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The Implementation Of Historical Thinking Skills Among Teacher Trainees In Teaching Learning Process

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ABSTRACT

A study to explore the implementation of Historical Thinking Skills category among teacher trainees was carried out. The Historical Thinking Skills involved are chronology, explore evidence, imagine, interpret and rationalize. This study is a case study which employed qualitative method using observation only. The participants were selected using purposive sampling which involved four teacher trainees who were in their fourth year of Bachelor of Arts in the education program from University of Sains Malaysia. These participants were observed while undergoing their practicum in secondary schools around Penang. Observation data were analyzed descriptively. The research findings reveal that implementation of Historical Thinking Skills by the teacher trainees focus on exploration of evidence and interpretation skills. In addition, it was found that other skills were implemented less frequent. Out of the four participants, only one teacher trainee frequently employed the four skills in the teaching and learning processes. These skills are exploration of evidence, interpretation, imagination and rationalization in the lesson. This study provides an overall picture of the implementation the Historical Thinking Skills by teacher trainees who emphasized on certain skills. The implication of this study indicated that the use of different teaching techniques which assist teacher trainees to implement frequently various Historical Thinking Skills in teaching learning processes.

Keywords : Historical Thinking Skills, Implementation, Teacher Trainees

Introduction

History subject is important in the education system. The importance of history was more obvious when the Ministry of Education accomplished this subject as compulsory which require secondary students to pass at the Malaysian Examination Certificate or Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) by 2013. Beginning in 2014, history is also a core subject in primary schools in Malaysia (Ministry of Education, 2011). The concern for the subject of history by the government is due to the capacity of this subject to produce a generation of patriotism, nationalism and citizenship (Maharom Mahmood, 2001; Ministry of Education, 2003; Chan, 2010).

History subject was also able to develop critical and creative thinking of students through training interpretation and consideration of the facts (Ai Hoon Tan, 1997). To achieve a high level of thinking among secondary students, the Ministry of Education has established a set of guidelines in the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum through History Subject Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2003). These guidelines include discipline structure containing some aspects Historical Thinking Skills ('HTS), namely the skills to understand the chronology, discovering evidence, interpret, create imagination and formulate rationalization (Ministry of Education, 2003). These skills aim to train thinking skills underlying the events of history, to

foster and strengthen the spirit of each nation and identity as citizens of Malaysia (Ministry of Education, 2000; Abdul Razaq Ahmad et al., 2011).

Recognizing the importance of the history subject in building human capital among students, the Ministry of Education suggest that teacher training institutions to train future teachers implement and apply Historical Thinking Skills (HTS) in the teaching and learning of history during teacher training (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Problem Statement

History subject was introduced in primary school in 2014. The aims are to produce a new generation of highly intellectual, ethical, moral and capable of overcoming the challenges of the future by teaching High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2012-2025, Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). However, the willingness of teachers to carry out HOTS is still questionable. Baharuddin Jabar (2007) studied concerning the implementation of thinking skills in History subject by 20 teachers from six schools in Hilir Perak district. The finding indicated that only 45.5 percent (9) of the teachers involved in implementing of thinking skills in History subject.

The finding also point out that teachers failed to apply thinking skills during their studies in the university and even during their teaching practice (Ministry of Higher Education, 2005). Studies conducted by Halimah Harun (2004) and Abdul Razaq Ahmad (2001) indicate history teachers often use the 'traditional' approach in teaching practice because it is the easiest way to control the class and complete the syllabus during training period.

In other studies by Russell (2008), Renuka Ramakrishnan and Siti Hawa Abdullah (2012) reveal that there are various reasons for the failure to apply thinking skills in teaching and learning history subject. Among the difficulties encountered by the teachers are in obtaining resources, time constraints to get the original sources, the cost of the sources is expensive, and force to complete the syllabus. The reasons for the failure of implementation of Historical Thinking Skills were reveal in several studies such as: Longman (2004); Othman Md. Johan and Lukman Dinyati (2011); and the Ministry of Education (2012).

Research Objectives

In particular, the objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To identify the categories of Historical Thinking Skills (HTS) implemented by teacher trainees.
2. To find out the categories of Historical Thinking Skills (HTS) often implemented by teacher trainees.

Significant Of The Study

This study describes the categories of Historical Thinking Skills (HTS) by teacher trainees. The results of this research provide information to school teachers to be more serious in emphasizing the HTS in teaching and learning processes. In addition, the results of this study explain the real state of implementation of the HTS by teachers trainees who have been trained at university.

The result of this study provide teacher trainees ideas to improve their ability to implement HTS in teaching. In addition, this study impart added value to teachers to prepare their teaching practice and in future as a teacher in secondary school. Finally, this study

contribute to future study focusing on qualitative research on student teachers during their training.

Literature Review

In 1990, the curriculum in secondary school was revised and Historical Thinking Skills (HTS) was included in the structure of History Historical inquiry. Baharuddin Jabar (2009) argues understanding of the structure of the discipline will develop teaching and learning process more dynamic. In the history inquiry, essential question includes: What, Why, How, When, Where and Who. The answer to this question is obtained by gathering resources such as oral and written sources, artifacts, pictures, paintings, buildings and environments that can explain the issues raised.

The process of inquiry, accumulating of resources, and analysis of the history resources require thinking skills involving chronology, exploring data, creating an imagination and rationalization. The summary of the core discipline in history is shown in the Figure 1 below.

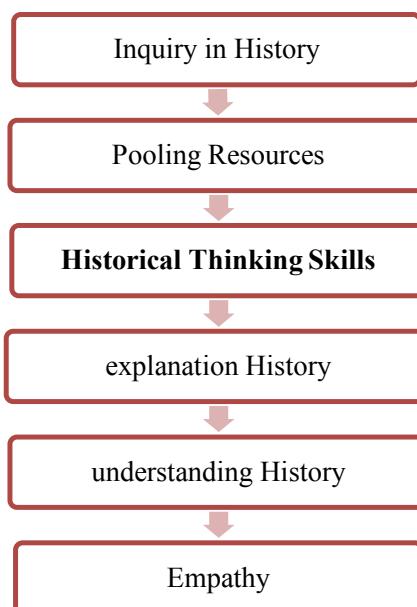


Figure 1 Discipline Structure in History

In 1993, the History subject was seen as crucial in fostering a sense of love for the country through the appreciation of national history in the education system. Therefore, this subject has been made compulsory for all secondary school students (Sufeah Hussin, 1993). According Sufeah Hussin (1993) and Ibrahim Saad (1994) changes in curriculum is a huge shift in philosophy and the conception of teaching and learning in schools.

Starting in 2012, 30 percent of different levels questions on thinking skills were included in Certificate of Education Examination questions for Paper 1, Paper 2 and Paper 3. Based on the design of the National Education Development Plan 2013-2025, Secondary School Standard Curriculum was introduced in 2014. The amendment and refining of new syllabus textbooks for secondary level will begin in 2017. This shows the government's commitment in reducing the rote method but rather emphasize on thinking skills for students in answering the questions.

Research Methodology

The design of this study is a qualitative case study which aim to explore, explain and understand the phenomenon studied (Creswell, 2014). This study choose a case study employing qualitative research design in order to generate in-depth analysis, to understand the situation and make room for more open interaction (Cresswell, 2012).

A total of four teacher trainees were selected as participants through purposive sampling. The participants were selected based on their willingness to cooperate during the investigation and the criteria adopted by the participants of the study is expected to answer the research objectives. In addition, study participants selected were homogeneous in terms of academic achievement based on grade point average (CGPA) of about 3.0 and above.

Selection of a small number of sample, of whom four were expected to make it easier for researcher to conduct observation. In addition, a small number is sufficient for the purpose of the detailed descriptive study (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009). Qualitative case study involves five different ways of collecting data: observation, interviews, analysis of documents, archival records, and artifacts (Creswell, 2012). However, in this study only observation was used as data collection method.

Research Finding

This section describe the categories of HTS implemented among teacher trainees and the categories of HTS often implemented by teacher trainees.

Based on data analysis, teacher trainees involved generally had implemented HTS namely, a) understanding the chronology, b) exploring the evidence, c) making interpretations, d) formulating imagination, and e) creating rationalization. Data analysis shows that the HTS often implemented by teacher trainees are exploring the evidence and making interpretations skills. Detailed analysis of the implementation of HTS by teacher trainees are as follows.

Understanding Chronology

This skill was seen to be carried out by Teacher A (TA) in the teaching learning session which was observed according the steps (Induction Set, Step 1, 2, and 3) as in Table 1 and the finding is as Table 1.

Table 1
Understanding Chronology Skill by the Teacher Trainees

Observation					O2				O3						
O1					I	S	S1	S2	S3	S4	IS	S1	S2	S3	S4
Teaching Step					T	A	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	-	-

Note: IS - Induction set; S - Step; / - Available; - No; O - Observation

Exploring the evidence. This skill was demonstrated by Teacher A, Teacher B and Teacher D (TA, TB and TD) in the teaching and learning session according the steps (Induction Set, Step 1, 2, and 3) and the result is as in Table 2.

Table 2
Exploring the Evidence Skills by the Teacher Trainees

Observation O1				O2				O3				
				Teaching Step								
	IS	S1	S2	S3	IS	S1	S2	S3	I S	L1	L2	L3
TA	-	/	/	-	-	/	/	-	/	-	/	-
TB	-	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	/	-
TD	-	-	-	-	-	/	-	/	-	-	-	-

Note: IS - Induction set; S - Step; / - Available; - No; O - Observation

Making interpretation. This skill was conducted by Teacher A, Teacher B and Teacher D (TA, TB and TD) in the teaching and learning session according the steps (Induction Set, Step 1, 2, and 3) and the result is as in Table 3.

Table 3
Making Interpretation Skill by the Teacher Trainees

Observation				O1	O2	O3														
				Teaching Step			I S	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	I S	S1	S2	S3	IS	L1	L2	L3
TA	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
TB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	
TD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Note: IS - Induction set; S - Step; / - Available; - No; O - Observation

Formulating imagination. This skill was implemented by Teacher B and Teacher D (TB and TD) in the teaching and learning session according the steps (Induction Set, Step 1, 2, and 3) and the result is as in Table 4.

Table 4
Formulating Imagination Skill by the Teacher Trainees

Observation O1				O2				O3									
				Teaching Step				I S	S1	S2	S3	S4	I S	S1	S2	S3	S4
TB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
TD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	

Note: IS - Induction set; S - Step; / - Available; - No; O - Observation

Creating rationalization. This skill was implemented only by Teacher B (TB) in the teaching and learning session according the steps (Induction Set, Step 1, 2, and 3) and the result is as in Table 5.

Table 5
Creating Rationalization Skill by the Trainees Teacher

	Observation				O2				O3							
	O1	I S 1	S2	S3	S4	IS	S 1	S2	S3	S4	I S 1	S1	S2	S3	S4	
TB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	/	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: IS - Induction set; S - Step; / - Available; - No; O - Observation

Discussion

The findings show that the overall category of Historical Thinking Skills (HTS) implemented by the trainees teacher. Teacher trainees revealed they often implement skills such as exploring the evidence and making interpretations in their teaching practice. Other HTS such as understanding chronology, formulating imagination and creating rationalization were less frequent implemented. Only a teacher trainer had implemented almost all the skills in teaching learning processes. The findings clearly indicate that teacher trainees were able to implement only some categories of HTS in their teaching.

These findings provide new insights as in line with studies conducted by Baharin Abu (2006) who found participants still failed to apply thinking skills during their teaching practice. However, this study provides a benchmark on the effectiveness of teacher training in the university that need to provide sufficient guidance for teacher trainees to apply HTS during their teaching practice. This finding also supports the TPACK Model that the coherence between content knowledge and the pedagogical knowledge can build effectively teaching and learning (Mishra and Koehler, 2006).

Conclusion

Emphasis on the implementation of Historical Thinking Skills should always be monitored in each course by qualified instructors. Constraints on the implementation of Historical Thinking Skills should be addressed immediately by the relevant parties so that the training provided at teacher training institutes could be improved. This is because the implementation of Historical Thinking Skills in the classroom by a teacher will not only produce students who have the skills but also students who are capable of thinking and evaluating a historical event with more empathy.

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