The Hikmah Pedagogy of Philosophical Inquiry for Thinking and Communication Skills

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Background

Thinking is commanded by Allah as evident in the Qur'an and also from the tradition of the Prophet. The Malaysian Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School (KESIM) emphasizes creative and critical thinking skills (KIKIS) and Teacher Education Programmes even offered courses for pre- and in-service teachers. However, we lack a programme that is appropriate for Muslim youth. This was the impetus for the researcher's interest in this field and this research is an effort to contribute to the development of Muslim youth from within their Islamic tradition.

There are many thinking programmes already in existence. However, this research project is based on the notion of philosophy for rational thinking. Lipman's Philosophy for Children Programme was used as a model. Using his framework, we have attempted to develop a philosophical inquiry programme for Muslim youth that incorporates common, central and contestable concepts in Muslim society and also Islamic ethical values, and thus the name HIKMAH. The objective of the programme is to make Muslim youth of various levels (primary secondary and tertiary) become more critical, creative and ethical in their thoughts and also more articulate in their presentation of arguments. This programme also improves students' communicative and language skills. Two important elements that are essential for the success of the programme are the specialized instructional materials and specially trained teachers because of its unique methodology. In this regards, we have worked to produce the materials and also have tested them with the students. I have also trained teachers using modules that I have worked on. The teachers need to help students make sense of their world, and to open up new worlds of knowledge and experience.

The outcomes from this research project are teacher training modules, instructional materials – narratives and concept games, theses, papers, and a continuous Hikmah School Holiday Programme and partnership with schools.

Published Research paper


Theses


Participants' views of the programme

1. "It opens my mind to new ways of looking at things," 13 year old student (20/1/1/67).
2. "It gives me confidence to express my view and defend it," 14 year old student (20/1/1/67).
3. "It improves my English," 10 year old student (20/1/1/67).
4. "It improves my thinking ability," 11 year old student (20/1/1/67).
5. "The philosophy programme also improves the confidence level and helps me make friends with others.," Master student AMOL (18/8/07).
6. "These skills, Argumentation, Overcome the feeling of shy," first year student KIRKHS (18/8/07).
7. "Before I join this programme I feel afraid to ask questions if I didn't understand I prefer to keep quiet. Now I am able to ask questions," First year student KIRKHS (18/8/07).
8. "This programme also helps me to think more and make reason for something to make a conclusion," 15 year old student (20/1/2/67).
9. "I like this programme because it gives me opportunity to speak in English and became more confident," 14 year old student (20/1/2/67).
10. "This programme improves me to raise questions and improve my vocabulary and grammar. It also teach me how to make moral judgement," 15 year old student (20/1/2/67).

Research

1. Rosnani Hashim conducted an experimental study in 2003 to find out the effect of doing philosophy on critical thinking skills among primary school students. Students, who were from the average ability group, were subjected to doing philosophy in Malay language for one hour per week for 12 weeks. The effect on critical thinking skills was measured using The New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills. Pre and post test scores were compared. Significant improvement was reported for high ability group.
2. Rosnani, in 2004, replicated the same study but on high and average ability groups in Tampin, Negeri Sembilan. Both groups (12 years old students) were doing philosophy using English language for one hour per day for three weeks. Similar improvement was reported for high ability group.
3. In 2005, Moomalothman conducted a comparative study between Reader Response and Philosophy for Children (PIC) approaches among Form Four students from a fully residential science school in Ulu Yam, Selangor. The study reported a significant mean different in thinking and reading abilities for PIC group.
4. A two-hour weekly programme was conducted for Form Three students of Sekolah Berarasana Penuh Integrasi (SBPI) Gombak from Feb. to May 2005. Students found that the programme helped them to improve their speaking, communication and critical thinking skills, and enhance their self-confidence. Similar views were reported by IIUM students who attended the programme at SLEU. Even though this programme produced good outcomes, it was only held for 3 semesters because of lack of fund.
5. In 2009, Nooradil did an experimental study to examine the effectiveness of the pedagogy of philosophical inquiry (PI) in enhancing critical thinking and self-confidence among undergraduate students of the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge, IIUM. The result showed that critical thinking skills and self-confidence in the treatment group (using PI) improved significantly.

Materials

1. Narratives – Thinking stories in the form of novels and short stories
2. Concept game – Philosophical card game, mind mapping, classification game
3. Teacher resources – discussion plans, exercises, teacher evaluation rubric, student assessment rubric

Training Manuals

Primary school students' views of the programme

1. It is interesting. I am able to share my point of view with others. It helps me to understand things better.
2. It is interesting, enjoying and helps me to improve my English. Furthermore, it helps me to think creatively. I learned how to read with a proper intonation, my thinking skill is in critical way and teach me to discuss so I can be open minded boy.
3. I gives me more new ideas and this class is very interesting. We can also change our own ideas with our friends. Besides that, it makes me think more and improve my English. Another thing I like this class is because sometimes we still have argument with some questions.
4. It is enjoyful and I began to think of consequences of my action before acting on it. It is useful to writing the questions on the board. I think this class can be useful for all participated.
5. I like this class because it is interesting, enjoyable and we can get closer between friends and teacher. It improves my English. It makes me think in a creative and innovative way. By finishing this class. I became an open minded person.

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