

Strengthening the Pedagogical Competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers: Mentoring Preparation of Contextual and Deep Learning-Based Teaching Modules in Banyuasin Regency

Fitri Oviyanti^{1*}, Nurlaila¹, Faizatul Mabruroh²

¹ Islamic Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Palembang, Indonesia.

² Physics Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Palembang, Indonesia.

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Corresponding Author:

Fitri Oviyanti

fitrioviyanti_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

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Abstract: The rapid implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum in Indonesia requires Islamic Education (PAI) teachers to design contextual teaching materials that promote meaningful and deep learning. However, many teachers in Banyuasin Regency still face challenges in developing such modules. This community service aimed to enhance the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers through mentoring in developing contextual and deep learning based teaching modules. The activity employed a participatory mentoring approach consisting of training session, workshops, and group guidance. The results indicate an increase in teacher's knowledge, creativity, and abilities in designing contextual modules. This program strengthens their pedagogical competence and encourages reflective teaching practices that align with the principles of in-depth learning.

Keywords: Pedagogical Competence, Islamic Education Teachers, Mentoring, Contextual Learning, Deep Learning.

Introduction

State the objectives of the work and provide an adequate background, avoiding a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results.

The rapid transformation of Indonesia's education system through the implementation of the independent curriculum has presented significant challenges and opportunities for teachers at all levels. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, in particular, are required to design teaching materials that foster contextual understanding and encourage in-depth learning, enabling students to connect Islamic values with real-life experiences. (Assalihee et al., 2024; González-pérez & Ramírez-montoya, 2022; Thamrin et al., 2024). Observations and interviews with PAI teachers in Banyuasin regency indicate that many teachers still struggle to develop teaching modules that effectively

integrate these approaches. Most existing teaching materials are still teacher centered and focus on delivering content.

Banyuasin regency was chosen as the focus area for this community service because it has a diverse educational environment with varying levels of teacher readiness to adopt the Independent Curriculum. Based on initial interviews with the Head of the Subject Teacher's Conference (MGMP) for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Banyuasin Regency (2025), approximately 80% of PAI teachers have not received intensive training in contextual learning and deep learning approaches. This situation indicates the need for systematic mentoring and capacity building to strengthen teacher's pedagogical competence.

Previous studies highlight the importance of contextual and deep learning approaches in enhancing student's critical thinking, creativity, and moral

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reasoning (Agyeman, 2024; Akmam, 2024; Alshumaimeri, 2023; GODOY et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2022; Thamrin et al., 2024). However, few community service programs have focused on empowering Islamic Education Teachers to design such modules within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. Therefore, this program seeks to fill that gap by providing a mentoring model that combines theory, practice, and reflection developing contextual and deep learning-based teaching modules.

The primary objective of this community service is to strengthen the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers through participatory mentoring activities. Expected outcomes include increased teacher knowledge, creativity, and ability to design learning modules aligned with the principles of contextual and deep learning approaches. In the long term, this initiative aims to encourage continuous professional development and improve the quality of Islamic Education practices in schools in Banyuasin Regency.

Method

This community service program employed a participatory and collaborative mentoring approach aimed at improving the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers in Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatera. The subjects of this program were 30 PAI teachers from several Senior High Schools, who were actively involved from the planning to the implementation stages. The service activities were conducted at the Banyuasin Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in collaboration with the local Islamic Religious Education Subject Teachers Conference (MGMP).

The implementation consisted of four stages:

1. Conceptual strengthening, focusing on deep learning pedagogy and contextual teaching principles aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum.
2. Workshop session, where participants collaboratively designed contextual and reflective lesson modules.
3. Mentoring and feedback, conducted through both face to face and online sessions to assist teachers in refining their modules.
4. Reflection and dissemination, in which teachers presented their best module products and shared experiences within their professional learning community.

Community engagement is emphasized through collaborative action planning, where teachers identify their learning challenges and design solutions together with facilitators. Data on teacher participations, understanding, and satisfaction are collected through observations, documentation, and structured feedback forms, then analyzed using descriptive qualitative

techniques to evaluate the effectiveness of each stage. This participatory approach ensures that teachers are not only trained but also empowered as reflective practitioners capable of meaningful Islamic Religious Education learning experiences.

Results and Discussion

Result

The implementation of this community service program successfully improved the pedagogical competence and reflective awareness of Islamic Education (PAI) teacher in Banyuasin Regency. Throughout the four stages of activities; conceptual strengthening, workshop, mentoring and reflection, the participants demonstrated progressive development in their understanding and practice of contextual Islamic learning.

1. Increased conceptual understanding

During the initial conceptual strengthening stage, most the teachers acknowledged limited familiarity with deep learning and contextual pedagogy. Post activity evaluations indicated a significant improvement in their theoretical comprehension. Based on feedback forms, participants stated that the sessions helped them connect Islamic values with real-life learning context, promoting higher student engagement and relevance.

2. Improving pedagogical design skills

During the workshop, teachers successfully designed learning modules aligned with the principles of contextual approaches and deep learning. These modules demonstrated creativity in integrating Quranic values, critical thinking, and problem-based learning. Document analysis of the resulting modules indicated 80% PAI teachers met the criteria for contextual and reflective learning design, as assessed through expert review and peer evaluation.



Figure 1. The presentation of concept by the facilitator

3. Strengthening mentoring and professional collaboration

The mentoring phase fosters strong collaboration between teachers and facilitators. Teachers reported that the peer review and mentoring process helped them better understand the steps in developing contextual and deep learning-based learning modules. The following is in excerpt an interview with an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher:

“Initially, I was still confused about how to develop an appropriate Deep learning pan, especially in setting learning objectives, designing engaging activities, and creating appropriate assessment. However, after participating in the mentoring, I have a better understanding of these steps and can see the interrelationships between the components.”

An Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher also acknowledged that her confidence in developing teaching modules has increased. Observations during the module pilot showed that teachers were able to apply the principles of the contextual approach and deep learning.

The following is documentation of offline and online assistance.



Figure 2. Discuss session

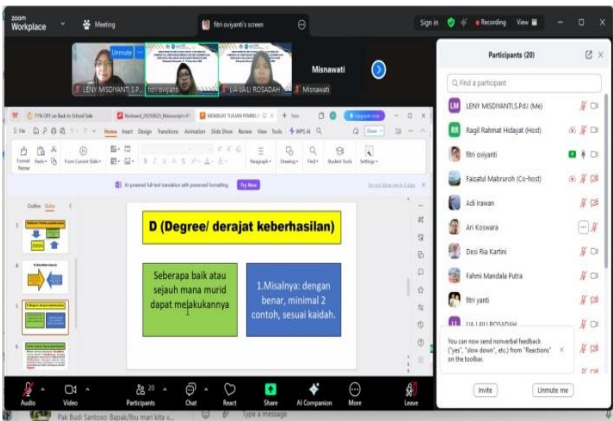


Figure 3. Online mentoring

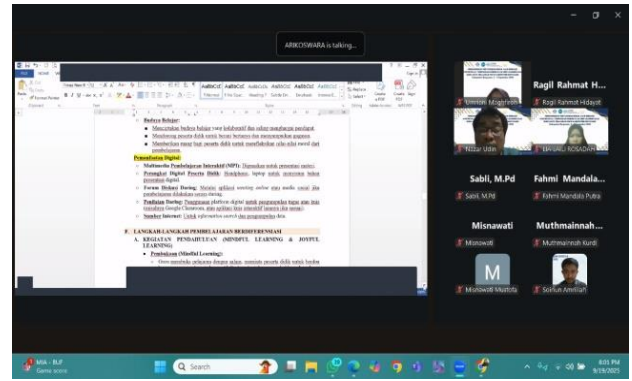


Figure 4. Online mentoring

4. Empowerment through reflection and dissemination

In the final reflection and dissemination session, teachers shared their module findings in the MGMP forum, which encouraged on going professional learning beyond the mentoring program. Reflective discussions revealed that participants developed a greater sense of autonomy and professional identity as reflective practitioners. Furthermore, teachers expressed satisfaction with the mentoring model an committed to implementing it in their own schools. As one PAI teacher commented:

“The satisfaction I feel is’nt just because the module is good, but because I feel I’ve developed as a more reflective, open minded teacher, and ready to continue learning for my students.”

The following is an exampe of PAI teching module for mentoring products.

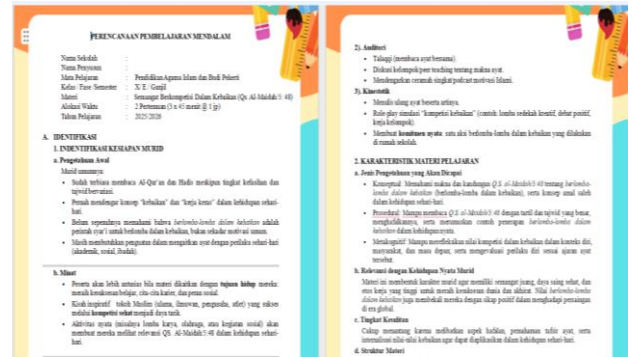


Figure 5. Module 1

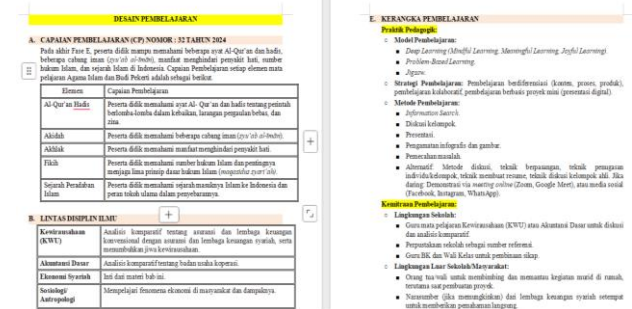


Figure 6. Module 2

Discussion

The result of this community service program demonstrated a significant increase in the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers through a participatory and reflective mentoring process. The observed increase in teachers' understanding of contextual approaches and deep learning suggests that professional empowerment requires more than just theoretical exposure. It requires on going guidance and collaborative engagement. This finding support previous research emphasizing that participatory mentoring enhances teacher's pedagogical competence through reflective engagement and dialogic learning. (Geletu & Group, 2023; Priawasana & Wulan, 2025; Thornton, 2025). Professional development involving reflection and feedback enables teachers to internalize theory into authentic practice, thereby strengthening the transformation of classroom pedagogy.

Improving teacher's ability to design contextual learning modules aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered and meaningful learning. The participatory mentoring model implemented in this program helps bridge the gap between theory and classroom application, strengthening teacher's confidence in adapting Islamic values to real-life situations. This aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes contextual engagement for meaningful understanding. (Le, 2024; Uddin et al., 2024), and with studies on Islamic Education that highlight the integration of values and real-life application in learning design. (Virtues, 2024). Therefore, a contextual approach in Islamic Religious Education Learning can serve as a transformative medium that fosters understanding and spiritual and moral awareness among student.

Collaboration among peers and reflective dialogue among PAI teachers further enhances the growth of a culture of professional learning. This type of collaboration reinforces findings from previous studies that emphasize that reflection and mentoring foster continuous professional growth and innovation in pedagogical practice. (Assalihee et al., 2024; Ghamrawi et al., 2024; Sonsupap & Cojorn, 2024). In this context, teachers engage in a cycle of feedback construction of knowledge, and continuous self-assessment. These interactions not only boost their confidence but also reinforce a sense of shared responsibility for improving the quality of learning.

Furthermore, the formation of professional networks among PAI teachers in Banyuasin, Palembang, indicates the beginning of a local movement toward independent professional development. This shift aligns with a broader educational transformation agenda that encourages teachers to become agents of change in their

communities. (Cong-lem, 2024; Grobler & Dittrich, 2025). The development of such networks provides teachers with a platform for continuous learning. In short, the mentoring model implemented in this program successfully empowered teachers not only to design contextual and deep learning modules, but also to transform their professional perspectives. The results of community service demonstrate that there is a significant increase in pedagogical competence when teachers are involved as partners in the continuous learning process.

Conclusion

This community service program effectively enhanced the pedagogical competence of PAI teachers through participatory and reflective mentoring. The activities not only improved teachers ability to design contextual and deep learning-based teaching modules but also fostered professional transformation toward more reflective, collaborative, and meaningful teaching practices. These outcomes affirm that mentoring grounded in contextual pedagogy and deep learning principles can bridge theoretical understanding and classroom application in line with Merdeka Curriculum.

Theoretically, this program contributes to the development of contextually integrated teaching modules based on deep learning. Practically, this program highlights the importance of continuous mentoring and professional collaboration in strengthening teacher innovation. In the future, it is recommended to expand this mentoring program throughout the city of Palembang, and integrate digital technology or IA into PAI learning, so that the competencies of PAI teachers can be continuously developed toward impactful PAI.

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