

DESCRIPTION OF THE REFLECTIVE PEDAGOGY PARADIGM AND STUDENTS' METACOGNITION IN SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING AT TUNAS BANGSA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

The paradigm shift in 21st-century education demands learning that encourages higher-order thinking and student awareness of their learning process. This study aims to describe the application of the Reflective Pedagogy Paradigm (RPP) in social studies learning and to capture the development of students' metacognition, particularly in terms of self-awareness and learning independence. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a naturalistic design, conducted in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at Tunas Bangsa Junior High School, Bintan Regency. The participants consisted of 25 students from class IX A and one social studies teacher who were selected purposively. Data were collected through learning observations, semi-structured interviews, student reflection journals, initial-final reflective questionnaires (as triangulation support data), and learning documentation. Data analysis used Miles and Huberman's interactive model through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification; validity was maintained through triangulation of techniques and sources. The results showed that PPR was consistently applied through five stages (context, experience, reflection, action, evaluation) and formed a meaningful learning cycle. Metacognitive development was evident in the students' increased ability to recognise their learning mastery/difficulties, understand learning objectives, choose appropriate strategies, plan learning steps, and evaluate the learning process. Learning independence also strengthened through learning initiatives, time management, responsibility, strategy improvement when facing obstacles, and learning consistency. These findings confirm that PPR has the potential to be a relevant pedagogical approach to strengthen reflective and student-centred social studies learning.

Keywords: Reflective Pedagogy; Metacognition; Self-Awareness; Independent Learning; Social Studies Learning; Qualitative Research

A. Introduction

The paradigm shift in education in the 21st century requires higher-order thinking skills. Higher-order thinking skills include analysis, evaluation, and creation (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In reality, learning practices in Indonesia are still largely dominated by approaches that are oriented towards memorisation and knowledge transfer (one-way). This results in students' cognitive abilities.

learning requires a connection between learning materials and students' real-life experiences. Wang and Degol (2017) state that the relevance of learning context contributes greatly to students' cognitive engagement and learning motivation. From the perspective of

Vygotsky's social constructivism (1978), social interaction and scaffolding enable students to build and reconstruct their understanding at a higher level. Through this, the role of teachers is no longer limited to being conveyors of information (*transfer of knowledge*), but rather their next task is as facilitators who guide students to realise and reflect on their own thinking processes (Lai, 2015; Hattie, 2012). The low cognitive abilities of students are also influenced by their low ability to know themselves (self-awareness) and their independence in learning activities. This condition has resulted in the decline of education in Indonesia. This is in line with the OECD, 2021, which states that low learning awareness, reflective abilities, and independence of students can affect their knowledge.

The results of international assessments such as PISA also show the same thing. The metacognitive abilities of Indonesian students are still below average. This is indicated by the low literacy skills of students. This condition indicates the need for a student-centred and student-based learning approach based on reflection on experience (Zohar & Barzilai, 2015).

The situation was exacerbated by the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, which triggered *learning loss*, reduced social interaction, weakened cognitive abilities, and self-regulation. Education plays a strategic role in improving the quality of human resources and is one of the main indicators in the Human Development Index (HDI). UNESCO (2020) emphasises that quality education contributes to the development of individuals who are critical, reflective, adaptive, and able to cope with global change.

In the context of national policy, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum provides a great opportunity to develop 21st-century competency-based learning, including strengthening reflection and metacognition (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, 2021). Reflection on learning, strengthening social and emotional competencies, and student-centred learning are integrated into the Merdeka Curriculum. The next challenge is that implementation at the student level still requires the right pedagogical approach so that the curriculum objectives can be optimally achieved.

The Reflective Pedagogy Paradigm (RPP) is one relevant approach to addressing these challenges. RPP emphasises meaningful learning through critical reflection on learning experiences, so that students not only understand the material, but also become aware of their own thinking processes and learning attitudes (Subagya, 2010). This approach is rooted in the Ignatian Pedagogical tradition, which emphasises self-awareness, responsibility, and the formation of the whole person. Research shows that RPP can encourage deeper learning engagement and the development of students' metacognitive awareness (Setiawan, 2021; Purnomo, 2022). In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, reflection is an integral part of learning and formative assessment.

Metacognition itself is understood as an individual's ability to be aware of and control their own thinking processes, which includes *knowledge* about cognition () and regulation of cognition (*metacognitive regulation*) (Flavell, 1979). The instrument developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994) shows that self-awareness and self-regulation are key indicators of metacognition. In developed countries such as Finland and Singapore, metacognitive strategies have been integrated into the curriculum and have been proven to improve the

quality of learning through contextual and reflective approaches. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia opens up space for the application of metacognitive strategies. Various studies show that students' metacognitive abilities are still relatively limited, especially in planning, monitoring and evaluating learning (Suherman, 2020; Panadero et al., 2017). Research by Anggraini (2021) and Setiawan (2021) shows that a reflection-based learning approach contributes to increasing students' self-awareness and independence in social studies learning.

Social studies, as a subject that integrates various social disciplines, requires high-level, reflective, and contextual thinking skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2017). Social studies is perceived as a subject that requires memorisation and is not very popular among students. Initial findings at Tunas Bangsa Junior High School indicate low levels of self-awareness and learning independence among students, as reflected in their dependence on teachers, poor learning planning, and lack of understanding of the learning objectives for their future. The gap between the learning process and outcomes emphasises the need for a pedagogical approach that can develop self-awareness and learning independence in a sustainable manner.

Based on this description, this study was conducted and focused on examining the application of the Reflective Pedagogy Paradigm in social studies learning as an effort to develop students' metacognitive abilities, specifically in terms of self-awareness and independent learning. This study was not oriented towards statistical measurement, but rather towards a deep understanding of the process, experience, and changes in students' learning behaviour in a contextual manner.

B. Method

This study utilises a qualitative descriptive approach with a naturalistic design, as the main focus of the research is to understand and describe the application of the Reflective Pedagogy Paradigm in social studies learning. The qualitative approach allows researchers to capture the meaning, experiences, and dynamics that occur naturally (Creswell, 2013). The descriptive qualitative research approach is used to describe the meanings, experiences, and dynamics of learning in a natural context without manipulating variables, so that the phenomena under study can be understood holistically and contextually (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Moleong, 2019). The descriptive type is used to describe the reflective learning process as it occurs in the classroom and the students' responses to the experience (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

The research was conducted in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at Tunas Bangsa Junior High School, Bintan Regency, with the research subjects consisting of 25 students from class IX A and , a social studies teacher. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account the students' direct involvement in PPR-based social studies learning. PPR-based learning was conducted through six meetings as part of regular learning practices, not as an experimental treatment, so this study emphasised understanding the pedagogical process in real situations (Maxwell, 2013).

Data collection was conducted continuously through learning observations, semi-structured interviews, student reflection journals, initial and final reflective questionnaires,

and learning documentation. Observations were aimed at observing teacher-student interactions, student engagement in reflective activities, and learning behaviours that reflected self-awareness and independence (Patton, 2002; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were used to explore students' learning experiences in a more in-depth and flexible manner (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Reflection journals serve as a source for understanding students' thought processes and interpretations of reflective learning experiences (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983), while reflective questionnaires are used as exploratory supporting data to strengthen the triangulation process, not as statistical measurement tools (Maxwell, 2013; Sugiyono, 2022).

Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data analysis was conducted simultaneously from data collection to the end of the study (Mils and Huberman, 1994). Data validity was maintained through triangulation of techniques and sources to ensure the credibility and reliability of the research findings. The entire research process was carried out by upholding the principles of research ethics, including participant consent, confidentiality of identity, honesty in data reporting, and protection of the rights and comfort of participants.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

The results of the study indicate that the application of the Reflective Pedagogical Paradigm (RPP) in social studies learning in Class IX A of Tunas Bangsa Junior High School was consistent and continuous. The implementation of the Reflective Pedagogy Paradigm (RPP) was carried out through five main stages, namely context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. All of these stages form a cycle of reflective learning that is interconnected and oriented towards the development of students' thinking processes. At the context stage (T1), students are able to relate social studies learning material to their daily life experiences, such as family economic conditions, social interactions in their neighbourhood, and community issues. This connection helps students to better understand the learning objectives and fosters cognitive and affective readiness to learn. These findings indicate that context plays a fundamental role in building students' understanding and engagement in learning activities.

In the experience stage (T2), students are actively involved in group discussions, social case analyses and exploratory activities. Students do not merely receive information, but begin to build understanding through interaction, exchange of opinions and collaborative work. This stage reflects a shift in the role of students from passive recipients to active subjects in the learning process. In the reflection stage (T3), this stage becomes the core of PPR implementation. Through written and oral reflection, students begin to realise their level of understanding, the difficulties they experience, and the learning strategies they use. At this stage, there is a noticeable development in students' reflection from merely descriptive to more analytical, where students are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses in their own thinking processes.

In the action stage (T4), students demonstrate their ability to formulate follow-up actions based on their reflections, such as improving their learning methods, increasing their questioning, managing their study time, and seeking additional learning resources. This stage marks a concrete change in students' learning behaviour as a result of the reflection process carried out previously. In the evaluation stage (T5), students demonstrate their ability to comprehensively assess the learning process and outcomes. The evaluation focuses not only on academic achievement but also on changes in attitude, engagement, and learning responsibility. Feedback from teachers and students' final reflections reinforce students' understanding of the meaning of learning and their personal development. In relation to metacognitive development, the results of the study show that students experience positive trends in two main aspects, namely self-awareness (KD) and learning independence (KB). In the aspect of self-awareness (KD1-KD5), students begin to be able to recognise their level of mastery of the material, understand learning objectives, and be aware of the learning strategies that best suit their characteristics. Students also demonstrated the ability to evaluate learning errors and understand the importance of continuous self-improvement.

Based on the overall results of the analysis of the five indicators of self-awareness, students in social studies learning developed gradually and contextually through reflective learning experiences. Students not only demonstrate the ability to recognise material that they have and have not mastered, but are also able to openly express their learning difficulties, whether through questions in class, written reflections, or verbal statements in interviews. This shows that students are beginning to be aware of their own learning conditions.

Students' self-awareness is also evident through their understanding of learning objectives. Students begin to interpret learning objectives as the direction and focus of learning, rather than merely preliminary information from the teacher. This understanding helps students relate learning activities to expected outcomes, making the learning process more focused and meaningful. Awareness of learning objectives is an important foundation for building student engagement during the learning process. In addition, students demonstrate improved awareness of the learning strategies used. Students begin to try various learning strategies, evaluate their effectiveness, and choose the strategies that they feel best suit their needs and characteristics. This awareness of learning strategies shows that students are beginning to think about how to learn, not just what to learn. Student self-awareness is also reflected in their ability to plan their learning steps before completing tasks. Students begin to realise the importance of planning by making notes of the steps, preparing the sequence of work, and anticipating difficulties that may arise. This planning shows that students are no longer completely reactive to tasks but are beginning to be proactive in managing their learning process. Furthermore, students' self-awareness develops to the stage of evaluation and learning responsibility.

In terms of independent learning (KB1-KB5), students showed positive tendencies through the emergence of learning initiatives without complete dependence on teachers, the ability to manage time and learning tasks, and responsibility for the learning process and outcomes. Students began to exhibit more consistent, independent, and goal-oriented

learning behaviours, both inside and outside the classroom. Based on the analysis of the five indicators of learning independence, it can be synthesised that students' learning independence in social studies develops gradually through reflective learning experiences integrated into the learning process. Students began to show learning initiatives that arose from internal motivation, characterised by learning habits that did not always require guidance from teachers. These initiatives indicated that learning began to be viewed as a personal need, not merely an academic obligation.

Students' independence in learning is also reflected in their ability to manage their time and learning activities in a more planned manner. Students begin to realise the importance of time management in completing tasks and achieving learning objectives. This awareness encourages students to organise their study schedules, complete tasks on time, and avoid work backlogs, which demonstrates the development of independent learning management. In addition, students show a stronger sense of responsibility for the learning process and outcomes. Students do not simply accept learning outcomes as a final assessment, but begin to evaluate themselves, note areas for improvement, and strive to improve learning outcomes by refining their learning strategies. This responsibility reflects an awareness that learning outcomes are a consequence of the learning process undertaken.

Independent learning is also evident in students' active efforts to improve the learning process. When faced with difficulties, students do not take a passive stance, but try to find other ways, ask questions again, or try different learning strategies. This proactive attitude shows that students are beginning to be able to manage their learning process adaptively according to their needs and the challenges they face. Furthermore, students' independent learning is demonstrated through consistency in learning under various conditions, including when there are no exams or assignment requirements. Students begin to view learning as a continuous habit, rather than a response to external pressure. This consistency indicates a shift in learning motivation from external factors to a more stable internal motivation. Thus, student learning independence in social studies learning based on the Reflective Pedagogy Paradigm can be understood as the ability of students to initiate, manage, evaluate, and maintain the learning process independently.

2. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the Reflective Pedagogy paradigm (PPR) is applied in social studies learning as a holistic and continuous pedagogical process. The application of PPR through the stages of context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation forms a cycle of reflective learning. Learning is not only understood as the delivery of material, but as a process that guides students to consciously interpret their learning experiences. These findings are in line with Dewey's (1933) thinking about meaningful learning that arises from the reflection of experiences. This is in line with Schon's (1987) idea, which interprets reflection as an integral part of practice. Unlike previous studies that emphasised learning outcomes or motivation (agnes et al., 2019; Ignasius et al., 2020), this study focused primarily on the students' reflective process, thereby demonstrating how PPR works in practice in social studies classrooms.

In the context of social studies learning, the application of PPR has proven to be relevant because social studies is not only oriented towards mastery of concepts, but also towards the formation of self-awareness and independent learning in students. The experience and reflection stages provide space for students to construct understanding through social interaction, discussion, and reflection, as emphasised in Piaget and Vygotsky's constructivist theory (1978). The description in this study reinforces the view that contextual social studies learning encourages students not only to know, but also to emphasise understanding and evaluation of the meaning of learning for themselves. Thus, this study complements the PPR study by showing that the main strength of PPR lies in the continuity of reflection that shapes the way students think and learn, not just academic achievement.

The results of this study indicate that PPR is an effective tool for developing students' metacognition, particularly in terms of self-awareness and independent learning. These findings are in line with Flavell's (1979) theory of metacognition and the ideas of Schraw and Dennison (1994), which emphasise self-awareness and self-reflection as the core of metacognition. Students begin to be able to recognise their habits and limitations, choose learning strategies, and plan and evaluate the learning process more consciously. Unlike approaches that teach metacognition as a separate skill, the novelty of this study lies in the finding that metacognition grows naturally through an integrated reflective learning process. Thus, this study confirms that the Reflective Pedagogy Paradigm not only changes positive tendencies in the social studies learning approach, but also serves as a sustainable strategy in the development of student metacognition.

E. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion presented, this study produced conclusions that answered the research questions. First, the application of the Reflective Pedagogical Paradigm (RPP) in social studies learning at Tunas Bangsa Junior High School () took place through the stages of context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation, which were interconnected and continuous. This process places students as active and reflective subjects of learning, while teachers act as facilitators who guide students in interpreting their learning experiences. Social studies learning does not only focus on mastery of material, but also on the internal process of students in understanding, reflecting on, and consciously improving their learning methods. The second conclusion is that students' metacognition in social studies learning develops through PPR, which is reflected in increased self-awareness and independence in learning. Students demonstrate the ability to recognise feelings, mastery, learning limitations, and understand learning objectives. Thus, PPR is an approach that encourages positive tendencies in fostering students' metacognition continuously through meaningful and reflective learning.

G. Bibliography

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