

Transformative Learning Strategies in an Effort to Improve Critical Thinking Skills

Saihlul Atho Alahul Huda^{1*}, Amirul Mirza Ghulam²

^{1,2}Islamic Education, Universitas KH. A. Wahab Hasbullah

¹Email : ghulammirza218@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine Transformative Learning Strategies in Efforts to Improve Critical Thinking of Basic Cadre Training Participants of PMII Tabassam Rayon, Wahab Hasbullah Jombang Commissariat. The approach used in this research is qualitative, with data collection methods through in-depth interviews with organizational administrators of PMII Tabassam Rayon, Wahab Hasbullah Jombang Commissariat. The results of the interview show that transformative learning strategies can influence the critical thinking of participants in PMII basic cadre training. This is proven by what the Head of Rayon said that transformative learning strategies enable participants to stimulate their thinking power for knowledge, and the development of knowledge also influences courage. participants in conveying ideas and notions, as well as making them aware of the shackles of naivety and social reality. Thus, transformative learning has proven to be effective as learning that can improve the critical thinking of participants who take part in PMII Rayon Tabassam basic cadre training. This research suggests that the PMII organization can perfect learning strategies in education which of course takes an adult and liberating approach.

Keywords: *Critical Thinking; Basic Cadre Training; Transformative Learning*

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental reason for the need to change the traditional classroom teaching practices is the psychological factor marked by the emergence of learning theories (Nurfarhanah, 2018). Learning theories describe learning as a change in behavior that can be observed, measured, and evaluated specifically.

Nowadays, the frequent changes in educational curricula burden teachers with a heavy workload, causing the essence of educating students' character and knowledge to be increasingly neglected. The focus tends to shift towards completing tasks rather than enhancing and monitoring individual development. Learning theories are essential skills that educators should possess as a foundational bridge in transferring knowledge (Rahman, 2018). While teaching without a theoretical basis is not inherently problematic, having a theoretical foundation allows teachers to have indicators and benchmarks for determining success in the educational setting. In practice, many educators still overlook the teaching skills implied by learning theories.

Many people believe that understanding theories without application is futile, likening it to an empty barrel that makes a lot of noise. As a result, in educational practice, it is often the case that delivering lessons relies heavily on practice without the theoretical framework, leading to educational practices that attempt to teach without clear outcomes and achievements.

The learning forum in the Basic Cadre Training organized by the Indonesian Muslim Student Movement (PMII) Tabassam, Wahab Hasbullah Jombang, also responds to the dynamics of education in the aspects of learning and material delivery. PMII Tabassam believes that teaching and learning activities should be focused on fundamentally changing attitudes and behaviors. Through the Basic Cadre Training, the aim is to improve cognitive quality through a teaching and learning process based on learning theories, resulting in what is termed "transformative learning." This approach uses adult learning strategies, emphasizes case studies relevant to reality, focuses on problem-solving, and enhances critical

thinking skills supported by a Stimulus-Response technique in each learning activity.

Stimulus refers to efforts to provide stimulation before learning begins, with the intent to stimulate initial thought patterns so that learners can later respond to what the speaker presents. A stimulus is the internal and external learning environment of a child that causes learning to occur. Response is the outcome or impact of a stimulus. Learning involves strengthening bonds, connections, traits, and behavioral tendencies. Learning theories emphasize environmental factors, focus on partial factors, use objective methods to emphasize observable behavior, are mechanical in nature, and emphasize the past.

METHOD

The approach taken in this final research project is qualitative, utilizing a descriptive-analytical method (Adhimah, 2020). This process aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, actions, and more, in a holistic manner and through descriptions in words and language within a specific natural context.

Qualitative research of a descriptive nature involves collecting data in the form of images, written or spoken words from individuals, and observable behaviors rather than numbers or statistical data (Subandi, 2011). This research is a type of descriptive qualitative study aimed at describing and analyzing in detail the relationship between learning strategies and the enhancement of critical thinking (Ambarwati et al., 2022). The research method used is a case study, involving the collection of data and information in-depth, detailed, intensive, and systematic about behavior, social settings, or groups, using various methods and techniques as well as multiple sources of information to effectively understand how people, events, and natural settings operate or function in their context. This study is categorized as descriptive qualitative because it seeks to describe how Transformative Learning Strategies are employed to improve the critical thinking of PMII Tabassam Basic Cadre training participants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This training is designed using an adult learning approach, with the primary goal of equipping participants with various essential skills. Participants are expected to understand the complexity of issues marked by conflict. This capability will provide them with the courage to be assertive and offer constructive criticism of the social conditions around them. The aim is to encourage positive change and advocate for common interests, both for the organization and the broader community.

Human Role and Self-Actualization: This training emphasizes the importance of each individual's role as a citizen. Participants are encouraged to focus on and strive for self-actualization within their social dimensions. This can be achieved by developing their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor potential, talents, and abilities. Consequently, they can play an active role in the political process and contribute to achieving common goals.

Learning Model: The learning model in this training is designed to enlighten and liberate participants. They are encouraged to be active participants in the learning process, not just passive recipients of information. The materials covered are not only theoretical or advisory but also reflect real societal conditions and personal or group experiences. This aims to eliminate the hierarchy of knowledge and emphasizes proving knowledge through concrete actions.

Understanding Learning Styles: Jung's theory divides cognitive functions into four dimensions: extraversion vs. introversion, sensation vs. intuition, thinking vs. feeling, and judging vs. perceiving. By understanding students' learning styles based on these dimensions, educators can tailor their strategies to enhance learning effectiveness. Jung also highlights the importance of developing a balanced psyche. Facilitators can help participants develop superior psychological functions and reduce inferior functions, allowing for a more focused and effective learning experience.

The adult learning approach in this training aims to equip participants with essential skills for understanding and addressing the complexities of social and political situations and to encourage them to actively participate in the political process and self-actualization as responsible citizens. The liberating, reality-based learning model is expected to produce critical, courageous individuals who can positively contribute to society.

In various learning processes, Kristeva notes in her book that "there is no lecturing approach that is instructive because, fundamentally, there are no teachers and students being instructed—there are only participants and facilitators." When using the terms "teacher" and "student," everyone involved in this training is both a "teacher and student" simultaneously.

Since there are no longer boundaries between teacher and student, the process is no longer a one-way “teaching-learning” process but a “dialogic communication” process involving various activities (group discussions, role-playing, etc.) with media (props, graphics, audio-visual aids, etc.) that facilitates critical, reflective, and participatory dialogue among all participants.

Table 1 Results of analysis using Paulo Freire's theory

Aspect	Paulo Freire's Education	Basic Cadre Training
Draft	Humanist education	Education to develop critical thinking skills and attitudes scientific
Objective	Can produce changes in students, both changes in the quality of thinking, personal qualities, social qualities, independence and quality its society	Can produce changes in students, both changes in the quality of thinking, personal qualities, social qualities, independence and quality its society
Method	Emphasizes intellectual freedom between educators and students, through open dialogue	Emphasizes intellectual freedom between educators and students, through open dialogue
Educator Position	facilitator, dynamist, mediator and motivator	Mentor, facilitator
Student Position	As a center for learning activities	As an active subject in Learning

The Basic Cadre Training of PR PMII Tabassam, Wahab Hasbullah Jombang, is part of an awareness-raising effort. This awareness is encapsulated in a series of activities with various programs consisting of pre-material, material, and post-material stages, designed in the style of Frankfurt philosopher Paulo Freire’s approach. Paulo Freire developed the concept of human consciousness, which includes three levels: magical consciousness, naive consciousness, and critical consciousness. These levels of consciousness have a significant correlation with education, especially in the context of liberating an

Magic Consciousness

This consciousness is characterized by fatalism and dependence on the power of others. People at this level are unable to see the connections between different factors.

Correlation with Education: Magical consciousness is a stage where individuals are unaware and do not realize that they are unable to accomplish a task. People at this level do not understand what they are doing and are indifferent to what happens around them. They merely follow along without a clear purpose.

Naive Consciousness

Naive consciousness is a stage where individuals can question and recognize reality but are still marked by primitive and naive attitudes. People at this level often identify with the elite, revert to the past, or accept pre-existing explanations.

In this phase of consciousness, participants begin to understand the issues around them but are still uncertain about what actions to take. At this stage, the training includes designing a specific forum, known as a Focus Group Discussion (FGD). This forum is a phase where participants are encouraged to think in a textual-contextual manner, using a case study approach. Participants engage in discussions and deepen their understanding of the material by analyzing various issues, thus learning how to critique problems. The transcendental aspect of critical thinking involves participants learning to critique themselves. This stage of consciousness is a lengthy process leading to a transformation from naive consciousness to critical consciousness.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness is a stage where individuals can interpret issues with depth, confidently engage in discussions, and are capable of both accepting and rejecting ideas while thinking critically. People at this level can reflect and see cause-and-effect relationships.

At this stage, individuals are able to understand social issues by mapping problems, identifying key factors, and determining influencing elements. Additionally, they can propose alternative solutions to social problems. Society begins to view systems and structures as sources of issues.

A structural approach is used to avoid “blaming the victims” and to conduct critical analysis of social, political, economic, and cultural structures and systems, and their impact on societal conditions. It is hoped that after undergoing the awareness-raising process, education will be able to liberate individuals from the constraints of human existence. In this final stage, education liberates individuals while also restoring their inherent potential. The concept of “liberation” refers to freeing individuals from oppressive constraints that commonly hinder their lives. In this context, the process of liberation is characterized by optimism, resistance, and critical thinking.

As an effort to free individuals from backwardness, ignorance, or the oppressive silence of culture, an awareness-raising movement is initiated. The aim of this movement is for individuals to recognize both their environment and themselves. It enables individuals to critically understand their backward living conditions. At the very least, this awareness-raising effort helps individuals comprehend their own conditions and analyze the issues causing them.

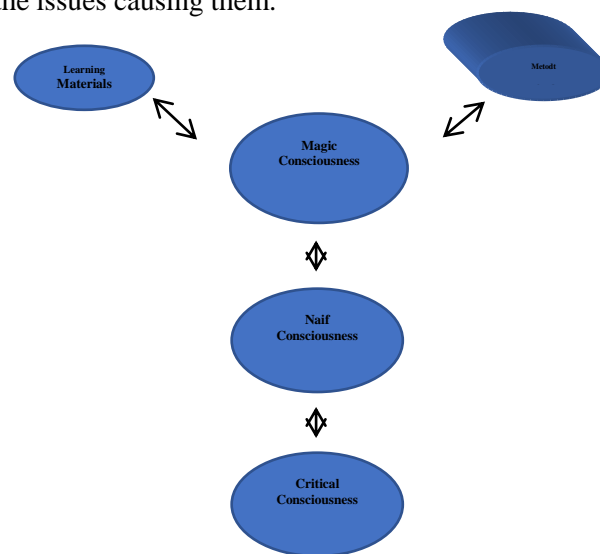


Figure 1. level of human consciousness

CONCLUSIONS

Transformative learning strategies use an adult learning approach with the primary goal of equipping participants with essential skills. This includes understanding the complexity of issues marked by conflict and empowering participants with the courage to be assertive and offer constructive criticism about their social conditions.

Transformative learning enhances participants' confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions. This happens because transformative learning focuses not only on providing information or skills but also on transforming learners' thinking, attitudes, and beliefs. As a result, they become more confident in defending and communicating their ideas.

An effective learning strategy, adequate learning facilities, excellent teachers/resources, and appropriate learning methods are key components in the initial process of developing critical thinking methods, ultimately leading to transformative thinking.

REFERENCES

- Adhimah, S. (2020). Peran orang tua dalam menghilangkan rasa canggung anak usia dini (studi kasus di desa karangbong rt. 06 rw. 02 Gedangan-Sidoarjo). *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 9(1), 57–62. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jpa.v9i1.31618>
- Ambarwati, D., Wibowo, U. B., Arsyiadanti, H., & Susanti, S. (2022). Studi Literatur: Peran Inovasi Pendidikan pada Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi Digital. *Jurnal Inovasi Teknologi Pendidikan*, 8(2), 173–184. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jitp.v8i2.43560>
- Nurfarhanah, N. (2018). Hakikat dan konsep-konsep dasar psikologi. *Universitas Negeri Padang*, November, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.30139.67368>

- Rahman, A. (2018). Urgensi Pedagogik dalam Pembelajaran dan Implikasinya dalam Pendidikan. *BELAJEA: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 3(1), 83. <https://doi.org/10.29240/bjpi.v3i1.358>
- Subandi. (2011). Qualitative Description as one Method in Performing Arts Study. *Harmonia*, 19, 173–179.