

Strengthening Teachers' Ability to Improve Students' High-Order Thinking Skills at Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan Islamic Boarding School

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ABSTRACT

This service activity seeks to strengthen Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan Islamic Boarding School teachers' High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) learning implementation skills. This service is offered since teachers confront many obstacles when setting up HOTS. A lack of awareness of HOTS and its practice contributes to low student achievement. This activity uses workshops to create HOTS using novel learning methods like Problem-Based Learning (P.B.L.) and Contextual Teaching & Learning. Higher-order thinking has been encouraged by learning outcome classifications in training. This training boosts student motivation, improves idea understanding, and promotes higher-order thinking tasks. Thus, this study emphasizes the need for HOTS in learning to prepare students for real-world issues. This study also suggests using other unique learning techniques to promote higher-order thinking skills. In Islamic boarding schools, teacher support and a larger learning environment might improve students' higher-order thinking skills.

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HOTS, learning, student teacher, training

Introduction

The Islamic legacy of knowledge, ethics, and accountability can generate people who can handle the complexity of the present global environment. Recent studies have proven that non-formal Islamic education can teach young Muslims critical thinking, despite its reputation for prioritizing memorization and submitting to authority. Including critical thinking and global competencies in Islamic educational curricula and practices can be a strategic step to address the challenges Muslim societies continue to face in maintaining their religious and cultural identities while adjusting to the demands of the twenty-first century. (Shah et al., 2015) (Altinyelken, 2021) (Rifai & Kemas Imron Rosadi, 2022) (Send & Magadlah, 2021). Islamic education, including Islamic Studies, has been a major focus of Muslim intellectuals for decades, particularly since the First World Conference on

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Muslim Education in Makkah, Saudi Arabia 1977. During the meeting, it was noted that Islamic education has been heavily influenced by secularism and has failed to promote Muslims' understanding of Islam. One of the resulting decisions was that education should include the balanced development of the entire human personality, including its spiritual aspects (Saqeb, 2000), as well as the creation of an emotional attachment to Islam and the ability of Muslims to follow the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Husain and Ashraf, 1979). Since then, world conferences on Muslim education have been held in Islamabad, Dhaka, Bangladesh (1981), Jakarta, Indonesia (1982), Cairo, Egypt (1987), Cape Town, South Africa (1996), Shah Alam, Malaysia (2009), and Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam (2012). (Nimulola, 2018).

On the other hand, the challenge in Islamic education lies not only in curriculum reform and educational vision, but also in the ability of teachers to comprehend and incorporate the content. Critical thinking abilities are essential for educators, especially the capacity to find, arrange, store, and recall pertinent information for teaching. Throughout the learning process, this skill is crucial for solving problems and rendering wise decisions. (Marzano, R. J., 2000) Teachers need strong thinking skills to help students learn. Cognitively gifted teachers can engage students, review and improve their teaching methods, and help pupils solve problems and make decisions. Teachers must adapt to change, be creative, collaborate with parents, appraise technology, and use it in the classroom. Strong cognitive abilities help teachers evaluate student performance and make the best teaching and learning decisions. (Halpern, D. F. (1998)., 1998)

Additionally, critical thinking abilities in pupils are a crucial component of education. This skill involves processing information, analyzing, evaluating, and applying knowledge and abilities to solve issues and come to wise judgments. It also involves the capacity to see issues and find solutions, generate fresh concepts and ideas, exercise critical thought, and come to wise conclusions. (Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.), 2001).

Thus, educators and students must use critical thinking to improve Islamic education for the 21st century. Education must be adaptable and sensitive to changing conditions, thus educators and students must have global competency and critical thinking abilities. Students must learn scientific ingenuity, communication, teamwork, innovation literacy, critical thinking, and creativity for the 21st century. Science education requires scientific creativity for problem identification, approach discovery, and alternative solution formulation. Students need critical, creative, and analytical thinking to gain competencies. (Astutik et al., 2020)

Research shows that problem-based learning (PBL) and contextual teaching and learning (CTL) models can boost students' confidence, social skills, and participation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Innovative learning methods like inquiry-based and project-based learning can help improve higher-order thinking. Critical thinking, a crucial 21st-century skill, improves student performance. This capacity can be built through affective, psychomotor, and cognitive learning outcomes. By modifying the cognitive taxonomy, Anderson and Krathwohl segregate students' skills into two parts: mental processes and info (Fazriyah et al., 2017)

The cognitive abilities of students are a fundamental component of the learning process, enabling them to acquire the necessary skills to comprehend and implement novel ideas and navigate practical scenarios. The cultivation of good thinking skills also facilitates the development of curiosity and lifelong learning skills in pupils. The cognitive abilities of students encompass critical, creative, problem-solving, and analytical thinking. By means of effective instruction, educators can facilitate the development of more robust thinking skills in children, therefore equipping them to confront real-life obstacles.

High-order thinking skills involve processing, evaluating, assessing, and applying knowledge to solve complicated issues and draw conclusions. Cognitive learning involves organizing knowledge, linking concepts, and forming new ideas. People may absorb ideas, make difficult decisions, and solve complex problems using this capacity. Students learn to solve complicated and ambiguous problems through higher-order thinking. All aspects of life benefit from creativity, innovation, flexibility, and problem-solving. Teachers need professional development to help pupils acquire advanced cognitive skills. Teacher involvement in learning is important because their pedagogical skills affect student learning. Technology and constructivism increase cognition. (Hopson et al., 2001)

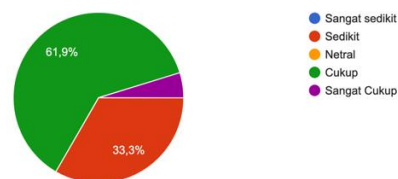
The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has launched a campaign to improve learning and educational outcomes by supporting advanced cognitive ability-focused teaching methods. (Nisfah et al., 2022). This effort recognizes the necessity of teaching pupils 21st-century cognitive skills. The current study highlights the challenges of bringing higher-order thinking Skills (HOTS) into standard classrooms. Although teaching 21st-century capabilities like higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) is generally recognized, scholars have found that implementation is difficult. Teachers may struggle to create learning and assessment activities that develop these higher cognitive skills. (Rahaju & Fardah, 2018)

The Ministry's program uses a well designed multi-stage strategy to help teachers teach Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to students. This training program aims to give teachers the knowledge, skills, and capacities to improve their teaching and students' academic performance. Previous studies have examined how HOTS training programs mitigate the positive relationship between teacher efficacy and effectiveness. (Mohd Ismail et al., 2017) The data indicate that implementing such programs can greatly enhance the positive correlation between teachers' self-assurance in their skills and their actual teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the crucial point that instructors have in promoting educational transformation via their behaviors and convictions. (Arumugam M. Pillay et al., 2018) Following the execution of the programs initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, it is crucial to closely observe and assess their influence on the educational achievements of both teachers and pupils. Ongoing evaluation and improvement of the training methodology will be essential to guarantee the sustained effectiveness of the program in cultivating a fresh cohort of analytical thinkers and effective problem solvers. (Mohd Ismail et al., 2017) (Rahaju & Fardah, 2018)

A program designed by the Ministry of Education and Culture to enhance the quality of learning and the quality of graduates is Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS)-oriented learning development. One of the priority programs of the Directorate of Basic Education

Teacher Development in the development of HOTS-oriented learning is the empowerment of the learning community through the Kelompok Kerja Guru (KKG) and Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP). The success of the Higher Level Thinking Skills-Oriented Learning Competency Improvement Program (HOTS) is contingent upon the preparation of primary teachers in the zoning process. The crucial function of core teachers in the learning competency development program is that they are components that interact directly with target teachers in their respective zones. Teachers are proficient in selecting suitable learning materials and are capable of developing HOTS-based planning and learning strategies, according to research. Pre-activity stages, such as interviews and observations, and activity stages, such as lectures, questions and responses, and discussions, are employed to enhance the proficiency of teachers in incorporating HOTS into the learning process. Methods used to improve teacher competence in integrating HOTS into learning include pre-activity stages such as interviews and observations, and activity stages such as lectures, question-and-answer sessions, and practice. Based on the results of the questionnaire on how teachers implement higher-order thinking Skills in learning, it shows that 61.9% of madrasah teachers of RWD Muslimin NWDI Kayangan can implement HOTS in learning, but there are still several obstacles such as time limitations and lack of understanding of HOTS.

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Method

At the Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan Islamic Boarding School, the Workshop and Intensive Training method is a highly strategic approach to a community service program that is designed to enhance the skills of teachers in teaching High-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). This method was selected due to its ability to deliver a substantial impact in a relatively brief amount of time while simultaneously ensuring that the training provided to the teachers is both relevant and of high quality. The Workshop and Intensive Training will complete teachers' HOTS knowledge. They will learn the differences between HOTS and core thinking skills and why they are important in 21st-century education. This course will teach educators how to apply HOTS in the classroom. They will be asked to explore instructional methods that encourage critical thinking, in-depth analysis, solution appraisal, and ideation.

Implementation of Activities

1. Initial Preparation and Activity Plan

Before starting the activity, the implementation of the activity planned and coordinated all activities to strengthen the teacher's ability. A comprehensive activity plan is prepared by considering the objectives, target participants, training materials,

schedule, and implementation location. In addition, the evaluation of training needs is carried out to ensure that the material presented is relevant and can effectively improve the competence of teachers. All of these aspects are structured with regard to the guidelines for continuous professional development so that training programs can have a long-term impact on the quality of education. (Desimone, 2009)

The goal of this activity is to help teachers create and implement higher-order thinking skills-based learning activities. Teachers should encourage pupils to think critically, analyze, evaluate, and solve complicated problems creatively by developing these skills. Improving teacher competence in HOTS-based learning creates a more dynamic and demanding learning environment so students can realize their academic potential. (Brookhart, 2010) .

Furthermore, the main objectives of this activity also include improving students' higher-level thinking skills through strengthening teachers' capacity in designing and implementing HOTS-based learning activities. High-level thinking skills involve more than just observing facts and memorizing; These skills require students to analyze, evaluate, and create a deeper understanding of the concepts learned. (Brookfield, 2012)

Target Participants: Participants in this activity consist of all teachers who teach at the Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan Islamic Boarding School, including teachers from various subjects and levels of education. **Training Materials:** The training materials presented during this activity include:

1. The concept and importance of High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) in education.
2. HOTS-based learning strategies.
3. The role of teachers in developing students' thinking skills at a high level.
4. HOTS-based learning activity design.
5. Application of HOTS in various subjects.

Implementation Location: All training activities and workshops are carried out at the Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan Islamic Boarding School. Training sessions by education experts can be held in special halls or meeting rooms available at Islamic boarding schools. The implementation of learning activities takes place in school classrooms at Islamic boarding schools, involving all students and teachers. Student thinking ability assessment tests are also carried out in the school environment

2. Training Sessions by Education Experts

The training began with an intensive session led by an education expert in the field of High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). This session provides an in-depth understanding of the concept of HOTS, appropriate learning strategies, and the importance of developing higher-order thinking skills in students. Education experts also provide practical examples and case studies to provide better insights to teachers.

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) is an approach in education that separates critical thinking techniques from lower-level learning approaches. Through HOTS, students move not only to have knowledge at the level of memorization, but also to

actively analyze, evaluate, and create. (Brookfield, 2012). Here are some practical strategies that teachers can use to develop HOTS in madrasah students:

- 1) Problem-Based Learning (PBL): This is a learning strategy that supports skill development in HOTS. PBL involves giving students a real-world problem or scenario and challenging them to find a solution.
- 2) Asking Divergent Questions: Teachers can ask divergent questions to students to develop their comprehension abilities. Divergent questions are open-ended questions that require students to think critically and creatively.
- 3) Group Discussions: Teachers can use group discussions to encourage students to share their ideas and perspectives. This helps students to develop communication skills and critical thinking
- 4) Step-by-Step Problem Solving: Teachers can teach students to use step-by-step methods to solve problems. This high-level way of thinking will help them solve problems more quickly and easily.
- 5) Encourages Creative Thinking: High-level thinking requires creative thinking. Teachers can encourage creative thinking by allowing students to express their ideas and perspectives in different ways.



Figure 1 : Presenter Delivering HOTS material

3. Workshop on Designing Learning Activities

After gaining a better understanding of HOTS, teachers engage in practical workshops. They are given the freedom to design HOTS-based learning activities according to the subjects they teach. Teachers collaborate, exchange ideas, and discuss the best strategies to encourage students to think higher. This includes designing project assignments, cognitive games, and in-depth discussions on specific topics.

Cooperation between teachers is very important to encourage higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in students. Here are some strategies that can be used by teachers of the Madrasah Raudlatul Muslimin NWDI Kayangan Islamic Boarding School to promote HOTS to their students:

- 1) Teachers can design project assignments that require students to analyze, evaluate, and create. These tasks are supposed to be challenging and require students to think critically and creatively
- 2) Teachers can use cognitive games to encourage HOTS in their students. These games are supposed to be challenging and require students to think critically and creatively.
- 3) Teachers can encourage in-depth discussions on specific topics to promote HOTS in their students. These discussions should be open and require students to think critically and creatively.
- 4) Teachers should introduce the concept of HOTS to their students and provide examples of questions and problems that require high-level thinking skills.
- 5) Teachers should use a variety of strategies to promote HOTS to their students. They should be aware of different types of strategies and use them appropriately

By using these strategies, the teachers of the Madrasah Raudlatul Muslimin NWDI Kayangan Islamic Boarding School can help their students develop higher-order thinking skills, which will prepare them for success in the future.

4. Implementation of Learning Activities in the Classroom

After the workshop, the teachers implemented the learning activities they had designed in their respective classrooms. They applied the approaches they had learned to facilitate students' thinking more critically, analyzing situations, and creating solutions. Teachers also provided guidance and feedback on students' progress in developing higher-order thinking skills.

The teachers of the Madrasah Raudlatul Muslimin N.W.D.I. Kayangan Islamic Boarding School implements the learning activities designed in their respective classrooms. They apply the approaches they have learned to facilitate students in thinking more critically, analyzing situations, and creating solutions. Teachers provide guidance and feedback on students' progress in developing higher-order thinking skills. Here are some ways teachers can design learning that can improve students' higher-order thinking skills:

- 1) Applying a constructivism approach: This approach involves students actively in the learning process to build their knowledge and skills. Teachers can apply active learning, learning-by-doing, scaffolded learning, and others
- 2) Applying a problem-based learning (P.B.L.) model can improve students' understanding of learning activities and critical thinking skills. In this model, students are given problems or situations they must solve using higher-order thinking skills.
- 3) Implementing differentiated learning: Differentiated learning can mean learning the same learning content to all students using different learning strategies or may require teachers to facilitate learning based on varying levels of difficulty based on each student's ability. Teachers can implement differentiated learning in the following ways: a) Provide several learning alternatives to adjust the process to the

student's condition. B) Conduct initial, formative, and summative assessments to produce student products with abilities as stipulated in the C.P. C) Create a learning atmosphere that prioritizes collaboration and not competition so that affection for the school environment grows.

- 4) Applying the contextual teaching and learning (CTL) learning model: This model can help students to think higher, critically, and creatively by analyzing, synthesizing, and solving problems
- 5) Implementing a student-centered learning approach allows students to be more active in the learning process and build their knowledge. Teachers can apply inquiry, project, problem-based, challenge-based, and differentiated learning approaches.
- 6) In designing learning that can improve students' higher-level thinking skills, teachers must also conduct an initial assessment to determine students' initial abilities and design learning through differentiation. In addition, teachers also need to provide feedback on students' progress in developing higher-order thinking skills.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The service monitors and evaluates all activities. Service implementers visited classrooms to directly observe the implementation of HOTS-based learning activities. In addition, the implementer also conducted interviews with students to understand changes in learning approaches and student responses to new activities. Here are some questions asked in interviews with students to understand their responses to HOTS activities:

- 1) What do you think of the HOTS activities you have done in class?
- 2) Do you think HOTS activities are more challenging than regular activities? Why or why not?
- 3) Have you noticed a change in the way you approach learning since you started doing HOTS activities?
- 4) Do you think HOTS activities have helped you develop your critical thinking skills? Why or why not?
- 5) Do you have any suggestions on how HOTS activities can be improved to better support your learning?

Here is a description of an interview with some students after the implementation of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in the classroom: Some students revealed that they found the HOTS activities very interesting. They love the opportunity to think more deeply about the subject matter and try different approaches to solving problems. The challenges provided by HOTS activities are considered to be fun and motivating.

Some students admitted that HOTS activities were more challenging than ordinary activities. They feel that this activity requires more critical and creative thinking, where they have to often reflect on the right solutions and apply the knowledge in a more in-depth way. This activity forces them to get out of their comfort zone and think more intensely.

These students also stated that since the implementation of HOTS activities, there has been a significant change in the way they approach learning. Now, they are more likely to question more, seek more information, and try to understand concepts better. They become more active in exploring knowledge.

According to some students, HOTS activities have helped them in developing critical thinking skills. Teachers are used to inviting them to evaluate information, identify problems, and find better solutions. It also helps them to better understand the broader context of the topic being studied.

The students gave some suggestions to improve HOTS activities. They feel that this activity could be more effective if there were more guidelines or examples provided to help understand how to overcome the problem. In addition, they also want more feedback and discussion with teachers and friends about the results of HOTS activities, so that they can understand where they can improve their abilities.

Interviews with several students after implementing HOTS in the classroom are as follows: **Question 1 - Opinions on HOTS Activities:** Some students' answers stated that HOTS activities were exciting. HOTS provides an opportunity to think more deeply about the subject matter and try different approaches to problem-solving. They love the challenge provided by this HOTS activity. (Interview with students and students, Dende Arzila Suci Ramdani, Hana Lubna, Hidayah, M. Faris Aniarzam, on 10 September 2023)

Question 2 - Difficulty of HOTS Activities: Some students stated that HOTS activities are more challenging than ordinary activities. HOTS activities require thinking more critically and creatively, reflecting on solutions, and applying knowledge in a more in-depth way. (Interview with Students and Students, M. Handayani, M, Rizal, Juana Rizkika, Fadli Rahman, on September 10, 2023)

Question 3 - Changes in Learning Approaches: The answers of some students stated that HOTS has made changes in the way they approach learning since they started doing HOTS activities. Now, students are more likely to question more things, seek information more deeply, and try to understand concepts better. (Interview with Students and Students, Majid, Soleha, Windawati, Fatin Veryal, on September 10, 2023)

Question 4 - Critical Thinking Skills Development: Some students stated that HOTS activities have helped them develop their critical thinking skills. The teachers made us accustomed to evaluating information, identifying problems, and finding better solutions. It also helps us better understand the lesson topic's broader context. (Interview with Students and Students, Susilawati, Mustika Pertiwi, Safira aulia, Syarif Hidayat, on September 10, 2023)

Question 5 - Suggestions for Improving HOTS Activities: Some students' answers stated that HOTS activities could have been better if more guides or examples were provided to understand how to overcome the problem. Also, more feedback and discussion with teachers and friends about the results of HOTS activities will help us better understand where we can improve ourselves. (Interview with Students and Students, Sawaluddin, Suhaebatul Islamiyah, Windawati, Ega Soleha, on September 10, 2023)

6. Student Thinking Ability Assessment Test

Student thinking ability assessment tests are carried out before and after teacher capacity-strengthening activities. This test is designed to measure students' improvement in their ability to apply the HOTS concepts they learn during these activities. The test results indicate the performance and effectiveness of teacher capacity-strengthening activities.

The questions stated that the test was conducted to measure the improvement of student's ability to apply the HOTS concepts they learned during teacher capacity-building activities. The test results indicate the performance and effectiveness of teacher capacity-building activities. The search results provide information about teaching assessments based on HOTS. Here are some relevant points from the search results:

- Using HOTS-based test questions is one of the efforts to stimulate students' higher-level thinking skills.
- HOTS-based learning assessment is an effort to measure students' abilities through questions oriented to high-level critical thinking.
- Teachers can provide HOTS-based test questions to train students to think critically.
- HOTS-based learning assessments require clear goals and principles.

Based on the search results, it can be concluded that the test conducted to measure the improvement of student's ability to apply the HOTS concept must be based on the principles and objectives of HOTS. The test questions should stimulate students' higher-order thinking skills and measure their abilities through questions oriented to higher-level critical thinking. The following are the results of the Test for the Field of Study of the Qur'an and Hadith.

SUBJECT:		AL-QUR'AN HADITS	
PEROGRAM :			
CLASS:		X	
It	PARTICIPANT NAME	Value Before HOTS	Value After HOTS
1	Abi Azmiadi	75	80
2	A. Maulana Hendrawan	75	77
3	Dende Arzila Suci Ramdani	75	79
4	Ega Soleha	80	80
5	Emiletes	75	77
6	Fadli Rahman	75	82
7	Haerul Rasyid	75	85
8	Hana Lubna	85	85
9	Hidayah	75	75
10	Inwandi	80	85
11	Juana is Rizkika	80	85
12	Juliana Sari	75	77
13	M. Faris Aniazam	75	78
14	M. Handayani	75	80
15	Mr. Rizal	75	77
16	M. Zeanuddin	75	77
17	Majid	75	80
18	Mustika Periw	75	80
19	Raffle	75	75
20	Rismawati	80	80
21	Safira Aulia	75	75
22	Sawaludin Fitria Jaya	75	78
23	Soleha	75	75
24	Suhaebatul Islamiyah	75	75
25	Susilawati	75	75
26	Syarif Hidayat	75	75
27	Windawati	75	75
28	Fatin Veryal	85	90

7. Reflection and Improvement

After the activity was completed, the teachers and the education supervisory team held a joint reflection session. They discussed the activity's strengths and weaknesses and developed an improvement plan for similar activities in the future. This ensures that activities to strengthen teachers' abilities continue to grow and improve the quality of education in Islamic boarding schools.

The implementation of this activity is a collaborative and directed effort to improve the quality of education by integrating HOTS into the learning process. With a focus on enhancing students' thinking skills, the head of the Madrasah stated that we are optimistic that this activity will provide long-term benefits for the intellectual and academic development of students at the Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan Islamic Boarding School. (Interview with Mu'tamad, SS, on August 30, 2023)

The content reflected in the session is the content of activities or programs at the Islamic boarding school. It includes the subject matter, teaching methods, learning strategies, and all aspects related to the activity. Examples of content that can be reflected include:

- 1) Subject Matter: Do the learning objectives present the subject matter? Is there a difference between the planned material and the actual material taught?
- 2) Teaching Methods: How do teachers teach the subject matter? Are the teaching methods used effective in communicating concepts to students?
- 3) Student Engagement: To what extent are students involved in learning activities? Is there enough effort to motivate students and maintain their interest in the material?
- 4) Learning Evaluation: How is assessment done to measure student understanding? Are there appropriate evaluation tools to use?
- 5) Punctuality: Are the activities carried out according to the predetermined schedule? Are there any delays or other issues affecting implementation?
- 6) Student Reactions: How did students respond to the activity? Do they feel engaged and motivated?
- 7) Strengths and Weaknesses: What works in those activities (strengths)? And what needs to be improved or improved (weaknesses)?
- 8) Repair Plan: How will the repair plan be implemented? What concrete steps will be taken to improve the quality of learning in the future?

All content related to learning activities, materials, methods, measurements, or student responses will be reflected on and evaluated so Islamic boarding schools can continue to develop and improve their education.



Figure 2 : Trainees

Results and Findings of Activities to Strengthen Teachers' Ability to Improve Students' Thinking Skills at the High Order Thinking Skill Level at the Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan Islamic Boarding School

The activity of strengthening the ability of teachers at the Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan Islamic Boarding School is one of the significant efforts in developing the quality of education in the institution. The main focus of this activity is to improve students' thinking skills at the High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) level. Through a series of training, workshops, monitoring, and evaluations, this activity managed to achieve several significant findings in an effort to improve the thinking skills of students in this Islamic boarding school.

Teacher's Understanding of the HOTS Concept

One of the main findings of this activity was the teacher's understanding of the concept of High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS). Prior to training, most teachers had a limited understanding of what HOTS actually means and why it is important in education. They tend to associate HOTS only with remembering high-level facts. However, after attending the training organized by an education expert, our teachers became more aware of the importance of advancing students' thinking skills at a higher level.

Teachers are beginning to understand that HOTS is not just about remembering facts, but also about students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and create deep understanding. This is an important step in the intellectual development of students. The following is an initial assessment of the teachers' understanding of the concept of HOTS:

Prior to training, most teachers have a limited understanding of what Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) actually mean and why they are important in education. However, after attending a training session led by an education expert, teachers became more aware of the importance of improving students' higher-order thinking skills. They begin to understand that HOTS is not only about remembering facts, but also about students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and create deep understanding. This is an important step in the intellectual development of students.

Teachers who originally had a limited understanding of HOTS became more prepared to integrate this concept into their teaching. They realize that advancing students' thinking skills at a high level is essential in preparing them to face the challenges of the 21st century. The ability to think at a higher level is a strong foundation for students' intellectual development, allowing them to better analyze information, investigate different points of view, and develop a deeper understanding of the concepts they are learning.

Teachers Design HOTS-Based Learning Activities

After understanding HOTS better, our teachers designed learning activities that encourage students to think higher. The workshops after the training allow them to collaborate and share ideas on integrating HOTS concepts into their curriculum and teaching methods.

As a result, we saw an improvement in the quality of learning materials. Our teachers began using critical thinking questions that stimulated students' thinking, project assignments that encouraged collaborative problem-solving, and simulations designed to spark students' analytical and synthetic thinking. This well-designed learning activity is critical to improving students' thinking skills.

Teachers who can design and integrate HOTS-based activities into their teaching play an essential role in improving the quality of education in these Islamic boarding schools. They create a learning environment encouraging students to develop higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. This learning activity allows students to approach the subject more deeply and critically.

Teaching higher-order thinking skills has real benefits. Research has shown that it can improve student achievement and prepare them for success in the 21st century. Students who receive instruction in higher-order thinking skills have better problem-solving abilities and are more likely to apply their learning to new situations.

Improving Students' Thinking Skills

One of the main objectives of this activity is to measure the impact of improving teachers' abilities on students' thinking skills at the HOTS level. To measure this, we conduct assessment tests of students' thinking skills before and after training. The results are very encouraging. After participating in learning activities led by teachers who have developed their ability to teach HOTS, our students significantly improve their thinking skills.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the teacher capacity-building activities at Pondok Pesantren Raudlatul Muslimin Kayangan can be drawn as a successful strategic step in improving the quality of education, especially in developing students' High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). The program focuses on improving teachers' capacity and establishing a more critical, analytical, and creative learning ecosystem in the educational institution. One of the main achievements of this activity is the improvement of teachers' understanding of the HOTS concept. Before the training, many teachers had a limited view of what HOTS meant, often only associating

it with memorizing high-level facts. However, after a series of trainings led by education experts, teachers in this boarding school began to realize that HOTS goes far beyond mere memorization. They learned that HOTS involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and create deep understanding, all of which are essential skills in modern education. This understanding becomes an important foundation in teachers' efforts to facilitate students' intellectual development more fully.

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