

Application of Tutorials at The School Level

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ABSTRACT

Education is an ongoing effort to produce human beings who have an awareness of their responsibility to God. In carrying out the mission of education, then the approach used to convey knowledge must take into account the level of effectiveness so that the knowledge reaches students. At a time when many people are passionate about the use of technology in the education system, the most important foundation that should be given attention actually lies in the teaching outcomes where students understand the entire content of teaching. The tutorial approach is said to be very effective in addressing the issue but it is more practiced in institutions of higher learning. Motivated by this statement, this study seeks to examine the tutorial approach conducted at Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah, a private educational institution operating in Selangor. The institution was chosen because the researchers who serve in the institution are interested to know more about the level of effectiveness of the tutorial approach that has been conducted since the beginning of 2020. Using an observation and literature -based research approach, this study found that the tutorial concept provides many benefits to the institution in terms of increasing the diversity of teaching techniques among teachers and building knowledge and skills among students. In other words, the tutorial approach if combined with the normal teaching approach is able to develop the potential of students.

Key Words : Tutorial, Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah, Education, Potential, Effectiveness

A. Introduction

As stated by Hasan Langgulung (1934 – 2008), education is a way or effort to change and transfer cultural values to each individual through various processes, to produce human beings who are responsible to Allah SWT. The nature of this responsibility is the main purpose of education which refers to the worship of God, and to the birth of the individual believer. The characteristics of a believing human being include metaphysical (transcendental) nature and physical nature (pious deeds).¹

By metaphysical nature, man knows God and develops the attributes of God in man, which are manifested in the form of physics into worship. The effect of the

¹ Moharam, M. M.-H., Mokhtar, S., & Thia, K. (2021). Pendekatan Kaedah Interaktif Dalam Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Abad Ke-21 Di Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kota Kinabalu. *5th International Conference on Teacher Learning and Development (ICTLD) 2021 03 - 05 August 2021*, (pp. 79-88). Johor Bahru

development of such qualities is that man has a pure mind, a consistent spirituality, and right actions. Faith comes in the form of awareness so as to be able to motivate people to do good things. In other words, faith is a guardian to an individual's thoughts and behaviors in life.²

As for the context of education, faith is an output in the form of metaphysics while pious deeds are an output in the form of physics. Good deeds must be based on the value of faith so that it benefits the perpetrator and others. Thus, pious deeds have pragmatic values, which are not only beneficial, but also relevant and organized to be practiced in life.³

Thus education plays a very important role in developing spiritually and physically skilled individuals. To ensure that education can channel knowledge effectively, then the teaching and learning process must be done effectively. Currently, interactive methods are the main choice in teaching and learning practices because they are said to be very effective in terms of increasing the momentum of knowledge development among students. This method is in contrast to the traditional method which emphasizes one-way communication by the teacher where students only act as listeners in the classroom. With such an atmosphere, students' attitudes are often associated with passive nature and less responsiveness. In contrast in the interactive method, students become active because students not only listen but also need to use their minds and other senses to perceive the data and information presented. Through such methods, the cognitive and affective dimensions in students will experience positive development.⁴

However, the interactive method that is the focus at this time, refers to the practice of teaching and learning that uses computers or multimedia. The use of technology is said to be able to stimulate students' thinking, which is no longer tied to notes and facts presented to the teacher alone. By using such technology, students are trained to strengthen high-level thinking skills that can be applied in life and not just

² Badruzaman. (2017). Manusia dalam Tinjauan Falsafah Pendidikan Hasan Langgulung. *Ta'dibuna International Journal of Islamic Education* , 6 (1), 118-135

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⁴ Moharam, M. M.-H., Mokhtar, S., & Thia, K. (2021). Pendekatan Kaedah Interaktif Dalam Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Abad Ke-21 Di Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kota Kinabalu. *5th International Conference on Teacher Learning and Development (ICTLD) 2021 03 - 05 August 2021*, (pp. 79-88). Johor Bahru

for exam purposes only. Active learning can build new knowledge as students are motivated to use existing knowledge to reflect on the lessons delivered.⁵

But technology is not a mandatory thing for the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices. Nevertheless, technology can be an obstacle to the education system if it is not handled by skilled individuals.⁶ Moreover, the availability of support and connectivity systems such as devices and networks also exerts a significant influence on the effectiveness of live interactivity.⁷ As a result, teaching and learning may not achieve the expected objectives. In other words, the use of technology is not a definitive factor.

Thus, the success of interactive teaching and learning in fact does not depend on the great performance of a technology but what needs to be examined is the approach used. A technology -supported education system is unlikely to be effective if it relies too heavily on a centralized teaching approach where teachers are central. This is because such methods still do not give students the opportunity to actively develop their potential. Thus, the most important factor actually lies in effective interactivity in the context of interpersonal relationships regardless of whether the relationship actually comes from teacher to student or, perhaps even from student to student.⁸

Such interactive methods refer to the tutorial approach, which is said to be efficient and effective in dealing with student performance problems. This approach emphasizes the process of coaching where someone who is more experienced and knowledgeable will give guidance to someone who is less experienced and less knowledgeable. The person who gives this instruction is called a tutor. In the context of

⁵ Moharam, M. M.-H., Mokhtar, S., & Thia, K. (2021). Pendekatan Kaedah Interaktif Dalam Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Abad Ke-21 Di Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kota Kinabalu. *5th International Conference on Teacher Learning and Development (ICTLD) 2021 03 - 05 August 2021*, (pp. 79-88). Johor Bahru

⁶ Azhar, N. H., Jamaluddin, M. F., & Daud, D. (2021). Effectiveness of Online Teaching During Pandemic of Covid-19 Among Educators in Higher Learning Institutions: An Overview. *Journal of Media and Information Warfare*, 14 (1), 21-29

⁷ Ramly, R. A., & Latiff, Z. A. (2021). Secondary Teachers Perception on the Effectiveness of Google Classroom As a Learning Medium During Movement Control Order (MCO). *Journal of Media and Information Warfare*, 14 (1), 1-10

⁸ De, B. (2018, February 4). Traditional Learning Vs. Online Learning. *eLearning Industry*, p. Elearning Basics

education, tutors can consist of teachers, or students who have abilities and wisdom recognized by the teacher, that surpass the achievements of other students.⁹

However, in Malaysia, the tutorial approach is said to be popular only at the tertiary level such as universities.¹⁰ This statement is the impetus for the implementation of this study to conduct a review of the tutorial approach practiced in schools. The main objective to be achieved in this study is to see the effectiveness of the approach at the school level. This is because so far the approach is more practiced in universities. Significantly, the results of this study benefit the education sector especially to school institutions in an effort to develop potential, without being tied to the existing education system that places too much emphasis on the way teachers deliver knowledge.

B. Research Methodology

The research approach used in this study is observational because data collection is related to humans, processes and habits. Through observation, human thought and behavior can be studied and analyzed. In this study, direct observation was used as the main approach because the object of study did not involve interaction with the researcher. This approach is relevant to the needs of the study because all the activities in the organization that have been selected as the object of the study can be fully appreciated, understood, and scrutinized. In addition, this approach provides space for the researcher to write descriptive views in the social contexts that have been studied. This situation facilitates the researcher to continue to make the analysis because it is in the right context, and in line with the objectives of the study.¹¹

At the same time, a document analysis approach was also implemented to obtain data that supported the observations and research needs. By using this approach as well, the understanding of the tutorial concept will be strengthened. This is because the emphasis of this approach is given to the identification of relevant categories for

⁹ Guerra-Martín, M. D. (2014). Tutoring as a way of achieving employability for nursing students at the University of Seville. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* , 139, 479-486

¹⁰ Glomo-Narzoles, D. T., & Glomo-Palermo, D. T. (2020). Effectiveness of Tutorials in Improving the Academic Performance of English Language Learners. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies* , 2 (3), 141-152

¹¹ Kawulich, B. (2012). Collecting data through observation. In C. Wagner, B. Kawulich, & M. Garner (Eds.), *Doing Social Research: A global context* (pp. 150-160). New York: McGraw Hill

analysis.¹² The documents examined in this study are in the form of books, journals and periodical articles related to the study subject.

The selected study object is Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah, a private educational institution that has been operating in Puchong, Selangor since 2004. The institution offers classes from pre-school to secondary level. This institution was chosen as the object of study because the researcher served with this institution and was directly involved with the curriculum, and the teaching and learning system applied in this institution. The tutorial approach has been one of the practices in the teaching and learning curriculum of this institution since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the whole world, including Malaysia since the beginning of 2020. Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah decided to use this approach because it was found to be appropriate, relatively relaxed and inclined to an interactive environment. Furthermore, it was quite in line with the teaching and learning methodologies conducted online at the time. Such an approach continues to be adopted to this day as teaching and learning are still conducted in a hybrid manner; physically and online.

C. Discussion

1. Concept Tutorial Approach

In this approach, the tutor is central to pedagogy because of its role in general as a mentor to students. In particular, the role of the tutor goes beyond that. For example, a tutor not only guides, but also evaluates, facilitates, supports, exemplifies, and forms dynamic interpersonal relationships such as trust and a sense of responsibility.¹³

The concept of tutorials goes beyond the realm of classroom norms as it involves environmentally friendly integration so as to be able to enhance students' knowledge and skills. Tutors who are almost the same age as the person they are mentoring are said to be able to increase the reflection of the person being mentored because the positive thoughts and behaviors of tutors are easier to emulate.¹⁴

¹² Dalglish, S. L., Khalid, H., & McMahon, S. A. (2020). Document analysis in health policy research: the READ approach. *Health Policy and Planning*, 35, 1424-1431.

¹³ Guerra-Martín, M. D. (2014). Tutoring as a way of achieving employability for nursing students at the University of Seville. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 139, 479-486

¹⁴ Glomo-Narzoles, D. T., & Glomo-Palermo, D. T. (2020). Effectiveness of Tutorials in Improving the Academic Performance of English Language Learners. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 2 (3), 141-152

In teaching and learning methodologies, tutorials help students understand a subject better, and encourage them to highlight their talents or abilities. This is because the tutorial strongly emphasizes the benefits of discussion in a variety of contexts. That way, they are able to incorporate experiences, see importance, and evaluate the implications of those discussions to their knowledge whether it is evolving or otherwise.

If the discussion is deadlocked or difficult, then this is where the tutor plays a role to provide guidance either in the form of guidance or advice. Guidance in smaller groups facilitates teaching done based on the centralization of student needs. That way, students' understanding of a subject will be able to be known and in turn can help them build new knowledge based on past experience when solving a problem, making judgments or facing the challenge of failure.¹⁵

The tutorial-based teaching approach is able to inspire, challenge the mind and ultimately satisfy all members of the discussion group because an answer or decision obtained is based on the results of discussions among members that include explanations and actions that have been agreed. Returning to the context of education in schools, this is where the role of teachers as tutors is paramount, in considering their experience to develop the intellectual power of their students by combining scientific knowledge, practice, and common sense.¹⁶

As tutors or mentors, teachers need to leverage reflective practice by reviewing their own teaching methods, making improvements and determining which methods are most efficient for students, including ethical considerations. Reflection in action can help teachers build professional knowledge gained from their own teaching experience. Reflective practice can also encourage teachers to improve their skills appropriate to specific contexts and situations, and ultimately create new strategies. In other words, teachers need to have the ability to mobilize themselves, and their pupils, beyond existing theories in practice.¹⁷

The main advantage of reflective practice is that it has a positive impact on professional growth and development leading to the development of new knowledge

¹⁵ Ting, K.-y. (2013). Student Teachers' Reflective Practice on a Tutorial Teaching Approach. *International Education Studies*, 6 (7), 150-156

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¹⁷ Ting, K.-y. (2013). Student Teachers' Reflective Practice on a Tutorial Teaching Approach. *International Education Studies*, 6 (7), 150-156

and a broader understanding of the problems once encountered. This is because reflection emphasizes awareness to realize certain objectives and standards. In pedagogical reflection, on the other hand, teachers need to evaluate their actions in the classroom and consider how it impacts on student learning.¹⁸

2. Tutorial features

In the tutorial concept, the main goal is to encourage students to learn on their own. Tutors act as mentors without being bound by strict lectures, unless it is absolutely necessary. A tutor should be prepared with feedback but not necessarily make specific corrections because what is more important is that it is able to lead students to find the right answers and solutions.¹⁹

A tutor is not necessarily a teacher, as a tutor can also be selected from among students who have abilities, which are certified by his or her teacher to help his or her other peers. However, the teacher is the absolute mentor in a class. Tutors will provide detailed lesson content based on the level and learning style of the students. Tutors should explain the rules of a subject, introduce terms and actively introduce students to a concept.²⁰

Tutors have the role of advising and orienting individuals or small groups of students by paying special attention to them so that they can absorb the benefits of study skills. Tutorials with such features can improve students' academic performance because emphasis is given to the consistency of their attention in maintaining performance.²¹

The tutorial concept provides space for teachers to identify students' abilities and knowledge. That way, students can be nurtured faster to be able to compete with their other peers. The advantage of the tutorial concept is that students can follow the teaching in a focused manner because the learning environment is conceptualized one by one; where students will learn to their mentors face to face. Face-to-face teaching and learning allows the tutor to understand the learning style of the person he is

¹⁸ Ting, K.-y. (2013). Student Teachers' Reflective Practice on a Tutorial Teaching Approach. *International Education Studies*, 6 (7), 150-156

¹⁹ Silén, C., & Uhlin, L. (2008). Self-directed learning - A learning issue for students and faculty! *Teaching in Higher Education*, 13 (4), 461-475

²⁰ Hernandez, Y., Martínez, J. C., & Carranza, C. I. (2013). Institutional Tutoring Program: a strategy for raising standards of achievement in an educational institution. *Acta Universitaria*, 23 (1), 31-36

²¹ Velázquez-Sagahón, F.-J., & Rodríguez de la Osa, H.-E. (2014). Design and implementation of subject tutoring in the degree program in administrative information systems of the Guanajuato University. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación Superior*, 5 (14), 41-54

mentoring. They will then be guided with appropriate techniques so that they can understand complex and confusing concepts easily. With the process eventually becoming such a routine, they will acquire good study habits that eventually make them better students.

3. Tutorial Practice at Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah

Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah emphasizes the concept of guidance to students, especially to pre-school students, lower secondary and students who need specialized teaching assistance in a subject such as Jawi and Arabic. The application of this concept, however, does not ignore the teaching based on the prescribed syllabus. Before students engage with coaching, students first follow the lessons delivered by the teacher. After the lesson is delivered, then the students are guided to ensure that the students really understand the content of the lesson that has been delivered.

When teaching is done, the teacher will make a general assessment of the students' understanding and performance. Any student who is seen to be competent in mastering a topic, has the potential to be selected as a mentor. In the pre-school level, the role of the mentor from among the students is very useful as it is an example to his other peers. For example, the skills or techniques applied by the student who is the mentor are easy to imitate by other students. At the same time, the student can be a good motivator for other students to use the methods they have used in solving a problem.

For primary and secondary levels, the coaching process is very useful in subjects that require specialized skills or techniques. For example, jawi and memorization subjects have certain techniques that can help a person improve mastery. Some students have techniques to facilitate memorization. Once certified by the teacher, the technique is shared with other learning partners. The same goes for jawi which requires a certain technique to spell a word. Students who have successfully mastered these techniques are then asked to share them with other study peers.

Another coaching approach practiced at the Al-Mansoorah School is by mixing students from various levels in a teaching class based on the same subject. For example, students from years 1 to 3 are combined to follow the teaching of the subject of Sirah. Year 3 students can be good mentors to year 2 students while year 2 students can be good mentors to year 1 students. On the one hand, the process helps them review the

lessons they have gone through in the previous year. At the same time, they are able to build new knowledge based on the learning experiences they have gone through.

For example, year 1 students show good potential development in jawi subjects when engaged with a coaching approach that incorporates students from higher levels. Encouraging developments can be seen in a short period of time such as;

1. Able to connect Jawi letters well.
2. Be able to spell days and numbers well.
3. Can write sentences from the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith well.
4. Able to read short passages fluently.

Based on the observations conducted, the coaching approach is seen to be very effective to potential development in several respects;

1. A positive learning experience can be used as a guide to other students.
2. Instill confidence in other students to understand the lesson better and be optimistic about their abilities. Through guidance delivered by peer students, students find it easier to replicate the way they think and feel confident to experiment with the actions performed.
3. Teaching can be adapted according to the context, needs and interests of students.
4. Tutoring sessions can be optimized because students feel comfortable with the way the presentation is given. This is because the information received from the tutors is in line with their needs and the delivery of knowledge has been tailored according to their needs and level of thinking.
5. Learning time management becomes more systematic because students can focus on a topic easily.
6. Students get two benefits through practicality when following guidance; and, theories and concepts when following the teaching delivered by the teacher. In that way, students' understanding of knowledge becomes stronger because knowledge and charity are integrated.
7. Tutoring sessions become ideal when there is an exchange of opinions so as to develop students' interest to follow the next lesson.
8. Tutorials can improve skills because students undergo training or tutoring on their own.

9. Tutorials can improve the consistency of learning because students need to follow a routine that has been compiled by the tutor based on their learning experience.
10. Change students' perceptions of a lesson content by cultivating their interest through effective learning strategies and techniques that can strengthen understanding.
11. Make students focus on a change because of the existence of a dynamic relationship between the person being guided and the mentor. This dynamic relationship encourages systematic thinking and ultimately bridges the gap of difference from point of view and trial.
12. Create a conducive environment because students gain autonomous control in learning. With such controls, students leverage their concrete experiences and align them with abstract concepts, and modeling to build on their new knowledge.

D. Conclusion

The tutorial approach receives less attention at the school level because more focus is given to teacher -centered teaching. Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah began to take advantage of that approach when implementing online teaching and learning, when the Covid-19 pandemic began to hit in early 2020.

Because such an approach benefits students, its application is maintained in a physical teaching and learning mode. In fact this approach not only benefits the students, but also the teachers. This is because teachers are able to re-evaluate the effectiveness of teaching methods that have been practiced in the classroom. Teachers can compare the results of guidance with existing teaching methods. If students' understanding improves much better when following a coaching approach, rather than teaching; then teachers need to make improvements in the teaching process.

Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah does not neglect the teaching approach as a core in education. This is because the coaching approach is only used as a complement to teaching; and it turns out that with a combination of such concepts, students' understanding of a subject increases. Pusat Pengajian Al-Mansoorah is able to implement a combination of teaching and coaching because each class session takes an hour, instead of 30 minutes or 40 minutes as usual. Thus, the class session can be divided into two parts; the first session, teaching, and the second session, guidance.

In conclusion, the tutorial approach provides many benefits to school such as;

1. Benefits to the teacher - Teachers can diversify the techniques of imparting knowledge to students so that students can understand a concept and philosophy contained in a lesson accurately. Tutorials are also able to bridge the gap between teachers and students in terms of communication relationships where teachers can delve into the problems faced by students in learning.
2. Benefits to the student - Students who become mentors can build new knowledge after giving guidance to fellow learners. Guided students can build confidence and interest because they are guided based on needs that make the learning content more focused and easy to digest. Tutorials increase students' confidence to communicate with teachers because students do not feel awkward or shy to raise any problems encountered.

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