

# THEMATIC LEARNING IS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Hamruni<sup>1</sup>

Istiningsih<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Efforts to improve education in Indonesia has been carried out by various parties, both government and non-government. Nature, science, and technology, are already changed, the education in Indonesia is also supposed to be changed. Expected change of course in response to improvement efforts. There are much research done in an effort to improve education in Indonesia. Thematic learning is one of the policies issued by the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Education to improve education in Indonesia. Why this policy "Thematic Learning" is considered as one model of learning that can improve education in Indonesia? To answer this question, it is important to describe about the thematic learning. This study is a descriptive study of the Thematic Learning. Descriptions include: Overview thematic learning, The concept of thematic learning, and Implementtion of thematic learning.

**Keyword:** *Thematic Learning, Education Improvement*

## Introduction

The current era, it is called reform era (for Indonesia) and globalization (for any nation in all the countries in the world), required the existence of a paradigm shift in education. From the paradigm of active teachers, transformed into an active student. In the activity will be obtained many benefits that are necessary for the development of self-learners or students. The question is "what kind of learning methods are able to answer questions of paradigm shift?".

Thematic learning is a model that is assumed to be able to answer the question above. In an effort to build education in Indonesia, the Indonesian government through the ministry of Education and Culture issued an education policy that changes in the curriculum for school education. In the new curriculum (refer to the curriculum in 2013) there is a learning model called thematic learning.

One of the educational policy issued by the ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia recently is a thematic learning. This policy is applied to students in

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<sup>1</sup> Lecturer – Faculty of Education, State Islamic University 'Sunan Kalijaga' Yogyakarta Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer – Faculty of Education, State Islamic University 'Sunan Kalijaga' Yogyakarta Indonesia

secondary school and o below. Regardless of whether this policy can be a political reality or not, but for scientists the field of education is expected to immediately draft thematic learning, so that these policies can be implemented.

For the author, the thematic learning policy is interpreted as an effort for education in Indonesia to improve the lacks. According to observers of education, education in Indonesia can not build real scientists.<sup>3</sup> Scientists in Indonesia did not find a new science.<sup>4</sup> The process of education in Indonesia does not make students competent, but simply memorize it.<sup>5</sup>

Through thematic learning, all of the issues identified above, is expected to be missed. This paper does not offer technical measures thematic learning, but rather focus on the various concepts related thematic learning.

### **Overview Thematic Learning**

Thematic learning is a learning process through the theme approach. The theme is not the orientation, but as an approach. Learning outcomes in order to obtain a comprehensive and representative. Achievement of a comprehensive learning is a learning that the achievement is able to build students like four UNESCO Pillars. While the achievement of a representative study are thematic learning is able to make students active and do the task by themselves. Holistic learning process means the process of learning that involve mind, physic, and spirit.

The theme was taken from one point to the large area, which are interrelated, by finding sub-themes that was done by students. So that the sub-theme or a new problem is familiar to student, as atool or gun for solving.

In the process of learning, one study has gained a lot of problems, and lived settlement gradually. The theme is taken to be strategic, essential, realistic, inviting solving comprehensively, and representative, according to the field of science are studied.

In one semester can be submitted at most five themes, so 3-4 times per theme discussed. Teachers met five times when determining the classical theme, after sub-themes submitted by a group of students to be solved.

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<sup>3</sup> Kompasiana

<sup>4</sup> Kompasiana

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## **Thematic Learning is An Integrated, Holistic, and Comprehensive Learning**

Why thematic learning can be termed as integrated learning? Integrated learning is a part of thematic learning. Thematic learning will be successful among learners, a curriculum that is integrated is important. Thematic learning, as an integrated learning method, implies the needs to have certain objectives in framing curriculum and plan of proceeding.<sup>6</sup> Thematic learning consists of a curriculum that is unified and dwells on a particular topic. It needs to be a sound combination of various disciplines, subjects with an emphasis on projects. The curriculum needs to emphasize the explicit and implied relationship between different concepts.<sup>7</sup>

Why thematic learning can be termed as a holistic learning? Holistic learning is based on child development. In providing holistic learning educators recognise that children are learning from conception and develop in their own time and their own pace. They understand that all children are strong, competent and unique. Based on the explanation above, it has a meaning that actually thematic learning that is based on students' uniqueness is also holistic learning. Holistic approaches to teaching and learning recognise the connectedness of mind, body and spirit. In thematic learning, of course the educators pay attention to all aspects above, physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing as well as cognitive aspects of learning.

Why thematic learning can be termed as a comprehensive learning? Comprehensive education according to UNESCO is meeting the four pillars, four bases and eight transmit. UNESCO of the opinion that the above related to the thematic core of the four pillars of learning are (1) to know, (2) to do, (3) to be, and (4) to live together. Clear thematic orientation learning answer the four pillars of UNESCO. Of the eight transmit education according to UNESCO transmit (1) hearing, (2) notice, (3) feeling, (4) read, (5) thinking, (6) understand, (7) talk, and (8) writes, all of which are part of the activities carried out in thematic learning.

## **Students Do Explore The Surroundings – Thematic Learning is A Contextual Education**

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<sup>6</sup> Wikipedia, free encyclopedia.

<sup>7</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Based on the illustration below can be explained that the activities of students in the learning process is to conduct exploration. Thematic learning is done in a way, the students raised the issue of learning from the student's own environment. Students solve problems stemming from their own environmental problems. Learning based on problems in the student environment itself is a contextual learning.

*Contextual learning is rooted in a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. According to constructivist theory, individuals learn by constructing meaning through interacting with and interpreting their environments. Current perspectives on what it means for learning to be contextualized include the following: situated cognition, social cognition, and distributed cognition. Contextual learning has the following characteristics: emphasizes problem solving; recognizes that teaching and learning need to occur in multiple contexts; assists students in learning how to monitor their learning and thereby become self-regulated learners; anchors teaching in the diverse life context of students; encourages students to learn from each other; and employs authentic assessment. Welfare-to-work, workplace education, and family literacy programs, where learner contexts are used to integrate academic content with learners' life experiences. When using contextual learning in their classrooms, educators should consider the following recommendations for practice: (1) select an approach reflecting the complex contexts of learners' lives; (2) examine materials for bias; (3) avoid imposing the perspectives of others; and (4) use the group as a resource.<sup>8</sup>*

Based on the characteristics of contextual learning, it can be identified that actually contextual learning has similarity with characteristics of thematic learning. So it is concluded that contextual learning is a part of thematic learning.

### **Thematic Learning Is A Process That Requires Skill – Scientific Learning Skills**

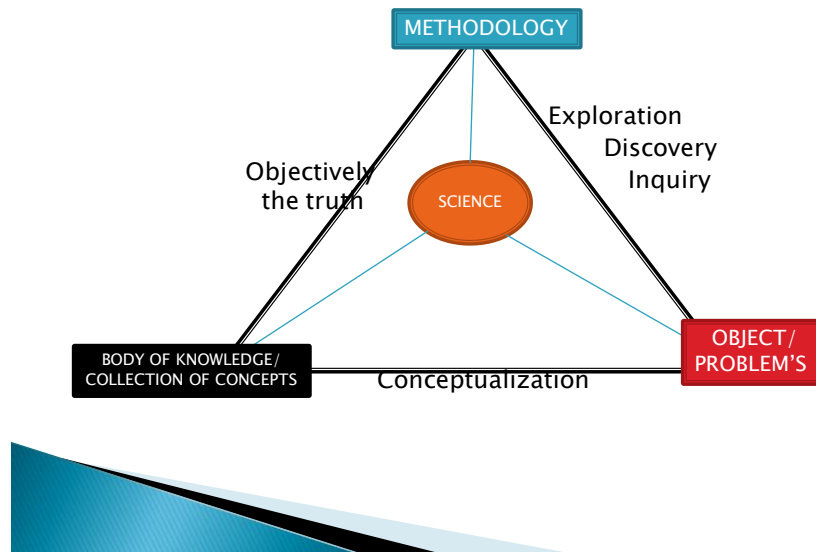
Scientific learning process is a learning process that can develop students to be able to build the capability conceptualization. Conceptualization capability can be achieved when in the learning process of students conducting exploration, discovery and inquiry. The above activities is a reflection of scientific learning. There are two skills in scientific learning is a basic skill which includes (1) observation skills, (2) measuring skills, (3) the skills to formulate action, and (4) the skills to communicate findings. Integrated skills or advanced

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<sup>8</sup> Imwl, Susan. 2000

skills that include (1) the skills to make hypotheses, (2) the skill to control variables, (3) foster the skills issues, and (4) the skill to interpret the results.<sup>9</sup>

The illustration below is a concept of scientific learning.<sup>10</sup>



Illustration

### Scientific Learning – From Students’ Perspective

A learning is said as scientific or it is called scientific learning when it has four elements, namely (1) object study, (2) methodology used to solve the problems, (3) existing science as references in laerning process, and (4) body of knowledge / collection of concepts as new findings of learning.

### **Thematic Learning To Build Individual Learning - Students Learn Individually**

In thematic learning, a learner takes responsibility for one’s learning. Through the selection of sub-theme, which should be chosen by the students. From what they are interested in and from what is already familiar with him, then the meaning in which each student is doing. Each student learns individually. In addition to the selection of themes, the thematic learning students are also required to resolve the issue of learning. Pembelajarannya nature, students

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<sup>9</sup> Djohar. 2007

<sup>10</sup> Djohar. 2002

find answers to the problems are studied without having to be given by the teacher. From this description, it can be interpreted that students learn individually.

The old paradigm, the teacher gave the material to the students do not appear in the thematic learning. Students are passive, only listening to the teacher alone is not the case in the thematic learning. Students read the text in the classroom has also been no such nuance. Teachers provide instruction, students carry out the instructions of the teacher has been eliminated in the thematic learning. The phenomenon of passive students no longer exist in learning thematic learning.

The concept of individual lessons can be taken from the illustration above (in scientific learning). From the illustration above can be explained as follows: students interact with the object / learning issues. Students perform a variety of activities, called scientific learning. Every student will be able to perform conceptualization to knowledge learned. Then, students will be able to understand the science concepts being studied. From the illustration above, it can be seen there are some activities, it appears that students perform better teaching and individually. Students are active, they have conceptualization abilities.

### **Thematic Learning Builds Creativity**

In thematic learning model, there is one step "group activities and discussion".<sup>11</sup> Through group activities and discussions, students are able to participate and reach on a shared perspective of the theme. Also this helps in creative exploration of the subject. Psychologists say that one's creativity is built through the process of doing. In doing there is the meaning of experience. With experience it would appear creativity.

Educational challenges in an era of globalization is the "education that is able to build students 'creative'. The present era and the next, which is expected is a creative human resources. Creative has more meaning than just clever. Creative people are able to survive in any situation. Creative means able to create something original. When there are more creative people, of course, the development of science and technology will be faster.

The relationship between natural change with the development of science and technology is a reciprocal relationship. Natural change requires changes in science and technology. On the

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contrary, science and technology change, nature will change anyway. Rapidly changing of nature demands human creativity. Creative people will be able to survive (in the narrow sense - not related to the life) than those who are not creative. Survival in the sense able to maintain its presence in the community.

Thus, it can be concluded that education in the present era and the next era is expected to build a creative human resources. Creativity can be developed through thematic learning, because in it there is the activity of exploring and experience. Through exploring and experience will be awakened and creativity will be automatically built.

### **Conclusion**

1. Thematic learning is an answer of education improvement of Indonesia.
2. Thematic learning covers integrated learning, holistic learning, and comprehensive learning.
3. Thematic learning is an active learning. Student should do the task individually.
4. Thematic learning is a form of contextual education. The problem is taking by students from the surroundings.
5. It is needed a skill to implement thematic learning.
6. As a hypothesis, the skill to implement thematic learning is a scientific learning.
7. Through thematic learning, students will be creative.
8. Mental collaborate in students will emerge as a result of the thematic learning.

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