

**OPTIMIZATION OF THE COOPERATIVE INTEGRATED READING  
AND COMPOSITION (CIRC) MODEL TO IMPROVE READING  
COMPREHENSION AND NARRATIVE TEXT WRITING SKILLS IN  
INDONESIAN LANGUAGE SUBJECTS IN GRADE III STUDENTS OF  
SD NEGERI 09 LUBUK ALUNG**

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**Abstract**

*The ability to understand reading and write narrative texts is an important aspect in learning Indonesian at the elementary school level. However, the results of observations in class III of SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung showed that most students still had difficulty in understanding the contents of the text and composing stories coherently. This is due to the learning method which is still conventional and does not involve students actively. The purpose of this study was to improve students' reading comprehension and narrative text writing skills through the application of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model. This study is a Classroom Action Research (CAR) which was carried out in two cycles. Each cycle consists of the stages of planning, implementing actions, observation, and reflection. The subjects of the study were 10 students of class III of SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung. Data collection techniques included observation, written tests, documentation of student work results, and informal interviews. The research instruments included observation sheets, reading comprehension questions, and narrative text assessment rubrics. Applying the CIRC model increased students' reading comprehension from 30% before the cycle to 90% throughout the second cycle, according to the data. Skills in composing narrative texts also rose throughout this time, going from 20% to 80%. It seemed like students were more invested in the learning process because they were more vocal in class discussions, papers, and presentations. Overall, elementary school students' reading and writing abilities have been significantly enhanced by the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) approach. Learning environments that are dynamic, engaging, and meaningful can be achieved through the use of collaborative and integrated learning strategies.*

**Keywords:** Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC); reading comprehension; writing skills; narrative text; Indonesian language learning

**Abstrak**

Kemampuan memahami bacaan dan menulis teks naratif merupakan konsep kunci untuk siswa sekolah dasar yang mempelajari bahasa Indonesia. Observasi kelas III di SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung mengungkapkan, bagaimanapun, bahwa mayoritas siswa masih berjuang dengan pemahaman teks dan koherensi cerita. Ini adalah hasil dari fakta bahwa pendekatan pengajaran sudah ketinggalan zaman dan tidak mendorong partisipasi siswa. Menggunakan pendekatan CIRC (*Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition*), penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam pemahaman bacaan dan penulisan teks naratif. Ada dua iterasi dari proyek penelitian tindakan kelas (PTK) ini. Perencanaan, melakukan, mengamati, dan merefleksikan adalah empat fase yang membentuk setiap



siklus. Sepuluh siswa kelas tiga dari SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung berpartisipasi sebagai subjek penelitian. Observasi, penilaian tertulis, pencatatan hasil kerja siswa, dan wawancara santai adalah semua metode yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Rubrik penilaian untuk teks naratif, pertanyaan pemahaman bacaan, dan lembar observasi semuanya adalah bagian dari kotak peralatan penelitian. Pemahaman membaca siswa meningkat dari 30% pada pra siklus menjadi 90% pada siklus kedua ketika model CIRC diterapkan, menurut hasil penelitian, keterampilan menulis teks naratif meningkat dari 20% menjadi 80% dalam periode yang sama. Siswa tampak lebih aktif berdiskusi, menulis, dan menyampaikan hasil karya mereka, yang mencerminkan peningkatan motivasi dan keterlibatan dalam proses pembelajaran. Kesimpulannya, model *Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition* (CIRC) terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan literasi siswa sekolah dasar, khususnya dalam aspek membaca dan menulis. Pendekatan pembelajaran yang bersifat kolaboratif dan terpadu mampu menciptakan suasana belajar yang aktif, menyenangkan, dan bermakna.

**Kata Kunci:** *Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition* (CIRC); pemahaman membaca; keterampilan menulis; teks naratif; pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian is one of the subjects that has an important role in shaping students' literacy skills from the elementary education level. The mastery of language skills, especially reading and writing, is the basis for understanding various other sciences that students will learn (Santika and Sudiana 2021). In the lower grades, such as grade III of elementary school, strengthening reading and writing skills is very crucial. This is because at this stage students are in a transition phase from "learning to read" to "reading to learn". In other words, reading skills not only function as a basic activity, but also as a tool to understand the content of the lesson and pour ideas into writing (Snow, 2022). Therefore, Indonesian learning is expected to be carried out optimally to help students develop reading comprehension and convey their ideas through writing (Linda and Mulyatno 2024).

Students' understanding and production of narrative texts is still low, according to field observations. Initial observations at SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung revealed that a large number of third-grade students had difficulty understanding the readings given by the teacher. They tend to read mechanically without being able to grasp the meaning or content of the text being read. When asked to explain the content of the text or rewrite it in narrative form, most students are unable to organize the storyline in order. This indicates that reading and writing activities have not been properly integrated in the learning process. This low ability will certainly have a long-term impact, considering that reading and writing skills are the foundation in the learning process in all subjects.

Traditional teaching methods that fail to effectively engage children are one of the main factors in their low literacy skills. Teachers tend to use lecture methods, read books

in front of the class, and give homework without encouraging students to reflect on what they have read or express their thoughts in writing in a number of observed learning processes. Students lose interest and motivation due to what they perceive as less contextual and boring learning activities. The disinterest and lack of involvement of students in Indonesian learning is a result of the lack of variety of strategies, especially in terms of understanding and composing narrative texts, which require creativity and logical organization of ideas. The failure to use a learning model that is able to integrate cooperative reading and writing activities is another problem that contributes to poor results.

The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model is considered effective in improving literacy skills because it is able to create active, collaborative, and fun learning (Sagala, 2012). Students are not only required to understand the reading individually, but also learn from friends through group discussions. The learning process becomes more meaningful because students are invited to think critically, express their opinions, and rewrite them in the form of narrative texts. With this model, understanding of text structure, story content, characters, and plot becomes easier for students to understand because they are directly involved in the process of knowledge construction. In addition, this model can also increase students' learning responsibility and confidence as they are actively involved in the study group.

## **II. THEORETICAL STUDIES**

### **Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is a person's ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate the meaning of written texts. This understanding includes complex cognitive processes, such as identifying key ideas, drawing conclusions, understanding the meaning of words in context, as well as relating information in the text to prior knowledge. Without a good understanding, the reading process becomes a purely mechanical activity that does not provide maximum benefits to the reader (Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

Apart from being a cognitive process, reading comprehension is also closely related to the metacognitive aspect, namely the reader's ability to monitor and control his thought process while reading. A good reader not only reads word for word, but is also able to make predictions, ask questions, summarize, and evaluate the content of the text. Therefore, reading comprehension is an essential competency in the development of student literacy at all levels of education (Pang et al., 2003).

## ***Skills***

Skills are the ability of individuals to carry out certain tasks or jobs efficiently and effectively, both physical and mental. Skills are developed through repeated practice and hands-on experience, so that a person is able to perform activities with a certain level of proficiency. In the context of education, skills are often divided into basic skills, thinking skills, and social skills (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

In the modern era, 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication are important for students to have. Skill development focuses not only on cognitive aspects, but also affective and psychomotor aspects. Therefore, learning strategies that emphasize hands-on practice, problem-solving, and teamwork are highly recommended in supporting overall skill mastery (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

## **Narrative Text**

Narrative text is a type of text that aims to tell a series of events arranged chronologically, both based on reality and fiction. The text has a general structure consisting of orientation, complications, and resolution. The narrative serves to entertain the reader or listener with an interesting storyline, strong characters, and suspenseful conflicts (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). In the world of education, narrative texts are widely used to improve students' language skills, especially in the aspects of reading and writing. Through narrative texts, students learn to recognize the intrinsic elements of the story such as themes, settings, characters, and points of view. In addition, narrative texts can help students develop imagination and empathy through the experiences conveyed in stories (Derewianka, 1990).

## ***Model Cooperative Integrated Reading And Composition (CIRC)***

The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model is one of the cooperative learning approaches designed to improve students' reading and writing skills in an integrated manner. In this model, students work in small, heterogeneous groups to read the text, discuss the content of the reading, and write and edit essays together. Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) emphasizes collaboration and responsibility between group members to help each other in the learning process (Stevens, Madden, Slavin, & Farnish, 1987).

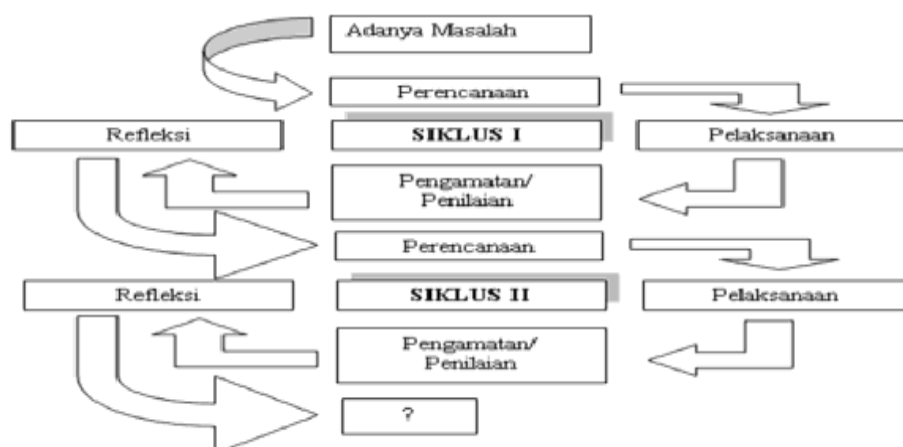
Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) has been proven to improve student learning outcomes in terms of reading comprehension and writing ability

because it involves students in the process of critical thinking and social interaction. This model also provides space for strengthening literacy skills through diverse activities such as vocabulary introduction, reading comprehension exercises, and creative writing activities. With an integrated approach, Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) is suitable for application at various levels of education, especially for language development at the primary and secondary levels (Slavin, 1995).

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was carried out at SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung with the subject of grade III students as the main focus, considering that they are the direct recipients of the learning interventions applied. Research activities are carried out for one semester and are divided into two action cycles, with each cycle including stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, which are adjusted to the class III learning schedule (Suharto, 2023). In the implementation of this research, the researcher collaborated with grade III teachers who were directly involved in learning activities, school principals who provided permits and administrative support, and supervisors or education staff who assisted in the observation and documentation process, so that research activities could run objectively and according to procedures (Kunandar, 2008).

The learning improvement process is carried out with a Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach which refers to the spiral model from Kemmis and McTaggart, as quoted by (Aqib and Murtadlo 2022), which consists of three stages, namely pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II. Each cycle is designed in four main stages, namely planning, execution of actions, observation, and reflection. This approach allows learning improvement to be carried out gradually and continuously based on the results of the evaluation in each cycle.



In the pre-cycle stage, learning is focused on students' ability to read and understand simple narrative texts and write narrative stories based on the right text structure. The

learning model used is Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), with methods such as group discussions, integrated reading, guided writing, and questions and answers (Asrifan, 2018). Learning includes understanding narrative texts, narrative storytelling based on experiences, and working together in groups. The assessment was carried out on three aspects, namely reading comprehension, writing skills, and student cooperation in the group (Sholihah, 2022).

In cycle I, learning is directed so that students can understand the structure of the narrative text through the text "The Arrogant Rabbit". Students read the text in groups, discuss the content of the story, answer comprehension questions, and rewrite their own version of the story in groups. This activity aims to improve student literacy, understanding story structure, and the ability to work together in groups. The activity was closed with reflection and follow-up assignments to strengthen students' understanding of the material.

In cycle II, the focus of learning is focused on strengthening the skills of composing story frameworks and writing narrative texts based on these frameworks. Students read the text "Elephant and Ant Friendship" in groups, put together a story outline, and then write a narrative story with a logical and clear plot. Some students read their work in front of the class and receive feedback from peers as a form of peer evaluation. This cycle aims to strengthen students' narrative writing skills through understanding structure, collaboration, and shared reflection.

The data analysis technique in this study was carried out quantitatively by calculating the average value of student learning outcomes through descriptive analysis.

$$\text{Nilai Akhir} = \left( \frac{\text{Perolehan Skor}}{\text{Jumlah Skor Keseluruhan}} \right) \times 100$$

Learning completeness is classified into two categories, namely complete ( $\geq$  score of 65) and incomplete (score  $< 65$ ). In addition, to assess the success of learning classically, the criterion is used that at least 85% of students must reach the complete category.

$$KK = \left( \frac{\text{Jumlah Siswa yang Tuntas Belajar}}{\text{Jumlah Siswa}} \right) \times 100\%$$

If the completeness of learning has reached this number, then it can be concluded that learning is classically successful.

#### **IV. RESEARCH RESULT**

This research was conducted in grade III of SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung with a total of 10 students. The research uses a qualitative descriptive approach through observation techniques, field notes, documentation of student work, and informal interviews.

##### **Pre-Cycle Results**

In the pre-cycle stage, the initial condition of Indonesian learning in grade III shows that most students do not understand the content of the narrative text read by the teacher. This can be seen from the results of initial observation and evaluation, where only 3 out of 10 students (30%) were able to answer the reading content questions correctly. Students are seen to still read mechanically, just following the text without understanding the content or message of the story being read.

Students' writing skills are also still very limited. Out of ten students, only 2 students (20%) were able to write narrative texts with a coherent structure. The resulting writing is still simple, only copying the content of the story that has been read, without any development of plot, characters, or story setting. This shows that students do not fully understand the basic concepts of narrative texts, both in terms of content and structure.

Learning activities during the pre-cycle are still dominated by lecture methods and individual exercises. Teachers tend to give explanations in front of the class, then ask students to answer questions or write independently. This learning model makes students passive and less actively involved in the learning process.

Observations also noted that the classroom atmosphere still tends to be calm, but not because of the high focus on learning, but because students have not been involved in active and collaborative learning activities. Students rarely ask questions or discuss, and even look hesitant when asked to express their opinions or tell stories in front of the class. Overall, pre-cycle conditions illustrate the need for a change in the learning approach used by teachers. The low reading comprehension and writing skills of students are the main indicators that Indonesian learning requires a strategy that involves students more actively and contextually. Therefore, the application of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model is one of the relevant alternative solutions.

Results of Cycle I Cycle I is the initial stage of the implementation of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model. In this cycle, students began to be introduced to reading activities in pairs, group discussions, and writing stories based on reading comprehension. The teacher divides students into small, heterogeneous

groups so that students learn from each other and support each other in understanding the narrative text.

The observation results showed a positive change compared to the pre-cycle stage. As many as 6 out of 10 students (60%) were able to answer the reading questions correctly. They began to show the ability to identify characters, plots, and story messages, although they were not entirely accurate. In the aspect of writing, 5 students (50%) were able to compose a narrative story with a basic structure such as orientation and complications. Although it is still simple, students' writing begins to show an effort to convey stories in a coherent manner. Some students begin to add imaginative characters and insert moral messages at the end of the story. The use of vocabulary and sentence structure still needs to be improved, but the spirit of writing and the courage to express ideas have begun to grow in students. When it comes to classroom activities, students seem more enthusiastic. A total of 7 students were active in group discussions, and 6 students showed active participation in the presentation of their group work in front of the class.

From the results of reflection at the end of cycle I, it can be concluded that the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model is starting to show a positive impact on student engagement and the quality of their learning outcomes. Although not all students have achieved the expected indicators, the learning process has gone better compared to the pre-cycle. This is the basis for perfecting the application of the learning model in the next cycle.

## **Results of Cycle II**

Results of Cycle II Cycle II is carried out by improving the process of cycle I, especially in providing assistance during discussion and writing. The teacher provides more concrete examples of the structure of narrative texts and increases the practice of composing a story framework before students start writing. Paired reading and group discussions remained the main part, but this time students were encouraged to compose stories based on an agreed framework. Significant developments can be seen in students' understanding of the content of narrative texts. As many as 9 out of 10 students (90%) managed to answer the reading content questions correctly. They not only understand the content of the story, but can also explain elements such as characters, setting, plot, and moral messages more clearly. Group discussions are more active and directed, with students asking each other questions and helping to explain the content of the readings.



In writing activities, there is a very good improvement. Eight students (80%) were able to write a narrative text with a complete structure: orientation, complications, and resolution. Their writing is neater, concise, and begins to show the characteristics of their respective writing styles. The use of vocabulary is also more varied, and some students are able to develop storylines in a creative and engaging way. Student participation in the class has also increased. Most of the students dare to read the results of their stories in front of the class. Other friends provide comments and feedback, both verbally and through expression symbols on the reflection board. This activity makes students feel more appreciated and more confident in writing. In general, cycle II shows that the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model has succeeded in creating an active, fun, and productive learning atmosphere. Students not only develop from the cognitive side, but also from the affective and social.

Graph 1 Development of Students' Reading and Writing Narrative Texts



The group work activity also showed progress: 9 students were actively discussing, and 7 students were enthusiastic when reading stories in front of the class. Teachers and friends gave appreciation and feedback on the work presented. The group work activity also showed progress: 9 students were actively discussing, and 7 students were enthusiastic when reading stories in front of the class. Teachers and friends gave appreciation and feedback on the work presented.

## Discussion

Based on the results of two action cycles, the application of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model has proven to be effective in improving reading comprehension and narrative text writing skills of grade III students of SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung. Some of the key findings in this study are:

### **Reading Comprehension Improved**

The improvement in students' reading comprehension appears to be significant from pre-cycle to cycle II. At first, only 3 out of 10 students (30%) were able to answer questions based on the content of the reading correctly. This shows that most students have difficulty in capturing important information from the narrative text given by the teacher. They tend to read aloud, but do not understand the meaning contained in the reading. After the implementation of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model, especially in cycle I, students' understanding began to improve. They are trained to read in pairs (partner reading), discuss in small groups, and help each other understand the content of the story. Students are also encouraged to ask questions and pitch ideas based on the readings. This activity makes the reading process more meaningful and not just spelling words. In cycle II, the results of observations showed that 9 out of 10 students (90%) were able to understand the content of the reading.

### **Writing Skills Improved**

Students' narrative text writing skills also undergo a clear development. In the early stages, students' writing is still very simple, tends to copy the text that has been read, and does not show a complete narrative structure. In cycle I, only 5 out of 10 students were able to write a story with basic structures such as orientation and complications. However, the structure of their story is not complete and the language used is still limited. The application of Cooperative Writing in the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model is an effective strategy in improving students' writing skills. Students are encouraged to write in groups first, then rewrite individually with more confidence. This process involves discussing story ideas, characters, and plots, which makes it easier for them to construct a coherent and logical story. In cycle II, as many as 8 students (80%) were able to write a narrative text with a complete structure, namely orientation, complications, and resolutions.

The students' writing results show that writing exercises accompanied by discussion, revision, and feedback have a major impact on their abilities. The teacher provides guidance in composing a story outline before writing, which makes it easier for students to compose a plot in a sequential manner. This process also trains students in organizing ideas and using Indonesian well. Overall, learning to write with a cooperative approach has proven to be more effective compared to an individual approach. Students become more

enthusiastic, less burdened, and motivated to write because they feel supported by the group and given the opportunity to express themselves through their writing.

### **1. Student Engagement and Enthusiasm**

One of the positive impacts of the application of the Cooperative Writing model in the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model is the increased involvement and enthusiasm of students in the learning process. In the pre-cycle stage, the classroom atmosphere tends to be passive. Only 3 to 4 students were active during the learning process, while others were more silent and waiting for the teacher's direction. This makes learning feel monotonous and less exciting. After learning is carried out in groups and interactively, the classroom atmosphere becomes more lively. Students begin to show the courage to ask questions, give opinions, and discuss with their peers. They feel more comfortable working in small groups, because they have the support and motivation of their peers. Even students who were previously shy began to show initiative to speak and convey ideas. In cycle II, the participation rate increased significantly. A total of 9 out of 10 students appear to be active.

The presentation of group writing in front of the class is also an important moment that encourages student confidence. They feel proud when the stories they write are read and receive appreciation from teachers and friends. This activity forms a positive and competitive learning atmosphere in a healthy manner. This high engagement shows that a collaborative approach to learning not only improves learning outcomes, but also forms a positive attitude towards learning. Students become more independent, confident, and value the learning process as a fun and meaningful social experience.

### **Structured and Integrated Activities**

The success of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model is also supported by a structured and integrated learning design. Each learning activity is designed to support each other between reading and writing skills. The process starts from reading the text individually, then in pairs, followed by group discussions, and ending with writing activities and presentations. This series of activities provides a complete and comprehensive learning experience for students. Reading activities are no longer carried out mechanically, but are directed to understand the content and structure of the text. Students are taught how to find the main idea, recognize the characters and settings, and understand the moral message. After reading, students are not immediately asked to write, but are given time to discuss the content of the text and develop a story outline first. With

clear and continuous stages, students have guidance in completing their assignments. They don't feel confused.

The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model also provides a variety in learning activities that make students not easily bored. Learning not only listens to the teacher's explanations, but also involves social activities such as reading together, storytelling, collaborative writing, and presentations. These activities encourage active engagement and encourage the development of overall language skills. Through this structured and integrated activity, students not only understand the content of the reading, but are also able to develop ideas, rewrite them, and express them in the form of stories. This shows that well-designed learning will have a positive impact on learning outcomes, as well as shape students' character and social skills. The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model is proven to create an active, fun learning environment and encourage critical thinking skills and cooperation.

## **V. CONCLUSSIONS**

Based on the results of the class action research that has been carried out in two cycles, it can be concluded that:

1. The application of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model can effectively improve the quality of the Indonesian learning process, especially in the aspects of reading comprehension and narrative text writing skills in grade III of SD Negeri 09 Lubuk Alung.
2. The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model helps students more actively engage in learning activities. Reading activities in pairs, group discussions, story writing, and presentations have been proven to increase students' motivation and confidence.
3. Students' reading comprehension increased from 3 people (30%) in the pre-cycle to 9 people (90%) in the second cycle. This happens because discussion and practice activities are carried out repeatedly and collaboratively.
4. Narrative text writing skills have also increased, from 2 people (20%) who are able to write with a basic structure at the beginning, to 8 people (80%) who are able to write with a complete structure and collapse at the end of cycle II.
5. The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) model provides a more meaningful learning experience, as students not only read and write passively, but also interact, give each other feedback, and learn cooperatively.

Thus, the use of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) learning model has proven to be effective and feasible to be applied in improving the literacy skills of elementary school students, especially in comprehending and writing narrative texts.

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