting the reading content to everyday experiences. The extraordinary effectiveness of the SQ3R method in improving students' understanding and critical thinking skills at the elementary school level was also confirmed by a study published by ICEHoS (2023), which found that the question-and-answer and recital stages were proven to deepen students' understanding.

Analysis of Differences in Students' Critical Thinking in the Experimental and Control Classes

The posttest data showed a significant increase in the experimental group. The average score for the experimental group rose to 82.41, while the control group only managed 66.30. Furthermore, the standard deviation for the experimental group was smaller than before, indicating more even and consistent student learning outcomes. Although the mean difference between the two groups is not descriptively large, this finding remains statistically significant. Statistical analysis using the t-test (independent t-test) confirms this, where the calculated t-value exceeds the t-table value (as indicated by the Sig. (2-tailed) value = 0.001 ≪ 0.05). This finding is in line with the opinions of Arikunto (2010) and Sukmadinata (2013) who emphasized that even small differences remain meaningful in the educational context because they indicate a real effect of the treatment. These findings indicate that the application of the SQ3R method assisted by digital story texts has been proven to have a stronger positive influence on improving students' critical thinking skills compared to conventional learning methods.

Improving Students' Critical Thinking Skills After Implementing the SQ3R Method Assisted by Digital Story Texts

The implementation of the SQ3R method with the aid of digital narrative texts has been shown to significantly improve students' critical thinking skills, with average student scores increasing by 15.18 points (from 67.23 to 82.41). This improvement was driven by two main factors:

a) SQ3R Mechanism: The SQ3R stages require students to actively build understanding and practice complex cognitive skills, including analyzing, evaluating, and drawing conclusions from the information they have read. This finding is consistent with the research of Plores Lidia Mangasi (2019) .
b) Synergy of Internal and External Factors: The improvement of students' critical thinking skills is the result of a harmonious combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors include high learning motivation and reading interest, especially in the experimental class, which is in line with the opinion of Puji Cahyani, V., & Ahmad, F. (2024), who emphasized that student motivation and active involvement are key in developing HOTS. Meanwhile, the most determining external factors are the systematic SQ3R method, interesting digital media, and the role of the teacher as a facilitator.

Thus, the SQ3R method assisted by digital story texts has been proven not only to be able to increase the average value of learning outcomes, but also plays a role in expanding students' critical thinking skills, so that they are able to understand, analyze, and draw conclusions from the information contained in the reading text.

5. Conclusion And Suggestions

Based on the analysis of the results and hypothesis testing, it can be concluded that the implementation of the SQ3R method assisted by digital story texts on the critical thinking capacity of fifth-grade students of SD Negeri 104202 Bandar Setia is that there is a statistically significant difference in results between the experimental group and the control group ($p<0.05$), where the SQ3R method is proven to be superior and effective in improving these abilities. Although students' initial abilities are still in the moderate category (average pretest experiment 67.23; control 51.96), the structured implementation of SQ3R succeeded in increasing the average of the experimental class to 82.41, which is driven by a harmonious synergy between students' intrinsic factors (motivation and active involvement) and extrinsic factors (digital methods and media). The recommended

suggestion is that teachers implement SQ3R assisted by digital story texts continuously to increase engagement, motivate critical thinking, and help equalize student learning outcomes, supported by the school through the provision of adequate digital facilities and infrastructure. In addition, the limitation of this study lies in its focus on measuring only one skill variable (critical thinking) and one type of media. Therefore, recommendations for future research are to explore the application of the SQ3R method using a variety of alternative media (such as videos or digital comics) and to measure its effectiveness on other language skill variables, such as writing or speaking skills, so that the results are more comprehensive.

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