

HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE IN CIVIC EDUCATION: ENHANCING
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INFO ARTIKEL

Keywords:Hermeneutic Circle;
Civic Education;
Civic Literacy;
Horizon Interaction;
Democratic Citizenship.**Kata Kunci:**Lingkaran Hermeneutik;
Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan;
Literasi Kewarganegaraan;
Interaksi Horizon;
Kewarganegaraan Demokratis.**Citation:**Siagian, L., Ndonga, Y., Ginting, P. P., & Purba, J. F. (n.d.). Hermeneutic Circle in Civic Education: Enhancing Authentic Text Analysis and Literacy Skills. *Jurnal Kewarganegaraan*, 23(2), 335-352.<https://doi.org/10.24114/jk.23.2.73271.335-352>**Article History:**

Submitted: 19-04-2026

Revised: 10-06-2026

Accepted: 15-06-2026

Published: 30-09-2026

ABSTRACT

Authentic civic text literacy is needed because students often read constitutional articles, historical narratives, cultural symbols, and digital issues literally, without linking them to context and civic responsibility. This study developed and evaluated a hermeneutic-circle-based Curved-Arrow Learning Model for Grade 10 Civic Education in eight senior high schools in Medan. Using research and development with Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics, data from classroom observations, interviews, focus group discussions, expert validation, worksheets, and reflective documents were analyzed through *verstehen*, translation, and interpretation. The model strengthened students' ability to identify pre-understanding, use textual and contextual evidence, map civic values, conduct Horizon Interaction, and formulate reflective civic judgments. The discussion shows that Horizon Interaction modifies Gadamer's fusion of horizons into an inclusive Pancasila-based classroom procedure. The study concludes that the model is feasible for authentic civic-text analysis and recommends wider trials with complete verbatim transcripts and comparative assessment.

ABSTRAK

Literasi teks kewarganegaraan otentik diperlukan karena siswa sering membaca pasal konstitusi, narasi sejarah, simbol budaya, dan isu digital secara harfiah tanpa mengaitkannya dengan konteks dan tanggung jawab kewarganegaraan. Penelitian ini mengembangkan dan mengevaluasi model pembelajaran *Curved Arrow* berbasis lingkaran hermeneutik pada Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan kelas X di delapan SMA di Kota Medan. Dengan pendekatan penelitian dan pengembangan serta hermeneutika filosofis Gadamer, data observasi kelas, wawancara, diskusi kelompok terarah, validasi ahli, lembar kerja, dan dokumen refleksi dianalisis melalui *verstehen*, translasi, dan interpretasi. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa model memperkuat kemampuan siswa mengidentifikasi pemahaman awal, menggunakan bukti tekstual dan kontekstual, memetakan nilai kewarganegaraan, melakukan Interaksi Horizon, dan merumuskan penilaian kewarganegaraan reflektif. Pembahasan menegaskan bahwa Interaksi Horizon memodifikasi fusi horizon Gadamer menjadi prosedur kelas yang inklusif dan berbasis Pancasila. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa model layak digunakan untuk analisis teks kewarganegaraan otentik dan merekomendasikan uji lebih luas dengan transkrip verbatim lengkap serta asesmen komparatif.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24114/jk.23.2.73271.335-352>Copyright © 2026 The Authors
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Available on <https://jurnal.unimed.ac.id/2012/index.php/jk>

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's civic life is increasingly shaped by a crisis of interpretation. Indonesia has strong constitutional, cultural, and religious foundations for unity, yet contemporary public life still faces polarization, digital hostility, weak civic character, intolerance, and declining sensitivity toward local wisdom. In schools, these problems appear through bullying, student conflict, weak empathy, low participation, and limited reflective capacity in understanding civic issues. In the wider public sphere, narrow interpretations of religious symbols, political narratives, ethnic identities, cultural expressions, historical memory, and digital information can produce prejudice, social tension, and violence (Naldo et al., 2026). Therefore, the current crisis of citizenship is not only a crisis of civic knowledge. It is also a crisis of literacy, interpretation, moral reasoning, and democratic responsibility.

Recent studies in Civic Education show that good citizenship cannot be formed only through the transmission of concepts, rules, and constitutional knowledge (Bila et al., 2023). Civic Education must strengthen civic disposition, civic skills, critical literacy, moral awareness, participatory competence, and sensitivity to plurality. Studies on cultural and civic literacy emphasize the importance of diverse learning resources for strengthening citizenship awareness (Setyawati & Aulia, 2023). Research on young citizens and nationalism also shows that Civic Education must help students negotiate national identity within complex social change (Nurgiansah & Rachman, 2022). Mulyani et al. (2024) argue that global citizenship education requires stronger implementation strategies in the twenty first century. Hidayah et al. (2025) highlight the importance of complex problem-solving through civic engagement in the digital era. Syahwaliana et al. (2025) show that the integration of Pancasila values remains central to the formation of civic disposition. These studies support the view that Civic Education needs a learning model that enables students to read civic reality critically, contextually, and ethically.

The urgency becomes stronger in the digital era. Civic problems now often emerge through hoaxes, hate speech, echo chambers, filter bubbles, political provocation, and fragmented interpretations of public events. Bila et al. (2023) argue that Civic Education must strengthen character so that students do not simply follow the negative flow of digitalization. Arisanty et al. (2026) show that echo chambers and filter bubbles can intensify war flaming on social media, yet their study does not offer a classroom-based interpretive model for helping students analyze public texts responsibly. Mazid et al. (2026) explain the importance of civic disposition in forming responsible citizens, but their discussion still leaves a methodological gap in how teachers can guide students to penetrate the meaning of authentic civic texts. Nurgiansah et al. (2023) also emphasizes the role of Civic Education in strengthening citizenship character, but does not yet formulate a systematic hermeneutic procedure for linking textual evidence, social context, civic values, and reflective judgment. Thus, previous studies have clarified the importance of civic character, digital citizenship, and local wisdom, but they have not sufficiently explained how students can interpret authentic civic texts through a structured learning model.

In this study, authentic civic texts refer to texts and phenomena that originate from real civic life, not materials created only for textbook exercises. They include constitutional and legal documents, historical narratives, public policies, news reports, social media posts, civic speeches, political statements, visual symbols, cultural practices, local wisdom, public controversies, and lived social events. Authentic civic texts also include symbols and narratives that appear in plural public life, including religious and cultural expressions, as long as they are analyzed as civic phenomena and not as doctrinal materials. This definition is

important because students do not encounter citizenship only in textbooks. They encounter citizenship through news, public debates, local traditions, school conflicts, digital narratives, community practices, and symbolic events. These texts require interpretation because their meanings depend on context, intention, history, values, and the position of the reader.

The central problem addressed in this study is students weak ability to analyze authentic civic texts. Students often read civic texts at the surface level (Feriyansyah et al., 2026). They may identify explicit information but fail to recognize historical background, value structure, social context, implied meaning, and ethical consequences. This weakness can produce partial understanding, prejudice, misjudgment, and weak civic reasoning. For example, students may understand a constitutional article literally but fail to relate it to justice, equality, and responsibility. They may read digital news but fail to examine its source, bias, and social impact. They may recognize a cultural symbol but fail to understand its relation to local wisdom and civic identity. They may respond to political or religious narratives emotionally without examining context and intention. Therefore, Civic Education needs a model that trains students to move from literal reading to contextual, reflective, and responsible interpretation.

This interpretive problem is closely related to misunderstanding. Misunderstanding occurs when individuals or groups interpret a text, symbol, event, or statement without sufficient attention to context, intention, historical background, value orientation, and relation to the whole (Kabatiah et al., 2024; Mulyani et al., 2024). Misunderstanding may appear minor when it only causes personal offense. It becomes serious when it produces hostility, stigma, polarization, violence, and delegitimization of other groups. In religious life, misunderstanding of sacred texts, doctrines, and symbols may trigger accusations, exclusion, and social division. In political life, misunderstanding of historical narratives and ideological claims may reproduce stigma across generations. In education, misunderstanding weakens students' capacity to seek truth, justice, and democratic responsibility. Civic Education must therefore train students not only to receive information, but also to interpret meaning responsibly.

The hermeneutic circle offers a relevant framework for this need. In Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, understanding moves circularly between the parts and the whole. The parts can only be understood through the whole, and the whole can only be understood through the parts (Schleiermacher & Bernofsky, 2021). Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics further emphasizes that understanding always involves pre-understanding, historical consciousness, dialogue, and the encounter between horizons. A civic text cannot be interpreted adequately when it is separated from its wider structure of meaning. A statement, symbol, or event must be read through its textual parts, social context, authorial intention, historical situation, value content, and relation to the interpreters horizon. In Civic Education, the hermeneutic circle can become a pedagogical procedure that guides students to move from initial understanding to deeper interpretation, from fragmented information to whole meaning, and from subjective reaction to reflective civic judgment.

This study continues and refines the Curved Arrow Learning Model developed in 2022 and the local cultural values-based learning model developed in 2021. The previous models contributed to value based Civic Education by emphasizing the movement of learners toward the object of study and the importance of local cultural values. However, the Curved-Arrow Learning Model still has several limitations. First, it explains the direction of learning movement, but it has not yet provided a concrete interpretive procedure for penetrating the meaning of texts and civic realities. Second, it has not clearly operationalized how students

should examine pre-understanding, textual evidence, context, civic values, and reflective judgment. Third, it has not offered a specific mechanism for analyzing authentic civic texts in plural and digital contexts. Fourth, it has not sufficiently explained how teachers can guide students to move between parts and whole in interpreting public issues. These limitations create the need for a hermeneutic refinement of the model.

The philosophical foundation of this study remains Pancasila based and inclusive. Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and democratic citizenship form the normative basis of Civic Education in Indonesian schools (Rachman et al., 2021). Karl Jaspers's concept of Transcendence is used only as a philosophical concept to explain human openness to a higher moral horizon, freedom, responsibility, and self-transcendence beyond egoistic or group-based interests. It is not used as a religious doctrine. Catholic Social Teaching is also not positioned as classroom doctrine, religious instruction, or a normative replacement for Pancasila. It is used only as a comparative ethical reference in the theoretical discussion, especially on human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, participation, and the common good. These principles are treated at the level of public ethics and are read in dialogue with Pancasila values. This framing ensures that the model remains inclusive, nondenominational, and relevant for multi-religious Civic Education classes in public schools (Wibowo et al., 2026).

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of the hermeneutic circle into the Curved-Arrow Learning Model through the concept of Horizon Interaction. Horizon Interaction is a pedagogical modification of Gadamer's fusion of horizons. It refers to the structured encounter between students present horizon, the historical social horizon of the text, and the civic normative horizon of Pancasila. Through this interaction, students are guided to identify their pre-understanding, examine textual and contextual evidence, reconstruct civic values, compare interpretations, and formulate reflective civic judgments. This novelty distinguishes the model from previous studies that focus mainly on civic disposition, digital citizenship, local wisdom, or character education without offering a systematic procedure for authentic civic text analysis.

This study is guided by two research questions: how can the hermeneutic circle refine the Curved Arrow Learning Model as an inclusive Pancasila-based procedure for authentic civic text analysis, and to what extent does the model strengthen students authentic civic text literacy in eight senior high schools in Medan? The working hypothesis is that students who learn through the hermeneutic circle procedure will show stronger ability to interpret civic texts through textual evidence, contextual reasoning, value mapping, horizon interaction, and reflective judgment. Therefore, this study aims to develop, validate, and examine the effectiveness of a Hermeneutic Circle-Based Curved Arrow Learning Model that introduces Horizon Interaction as a conceptual novelty for strengthening authentic civic text literacy, moral reflection, and democratic citizenship

METHOD

1. Research Design and Context

This study combined Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics with a research and development framework. Philosophical hermeneutics functioned as the epistemological and analytical foundation for examining how students encountered, questioned, and reconstructed meaning from authentic civic texts (Gadamer, 2023). Research and development functioned as the procedural framework for testing, evaluating, and refining the learning model through successive classroom applications (Richey & Klein, 2014). The

study was conducted in Grade 10 Civic Education classes at Medan State High School 2, Medan State High School 5, Santa Maria High School, Santo Petrus High School, Methodist High School 2, Ignatius Johor High School, Harapan Johor High School, and Trisakti Private High School. The participant groups comprised students, Civic Education teachers, school administrators, and experts in Civic Education, hermeneutics, philosophy, learning design, and qualitative methodology. The unit of analysis was the interpretive process generated during classroom implementation rather than a statistical estimate of individual performance.

2. Authentic Civic Texts and Learning Procedure

Texts were selected purposively because they represented real civic problems and required contextual interpretation. The corpus comprised Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution, historical narratives concerning national conflict, local cultural practices selected from students' social environments, and viral digital or social-media texts concerning public controversy, group identity, or tolerance. The exact historical, cultural, and digital items varied across schools, but each item was analyzed through the same eight-stage procedure: identifying pre-understanding, conducting grammatical-textual analysis, examining historical-social context, exploring the authorial or institutional horizon, moving between textual parts and the whole, conducting Horizon Interaction, mapping civic values, and formulating reflective civic judgment. This procedure operationalized the hermeneutic movement between parts and whole, text and context, and initial judgment and revised understanding (Gadamer, 2023; Hardiman, 2015).

2. Data Sources and Assessment Instrument

Data were generated through classroom observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, expert validation, and document analysis. Observation focused on participation, use of evidence, movement between parts and whole, contextual reasoning, value identification, and reflective judgment. Interviews with students explored their initial assumptions, interpretive difficulties, changes in understanding, and reasons for their final judgments. Interviews with teachers and administrators examined practicality, classroom challenges, and institutional relevance. Focus group discussions and expert validation were used to refine the learning syntax, worksheets, guiding questions, and assessment indicators. In-depth interviewing was selected because it enables researchers to examine participants lived meanings and interpretive perspectives in context (Bevan, 2014).

Table 1. Authentic Civic Text Literacy Assessment Framework

Dimension	Operational Indicator	Primary Evidence	Coding Rule	Achievement Indicator
Pre-understanding	States prior knowledge, assumptions, emotional reactions, or initial judgment before close reading.	Initial worksheet entry; opening classroom response; interview prompt.	1 = implicit/unexamined; 2 = stated but unsupported; 3 = stated and questioned; 4 = explicitly revised through evidence.	The student can identify and critically examine an initial assumption.
Textual evidence	Identifies key terms, statements,	Annotated text; worksheet; oral explanation.	1 = no evidence; 2 = isolated quotation;	The interpretation is anchored in

Dimension	Operational Indicator	Primary Evidence	Coding Rule	Achievement Indicator
	actors, symbols, and relationships in the text.		3 = relevant evidence; 4 = multiple connected pieces of evidence.	relevant textual evidence.
Contextual-historical reasoning	Relates the text to social, political, cultural, and historical conditions.	Context map; discussion notes; reflective writing.	1 = absent; 2 = generic context; 3 = relevant context; 4 = context is used to revise meaning.	Context changes or deepens the initial interpretation.
Part-whole interpretation	Moves between textual fragments and the broader argument, event, or value structure.	Worksheet sequence; classroom dialogue; teacher observation.	1 = fragmented; 2 = partial link; 3 = coherent part-whole relation; 4 = iterative reinterpretation.	The student explains how parts shape the whole and vice versa.
Civic value mapping	Identifies and justifies values such as dignity, freedom, responsibility, justice, tolerance, solidarity, unity, and the common good.	Value map; reflection; interview summary.	1 = labels values; 2 = gives a generic explanation; 3 = links value to evidence; 4 = weighs tensions among values.	Values are justified through evidence and civic consequences.
Horizon Interaction	Compares the student's present horizon with the historical, social, and normative horizon of the text.	Before-after matrix; dialogue summary; reflective note.	1 = no comparison; 2 = recognizes difference; 3 = revises an assumption; 4 = constructs an inclusive, evidence-based interpretation.	The final interpretation shows a documented shift from the initial horizon.
Reflective civic judgment	Formulates a reasoned judgment that considers evidence, alternative perspectives, human dignity, democratic responsibility, and consequences.	Final written response; oral presentation; teacher assessment.	1 = assertion; 2 = one-sided reason; 3 = evidence-based judgment; 4 = balanced judgment with ethical and civic implications.	The judgment is evidence-based, contextual, self-corrective, and publicly responsible.

The framework was used as a qualitative coding matrix rather than as an inferential test. A pattern was classified as reflective judgment when the preserved evidence showed four elements simultaneously: explicit textual support, contextual reasoning, consideration of an alternative perspective, and a civic-ethical justification of the final position. The interview guide followed the same sequence by asking what the student first believed, what textual or contextual evidence challenged that belief, how the student interpreted competing values, and why the final judgment was more responsible than the initial response.

3. Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Data-Integrity Boundary

Data were analyzed through *verstehen*, translation, and interpretation. *Verstehen* focused on understanding classroom responses within their immediate context. Translation converted observations, interview summaries, worksheets, and reflection records into analytical categories such as pre-understanding, textual comprehension, contextual awareness, authorial horizon, part-whole relation, civic value mapping, Horizon Interaction, and reflective judgment. Interpretation reconstructed how students' horizons were challenged, expanded, or revised through dialogue with the text. The researcher moved repeatedly between individual evidence fragments and the entire classroom context, which is consistent with the hermeneutic circle (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021; Suddick et al., 2020).

Trustworthiness was supported through expert validation, source triangulation, technique triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, reflexive memoing, and an audit trail. Student interpretations were compared with teacher observations, expert feedback, and learning documents; observation findings were compared with interview and focus-group summaries; and emerging interpretations were discussed with research partners to identify premature conclusions and researcher bias. These procedures addressed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in qualitative inquiry (Denzin, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

An explicit data-integrity boundary applies to this round-two revision. The original audio files and complete verbatim transcripts could not be recovered. For that reason, this article does not create direct quotations or numerical effect claims that cannot be audited. To respond to the need for stronger empirical support, the results present de-identified analytic paraphrases, observation-based evidence matrices, worksheet traces, document summaries, expert-validation records, and trial-refinement notes preserved in the manuscript archive. These materials allow the reader to examine the interpretive pattern, although they do not provide the same evidentiary strength as complete verbatim transcripts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Operationalizing the Hermeneutic Circle as a Civic Education Learning Model

The first finding concerns the operational form of the hermeneutic circle in Civic Education. Early classroom applications showed that students could mention general civic values, but they had difficulty explaining how those values emerged from the language of the text, its historical context, and its public consequences. Many responses moved directly from personal opinion to judgment. The model responded to this problem by translating philosophical hermeneutics into an eight-stage classroom syntax: disclosure of pre-understanding, grammatical-textual analysis, historical-social contextualization,

reconstruction of the authorial or institutional horizon, part-whole interpretation, Horizon Interaction, civic value mapping, and reflective civic judgment. Each stage produced a visible learning artifact, namely an initial assumption note, annotated text, context map, horizon comparison matrix, value map, or final reflective response. This finding answers the first research question because the hermeneutic circle refined the Curved-Arrow Learning Model from a general movement toward the learning object into a concrete interpretive procedure for authentic civic texts.

The empirical indicators also made the model assessable. Pre-understanding became visible when students recorded prior knowledge, emotional reactions, and early moral judgments before close reading. Textual evidence became visible when students identified key words, actors, legal clauses, symbols, or narrative fragments. Contextual-historical reasoning appeared when students connected those fragments with social conditions, institutional intentions, collective memory, cultural practice, or digital circulation. Horizon Interaction was evidenced when students compared their present horizon with the horizon of the text and revised the first interpretation. Reflective civic judgment was achieved when students integrated evidence, acknowledged an alternative perspective, considered public consequences, and justified the final position through democratic and moral values. Thus, the study did not treat fusion of horizons as a purely philosophical expression. It transformed the concept into an observable sequence of literacy practices.

2. Interpretive Change Across Four Authentic Civic Text Types

The preserved classroom summaries, worksheets, and observation notes showed four recurring trajectories of interpretive change. First, students who initially read Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution as unlimited freedom began to connect freedom of expression with responsibility, human dignity, and the rights of others. Second, students who judged historical conflict through a single dominant narrative began to ask how fear, ideology, political interest, and collective memory shaped the actions of historical actors. Third, students who described local cultural practice only as inherited custom began to identify mutual assistance, solidarity, identity, and social harmony as civic values that still need critical evaluation. Fourth, students who accepted viral digital content as a complete representation of reality began to examine source, producer, missing context, emotional framing, and possible social consequences. Table 2 records these dominant trajectories without claiming an inferential statistical effect.

Table 2. Cognitive Comparison Before and After the Hermeneutic Circle Procedure

Authentic Text	Dominant Pre-understanding	Evidence Introduced Through the Hermeneutic Cycle	Reflective Civic Judgment	Interpretive Change
Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution	Freedom of expression was read mainly as an unrestricted individual right.	Constitutional wording, democratic responsibility, human dignity, ethical communication, and public consequences.	Freedom is constitutionally protected but must be exercised responsibly and with respect for the rights and dignity of others.	Literal-legal reading developed into reflective-democratic interpretation.

Authentic Text	Dominant Pre-understanding	Evidence Introduced Through the Hermeneutic Cycle	Reflective Civic Judgment	Interpretive Change
Historical narrative on national conflict	Actors were judged through a single dominant narrative as simply right or wrong.	Historical context, ideological tension, political interests, collective fear, trauma, and memory.	Historical judgment requires contextual explanation, attention to multiple positions, and awareness of the consequences of inherited narratives.	One-sided judgment developed into contextual historical interpretation.
Local cultural practice	Tradition was treated mainly as inherited ceremony or custom.	Meaning of symbols, social function, community memory, mutual assistance, solidarity, identity, and responsibility.	Cultural practice can be evaluated as a living source of civic values while remaining open to critical reflection.	Descriptive cultural reading developed into value-based civic interpretation.
Viral digital or social-media text	Viral content was often treated as factual or as a complete representation of public reality.	Source, producer, context, omitted information, group interests, emotional framing, and possible social consequences.	Digital civic participation requires verification, contextual reading, ethical restraint, and consideration of the common good.	Emotional reaction developed into critical digital civic literacy.

Sources: Research Data (2024)

The movement shown in Table 2 supports the hermeneutic principle that the meaning of a civic text cannot be reduced to isolated words or immediate reaction. The findings were obtained through repeated comparison among field-note summaries, worksheet products, teacher observations, interview summaries, and expert-validation notes. A constitutional clause became meaningful when its legal wording was connected to democratic ethics. A historical narrative became more responsible when it was situated within conflict, memory, and political interest. A cultural practice became civic when students reconstructed its social values and examined possible tensions with dignity or equality. A viral post became an object of civic judgment when students examined source, context, framing, and consequence. These changes correspond to the movement between parts and whole emphasized by Schleiermacher and to the historical, dialogical character of understanding emphasized by Gadamer (Gadamer, 2023; Schleiermacher & Bernofsky, 2021).

3. Analytic Vignettes of Pre-Understanding, Horizon Interaction, and Reflective Judgment

Table 3 makes the interpretive movement more concrete by presenting analytic vignettes from classroom interpretation. The statements are reconstructed analytic paraphrases from preserved comparison summaries, worksheets, field notes, and interview summaries. They are not verbatim quotations because the complete transcripts could not be recovered. This form of presentation protects data integrity while still showing how students moved from first judgment to revised interpretation. The table responds to the need for stronger empirical grounding by linking each initial position with the hermeneutic activity that generated the revised civic judgment.

Table 3. Reconstructed Analytic Vignettes from Classroom Interpretation

Text and Interpretive Moment	Analytic Paraphrase of Initial Position	Hermeneutic Movement	Analytic Paraphrase of Revised Judgment
Article 28: opening response	Freedom of speech means that citizens may say whatever they want.	Students examined the wording of the article, discussed limits created by the rights of others, and connected online expression with dignity and public responsibility.	Expression is a protected right, but a democratic citizen must communicate responsibly and consider the harm caused to others.
Historical conflict: group discussion	One side was right and the other side was entirely wrong.	Students compared narrative fragments with historical conditions, political interests, fear, trauma, and collective memory.	A responsible judgment must explain why actors acted as they did and must distinguish contextual explanation from moral justification.
Local culture: value mapping	The practice is only an old ceremony that must be preserved.	Students interpreted symbols, social roles, mutual assistance, solidarity, identity, and possible tensions within the practice.	The tradition remains relevant when its civic values are understood, while elements inconsistent with dignity or equality can still be questioned.
Viral digital post: final reflection	The post is viral, so it probably represents what really happened.	Students identified the source, emotional framing, missing context, group interest, and possible consequences of sharing the content.	A citizen should verify the source, compare contexts, and avoid amplifying information that may deepen prejudice or conflict.

Sources: Research Data (2024)

The vignettes demonstrate the operational indicators in Table 1. Initial positions exposed unexamined prejudice, simplification, or overconfidence. Textual and contextual analysis interrupted that certainty by requiring students to justify claims through evidence. Value mapping required them to identify democratic and moral implications rather than repeat abstract slogans. Reflective judgment emerged when students could explain why the

revised position was more evidence-based, inclusive, and publicly responsible. The process therefore did not replace one fixed answer with another. It trained students to make their judgments revisable through evidence, dialogue, and civic responsibility.

Table 4. Evidence Matrix Supporting Authentic Civic Text Literacy Development

Data Source	Preserved Evidence Traced	Finding Supported	Interpretive Meaning
Classroom observation summaries	Teacher notes recorded students movement from quick moral claims toward requests for source, context, and public consequence.	Students became more careful in judging constitutional, historical, cultural, and digital texts.	Authentic civic literacy developed when interpretation was guided by evidence and not by immediate reaction.
Worksheets and annotation sheets	Initial assumptions, annotated terms, context maps, horizon matrices, value maps, and final responses showed traceable revisions.	Students could document the shift between pre-understanding and reflective judgment.	The learning model made Horizon Interaction visible as a sequence of written learning products.
Interview and focus-group summaries	Students and teachers reported difficulty interpreting bias, historical background, and digital framing, but considered guiding questions helpful.	The model was practical when teachers used staged prompts and examples before independent analysis.	Hermeneutic learning requires scaffolding because students do not automatically move from text to context.
Expert-validation records	Experts asked for clearer syntax, stronger assessment indicators, inclusive Pancasila framing, and careful separation between public ethics and religious doctrine.	The model was refined to avoid doctrinal teaching and to strengthen classroom measurability.	Validity improved when philosophical concepts were translated into public, civic, and pedagogical language.
Reflective learning documents	Final written responses increasingly referred to rights, dignity, responsibility, tolerance, unity, and the common good.	Students connected textual meaning with civic values and public consequences.	Reflective judgment functioned as the literacy outcome, not merely as an attitude statement.

Sources: Research Data (2024)

Table 4 shows that the finding was not based on a single source. Observation summaries identified classroom behavior, worksheets showed written traces of interpretive revision, interviews and focus groups explained perceived difficulties, expert validation refined the syntax, and reflective documents showed the quality of final civic judgment. The convergence of these sources supports the claim that the model strengthened authentic civic text literacy through five linked practices: exposing pre-understanding, grounding

interpretation in evidence, contextualizing meaning, comparing horizons, and formulating public responsibility.

Table 5. Trial-Based Refinement of the Hermeneutic Circle Learning Model

Trial Evidence	Problem Identified	Revision Made	Learning Implication
Initial classroom application	Students tended to state opinions before identifying textual evidence.	The pre-understanding sheet and textual annotation prompts were added before group discussion.	Students learned to separate first reaction from evidence-based interpretation.
Second classroom application	Contextual analysis often remained generic and was not connected to specific textual parts.	A historical-social context map was inserted between textual analysis and part-whole interpretation.	Students began to explain how context changed or deepened the meaning of the text.
Teacher reflection and focus group discussion	Horizon Interaction was initially too abstract for classroom use.	A before-after horizon matrix was added to compare initial assumptions, text horizon, Pancasila values, and revised judgment.	The novelty became operational and could be assessed through student documents.
Expert validation	The model risked being read as a doctrinal or philosophical abstraction rather than a Civic Education procedure.	The explanation was reframed through Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, democratic citizenship, and public ethics.	The model became more inclusive for multi-religious public-school classrooms.
Final implementation review	Teachers needed consistent criteria for judging authentic text literacy.	The coding matrix in Table 1 was used to align observation, worksheet analysis, interviews, and final reflections.	Assessment became focused on interpretive movement rather than on memorization or unsupported opinion.

Sources: Research Data (2024)

Table 5 explains how the findings were obtained through trial-based refinement. The development process did not merely confirm a pre-existing model. It identified concrete classroom problems and converted them into procedural revisions. The pre-understanding sheet addressed premature judgment, the context map addressed weak historical reasoning, the horizon matrix addressed the abstract character of fusion of horizons, and the coding matrix addressed assessment consistency. These refinements show the research and development character of the study and clarify the pedagogical contribution of the model.

4. Horizon Interaction, Critical Civic Literacy, and Digital Citizenship

The results extend current work on civic literacy and digital citizenship by explaining the interpretive mechanism through which students learn to evaluate public texts. Echo chambers, filter bubbles, and emotionally charged public communication can intensify hostility when citizens treat fragmented information as a complete account of reality (Arisanty et al., 2026). The classroom evidence shows that students need more than access to information. They need a disciplined procedure for asking who produced the text, what context shaped it, what evidence is present or missing, what values are at stake, and what consequences may follow from sharing or accepting the text. This finding is consistent with research that connects civic literacy with resilience against disinformation and with structured pedagogies for critical thinking (Lilja et al., 2024; Saldiray & Doğanay, 2024). It also complements participatory models of digital civic education that emphasize active and responsible engagement (Kahne et al., 2016). The distinctive contribution of Horizon Interaction is its explicit movement from initial reaction to reasoned civic judgment through dialogue with authentic texts.

The model also differs from approaches that reduce critical literacy to rational critique alone. Shaw (2023) argues that worldview literacy requires reflexive engagement within plural democracy. The present model situates that reflexivity within the Indonesian normative horizon of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, and the common good. The preserved classroom records showed that moral and spiritual experience entered interpretation as part of the student horizon, but it was not treated as a doctrine imposed on the classroom. Students were guided to examine how faith, culture, and identity could support human dignity, solidarity, responsibility, and openness to plurality while remaining accountable to democratic and constitutional evaluation. Jaspers's concept of Transcendence helps explain movement beyond egoistic and sectarian closure, while the public-ethical principles of dignity, solidarity, participation, subsidiarity, and the common good clarify the moral responsibility of citizenship (Jaspers, 1968; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2020).

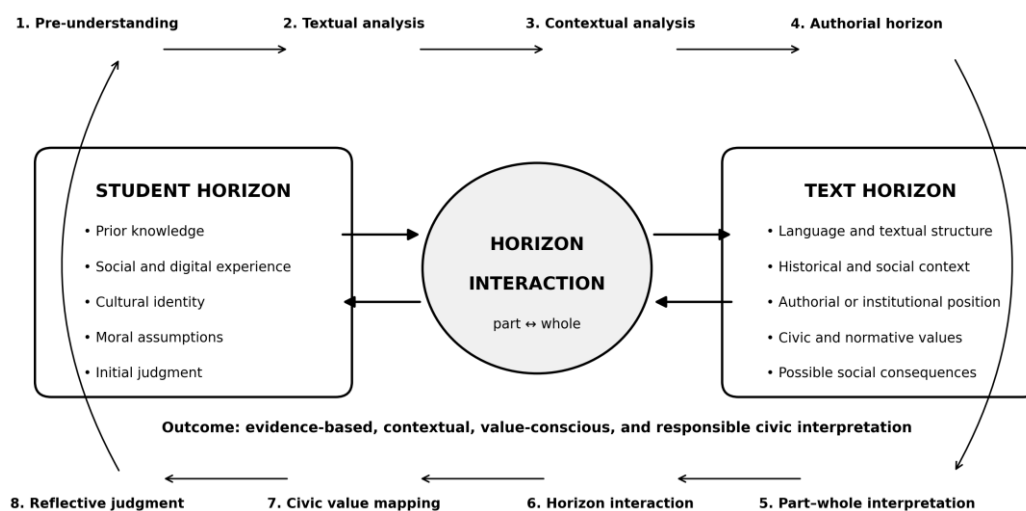
The interpretation of local culture further demonstrates the Indonesian contribution of the model. The findings show that local wisdom does not automatically function as civic value. It must be interpreted, contextualized, and critically evaluated. Students first tended to view local cultural practice as ceremony, inheritance, or group identity. Through symbol analysis, context mapping, and civic value mapping, they began to identify mutual assistance, solidarity, responsibility, social harmony, and respect for difference. At the same time, the model required them to evaluate whether a practice remained consistent with dignity, equality, and democratic responsibility. This result supports studies showing that local wisdom and local knowledge can strengthen character and civic responsibility (Moad et al., 2026; Wibowo et al., 2026). It also strengthens civic disposition by requiring students to justify values through evidence rather than merely repeat moral slogans (Mazid et al., 2026; Syahwaliana et al., 2025).

5. From Fusion of Horizons to Horizon Interaction

The principal theoretical result is Horizon Interaction. Gadamer's fusion of horizons explains understanding as an encounter between the interpreter's horizon and the horizon of the text. In classroom practice, however, fusion can be misunderstood as complete access to the author's intention or as the disappearance of difference between past and present. Horizon Interaction offers a more cautious pedagogical formulation. Students do not claim to reproduce the author's entire psychological or historical world. They place

their current assumptions into disciplined dialogue with the language, context, history, values, and consequences of the text. The outcome is neither passive acceptance nor uncontrolled subjectivism, but a revisable civic interpretation. This concept modifies an established hermeneutic theory by converting it into an assessable Civic Education procedure.

Table 6. Horizon Interaction Model for Authentic Civic Text Analysis



Sources: Research Data (2024)

Figure 1 presents the model as a reciprocal process. The student horizon contains prior knowledge, social and digital experience, cultural identity, moral assumptions, and initial judgment. The text horizon contains linguistic structure, historical-social context, authorial or institutional position, civic values, and potential consequences. The eight-stage cycle connects these horizons and produces an interpretation that is evidence-based, contextual, value-conscious, and responsible. This modification strengthens the Curved-Arrow Learning Model because it adds a specific procedure for penetrating authentic civic texts rather than merely describing the direction of learning. The model also answers the second research question by showing that literacy improvement appeared in the quality of interpretive movement: students moved from literal reading, one-sided judgment, descriptive cultural recognition, and emotional digital reaction toward contextual reasoning, value justification, and reflective civic responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The Hermeneutic Circle-Based Curved-Arrow Learning Model provides a structured procedure for authentic civic text analysis in Civic Education. Its eight stages guide students from pre-understanding through textual and contextual analysis, authorial or institutional horizon reconstruction, part-whole interpretation, Horizon Interaction, civic value mapping, and reflective judgment. The study found that the model strengthened five interrelated literacy practices: identifying initial assumptions, using textual and contextual evidence, mapping civic values, comparing the student horizon with the text horizon, and formulating reflective civic judgments. The most visible changes appeared when students interpreted Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution, historical conflict narratives, local cultural practices, and

viral digital texts. In these cases, students moved from literal, one-sided, descriptive, or emotional responses toward more contextual, evidence-based, value-conscious, and publicly responsible interpretations.

Horizon Interaction constitutes the study's main conceptual contribution. It modifies Gadamer's fusion of horizons for classroom use by preserving dialogue between the student horizon and the text horizon without claiming complete recovery of authorial intention. It also connects critical civic literacy with Pancasila-based moral responsibility in an inclusive multi-religious classroom context. The model is recommended for Civic Education teachers who use constitutional texts, historical narratives, cultural materials, and digital public issues as learning resources. Future research should conduct broader trials with complete verbatim transcripts, stronger documentation of classroom interaction, comparative assessment between control and experimental classes, and digital portfolios that can trace each student's interpretive development more precisely.

DECLARATIONS

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Conceptualization: LR; Methodology: YN; Validation: YN and JFG; Formal Analysis: PG; Investigation: LR, YN, and RB; Resources: LR; Data Curation: PG and RB; Writing—Original Draft Preparation: LR, PG, and JFG; Writing—Review and Editing: JFG and RB; Project Administration: LR. All authors have read and agree to the final published version of the manuscript.

3. Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no competing interests to declare relevant to this articles content.

4. Generative AI and AI-Assisted in the Writing Process

The authors used AI assisted tools only for language refinement and editorial improvement. All intellectual content, research design, data interpretation, analysis, and final decisions remain the sole responsibility of the authors.

5. Data Availability Statement

The complete original audio files and verbatim transcripts are no longer recoverable. The revised article is based on de-identified analytical summaries, comparison matrices, model-development notes, and evidence patterns retained in the manuscript archive. These materials contain confidential information from students, teachers, and participating schools and are not publicly available. No reconstructed statement is presented as a verbatim quotation

4. Funding

This research was funded by the Department of Pancasila and Civic Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Medan. The grant number is not applicable. The APC was funded by the Department of Pancasila and Civic Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Medan

5. Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Department of Pancasila and Civic Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Medan, for supporting this research. The authors also thank the principals, Civic Education teachers, students, and administrative staff of Medan State High School 2, Medan State High School 5, Santa Maria High School, Santo Petrus High School, Methodist High School 2, Ignatius Johor High School, Harapan Johor High School, and Trisakti Private High School for their cooperation and participation during the implementation of this research. The authors also appreciate the experts and research partners who provided constructive input for the validation and refinement of the hermeneutic circle model.

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