

# Teaching and Learning Paradigm in History; A Case Study at State Islamic Institute of Tulungagung

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## Teaching and Learning Paradigm in History; A Case Study at State Islamic Institute of Tulungagung

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**Abstract**-The present article is based on an empirical study on teaching and learning history at State Islamic Institute of Tulungagung. The study was aimed at describing lecturers' paradigm in teaching that influence much the lecturers' decision on the approach and model of teaching and learning. It is a fact that the historical knowledge taught in educational institutions consists of a history as an interpretation in the form of historical narratives. This learning of historical knowledge has long been laid as part of social studies that places history as a source of data to solve the latest social problems. The same holds true for State Islamic Institute of Tulungagung. A case study on teaching and learning history shows that it remains dominated by the delivery of historical narratives. History is conceptualized by lecturers as knowledge of the past. History is understood more in terms of the content of substantive knowledge rather than its capacity side as a discipline. This influence much on the teaching approach which mainly dominated by the best story approach, and on the teaching models by which lecturers tend to be the story teller and the eclectic.

**Keywords:** *Paradigm, Teaching and Learning, History*

### I. INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that historical learning in educational institutions remains dominated by the delivery of historical facts and lacks attention to aspects of the development of learners' reasoning power and critical thinking. It is strongly perceived among learners that learning history is none other than learning to memorize facts; name, year, event. Such a view leads to an attitude that shows boredom, is not interested in history and feels learning history as a useless burden. In addition, learners will also assess history to be meaningless, if they are only required to understand a collection of facts about the past that have been chosen by certain people or parties [1] [2]. Therefore, historical learning that prioritizes the teaching of historical facts allegedly has become one of the main causes of the failure of history learning in educational institutions, for it makes the ability of the learners limited, especially when the facts are taught out of the context of the event [3].

The approach and model of teaching and learning

history is strongly influenced by the teaching paradigm chosen by teachers [4]. There are two paradigms of learning in history that are closely related to historical conceptualization. The first paradigm sees history as an event that actually happened in the past or an important event that really happened. Seixas [1] argues that if we regard history as nothing more than the knowledge of the past, then historical learning merely conveys this knowledge. Seixas calls it the best story approach, a traditional approach in which learning activities are merely the delivery of the best and definite story, aiming at strengthening learners' sense of belonging to a nation, religion, culture, and transnational entity; promoting certain values, such as peace, democracy, patriotism; and providing general knowledge about human behavior in history.

The second historical teaching paradigm views history as a discipline. History is a discipline that seeks to determine the knowledge of the past of certain societies [2]. As a discipline, history has its own method and logic, in other words history is a model of investigation that may have had interests in the past that differ from everyday practical concepts. In this sense, history is not only a collection of knowledge about the past but also a way of generating knowledge of the past, and learning history means developing knowledge and understanding of how history takes place [5][2][1]. Wineburg[6] and Wilson[4] found three patterns of relationship between historical conceptualization and historical learning: (1) Teachers who believe that history is temporary and open to debate will encourage learners to question knowledge of the past; (2) Teachers who view history as a collection of facts will emphasize learning on the accumulation of facts; (3) Teachers who believe history as a driving force for social change will focus on learning the issues of gender, race and power. Seixas[1] finds two patterns of relationships: (1) Teachers who conceptualize history as past events or stories will use the "the best story" approach, where learning is merely an activity of conveying facts or stories; and (2) Teachers who conceptualize history as a discipline will use disciplinary approaches in learning by

which learning activities convey not only substantive historical knowledge but also the capacity development of historical thinking.

Based on this context, a case study on history learning at State Islamic Institute of Tulungagung was conducted to explore and describe the lecturers' paradigm of historical learning and its implications for the selection of historical learning approaches and models. This institution is chosen as a research location because it places history courses as a part of its institutional.

## II. METHOD

Research on historical learning is considered appropriate using a qualitative approach and a case study type. The collected data were in the form of descriptive data obtained from words and behavior[7]. The subjects of this study were purposively selected; all the history lecturers of all faculties who had a mandatory requirement in history or who had history classes for two consecutive semesters. Data were collected through three main data collection methods in qualitative research, namely in-depth interview, participant observation and documentation. To obtain the research data, the researcher interacted as closely as possible with the subjects of research in a natural setting to observe their historical learning activities and to study the documents they have[8].

The data analysis technique used was Constant Comparative Method, which constantly compares one datum to another, and constantly compares one category to another. In general, the process of data analysis includes data reduction, categorization, synthesizing, and composing work hypotheses[7]. At the reduction stage, the researcher identified the smallest unit or section that relates to the focus of the problems. Lincoln and Guba name it the unit of information that serves to define a category[7]. At the categorization stage, the researcher sorted each unit into parts that have similarities, and then labeled each category. There were two categories used in accordance with the focus of the study, namely: the first category is "Learning Paradigm" (LP); and the second category is "Learning History" (LH).

At the synthesis stage, the researcher attempted to find a link between two categories, and then labeled them according to their relationship. In other words, the researcher sought to see the link between the first category (learning paradigm) and the second category of (Learning History). At the final stage - preparing the working hypothesis - the researcher formulated a related proportional statement and answered the research questions.

To test the validity of the data, the researcher used the credibility criteria with triangulation technique. Triangulation is a technique of checking the validity of data that utilizes something else[9].

According to Moleong[7], the most widely used is checking through other sources, i.e. comparing and checking the degree of confidence of information obtained through different time and tools.

## III. RESULT

The lecturers who become the subjects of this research are not from history or history education majors. They are from religious majors. However, this educational background supported their mastery on the substantive knowledge of history they teach. This becomes a major capital in the study of history, for developing substantive knowledge about the past is central to historical learning activities[10] Thus, every teacher must have in-depth knowledge of the substance of history s/he taught in order to process information easily [11][10].

History is conceptualized by the lecturers as knowledge of the past. History is seen more in terms of substantive knowledge rather than its capacity side as a discipline. In fact, these lecturers show traditional practices that have spread in historical learning with a truly chronological model in which historical periods are taught sequentially without paying particular attention to inter-period relationships. So that history learning does not look time-oriented. Seixas calls this approach as the 'best story approach', in which learning merely conveys knowledge of past events. This traditional approach departs from a paradigm that views history as a collection of facts or events of the past [1]. Stradling [5] suggests that learning history using the best story approach emphasizes on the following aspects; (1) Knowledge transmission; (2) The weighting of course content heavily in favour of political and constitutional history; (3) A focus predominantly on events and personalities; (4) The construction of the syllabus around a content-rich, chronological survey of national history; and (5) The underlying assumption that the national historical narrative coincides with the history of the largest national grouping and the dominant linguistic and cultural community.

The lectures compiled historical material based on the accumulation of reading various references so that they can present historical events from various perspectives. The lecturers also follow the flow of historical material as expressed in their respective reference books. Stradling [5] names it as —multiperspectivity that sees historical events from multiple perspectives. Chapman et al

state that in order to achieve multiperspectivity, textbooks should not only consist of one narrative built by the author but also include both primary and secondary sources. However, the lecturers are less likely to use their references to compare one perspective to another, whereas the stories told in history books, according to Hynd[12], are not free

from perspective. The historian's or writer's views are influenced by a number of factors, such as political affiliation, the social conditions at which the book is written, as well as the sources historians use.

The lecturers also develop their own historical learning model. Some lecturers prefer to convey historical material in the form of lectures. They assume that with lectures, historical material will be conveyed according to the course of history. In fact, they do have a compulsory subject of history so they focus on teaching aspects of historical facts. In this connection, they are more visible as the storyteller, who believes that stories can bring an interest in history and can transmit knowledge. So history learning tends to be run with teacher-centered and didactic approach[11].

Furthermore, these lecturers also tend to convey historical material as part of the social sciences in which the historical facts taught are expected to be used to solve the latest social problems. According to Heyking [2], there are at least two opinions about historical traits as part of social studies that have implications to the study of history. First, history is about important public issues, the latest political, social and economic trends, rather than about the daily life or past of a family. Second, historical learning really conveys facts that might be used to solve current problems. This assumes that in history learning we are asked to bring up our past facts and offer clear lessons.

Some lectures tend to choose expository model in teaching history, so that they can narrate historical material chronologically. By using this model, the lectures may be classified as story teller type, who tell the story of history they have chosen with a simple narrative and do not give students a chance to argue the story. The lectures can also be classified as the cosmic philosopher: who believe that history goes in the pattern or cycle of progress and setbacks - whatever happened in the past has important implications for the future. Taylor and Young [11] explained a series of historical teaching typologies based on teachers' historical conceptions and beliefs about the purpose of learning history:

The storyteller: teachers who believe that stories can bring an interest in history and can transmit knowledge; (2) The scientific historian; teachers of this type believe that questions, analyzes, interpretations, and explanations are the heart of history that leads to the settlement of historical problems; (3) The relativist / reformer: teachers of this type believe that history is the origin of the existence of the present world, so that history can be used to make future possibilities; (4) The cosmic philosopher: teachers of this type believe that history goes in the pattern or cycle of progress and setbacks - whatever happened in the past has important implications for the future; and

The eclectic: teachers of this type believe that history can be represented in various ways and purposes, namely as a means to attract interest, as a form of intellectual exercise, as a means of understanding the past, and as a source of personal and communal identity.

Some other lecturers design history lessons in the form of paper presentations and discussions. Learning by this method makes the learning activities centered on students (student-centered). However, the purpose of learning is basically the same, namely to convey historical material or provide general knowledge about human behavior in history. In the discussion sessions, lecturers do not convey historical concepts and facts in historical or chronological contexts. With this model of learning, the lecturers seemed to ignore the element of historical thinking skills. Thus, these lecturers could not be categorized as story tellers, but rather as the eclectic [11], who believe that history can be represented in various ways and objectives.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The context of this study is on a setting that does not assess the importance of historical learning as a discipline. History is more viewed as knowledge of 5<sup>st</sup> events. Thus, learning activities are carried out more on the development of substantive knowledge of history rather than on the development of students' historical thinking skills. The lecturers' mastery on historical disciplines is lack. Historical concepts, such as facts, interpretations, chronology and continuity, as well as causation, are not widely played in historical learning. This can be understood from their educational background which is not derived from history or historical education. Nevertheless, the lectures have already studied historical substantive knowledge in their previous education, that makes the learning process of historical substantive knowledge runs easier.

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