DISCOVERY LEARNING STRATEGY IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN INTRODUCTORY PHILOSOPHY COURSES AT ISLAMIC TRIBAKTI UNIVERSITY LIRBOYO KEDIRI

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Abstract: This research is entitled *"Discovery Learning Learning Strategy in Improving Students' Critical Thinking Skills in the Introduction to Philosophy Course at Tribakti Lirboyo Islamic University, Kediri"*. The focus of this research is to explore how learning strategies are implemented *discovery learning* can improve students' critical thinking skills in studying the Introduction to Philosophy course. The research approach used is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, where data is collected through direct observation, interviews and document analysis. The subjects of this research were first semester students of the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Science Study Program at Tribakti Lirboyo Islamic University, Kediri. The research results show that Strategy *discovery learning* which includes the stages of stimulation, problem formulation, data collection, data processing, verification, and generalization is able to encourage active student involvement in the learning process. Students are given the freedom to identify problems, explore material, and discover concepts independently. This significantly improves students' critical thinking skills, including the ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate arguments and solve problems logically and systematically. The results of this research show that *discovery learning* is an effective strategy in improving students' critical thinking skills, especially in courses that require in-depth analysis such as Introduction to Philosophy. These strategies not only support theoretical understanding but also facilitate the application of knowledge in real-life contexts.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the quality and quality of human resources is very important for the successful development of a country. The development of human resources will greatly impact future success. Education is a way to start developing the quality of the younger generation, which is a milestone in the struggle for the nation. Education that is adapted to current developments will make the younger generation ready to face

challenges and compete in the modern world (Nababan, Manullang, and Munthe 2023). Talking about globalization, in the 21st century or often known as revolution time 4.0, the developments are extraordinary. All aspects of life, all levels of society are quickly required to be familiar with technology. Education can be seen as an important process to fulfill the promise of independence. Quality education will produce quality future generations (Budiwati and Fathoni 2022).

Apart from that, education has a significant influence on developments in the twenty-first century. Because education plays an important role in determining improving the quality of human resources, all people who work in the education sector are required to develop education according to the times. In this century, schools must support the application of 4K: critical, creative, collaborative and communicative. Studying in the education and experience building takes a long time to gain four thousand skills. (Kartini 2022).

Education can be defined as a series of conscious and planned efforts carried out by professionals in the field of competency, both generally and specifically, to guide students towards success (Tul Prize 2022). The responsibility for education does not only lie with educators or lecturers, but also with parents, families, communities and the government, which play an important role in improving the quality of human resources to face the future. Parents have a major role in formal education, namely by supervising, guiding and monitoring children at home, as well as supporting children's educational success by understanding their development.

The community plays a role in non-formal education which focuses on building children's character through a positive environment, while the government is responsible for developing the quality of formal education. Students are the main subjects in education who have the opportunity to develop themselves through communication with educators and families. They must be facilitated with space to discuss and express themselves, starting from home to the school environment (Aldiyansyah, Rahmatulloh, and Alviandini 2024). In accordance with the national education objectives described in Law no. 20 of 2003 (Asmoro 2022). National education helps students achieve their potential to become human beings who are devout, obedient to the commands and prohibitions of God Almighty, knowledgeable, moral, healthy, creative, capable, independent and democratic. (Rahayu 2023).

Educators at schools have the task of providing facilities that support discussion and exploration activities so that students can ask questions and learn to understand things they don't know. The ability to ask questions is an important part of learning skills, but not all students are able to do it. Therefore, educators must adapt learning methods to meet students' skill needs. The free learning curriculum currently used in Indonesia emphasizes innovative, creative and student-centered learning *(student- centered learning*), which encourages students to learn actively and find different ways of learning *most effective* for them (Jannah, Putri, and Cahyani 2022).

Learning strategies, such as *discovery learning*, can support the development of critical thinking skills by actively involving students in the learning process.[7] With this method, students are directed to discover knowledge independently, making it easier to understand the material. *discovery learning* is also an effective alternative for educators to hone students' critical thinking skills and increase interactivity in the teaching and learning process (Nababan, Bakara, and Sihite 2023).

Lirboyo Kediri Islamic University is the subject of this research implementation. The critical level possessed by Al-Qur'an and Tafsir students is extraordinary so that the learning strategy *discovery learning* In improving students' critical thinking skills in introductory philosophy courses, it can be a solution or alternative for educators to prepare students to train critical thinking skills, increase class activity and they can easily digest understandings of introductory philosophy material (Syukri 2024).

In the description of the problem above, the researcher attempted to conduct research at the Islamic University of Lirboyo Kediri on Semester 1 Students of the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Science course. This research is entitled "Learning strategies *discovery learning* in improving students' critical thinking skills in introductory philosophy courses at the Tribakti Lirboyo Islamic University, Kediri."

METHOD

In this research, researchers used qualitative methods with a descriptive approach. The results of this research were obtained directly through in-depth observations carried out by researchers on research subjects using personal and group approaches. This observation includes student motivation and behavior in a particular context which is described comprehensively in the form of written descriptions (Samsarina 2023).

The research subject is the individual or group that is the main focus in this study, while the research object includes facilities or conditions that are closely related to the subject. The research subjects in this study were students of the Al-Qur'an and Tafsir Science Study Program. This research is entitled "Learning Strategies *Discovery Learning* in Improving students' Critical Thinking Skills in the Introduction to Philosophy Course at Tribakti Lirboyo Islamic University, Kediri." This approach is expected to provide a deep understanding of how learning strategies work *discovery learning* can be applied effectively to hone students' critical thinking skills.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Learning strategies *Discovery Learning*

Discovery Learning or discovery learning is a strategy that originates from a constructivist approach and has become an integral part of the world of education (Sholikhan and Sayyadi 2024). This strategy is designed to provide a pleasant learning experience and increase student independence. In this process, students are expected to be able to find ways to learn independently and creatively by utilizing the theories they have studied previously, so that they can manage learning that is self-centered or self-centered. *student-centered learning*. Abrahamson and Kapur in their research, *"Reinventing Discovery Learning: A Field-Wide Research Program,"* emphasizes the importance of this approach (Fitri and Putra 2023).

According to Sund and Trowbridge, the term *discovery* closely related to *inquiry*, because both mean discovery. To achieve understanding, an investigation process is needed carried out by the students themselves. These discovery results are obtained when students play an active role and are involved in the process of discovery activities, so that they gain new knowledge, concepts or principles (Tanjung, Rohani, and Vera 2020).

According to Sugar *discovery* is a learning strategy that involves students directly and with maximum ability where learning activities are carried out to find a particular object or event in a structured, logical, critical and analytical manner so that students can confidently formulate answers from the results of their findings (Ningsih, Febriani , and Rohani 2023).

Wilcolx also believes that learning strategies *discovery learning* This encourages students to learn actively with their initiative. Apart from that, encouragement for students

is needed so that when carrying out experiments they can discover principles and concepts so that students have their own experiences (Alfiza, Hardiansyah, and Ritonga 2023).

Brunner argues that *discovery learning* is an activity to practice acquiring concepts independently by utilizing inductive learning principles, namely starting with specific activities leading to general activities.

According to Burden and Byrd, the most important aspect in *discovery learning* is the direct participation of students in investigations to find answers through experiments. In the learning process *discovery learning*, lecturers need to create a conducive learning atmosphere so that students can learn independently. Lecturers encourage students to carry out experiments so that they gain experience that allows them to discover principles or knowledge independently (Liharda 2022). Talking about independence, this is the behavior of someone who is able to take the initiative in carrying out various tasks to meet their own needs without depending on other people, and does it with full responsibility.

Differences in Learning Strategies *Discovery Learning* with other learning strategies

1. *Discovery Learning* with *Inquiry Learning*

   Although often confused, Discovery Learning and *Inquiry Learning* actually have differences. Both are similar in improving the quality of learning and have aligned educational goals. According to Sihabudin, *Discovery Learning* is a learning process that emphasizes students' mental involvement, where character and material are combined (Arlina et al. 2023). This mental process includes observation and drawing conclusions. On the contrary, *Inquiry Learning* focuses on more complex mental processes, including formulating problems, setting up experiments, carrying out experiments, collecting data, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions (Ritongga et al. 2023).

2. *Discovery Learning* with *Problem-Based Learning*

   These two strategies both encourage students to be active in learning, with the role of the lecturer being inductively oriented and students seeking their own understanding. The difference lies in the level of inquiry; in *Discovery Learning*, investigations are more limited because there is still guidance from lecturers (Winarno, Sholehuddin, and Hufron 2023). Meanwhile, inside *Problem- Based*

Learning (PBL), students are given the freedom to carry out investigations without restrictions, with the problems faced requiring the application of various scientific disciplines, because students are directed to solve real problems in everyday life.*Discovery Learning* with *Direct Instruction*.

3. Direct Instruction or direct learning is very different from *Discovery Learning*.

In *Direct Instruction,* the learning process is centered on the teacher *(teacher-centered learning*), where the lecturer is the main source of information, while students are passive and only receive information. In this strategy, students are not encouraged to process concepts independently. On the contrary, *Discovery Learning* emphasizes the independent learning process, where students actively seek information and analyze it critically (Khairat 2021).

Learning Strategy Objectives *Discovery Learning*

1. Learning activities focus on students, so they can be more active in seeking information.
2. Students have opportunities to deepen their understanding.
3. Students can formulate their own learning concepts and use critical thinking skills to understand them.
4. Students can work together with friends to exchange information and consider ideas from others.
5. Develop critical thinking skills that can be applied easily.
6. Understand the meaning of critical thinking to obtain concepts and principles of learning independently. (Hidayati, Makmuri, and Wiraningsih 2022)

Various Learning Strategies *Discovery Learning*

Learning *Discovery Learning* requires quite a long time, so this strategy is divided into two types of independent discovery *(free discovery*) and guided discovery (*guided discovery*). *Guided discovery* is more commonly used because students obtain results according to the targets given by the lecturer (Feni et al. 2023). In this strategy, the lecturer provides initial information as guidance so that students can find understanding. For example, the lecturer gives a problem and

accompanies students when solving the problem, as well as asking questions that lead to the solution (Nababan, Manullang, and Munthe 2023).

Learning Strategy Stages *Discovery Learning*

According to Syah, there are several stages in the learning strategy *Discovery Learning*:

1. Stimulus (*Stimulation*): Lecturers provide stimuli that encourage students to ask questions, such as through questions or other learning activities.
2. Formulation of the problem (*Problem Statement*): The lecturer gives students the opportunity to identify problems related to lecture material and formulate hypotheses.
3. Data Collection (*Data Collection):* Students look for information from various sources such as books, observations, interviews, or experiments to prove hypotheses.
4. Data processing (*Data Processing)*: Students process data to find out whether the problem can be solved and proven logically.
5. Proof *(Verification):* Students verify the hypothesis with real evidence from everyday life, checking the truth of the hypothesis based on the information collected.
6. Generalization *(Generalization)* Conclusion: Conclusions are drawn to produce the final concept of the verification process (Budiwati and Fathoni 2022).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning Strategies *Discovery Learning* According to Sihabuddin (Sihabbuddin 2022), strategy *Discovery Learning* describes students as active and critical educational subjects.

1. Advantages;
   a. The learning process is inductive, where students discover concepts in their own words.
   b. Developing students' cognitive potential.
   c. Increases external motivation because students are directly involved in concept discovery.
   d. Encourage students to think and make optimal use of their senses.

b. and. Students' long-term memory is stronger because concepts are learned and discovered independently.

2. Disadvantages:
   a. Makes students who are less enthusiastic about thinking experience learning difficulties.
   b. It takes a long time, especially with a large number of students.
   c. Abstract learning goals can be difficult to achieve.
   d. Freedom of thought is limited because problems are limited by the lecturer.

Critical Thinking Skills

1. Critical Thinking Skills

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), 25 skills mean expertise, the ability to complete tasks, and dexterity. Skills can be divided into two types: physical skills, namely an individual's ability to do something independently using muscles, and non-physical skills, namely a person's ability to solve problems using reason. In general, skills can be interpreted as a person's efforts to complete a job well.

a. Beyer stated that critical thinking is a disciplined method of thinking to evaluate a thing (question or idea).
b. Screven and Angelo define critical thinking as an intelligent and structured process of analysis that is actively evaluated through observation.
c. Rudinow considers critical thinking as a process that emphasizes logical and rational beliefs with certain standards and procedures for analysis.
d. Ennis believes that critical thinking is a process that states goals with strong reasons related to beliefs in an activity (Kartini 2022).

From these various definitions, it can be concluded that critical thinking is a thinking skill that involves cognitive processes in encouraging active participation in reflecting on problems.

2. Characteristics of Critical Thinking Skills
   a. Able to provide clear and relevant solutions to problems.

b. Think openly systematically and have logical assumptions, implications and consequences.
c. Able to communicate actively in solving problems effectively and complexly (Tul Prize 2022).

3. Characteristics and Indicators of Critical Thinking Skills
   a. Character: Individuals who have critical thinking skills tend to be open, honest, respect other opinions, careful, thorough, and flexible in changing opinions if they find a better point of view.
   b. Criteria: Critical thinking has certain benchmarks; arguments must be based on relevance, accuracy, facts, reliable sources, consistent logic, and mature consideration.
   c. Arguments: Composing arguments requires activities such as recognizing, evaluating, and formulating arguments.
   d. Reasoning: The ability to draw conclusions from one or more premises and Point of view A way of looking at and organizing meaning.
   e. Procedure: Application of complex and procedural criteria (Tul Prize 2022).
4. Stages of Critical Thinking Skills
   a. Analyzing The process of breaking down a concept as a whole into more detailed parts.
   b. Synthesizing The process of combining various pieces of information to create an explicit new idea.
   c. Recognizing and Solving Problems Skills in recognizing problems and finding new solutions, as well as organizing thought patterns into a concept.
   d. Conclude The process of drawing conclusions based on existing knowledge and updating with new information and Evaluate and Assess
   e. The skill of assessing based on various criteria is considered the highest stage in cognitive thinking, where evaluation is carried out based on facts and concepts (Aldiyansyah, Rahmatulloh, and Alviandini 2024).

Introduction to philosophy

Philosophy in general, aims to develop humans' critical, analytical and reflective thinking abilities regarding various aspects of life (Asmoro 2022). Through the philosophy learning process, students are invited to explore fundamental questions about

existence, knowledge, truth, ethics, and reality. Philosophical education should not only include intellectual aspects but also encourage the development of moral and emotional abilities so that individuals can understand and analyze the meaning of life, social responsibility and relationships between humans (Rahayu 2023).

Introduction to philosophy learning is a series of interactive activity processes that involve educators and students in a structured and planned effort. This process aims to prepare students to understand basic philosophical concepts, hone critical thinking skills, and evaluate arguments and ideas logically. Through discussion methods, text analysis, and case studies, students are invited to be actively involved in the learning process, so that understanding of philosophy is not only limited to theory but can be applied in everyday life (Jannah, Putri, and Cahyani 2022).

Introductory philosophy courses, which can be taught from high school to college, cover several main topics such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic, and aesthetics (Nababan, Bakara, and Sihite 2023). Metaphysics teaches students to understand reality and existence, while epistemology explores the sources and limits of knowledge. Ethics discusses moral values, logic teaches a coherent and systematic way of thinking, and aesthetics discusses beauty and art in human life (Samsarina 2023).

The main aim of studying introductory philosophy is to form individuals who are able to think critically and wisely in responding to life's problems. The application of appropriate methods such as group discussions, debates and case analysis is necessary to achieve optimal learning outcomes, so that students can develop a broad and in-depth perspective on various issues (Fitri and Putra 2023). Policy for the Application of Philosophy Learning in Indonesia is as follows:

1. Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek)

   The study of philosophy at the formal education level, especially at universities, is taught as part of mandatory or elective courses. Philosophy is a means of developing critical, analytical and multidisciplinary thinking skills in various departments (Sholikhan and Sayyadi 2024).

2. Educational institutions

   Non-formal Philosophy can also be studied through non-formal programs such as seminars, open discussions, and philosophy learning communities. This

program aims to reach the general public who want to study philosophy outside of formal academic channels (Tanjung, Rohani, and Vera 2020).

Learning strategies *Discovery Learning* in Improving Students' Critical Thinking Skills in the Introduction to Philosophy Course at Tribakti Lirboyo Islamic University, Kediri

The Introduction to Philosophy course is an important part of the higher education curriculum which teaches students to understand the basic concepts of philosophy, develop critical, analytical and reflective thinking skills on various issues. The application of appropriate learning strategies is needed to support this learning process, one of which is learning strategies *discovery learning* (Ningsih, Febriani, and Rohani 2023).

Strategy *discovery learning* which is applied to the Introduction to Philosophy course because the nature of philosophical material requires in-depth understanding and critical analysis (Ningsih, Febriani, and Rohani 2023). With this strategy, students are given the freedom to search, explore and discover philosophical concepts independently, thereby enabling them to gain an understanding that is stored in their memory longer and is more meaningful. Through this independent investigation process, students not only understand theory but also apply their understanding in the analysis of real problems (Arlina et al. 2023).

Usage *discovery learning* encourage students' active involvement in the learning process, which can ultimately improve their critical thinking skills. The learning process begins with providing stimulus in the form of questions or cases that provoke curiosity. Students then formulate the problem, search for data, collect information from various sources, and process the data to find answers or concepts that are relevant to the material being studied (Liharda 2022).

Strategy *discovery learning* In teaching Introduction to Philosophy, educators are placed as facilitators. The task of educators is to guide and motivate students without giving direct answers, so that students are encouraged to find the answers themselves (Ritongga et al. 2023). This method forms a more interactive and collaborative learning process, where students can share their findings and views in class discussions.

The implementation of this strategy at Tribakti Islamic University Lirboyo Kediri has shown positive results in improving critical thinking skills. Students who take part in learning with this strategy are more active in asking questions, arguing and showing high

curiosity. Activities such as discussions, group work and presentations are supporting tools to train their critical and analytical thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

This research discusses "Learning Strategies *Discovery Learning* In Improving Students' Critical Thinking Skills in the Introduction to Philosophy Course at Tribakti Lirboyo Islamic University, Kediri" based on theory and field practice, the researcher drew the following conclusions:

1. Through this strategy, students are required to be active in discovering concepts and understanding material independently, which in turn encourages deeper involvement and sharpens their analytical skills. Discovery learning not only allows students to understand theory well, but also helps them apply it in real situations through an independent investigation process.
2. This strategy is successful in providing an interactive and reflective learning experience. Students participate in learning stages starting from stimulus, problem formulation, data collection, to verification and generalization of concepts. The results of this research show that students are able to develop critical thinking skills which include analysis, synthesis, problem solving and evaluation.
3. Even though there are several obstacles such as a very short time to implement it and requiring patience, the benefits of this strategy far outweigh the challenges. Discovery learning has been proven to be effective in building deep understanding and encouraging students to think logically, systematically and openly in studying philosophical concepts.
4. Overall, the application of discovery learning strategies is able to increase students' motivation, participation and critical thinking skills, which are the main objectives in teaching the Introduction to Philosophy course. This strategy can be an alternative learning model that is relevant and applicable in higher education environments, especially in fields that require the development of analytical skills and reflective thinking.

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