

THEMATIC DESIGN OF LEARNING BASED ON AL-ASMA 'AL-HUSNA FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract

Early childhood education should be created in instructional design to the needs of children. Thematic is learning that seeks to combine various mastery of some subjects or discussions that teach the relationship based on a theme, so children accustomed to looking at everything in the whole mind set. Thematic learning that based on al-Asma' Al-Husna can provide opportunities for children to draw conclusions from the various names of Allah linked to certain theme, so that they can develop all of the phenomena they feels and able to solve the problem through the different factors (in terms of various aspects). In addition, to the integrated curriculum, the learning process becomes relevant and contextual, so that children can actively participate in all dimensions, whether physical, social, emotional, and knowledge. Among 10 integrated learning models proposed by Robin Fogarty, three of them are quite effective to be applied to early childhood education, i.e. Connected, Webbed and Integrated. These learning models are student-centered, behaviorism, flexible, interest-centered. Al-Asma' al-Husna-based integrated learning adjusts the application with the stages of children's development. In the process, children know and memorize al-Asma' al-Husna according to the theme of the lesson. By this way, the essence of al-Asma' al-Husna will be blended to their soul.

Keywords: *Learning design, Learning thematic, Al-Asma' Al-Husna, Early childhood education*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education, in accordance with Regulation No. 17 of 2010, article 61 aims to establish the foundation for the development of students' potentials to become a man of faith and piety to God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, critical, creative, innovative, independent, confident, and become citizens of a democratic and responsible and develop the potential of spiritual intelligence, intellectual, emotional, kinesthetic, and social learners on a golden period of growth in the environment of fun education.

Early childhood education institutions need to implement appropriate and ideal in the learning process by focusing on curriculum which is designed and implemented in accordance to development of child-centered. Building a smart kid must deliver together with faith and piety. The intelligence of children will bear the attitude of submission and recognition of the existence of Allah SWT. To develop the knowledge and skills must also be accompanied by building the of noble character so that children have the proper knowledge and civilized character, makes children have the original science input, balanced and complete in all aspects of learning known as holistic education.

Thematic learning is learning that seeks to combine various mastery of some subjects or discussions that teach the relationship based on a theme, so children accustomed to looking at everything in the whole mind set. Integration of the learning process at schools both models, methods, or learning approaches, it is necessary to reinterpret the entire subject matter of the school with the charges of Islamic values. Thematic learning model in essence is an approach to learn that allows the child either individually or in groups actively searching, focus, and found the concepts and principles of holistic and authentic learning proces.

While the thematic learning-based on al-Asma 'al-Husna can provide opportunities for children to draw conclusions from the various names of God linked to the certain theme, so they can develop all of the phenomena he feels and able to solve the problem by taking into various of different factors (in terms of various aspects). In addition, to the integrated curriculum, the learning process becomes relevant and contextual that makes children can actively participate in all dimensions, whether physical, social, emotional, and knowledge activity.

Principles of education that shall be given to children, covering faith, worship and morality. In order to optimize the development of children and to meet the characteristics of children who are unique individuals, who have different experience and knowledge. It is necessary to attempt and provide stimuli, impulses, and support to children. In addition, to the formation of attitudes and behavior, children also need intellectual abilities that is ready to face the demands of the present and the future. Therefore, the curriculum for early childhood should pay attention to several principles; First, child-centered, meaning that children are targeted in learning activities conducted by educators. Second, encourage the development of physical, cognitive, creative, social, emotional, language and communication as the basis for the formation of the human being. Third, pay attention to the differences of children, whether in the state of physical, spiritual, and developmental level of intelligence.

DISCUSSION

Based on integrated curriculum, an integrated learning is an activity to design various learning materials through an intra-subjects theme in which these subjects will become a meaningful unit. So that the line of these subjects will be decreased or perished. Integrated learning shows well-structured and organized learning activities which discuss certain themes or lessons as the center of interest.

The use of theme is aimed to relate children's learning process with the real-life. All activities are hands on experience for children. These give them understanding about their circumstances. Besides, the activities also provide opportunities for children to integrate knowledge and skill from one experience to another. Integrated learning also integrate all aspects of development where the children can develop all their potentiality such as training their smooth and rough motoric, doing observation, counting, memorizing, comparing, classifying, role playing, and exploring ideas and creativities.

The implementation of this integrated learning approach is based on the topic developed by the teacher and the learners. The purposes of this topic are not only to master the concept or the skill but also to learn and explore the chosen topic. The philosophy of this activity claims that the process of learning is an interaction process between teachers and students, directly or indirectly. Student-centered atmosphere should be built to create a situation which is democratic, fair, humanist, empowered, pleasant, encouraged, motivated and stimulated. This kind of situation will create inspiration, imagination, creation, innovation, work-ethic and spirit of life¹.

Learning is series of activities which influence the learners. Learning is not all about simple or complex concept but more than that, it is a process of delivering information, messages and values from teacher to the students. Learning is closely related to the development of children's potentiality.

¹Abuddin Nata, *Perspektif Islam Tentang Strategi Pembelajaran*, Jakarta, Kencana, 2009, p. 3

In other words, learning is all efforts done by the teacher to make the learning process happens to his/her students.²

Thus, it can also be defined that learning is an activity aimed to let the children learn.³ Paulo Freire stated that education is problem posing in which in the objective of learning people learn all realities in life to make his/her life better. The process of action-reflection learning happens repeatedly (more than once) to form a learning spiral. One dialect will be followed by another one (s). It shows that learning is not a routine process but changing and transformation processes. Learning is a life-long process. Learning refers to an activity to build communication between teacher and the students. That is why the implementation of posing problem is the process of how to solve problem between teacher and the students.⁴

Al-Asma' Al-Husna-based Integrated Learning Model in Character Education, referring to its Arabic term, Al-Asma' al-Husna means all good names while from its term, it refers to all good names belong to Allah as the proof of His noble and glorious. It is stated in the holy Qur'an surah Al-A'raf 7:180 that:

بِهَا الَّذِينَ يُلْجُونَ أَسْمَاءِهِ سِجْرُونَ يَعْمَلُونَ ﷻ

"... and to Allah belong the best names, so invoke HIM by them. And leave (the company of) those who practice deviation concerning His names. They will be recopansived for what they have been doing".

Integrated learning is an appropriate practical approach. This approach rejects drill system for the basic of children's cognitive forming and intellectual structuring. The first step of integrated learning is choosing or developing a theme. At this first step, the teacher asks the children to choose and develop the theme. Thus, the children will actively involve in the process of learning. Through al-Asma' al-Husna, the children will memorize names of Allah and mention Allah characters. It is hoped that by applying this way, character's building in the early childhood education can be developed easier.

The repetition of al-Asma' al-Husna during the learning activities will stimulate children to always listen and say all Allah's names. Their sense of love to Allah will also be built easily. Thus, all the learning process of all aspects; cognitive, affective and psychomotor will easily achieved⁵ as long as its process covers three steps of learning, i.e. planning, acting, and evaluating.⁶ In relation to this, the implementation of character education in under-aged learners should focus on 3 important elements; principle, process and practice.

Integrated model in character education is being implemented integrately based on the theme. The strength of this model is that the teacher will be responsible to the characters' building of the learners. Besides, the process of this character building education is not informative cognitive but more applicative. The children will get accustomed with the values applied in each activity. One of the ways to build character values is through the implementation of al-Asma' al-Husna in which the children should memorize and understand Allah's names in order to stimulate their cognitive aspect without neglecting the aspect of their affective.

The following models are al-Asma' al-Husna-based integrated learning which can be applied to develop character education: 1). Fragmented Model. This model is implemented by the integration

²M. Sobari Sutikno, *Mengagas Pembelajaran Efektif dan Bermakna*, Mataram, NTP Press, 2007, p. 50

³Hasniyati Gani Ali, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, Jakarta, Ciputat Press, 2008, p. 62

⁴Paulo Freire, *Pendidikan Kaum Tertindas*, Jakarta, LP3ES, 2000, p. 61

⁵Dimiyati dan Mudjiono, *Belajar dan Pembelajaran*, Jakarta, Rineka Cipta, 2006, p. 26-32

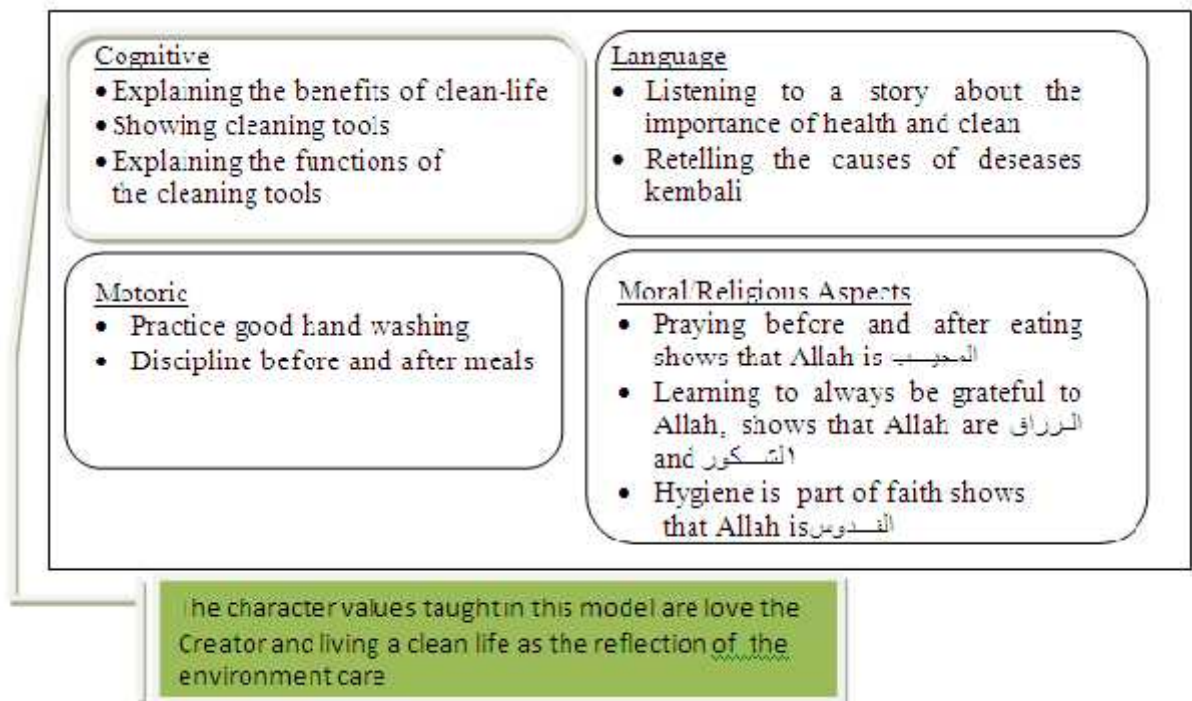
⁶Asmawan Sahlan dan Angga Teguh Prastyo, *Desain Pembelajaran Berbasis Pendidikan Karakter*, Jogjakarta, Ar-Ruzz, Media, 2012, p. 43-48

limited to one subject. For example, the lesson of myself, the discussion is more focused on I and member of my body, I and my circumstances and family. This learning model, the child is expected to know in full the specific capabilities of each of learning, although sometimes children are less able to make connection or integration with similar concept. However, for early childhood, at least they can get to know the attributes of God more than enough to instill the love of God, as well as the values of aqidah ingrained from an early age.2). Connected Model. This model is implemented based on the assumption that the lesson can be connected to certain learning activity. Namely on each subject content related to the topic of other topics, concepts with the concept of learning in one subject or specific material. The Model is connected from the idea that in fact in every learning content related to the topic of certain topic, and concept to be linked explicitly. One of subjects focused on each of interrelated subject. 3). Nested Model. This learning model, the main targets are the subject matter associated with thinking and organizational skills. It means integrating cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills and integrating processes, attitude and communication. This model is focused on the integration of some aspects of the subject. But the subject matter is still placed on priorities which are fitted with aspects of other skills. 4). Sequenced Model. This model significantly organize or integrate the concepts, skills, or abilities developed in a theme or sub-themes associated with the concepts, skills or potentials in early childhood. 5). Shared/Participative model. The learning model is based on the type of shared ideas derived from the distribution of the various sciences. This learning model is a combination of the curriculum, to the need of study two science teachers by linking of same concepts, attitudes and skills. The learning model is form of fusion type that share learning activity due to the overlap of ideas or concepts on two or more subjects. This learning is taken based on the fact that found sense of achievement that must be met through two or more subjects. 6). Webbed Model is one of the learning model that uses thematic approach to integrate subjects. One theme can be implemented in the webs spider method for curriculum content and subjects. The Subject uses a theme to present the suitability of concepts, topics and ideas. Children and teachers can determine the theme simultaneously, for example, animal themes, then the teacher designing these activities into sub-themes of animals, for example, water animals, wild animals, quadruped, and others. The combined theme is expected to provide an understanding of the development cognitive, language, social and emotional on children. 7). Threaded Model. This model, in fact quite difficult applied to early childhood since this model focuses on integration of Meta curriculum very deeply on a variety of subject matter content of material. This model is integrated in meta curriculum which is the focus of all subjects. Thinking skills, social skills, study skills, graphic organizer, technology, and multiple intelligence skills found in all disciplines to do with the approach of the choices. The core of this skill will be linked through existing curriculum of standard content. 8). Integrated Model. This model is an attempt to integrate a variety of learning mastery of some subjects or discussions that teach the relationship based on the theme, so that the child accustomed to looking at everything in the whole mind set. Integration of the learning process at schools both models, methods, or learning approaches is necessary to reinterpret the entire subject matter of the school that connected to Islamic values. The goal is not merely to encourage students to have the ability to understand the learning, but once a child can solve the problem well and intact, taking into various aspects. 9). Immersed Model. This model is designed to help children in filtering and combining various experiences and knowledge associated with aspects of the child's activities. The learning activities directed to facilitate the experience and utilization of each other's experiences. This model requires the ability to think quite high for children. Fusion process occurs internally within the child, so teachers need to facilitate the fusion process taking into comprehensive development of intelligence, combined with a variety of skills, concepts, and a good attitude of the child. 10). Networked Model. This learning is directing the child to experience directly the learning process and establishment of cooperation between children with expert or teacher in finding the data, information, or connection with its potential that they're interested in, so that they are not directly looking out from various sources. Sources may include books, friend, sister, parents or teachers who considered as an expert by them.

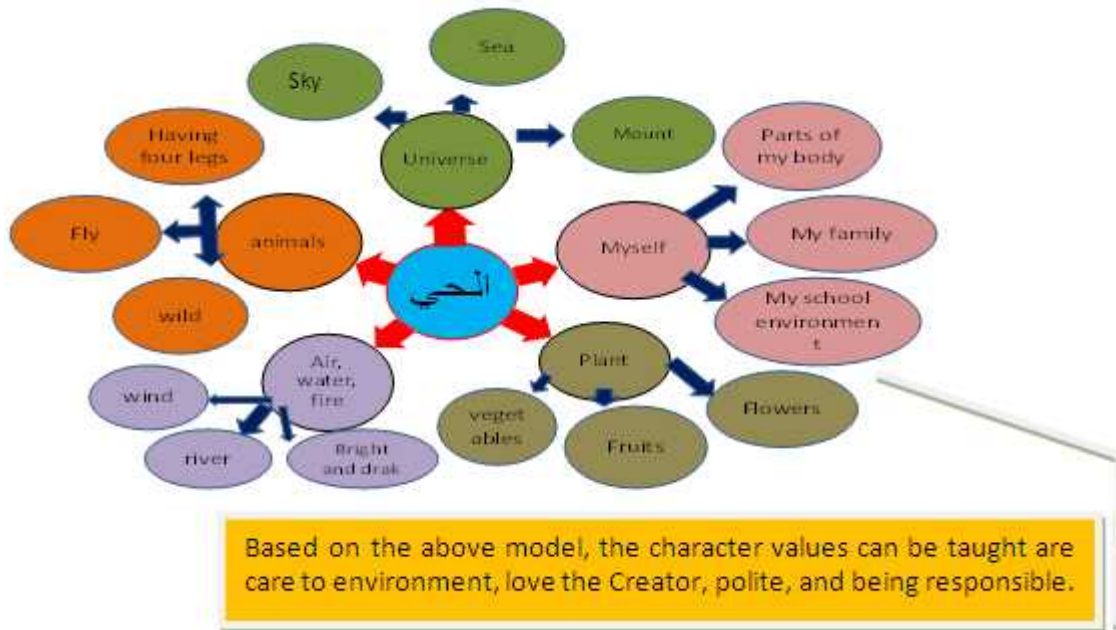
Among 10 integrated learning models, there are three models which considered effective for under-aged learners as follows: 1. **Connected Model**, This model is being implemented by composing each point of learning under one subject discussion. Every subject learning composes the connection

between topics and concepts in one learning discussion. In this connected model, the students will automatically connected to the curriculum in the subject learning more than they can assume.

A connected model is the connection under the same competencies among all fields of study, topics, concepts, skills, and today's assignment with the next one. Even it also connects the themes learnt in today's semester with the next ones. This model is appropriate to be implemented in the early childhood education since the children will not only connect some parts of the theme but more than that, they will also be able to grasp whole information in order to improve their creativities to reach certain competence. This competence will also be connected to other competence so that their potentiality and cognitive competence will be maximized. If the application of this model is based on al- Asma' al-Husna, it can described in the following design:

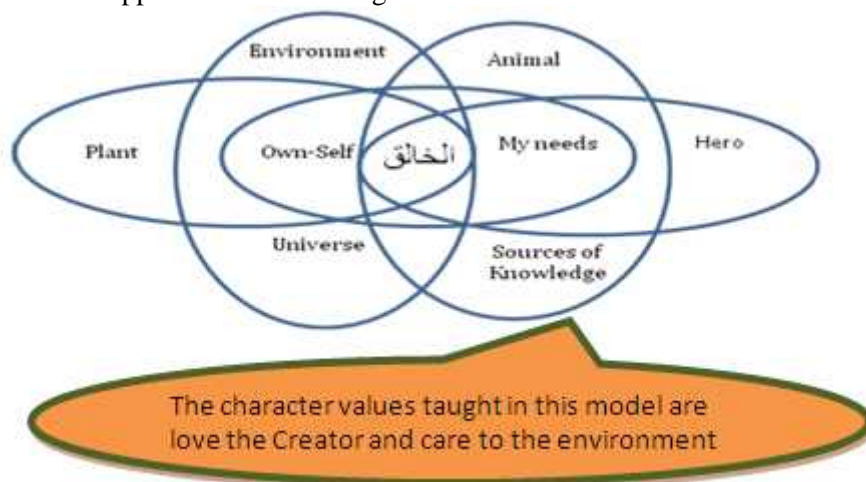


The above model shows that there is a relationship between ideas in one lesson. The children will get clearer and wider description on the concepts explained to them. They will also be given opportunities to deepen, review, revise and assimilate ideas in several stages. Building the feeling of loving Allah and caring to the environment in above themes will be easier to apply. 2). **Webbed Model;** This model applies thematic approach by integrating all subjects. One theme is being webbed to spread the content of the curriculum and its lessons. The lessons use theme to provide related concepts, topics and ideas. In this model, both teacher and the students will determine the theme together. The theme should be interesting enough to attract students' attention and make them easy to learn any interrelated points to the the theme. If this model is being developed with al-Asma' al-Husna basis, it can be described as follows:



Allah is the al-Mighty of the live of humans, plants, animals, water, air and fire, and universe. Through this learning model, the concept of الحی , can be easily understood by the children. They will understand that the existence of humans, animals, and environment is created by Allah. This point can become theme of the lesson to be discussed to let the children know about the characters of Allah. In the process of learning, the theme is given to integrate the content of the curriculum into one, enrich children's vocabulary and make the lessons become meaningful. The theme is used in order to direct children to understand the concepts of loving Allah and caring to the environment, so that the children will automatically learn these characters. 3). **Integrated Model**, Integrated model refers to a learning process which integrates the mastery of several subjects related to a certain theme, so that the children will get accustomed to see everything in the whole perspectives. The integration of learning model, method, and approach is considered important to re-interpret all subject lessons with Islamic values. The purposes do not only to encourage the children to have ability to understand the lessons but also to solve all problems by considering various aspects.

Besides, integrated learning is also a learning approach that give the opportunities to children; both individually or in group, to actively search, dig and find concept authentically and holistically. This learning approach provides learning materials integrated by connecting all subject lessons so that the lessons will not be separated. The children will actively participate in the learning process and decision. The application of this integrated model can described in the following picture:



The learning above is being adjusted with the children's development stages and characters. The theme of "Allah is The Creator" can be integrated to self-concept. Allah created heroes and humans with all their needs such as universe, plants, animals, water, air and fire as the sources of knowledge. Al-Asma' al-Husna-based integrated learning is very effective to maximize all children's cognitive aspects; motoric, language, free of choice, creativity, and characters. Thus, all *Illahiyah* characters will be automatically formed.

Through the application of those three (3) al-Asma' al-Husna-based integrated learning models, the process of learning is expected to be conducted suitable with the development of the children. At this process, children will know, memorize al-Asma' al-Husna integrated with the theme. Al-Asma' al-Husna will be blended in their personalities. By knowing the characters of Allah, they will be easy to know and adopt Allah's characters so that their characters will be built well.

The character building can be educated to children by letting them do their activities suitable with their ages. Children should be taught to become more independent day by day. They should have well self-confident towards their capabilities. The characters of children and their styles of learning should be used as the references to plan and run one learning program. Al-Asma' al-Husna is a basis developed to build children's characters so that they will have good characters by internalizing the characters of Allah to their personalities. Thus, teachers should be able to lead, supervise, and guide them to become the capable obedient Allah's creatures.

CONCLUSION

Al-Asma' al-Husna integrated learning is an effective model to be applied in the character education building of the children. This philosophy is based on the concept that educating children to be smart should be in lined with their good belief and faith to Allah.

The research showed that al-Asma' al-Husna contributes to children's character education. There are 10 characters of Allah that can be applied in the early childhood education, i.e. love the Creator, polite, respecting others, generous, caring to the environment, discipline, responsible, independent, and creative. The values of these characters should be built as early as possible to children. Early age is the most important stage for children to get the knowledge about the Oneness of Allah because children have high curiosity about the existence of Allah. The attitude of respecting others, generous, caring to the environment, able to have social interaction will create perfect whole personalities. Further, the characters of patient and discipline, are very needed to teach children on how to control themselves so that they will become someone who is responsible, independent, creative, and highly dedicated as the reflection of being obedient to Allah.

Among 10 integrated learning models proposed by Robin Fogarty, three of them are quite effective to be applied to early childhood education, i.e. Connected, Webbed and Integrated. These learning models are student-centered, behaviorism, flexible, interest-centered. Al-Asma' al-Husna-based integrated learning adjusts the application with the stages of children's development. In the process, children know and memorize al-Asma' al-Husna according to the theme of the lesson. By this way, the essence of al-Asma' al-Husna will be blended to their soul.

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