

INQUIRY STRATEGY IN ENHANCING THE ACTIVITY OF LEARNING AQIDAH AND AKHLAK

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve student learning outcomes in Aqidah Akhlak by implementing inquiry strategies in class VI MI Riyadlul Sholihin. The research method used is classroom action research (CAR), which is conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consists of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In the initial stage, a pretest was conducted to measure students' understanding, which showed that only 11 out of 31 students achieved completeness. The researcher designed and implemented inquiry strategies involving group discussions and presentations based on these results. In the first cycle, although there was an increase in student activity, some students still did not achieve completeness. Reflections from the first cycle were used to improve the learning process in the second cycle. The evaluation results of the second cycle showed a significant increase in student scores, with the majority of students achieving completeness. This study concludes that the implementation of inquiry strategies is effective in enhancing student activity and understanding of the Aqidah Akhlak material. These findings provide important contributions to the development of more interactive and collaborative teaching methods and can serve as a reference for educators in improving the quality of classroom learning.

Keywords: Improvement of Learning Outcomes, Inquiry Strategy, Interactive Learning

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of learning is always closely related to the objectives to be achieved in the process. These objectives guide the activities of teachers and students during the learning process. Learning objectives play a crucial role in aligning educational activities to meet desired outcomes (Ipsita et al., 2024). The methods of implementing learning can vary depending on the level or stage of education involved. For example, the learning process at the elementary school level (SD/MI) differs from that at the junior high school level (SMP), and similarly, the learning process at the junior high school level differs from that at the senior high school level (SMA). Furthermore, there are significant differences between the learning processes at the senior high school level and at the tertiary

level (university). However, the methods and strategies used by teachers and lecturers are essentially the same; only the application varies, tailored to the abilities and needs of learners at each educational level (Yang et al., 2025).

In the learning process, there are inevitably various problems, both from students and teachers (Groothuijsen et al., 2024). Examples of common issues that arise in the learning process in the sixth grade of an Islamic elementary school (*madrasah ibtidaiyah*) include: 1. the lack of activity from some students during lessons, 2. students being unable to focus during lessons, and 3. some students engaging in self-directed activities such as playing or talking during class. There are various strategies that can be applied to enhance the quality and participation in learning, one of which is by selecting an appropriate learning method for the students.

In the learning process, there is a need for innovation in implementing appropriate strategies, such as the inquiry strategy (Feng et al., 2024). The application of the inquiry strategy in learning can enhance student participation, stimulate critical thinking, and help them find solutions and address problems continuously. Managing learning using this approach can be done individually or in groups, where students actively seek answers to questions relevant to the material being studied, and the results are discussed together in class. The teacher acts as a facilitator and mediator, providing support and meeting the learning needs of the students. Considering the various issues that have been identified, the researcher feels motivated to conduct further research on these challenges (Dan Luo et al., 2024).

This research introduces an innovation in the implementation of the inquiry learning strategy in the sixth grade of an Islamic elementary school (*madrasah ibtidaiyah*) as an effort to enhance student engagement and participation during the learning process. Unlike conventional teaching methods that tend to focus on the role of the teacher, the inquiry strategy positions students as the main actors actively involved in the learning activities. Through this approach, students not only become passive recipients of material but also participate in the investigative process, ask questions, and seek and find answers independently. This approach aligns with constructivist theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is constructed by learners through interaction with their environment and relevant learning experiences.

This research offers significant contributions, as the implementation of the inquiry strategy is expected to enhance students' critical thinking skills, strengthen their learning motivation, and build self-confidence in solving problems independently. Additionally, this research is expected to serve as a guide for teachers in applying more interactive and effective learning strategies, particularly in enhancing active student participation in Islamic elementary schools (*madrasah ibtidaiyah*).

METHOD

This research uses an educational action research approach conducted in cycles and will be stopped if the research objectives are achieved (Du & Gao, 2024a). Each cycle is an evaluation process consisting of four phases. According to Kemmis and Tanggar, classroom action research consists of four components in each cycle: planning, action/implementation, observation, and reflection (Du & Gao, 2024b).

If the results from the first cycle do not achieve the expected success, then it will be continued with the next cycle based on the reflection results from the previous cycle. The sample in this research is taken from one class only, namely the sixth-grade students of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, consisting of 19 male students and 12 female students, with a total of 31 students. This research involves one teacher of the Aqidah Akhlak subject. The object of this research is the implementation of the inquiry strategy to enhance the learning activity of sixth-grade students in the Aqidah Akhlak subject.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-Cycle

The students' learning outcomes before the implementation of the inquiry strategy in the Aqidah Akhlak subject show a low level of achievement. At the initial stage, which is the first meeting with the sixth-grade students of MI Riyadlus Sholihin, the researcher conducted a pretest consisting of 20 questions. The pretest aims to measure the students' knowledge level before the implementation of Cycle I and Cycle II. The pretest is in the form of a written exam. Below are the learning scores of each student obtained from the pre-cycle stage (pretest).

Table I
Percentage of Pre-Cycle Assessment Results

Grade	Level	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage	Pass/Fail
A	Very Good	90-100	2	6,45 %	Pass
B	Good	70-89	9	29,05 %	Pass
C	Satisfactory	50-69	20	64,5 %	Fail
D	Poor	< 50	-	-	-
Total			31	100 %	

From the results of the pretest obtained, it is evident that out of a total of 31 students, only 11 students (35.5%) in the class achieved the learning achievement standard, while 20 students (64.5%) did not meet the standard. This indicates that the majority of students do not have a sufficient understanding of the Aqidah Akhlak material being taught. In other words, the pretest results confirm that the students' learning achievement is still at a low level, and their understanding of the material needs to be improved.

This situation shows the need for intervention through the implementation of a more effective learning strategy to improve students' learning outcomes. Therefore, based on the pretest results, the researcher feels the need to apply the inquiry strategy in teaching with the hope of increasing students' activity and understanding of the material being taught, so that students' learning outcomes can significantly improve (Power et al., 2024).

Based on the pretest results showing that only 11 out of 31 students achieved the learning achievement standard, the researcher then took further steps to improve students' learning outcomes. The next step was to implement the action phase using Cycle I, which aimed to enhance students' learning outcomes through the application of the inquiry strategy. This strategy was not only expected to improve students' overall learning outcomes but also to enhance their understanding of the Aqidah Akhlak subject. By applying this strategy, the researcher hoped that students would become more active in the learning process, capable of critical thinking, and able to find answers to questions and problems they faced independently. Thus, through this approach, a significant improvement in students' learning outcomes and understanding of the material being taught was anticipated.

Cycle I

a. Action Planning

In this planning phase, the researcher began by conducting an initial observation of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The researcher carefully observed all activities carried out by the students and the teacher in the classroom. After obtaining data from this observation, the researcher started to formulate appropriate solutions to address the problems faced by the students, particularly those related to the low learning outcomes in the Aqidah Akhlak subject. One of the actions planned by the researcher to address this issue was to apply the inquiry strategy in the teaching process of the Aqidah Akhlak subject.

From the pretest results obtained, the planning to be carried out by the researcher includes the following steps:

1. Developing a Lesson Plan (RPP) that aligns with the teaching materials to be used in the first cycle. The RPP must be designed to meet the learning objectives and the needs of the students.
2. Preparing the necessary teaching materials to support the learning process. These materials must be relevant and engaging to increase students' interest and activity in learning.
3. Preparing teaching aids, such as whiteboards and student books, which will be used as support for the learning process. These aids are essential to ensure that students have sufficient resources to follow the learning process effectively.
4. Creating student worksheets to evaluate students' learning outcomes and monitor their progress and achievement. These

worksheets must be designed to comprehensively measure various aspects of students' understanding and skills.

With these planning steps, the researcher hopes to improve students' learning outcomes in the Aqidah Akhlak subject through the effective application of the inquiry strategy.

b. Action Implementation

The implementation of the teaching activities according to the designed Lesson Plan consists of three main stages. The first stage is the introductory activity, which begins with greeting the students using a salutation as a form of respect and a warm welcome. Next, the activity continues with a prayer led by one of the students, giving them the opportunity to actively participate from the beginning of the learning process. After that, the teacher inquires about the students' well-being as a form of attention and to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. The next step is to provide an appreciation or introduction to the material to be studied, with the aim of arousing students' interest and motivation towards the topic to be discussed in the lesson (Lio & Pia Bone, 2023). Thus, the introductory activity is designed to create a positive learning atmosphere and prepare students mentally and emotionally to follow the teaching activities well.

In the core activity, students are instructed to study and read the material in the student book as the first step in the learning process. Before moving on to further discussion of the material, the researcher divides the students into small groups, each consisting of two to three students. After the division of groups, the researcher distributes worksheets from the book to each group to be completed together. Each group is then asked to complete the task and discuss their findings within their respective groups.

Afterwards, the researcher asks a representative from each group to present their findings from the group discussion to the entire class. This presentation aims to share the work and understanding gained during the group discussions. Other groups then provide feedback on the presentation delivered by the presenting group. This process allows for interaction and information exchange among groups, as well as giving students the opportunity to learn from their peers' work and deepen their understanding of the material being studied.

In the closing activity stage, the researcher administers a written test to the students based on the material discussed during the learning session. This test aims to measure students' understanding of the material and evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching that has been implemented. Additionally, the researcher provides guidance to the students while they take the test, to ensure that they remain motivated and can complete the task well.

After the test, the researcher and the students conduct a joint reflection to draw conclusions about what has been learned during the session. This reflection process allows students to review the material

taught and reinforce their understanding. Next, the researcher provides information related to the material that will be discussed in the next meeting, giving an overview of what is expected from the students in the next session. The closing activity ends with a prayer as a closing of the learning session, giving students the opportunity to be grateful for the learning process that has taken place and prepare them for the next meeting.

c. Reflection

Table II
Percentage of Pre-Cycle Assessment Results

Grade	Level	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage	Pass/Fail
A	Very Good	90-100	5	16,12 %	Pass
B	Good	70-89	17	54,83 %	Pass
C	Satisfactory	50-69	9	29,05 %	Fail
D	Poor	< 50	-	-	-
Total			31	100 %	

The reflection on the teaching situation during Cycle I shows that the average class results after Cycle I have improved compared to before Cycle I, although there are still several aspects that need improvement. During the implementation of the action in the first cycle, several issues arose that need to be addressed. First, it was observed that students often started the learning late, indicating a lack of readiness and attention at the beginning of the session. Many students still felt shy and had difficulty asking questions during the "Ask" stage, indicating barriers in interaction and communication (Rautri et al., 2018).

During the smaller group activities, the classroom atmosphere became noisy, indicating that the group arrangement needs to be improved to maintain order. Additionally, many students were confused about when to start writing the Student Worksheet (LKS), caused by unclear instructions from the teacher. Students did not seem to pay attention to the teacher's instructions when the task was given, impacting their understanding. In the investigation stage, although students followed the instructions on the LKS, some of them appeared less active in participating in activities and did not give opportunities to other group members to conduct surveys. Since there was only one LKS per group, not all students were involved in filling out the LKS, limiting individual involvement. In the discussion stage, no students volunteered to stand up and present their experiment results, forcing the teacher to randomly select students for the presentation. During the class discussion, the atmosphere was not conducive with some students playing with their classmates and ignoring the student presenting the experiment results. In the reflection stage, all groups reviewed their work, but there were still parts that were incorrect and needed improvement.

Cicle II**a. Action Planning**

In the planning phase for Cycle II, the researcher focuses specifically on improving the group task completion by students, with a focus on addressing the shortcomings from Cycle I. In Cycle I, the learning process was not fully effective because the inquiry strategy was not optimally applied. Therefore, in Cycle II, the researcher aims to enhance the effectiveness of the learning by utilizing the inquiry strategy more deeply to create a more active learning atmosphere. With a more integrated application of the inquiry strategy, it is expected that the shortcomings found in Cycle I can be well addressed. To achieve this goal, several planning steps are undertaken, including: 1) Developing teaching materials and Lesson Plans (RPP) that are adjusted to the material to be taught in Cycle II, 2) Preparing relevant learning materials to support the learning process, 3) Providing learning media to be used, such as whiteboards and student books, to support the learning process, and 4) Creating student worksheets designed to evaluate learning outcomes and monitor students' progress and achievement during Cycle II.

b. Action Implementation

In the implementation of teaching activities, the researcher closely follows the designed Lesson Plan (RPP) and applies the solutions planned to address various issues. In the introductory stage, the researcher begins the process by briefly presenting the material to provide an initial overview to the students. The researcher also engages in initial interaction with the students, such as greeting them and inquiring about their well-being, and prepares a prayer before starting the learning activities by involving one student as the prayer leader. After that, the researcher communicates the material to be studied and clearly explains the learning objectives to the students, so they have a good understanding of what they will learn and the goals to be achieved from the learning process.

Next, the researcher asks the groups formed in Cycle I to present their collaborative work in front of the class. Each group is given the opportunity to present their findings and discussion results, while other groups are asked to provide feedback or ask questions related to the presentation. Each group providing feedback or questions is represented by one member, and the questions asked are the result of the discussions conducted within the group. In this way, it is expected that there will be constructive interaction between groups, which can enrich understanding and deepen the material that has been studied.

c. Reflection

Table III
Learning Outcomes After Applying the Inquiry Strategy in
Cycle II

Grade	Level	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage	Pass/Fail
A	Very Good	90-100	11	35,48 %	Pass
B	Good	70-89	18	58,07 %	Pass
C	Satisfactory	50-69	2	6,45 %	Fail
D	Poor	< 50	-	-	-
Total			31	100 %	

After implementing the second stage of learning, a significant improvement in the average student scores was observed, indicating that the learning outcomes in Cycle II were much better compared to Cycle I. In Cycle I, various challenges were encountered, such as students not paying attention to the material presented by the teacher and group presentations, being less focused, feeling shy to ask questions, often playing on their own in the classroom, creating a noisy or chaotic atmosphere, not being cohesive with their group, and not actively participating in discussions. However, in Cycle II, positive changes occurred, where students showed higher enthusiasm and activity during discussions, were more focused on listening to presentations from other groups, no longer felt shy to ask questions, and generally participated fully in the learning activities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions found in the document, it can be concluded that the application of the inquiry strategy in teaching Aqidah Akhlak in class VI MI Riyadlus Sholihin shows a significant increase in student activity and understanding.

In the first cycle, although there were some students who had not yet achieved mastery, the reflection conducted after each learning session allowed students to review the material and reinforce their understanding. The learning outcomes showed that most students achieved the passing score, with several students experiencing significant improvement in the second cycle.

The interaction among students through group discussions and presentations of their work also contributed to the improvement in material understanding. The closing activities involving reflection and prayer provided students with the opportunity to be grateful and prepare for the next learning session.

Overall, the application of the inquiry strategy not only increased student learning activity but also created a positive and collaborative learning atmosphere, which is very important in the education process. This indicates that interactive and reflective teaching methods can be an effective solution to improve the quality of learning in the classroom.

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