

Innovation for Islamic Education Instruction through Reflective Learning

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Abstract. This current research aimed at elaborating an innovation for Islamic Education instruction through reflective learning. Constructivism paradigm was used utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach in the form of library research, and data were collected from the documentation. While the content analysis was administered to analyze the data, triangulation on data source was used for validation. The ultimate result of the research was to generate an instruction that was designed, developed, and managed by full of creativity and dynamicity to create innovative instruction. The importance of learning approach, especially reflective learning approach, influences not only the teaching but also the learning, especially through. Thus, it was supposed to raise students' critical behavior, which motivated them to learn. In Islamic education instruction, reflective learning approach attempted to revolutionize the way the students learn by focusing on behavioral context and implementing the Islamic teachings.

Keywords: *innovation for Islamic education instruction, reflective learning*

INTRODUCTION

Innovation for Islamic Education instruction in school needs serious attention from all teachers since curriculum transformation needs significant revitalization [1]. It is believed that a teacher is the one who has the biggest responsibility in education process because every aspect of learning such as instructional method, curriculum, and materials involve teachers [2], [3]. In essence, innovation has to be originated from teachers as they possess a good and deep understanding of the teaching methods and materials [4]. In addition, the importance of innovation for instruction not only gives advantage to students for learning but also benefit teachers. Indeed, the harmony between instruction and students will not be achieved if the teachers do not master crucial instruction aspects that need transformation [5], [6]. One of the essential aspects is the instructional method [5]. In a nutshell, this paper aims to show an exclusive approach different from the conventional one which educational practitioners have been familiar with. Thus, reflective learning is recommended as an alternative approach for better education.

This paper seeks to examine the improvement in students' critical behavior and interests in learning in

responding to various approaches and methods. Reflective learning approach reflects student diverse characteristics, and critical learning process [7]. It is a special instructional approach utterly different from other approaches, which includes processing skill, logical skill, and other critical skills [8].

An innovation equipped with learning approach must be completely different from the traditional ones and based on the philosophical framework in performing something new for instruction. In reflective learning approach, the priority is to transform the approach, not necessarily the instruction. For this reason, this sort of approach is believed to be different from common approaches that mainly emphasize the specific concept, hypothesis, and assumption. Thus, the reflective learning approach is expected to improve students' critical behaviors in learning.

METHOD

This current research employed constructivism paradigm using descriptively qualitative approach through library research. Data consisted of primary and secondary data. The data was collected through documentation and analyzed using content analysis with further process of specific categorization and deselection. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation was performed [9].

RESULT

Reflective Learning Approach for Instruction

The use of reflective learning approach in instruction does not solely aim to alter the way of teaching or learning. Instead, there are some vital aspects in reflective learning; which is often neglected by teachers in conducting instructional activities. One of them is the students' critical behavior. When the students' critical behavior is not evident or, is declining, the instructional activities might be 'threatened.' Essentially, instruction mainly aims to encourage students to learn and use their intelligence as a result of critical process derived from a complex process of learning.

The reflective learning approach is a critical process involving learners and specific learning conditions [7], [10]. The learners serve as an active party who can think and change the condition. In other words, reflective learning is a learning approach that allows students to reflect on what to learn, what to think, and what to do

next. Also, it emphasizes learning from experiences [11], [12].

Margot Brown *et al.* stated that reflection is essential for transformation and integration of new experiences and understanding prior knowledge [11]. Instead of revealing what materials to teach in advance, the reflective process shows what the students learn and think. Similarly, Jennifer Moon argued that reflection is a mental process to target a specific outcome based on complex or unstructured viewpoints when there is no solution found [13]. The importance of raising students' self-awareness of learning can develop not only student critical thinking but also their 'living' component to raise their sensitivity about the essence of learning.

Gognon and Collay saw reflection as an action of self-portrayal about what has been felt, seen, and understood on how to create and gain new understanding or improve learning outcome, as well as on what to do and think about next [14]. Thus, the awareness of personal independence to gain advantage from the instructional process can be generated from reflective learning. It is due to the fact that, in classroom instruction, reflection constitutes the vital component closely related to instructional activities. In general, teachers attempt to create a specific situation for students where they make a reflection on their own [15], [16]. In its real implementation, there are going to be a variety of typical instructional strategies, such as questioning, motivating for self-measurement, and prompting to complete tasks given [17].

Based on the aforementioned reality on reflective learning, teachers are allowed to make use of critical analysis on actual occurrences in the instructional activities. Also, they are allowed to ask students to analyze and criticize something based on their point of views or what they have been learned. The reflective learning is implemented on the basis of constructivism paradigm of learning, which encourages students' independence in learning to create an effective constructive learning process, so as to result in efficient use of knowledge [18]. Thus, a constructive substance in reflective learning approach refers to a notion that reality is constructed by learners based on their own mental activities [12].

According to the notion, humans are neither a receiver nor a reality interpreter. Instead, they are assumed to construct their own reality by involving mental activities. Thinking is just a perception of what will happen. Similarly, learners construct a perception of what they are learning. Meanwhile, the reality triggers behavioral shift, such as a change of viewpoint, which will activate the critical behavior. That said, all humans are capable of constructing a different internal reality concept on the basis of a unique framework of experiences or based on universal and personal beliefs.

Reflective Learning for Islamic Education

Reflective learning based on the context of Islamic Education has a philosophical meaning to revolutionize students' way of learning, which focuses on behavioral

context and appreciation on Islamic teachings. This approach is deemed innovative because it engages students not only in] cognitive learning but also in applicative learning, especially to understand Islamic values integrated into the learning materials. Reflective learning is an innovative approach intentionally designed to assist students in developing their understanding and raising their awareness of Islamic values through the reflective process within instructional activities [19].

According to Given, reflective learning is the most effective system in Islamic Education instruction to complement other previous learning approaches. In addition to the cognitive aspect, the awareness of surrounding reality is essential in reflective learning. The learning deals with functions of the brain and entire parts of the body that are unified as high-order-thinking and problem-solving skills in daily life based on Islamic teachings. Currently, mental reflection system revives the past in order to see the future through a process of self-awareness of Islamic teachings [20].

According to Perkin, the reflective method allows us to be whomever we want [20]. Additionally, Sparrow *et al.* stated that instruction is a part of learning and knowledge enrichment. It seems that the actualization of sustainable development in Islamic Education is intended to appreciate the religious teachings [21].

Therefore, it is noticeable that reflective learning constitutes a systematic learning system. In its implementation, teachers give learners the opportunity to analyze or elaborate on their individual experiences to facilitate experience-based instruction. Furthermore, reflective learning allows students to think creatively and critically by self-questioning through attitudes. Besides, it encourages students' independence in actualizing an accurate, applicative, and advanced learning. Indeed, reflective learning suggests that the process is a product of thinking and *vice versa*.

There are six key phases of reflective learning according to Tebow (2008): 1) mental discomfort – individuals are aware that there is something messing up in their mind; 2) identification and clarification from attention – individuals are aware of a specific problem; and therefore, try to overcome it based on their own experiences; 3) openness to new information – there should be openness to new information from internal and external sources, along with the capability of observing and adopting a variety of perspectives; 4) resolution – in this stage, an assistance is given when someone feels bad about the problem he is facing; 5) defining self-continuity in the present and the future time – students are challenged with something referring to self-transformation from time to time, and 6) making decision – it is deciding whether individuals will take action based on the result of the reflective process or not ; it is also considered as a result of reflective learning [22].

The Urgency of Learning Innovation through Reflective Learning for Islamic Education

Reflective learning is expected to improve Islamic Education instruction. In essence, learning refers to any

activity that leads to behavioral transformation at individuals who undergo the process of learning [23]. In line with the main purpose of Islamic Education, the behavioral transformation has to be actualized at the end of learning to meet the expected goal. Through reflective learning, it is believed that the essence of reflective Islamic education, firstly originated from self-awareness that affects the behavioral pattern, will come true. Beginning from the concept of intellectual learning, the ultimate goal is to create actual learning about the meaning of life and to explore the authentic learning as an attempt of educating students. [24]. This is supported by Gagne and Briggs, who defined learning as a set of conditions, events, and situations that are intentionally designed to influence learners to construct an easy learning process [23].

Secondly, an accurate reflection of Islamic Education mirrors the students learning experiences in which they performed well, both individually or in groups [25]. Therefore, instructional activities using reflective learning approach can provide students with abundance experiences, which will be actualized in their actual behaviors. Besides, students make an evaluation about what and how they have been learning and what they will probably do in different learning situations. It can be said that reflection is a way of learning to avoid possible mistakes for better performance in the future.

The roles of reflective learning, especially for Islamic Education, can be identified from three significant aspects, namely: 1) assistance to construct understanding, restructure understanding based on cognitive structure and transform the learning; 2) assistance to represent the learning in which reconsideration and feedback processes are in need of understanding manipulation; and 3) assistance to develop understanding deeper than before (Brown *et al.*). By reflection, students are allowed to think about what is being and have learned previously, and about how their responses to the past and future events are [26].

John Dewey in his book entitled "*Why Reflective Thinking Must be an Educational Aim*," as quoted by Gagnon and Collay, proposed three main aims of reflection: raising awareness, systematical preparation and invention, and significant enrichment (Gagnon *et al.*). In its implementation, reflection can be useful cognitive, psychomotor, affective, and interpersonal domains. Also, it can be used to help students construct new schemata in regards to particular theories and concepts. In this case, self-awareness is vital during the instructional activities, especially for Islamic Education context, which is often considered textual and normative. By reflective learning approach, it is expected that there will be systematical internalization in religious instruction, from cognitive state to meaningful appreciation [27].

CONCLUSION

There are some critical points that can be summarized here. Firstly, the administration of reflective learning

approach in Islamic Education instruction is often considered a novel thing since appreciation has been integrated into the instruction. It means that material understanding and appreciation process is totally inseparable. Secondly, some new things that exist in Islamic Education instruction through reflective learning include reconditioning of awareness raising of the school environment, which has been material-oriented and overlook the process of recognition and recondition of self-awareness. Thirdly, reflection may be challenging if conventional approaches are mostly used, especially when discussing the current event in the globalized era. Thus, it is imperative to apply new approaches (e.g., contemporary approaches) for better and improved learning.

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