Research Paper

Entitled

The effectiveness of probing questions strategy in the development of thinking skills in the Islamic Education courses using a sample of intermediate school students in Riyadh.

Prepared by

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Introduction:

Islamic Education aims to build an integrated Muslim at the physical, mental, spiritual and social levels. The most important objectives of such education is pushing the individual towards meditation and reflection to reach the stage of self-certainty.

Undoubtedly, the use of one's mind as well as thinking on the creations of God and understanding the realities of existence are foregrounded actions in the Islamic faith. They are the means by which human beings discover and thus understand the laws of the universe and adapt them to their delight, which process is the way to know the Creator and strengthen the doctrine of Islamic faith. In fact, Islam's call for the use of the mind and the functions entrusted to it, does not differentiate between using it to understand the universe, or to reflect on the book of Allah Quran.

Meditating and thinking are the individual's path to certainty, and Quran classifies good thinking and discernment of the universe as the greatest means of faith in Allah. The invitation of Quran to understand its verses and implications requires the Muslim to thoughtfully learn as much verses as possible to the extent he becomes trained on how to ponder on the Quranic text, and therefore achieve the aim of Islamic education. Thinking is a mental formation that allows the Muslim to handle the Book of Allah - the Almighty – in reading and listening, as well as understanding its content to defend the faith by revealing the fallacies and fabrications of the enemies of Islam.

Nothing better than education can build such a Muslim individual. Education should provide students with the opportunity to think, especially if these students are the pillars of the future, who presently figure as the most important educational issue of concern to all Arab and Islamic countries. This is so because of the challenges facing Arab and Islamic nations in the era of globalization, intellectual invasion, blatant interference in their religious curricula, extremism and terrorism, and other challenges. These issues impose raising the awareness of students by developing their thinking, and by enabling them to deal with religious and non-religious texts.

The role entrusted to the teacher today is not just transferring knowledge and teaching learners, but also guiding and facilitating the learning process. This move does not mean leaving students learn on their own, rather the teacher needs to lead their learning by inciting and pushing them to interact with learning topics. There is no single way of teaching which fits all areas of knowledge, or which is appropriate for all students, a successful teacher however is someone who uses a variety of methods to help him achieve the majority of the aims he set.

The common practice of teachers shows a use of questions to manage dialogue in the classroom. They exploit most of the time in delivering different ideas relying on questions answers and comments. Most classic and modern teaching methods rely on questions to explain the topics of study. Hence, classroom questions are one of the most commonly used methods in the educational process given their importance in raising, sustaining and verifying the mental abilities of students.

Questions are used in teaching regardless of the teaching method. They mix with lecturing, and are a key element in debates, they are added to display or practice. Questions are also added to every specific area study of teaching methods. Hence it can be argued that it is difficult to find a strategy to explain a topic without a great or small deal of questions, with varied targets and different complexity levels of required mental processes.

(AL Saifi, Atef, 2009: 41)

Questions are considered as one of the most important stimuli of student's responses and the production of innovative answers every time the questions were more profound. This statement is concurrent with the behavioral and cognitive schools, which gave obvious attention to questions. Skinner confirms their importance as stimuli. The more organized , sequential and productive of innovative answers the questions are the newer the learning is. Seniors of the cognitive school like Bruner, Piaget, and Ozbel also see the contribution of questions in provoking students to discuss and reach new ideas by themselves.

Teachers' development of their ability to ask questions increases the stimulation of students to think, and provides them with opportunities to engage in high-level thinking when formulating hypotheses and solving the problems and when exposing their opinions. Classroom questions are classified according to the angle from which you see them. They can be classified by the extent to which we want the student's answer to reach. The initial answer maybe correct, incorrect or partially correct, the student may be also unsure of the answer; so it is useful to ask the student who gives such answers other questions probing the knowledge he has so that the teacher acts in the light of this answer to lead them to a correct knowledge. This is what we call the probing questions which are the focus of this research paper. (Rabadi, Insaf, 2007: p. 5-6).

Probing questions are the backbone of the teaching style based on dialogue. The philosophy of these questions is based on the assumption that students are able to solve the problems they face during the learning process through a graded series of questions posed by the teacher. Students answer these questions until they reach a comprehensive solution to the problems. Probing questions are the most appropriate types of questions in the treatment of student cases of non-answer, wrong answer or partially right answer or when the teacher wants to upgrade a correct answer.   (Nabhan, Yahya 2008: pp. 79-80)

Wael Kerkz (2004: pp. 49-52) sees that if teachers really wanted to teach their students to engage in thinking in a manner different from asking and receiving shallow answers, they must teach them how to pose questions of their own, unlimited and always inviting them to deep and accurate thinking. Encouraging students to ask questions lead to the development of a desirable habit which is delicate meditation. Asking questions stimulate students' thinking process, in addition to training them to answer profound questions, creating the possibility to redirect the question to other classmates to be completed , clarified or justified.

Some previous studies were concerned with the disclosure of the impact of probing questions on increasing the academic achievement of students of different specialization and grades like those of Tarawneh and Salim (2007), and the study of Insaf Rabadi (2007) and the study of Majali Nazar (2007). In addition, a successful teacher does not seek to measure through the questions students' retention, remembering and then application of information, rather he goes to what is loftier than mere retrieval, which is the use of

knowledge and the ability to critique it while knowing its different dimensions and interpretations, and being able to use it in situations that lead him to effective learning.

The Almighty Allah urged all people to reflect on his verses, clearly calling in Quran as in Surat AL Ghashia "do they not look at the camels, how they are made? and at the sky how it is raised high?(verses 17-18), and "it is he who made the night and the day to follow each other for such as desire to be mindful or to show their gratitude(verse 62). This reasoning is innate and does not require from the individual any space or time or specific conditions, the individual who does not think stay entirely away from the realization of his raison d'etre on earth. (Abdel Hadi and Nadia Mustafa 2001: 221)

Due to the lack of studies on probing questions in the classroom and their relationship to thinking, in particular, and its relation to Islamic education among intermediate school students, it was an impetus for me as researcher to address this topic. This papert is an attempt to find out the nature of the relationship between this kind of questions and these variables.

Setting the Research Question :

Probing questions are a category of classroom questions that can be relied upon to guide students' thinking and get them to the correct answer, depending on their knowledge base and by sequencing questions according to their responses and their interaction. Probing questions can hence be an active enhancer and helper to push students to develop their answers and increase the level of thinking. They also contribute to academic achievement and increase students' ability in effective learning. Thus, it is the task of the teacher to formulate and ask classroom questions probing student answers and to help them achieve cognitive development and the desired educational objectives. Therefore, I believe that the use of probing questions may lead to the development of thinking skills in students.

Based on the above, the research question of this study is the following:

How effective is the strategy of using probing questions in the development of thinking skills in Islamic education courses using a sample of second-grade intermediate school students?

 Hypotheses:

1 There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average pre-test scores for the experimental group and control group in the skills of thinking.

2 There is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the average post-test scores for the experimental group and control group in the skills of thinking

Limits:

This study is limited by the following:

1 A sample of second-grade students of an intermediate school in Riyadh.

2 Some thinking skills and the corresponding Islamic Education course (Skills of understanding the Quranic text), which are as follows:

A Inference Skills.   B Refocusing skill

C Interpretation skill. D Induction skill.

And for the following reasons:

A) the importance of these skills in the understanding of the Quranic text.

B) there is a strong relationship between the four thinking skills, and understanding the Quranic text.

C) the possibility that students acquire the four skills through some other courses such as: Fiqh, Tafsir, and Hadith.

3. **Tools of the study**:

A. A questionnaire for teachers before applying the experience of the study to identify the level of their ability to use the strategy of probing questions.

B. testing the thinking skills in understanding the Quranic text.

 Objectives of the study:

The present study aims to:

1 .know the reality of Islamic education teachers use of probing questions strategy and their mastery of such strategy.

2 . investigate the effect of probing questions on the development of thinking skills in Islamic education courses in a sample of second-grade students from an intermediate school.

Importance of the study:

The importance of carrying this study is manifest in the following points:

1 .this study may benefit Islamic education teachers in intermediate school classrooms to improve their performance when using the probing questions strategy in the teaching of Islamic education and in the development of thinking skills.

2. this study, may benefit Islamic education curricula developers in the preparation and development of activities, guidelines and proposals to ensure the formulation of a content while respecting the relationship between the use of probing questions in teaching and the development of thinking skills.

3 .Determine the level of intermediate school students in thinking skills.

4.enlighten those who teach Islamic education of the importance of training students to think about the understanding of the Quranic text skills.

5. The present study may be useful in providing teachers with new ways to help them increase the academic achievement of male and female students as well as inciting them to think and develop thinking skills in other areas.

Concepts of the study:

 -Probing Questions:

The dictionary meaning of probing in Arabic is to estimate and apprise: to probe the wound is to estimate its depth by a probe or to probe someone means to apprise someone to know what they have. Probing initially is the origin, color, body and outlook. (Anis et al., 1972 413).

Probing questions as defined by Insaf Rabadi (2007: 11) "are the sequential questions provided by the teacher after a student answers a question ,they might include a new formulation or hints intended to guide the student to reach the correct answer or improve the quality of the answer".

Majali, Nizar (2007: 8),defines them as "questions posed by the teacher to comment on the answer of students to previous questions in order to improve their answers themselves, or to cause the participation of other students, or to achieve a correlation between certain ideas. they are used to help students reconsider in depth their initial responses and improve them by clarifying, switching, refocusing or reasoning probing questions.

As a researcher I procedurally define them as: the type of questions posed by the teacher after the initial response to a question previously posed so that the student amends, corrects, completes, justifies or confirms his answer, or link it to previous knowledge, or transfer it to other classmates to achieve mutual active participation and help them produce more in-depth answers and increase the level of thinking.

 -Thinking Skills:

Barakat, defines them as "the student's ability to deal with situations, events and educational stimuli vigilantly, and to analyze such situations and events in depth and with care to make the right decision at the right time and place and to achieve the expected goals." (Barakat, Ziad, 2005: 108)

I procedurally define them as "in-depth thinking in attitudes, which earn the student the ability to self-regulate his learning, and take advantage of previous information in synthesizing new knowledge , examining the current learning, analyzing the situation, understanding the relationships among the different types of knowledge that he learned, reviewing the alternatives and finding the right solutions. The student becomes a producer of knowledge i.e. the ability to analyze and understand relationships along with interpretation and induction.

Theoretical framework and Literature:

First research area: Probing Questions

Classroom probing questions are questions that help students solve the problems they face during the learning process. They are one of the most important means used by the teacher to excite students' thinking

and learning. They are also the entrance which saturates the individual's tendency to search and investigation, and the teacher sees them as an assessment of his work and the achievement of others. (Jamal, Mohammed Jihad 2005: 206)

Definition of Probing Questions:

Socrates was the first to realize that education is not intended to pour views in a free mind, but rather the elicitation of the timeless truths of the mind. His way of teaching was talking and dialoguing with his students. He would ask the question to tempt the asked person to make a step to the opinion he would like to lead him to. This type of education was called (Socratic dialogue), which depends on the form of a good question to get personal answers and then extract other questions. Socrates did not give his students ready answers, but by asking them once and opposing them at other times, he led them to the discovery of the right solutions. His goal was never giving knowledge but stimulating the love of knowledge, and allowing students to experience the modes of thinking that guide them to disclose the facts for themselves and reach the correct knowledge. This form of generative discussion was called the Socratic Method.

Hashim Al-Samarrai, et al (2000: 42) mention that the probing question "is the question that follows the initial answer of the student, it is a series of newly formulated questions, or questions with new stimulations intending to direct students toward the correct answer, or to improve the quality of their answer".

The above definitions show the consensus of educators that probing questions share the following characteristics:

 •depend on the initial answer of the student and use it as a starting point for the next question.

 •focus on the effectiveness of the student by exciting his thinking and ability to recognize relationships between content elements and through the teacher's adoption of the student's answer in the dialogue management and in addressing the discussed topics.

Probing Questions Categories:

There are several types of probing questions that educators differed in classifying them. Some classified them as Insaf Rabadi sees(2007: 24) into two types:

1 .Prompting Probing Question. 2. Illustrative Probing Questions.

Nabhan, Yahia. (2008: pp. 90-91)divides them into three sections:

1. Switch probing. 2. Refocusing probing 3. Direct probing.

some others classified them into four types, as described by Samurai et.al (2000: 42)

1.Prompting Probing 2. Illustrative Probing. 3. Switch Probing 4. Refocusing Probing.

Saada Jawdat et al. (2006: pp. 260-269), and Nabhan, Yahia. (2008: pp. 70-72), and Younis wafa 2007: 259-260) divide them into five types:

1Clarification Probing Question

2 Prompting Probing Question.

3. Refocusing Probing Question

4.Switch Probing Question

5 Critical Probing Question

1 .Prompting Probing Questions:

 -Probing questions share the following characteristics:

1. help to rectify the student answer without resorting to the use of corporal punishment or to sentences repulsive of values.

2. calls for the development of the initial responses of the student.

3. help in-depth analysis of content to its multiple elements like facts, concepts, principles, laws and theories, and recognizing the relationships between them.

4. expansion of the base of participating students, especially when using the switch or refocusing probing questions.

5. All of them are thought-provoking, and encourage the active participation on the part of students.

6.The role of the teacher is director, guider and thought- provoker.

7 .encourage to delve deeper into the subject matter or issue being discussed, leading to the students' better understanding.

8. ranked among the most successful patterns of the questions that the teacher can use in the skill of asking questions and investigating.

9 .reveal to the teacher and students alike the strengths and weaknesses in both the cognitive and participatory aspects of learning.

(Saada Jawdat. Et al, 2006: 270-271)

Objectives Behind the Use of Probing Questions:

Probing questions are used in multiple educational areas. Whether in the classroom or in life they work on enriching the discussion and interaction. They can be used by the teacher to achieve multiple objectives, including the following:

(Kitami, Nayfeh 2004: 187-196)

1.   clarification, such as the teacher's use of the phrase what do you mean by saying…?

2 .Increase criticism of answers, this use is based on the assumption that answering students have the ability to amend their answer and justify it which is reflected in the teacher saying : How do you explain that ?, what is the assumption you reached ?what is the justification of your premise?

3. upgrading the answers to a higher level, which contributes to encouraging the learner to overcome the familiar dimensions of the answer, as when the teacher says: Can you explain what you advanced because I'm not sure I understood what you meant by this?
Re-focus the answer of the student with the question. The student gives an ordinary answer, but the teacher expects a better one because his potential is superior to what he produced, the teacher guides the student to a deeper and wider field as when he says: What can that mean? or What if you tell me more ...?, please carry on in… ?

4. achieve accuracy in answers as when the teacher asks students to develop their answers, or to express them in more precise terms.

5. minimize generalizations which are not based on specific conditions.

6. Provide evidence and strengthen the answers given by students in educational situations and justify them.

As for Ryan, Mohammed. (2005: 288) he adds to the previous objectives the following:

1 .provide more opportunities to interact in the classroom as when the teacher says: Imad do you agree with what Ahmed said?, Who supports the viewpoint of Ali? Yes please, Sulaiman.

2. Forward ideas, like when the teacher says: how many of you have another idea? Yes please Said, is there a better way? Yes please Mahmoud.

Thus, probing questions of different types are used to clarify and expand the level of the answers, to critique and interpret them, re-focus on specific answer and re-formulate it in fewer words, focus on strengthening the answers with evidence or arguments for justification.

Second research area : The development of thinking skills:

Broadly speaking thinking is the search for the meaning of something depending on experience. It may be a phrase, an act, an event, a signal or an opinion (AL Wahr, Mahmoud 2002, p. 92). When we think we use a set of mental processes varying in the degree of complexity to help us process sensory input or remembered perceptions to produce new ideas, or reach a different understanding or judgment.

Definitions varied and differed about the concept of thinking. Most notably Magdi Habib defines it as a: " a high, mental, cognitive and emotional process built on the outcome of other psychological processes like perception, feeling and imagination, as well as mental processes like remembering, abstraction, generalization, discrimination, comparison and reasoning, and as we move from the concrete to the abstract it becomes more complex. " (Habib, Magdi 2003: 23)

Jerwan, Fathi says that it is "the integral process, whereby we process the sensory input and retrieved information to form, reason on or judge ideas, which is not a fully understood process. It included

perception, previous experience, conscious processing and intuition, through which experience gains meaning." (Jerwan, Fathi 1999: 27)

Consequently, thinking is a continuous mental process, carried out by the human being as long as his mind is intact, and in particular when exposed to a dilemma or when wishing to achieve a gain. It is affected by culture, experience , the environment and the circumstances surrounding them., It benefits people in solving problems and in decision-making.

Basing on the above definitions it is clear that the constituent elements of the thinking process are:

1. Complex cognitive processes (such as problem solving) and less complex processes like(understanding, application and reasoning), supra- cognitive direction and control operations.
2. special knowledge of the content or subject.
3. preparations and personal factors (trends, needs, tendencies.

Thinking consists of three components:

1 complex cognitive processes (such as problem-solving) and less complex processes (observation, comparison and classification) and supra-cognitive direction and control operations.

2. Special knowledge of the content or subject.

3. preparations and personal factors (trends, objective, tendencies

The invitation of the Quran to think of Allah's creations and its permanent urge to use the mind implicitly invites human beings to develop their mental faculties so that they can perform the functions assigned to them, of which understanding the universe and life comes in the forefront, because such task is an ordinance that precedes other ordinances made by adulterated cultures, proclaimed but far from being part of Islam (Al-Ghazali, Muhammad. 1411 AH: 22). It should be noted here that "proper Islamic education is based on a wide understanding of life and living creatures, of heaven and earth, and of everything that affects us and that we affect, to the extent that these elements are our religion, life and death, and then using what we reached to earn God's consent. " (Al-Ghazali, Muhammad. 1411: 91)

For all those reasons it is compulsory that we care to develop thinking skills among our students and make them a goal of basic education. "Teaching for the purpose of thinking or thinking skills is an important goal of education, educational institutions must do what they can to create opportunities for thinking to their students." (Jerwan, Fathi 2005: 17)

The tremendous changes the world is witnessing in various aspects of human life, and the challenges that Islam and Muslims are facing and that jeopardize the fundamentals of faith enjoins us to give our students thinking skills, which serve as a set of tools for the individual who needs to be able to deal effectively with any type of information or variables that come in the future. "Educational institutions have to accustom students to the use of their mental abilities and equip them with the necessary thinking and working skills to diagnose the reality in which they live as individuals and groups, in the family, city, clubs and in the community. (Ahmad Mahdi Abdel Halim 2004: 183)

If educational writings are concerned with listing the thinking skills and its different classifications and developing training programs Quran on the other side, a book of guidance and counseling, and not a book in mental psychology, dealt with a number of operations carried out by what Islam describes as a rational person, Examples of these processes (Ahmed Mahdi Abdel Halim 2004: 116-118)

1. **Classification**: This means putting similar entities in categories characterized by assembling and prevention." Then we have given the Book for inheritance to such of Our Servants as We have chosen; but there are among them some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds."(Surah Fatir, verse 32)

2. **Proofing**: (verbal - practical - mathematical) " And they say; None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. Those are their desires. Say:Produce your proof if ye are truthful."(Surah AL Bqarah, Verse: 111) "Or have they takenfor worship other gods besides him? Say, "Bring your convincing proof: this is the Message of those with me and the Message of those before me". But most of them know not the truth, and so turn away (Al-Anbiya, verse 24)

3. **Comparison**: noting the similarities and differences between two entities or more "Shall We treat those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, the same as those who do mischief or earth? Shall We treat those who guard against evil, the same as those who turn aside from right?(Surah Saad, verse 28).) "Is then He Who creates like one that creates not? Will ye not receive admonition" Al-Nahl, verse 17)

4 .**Deductive Thinking**: mentioning an issue or a principle then stating all elements falling under this principle (general to particular) " He said: "Our Lord He Who gave to each thing its form Then, gave it guidance."(Surah Taha, verse: 50)," He Who has made for you the earth like a carpet spread out; has enabled you to go about therin by roads and channels; and has sent down water from the sky." With it have We produced diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others."(Surah Taha, verse 53)

5. **Inductive Thinking**: it starts by the elements and then the rule or the general principle, in the reasoning on the ability of Allah - the Almighty Quran says "do they not look at the camels how they are made? And at the sky how it is raised high? And at the mountains how they are fixed firm and at the earth how it is spread out? Therefore do thou remind, for thou art one to remind (Surah Al-Ghashiya, verse 17-21).

6 .**Critical Thinking**: It is thinking with deep meditation and search for the causes that led to the phenomenon or event, and offering alternatives) "(The Prophet) frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man (interrupting) But what could tell thee but that perchance he might grow in purity? Or that he might receive admonition and the Reminder might profit him? As to one who regards himself as self-sufficient, to him dost thou attend; though it is no blame to thee if he grow not in purity. But as to him who came to these striving earnestly, and with fear of him wast thou unmindful, by no means (should it be so) for it is indeed a message of remembrance.(Abasa Surah verses 1-11)

By the few examples I provided I wanted to point out that Islam urges the use of the mind to understand the universe including the individual, and to insist that thinking is an Islamic ordinance, and that the Holy Quran invites us to consider enlightening ourselves as an absolute, boundless, unrestricted call, and that thinking

from the Islamic perspective is very wide as Allah says " Do they see nothing in the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and all that Allah hath created (Surah AL-A'raaf, Verse: 185)

The Importance of Developing Thinking Skills:

Many educational institutions are keen to set up integrated and effective programs of study which include the training of teachers to implement these programs efficiently. They fulfill the different requirements from technology to workshops to equip teachers with skills enabling them to fulfill their mission and carry out their duties of achieving a number of key objectives, such as the creation of desirable changes in students' behavior, and the development of their skills and ways of thinking, as well as building balanced characters.

Thinking skills figure among the most important goals that educational institutions seek to achieve. They harness all their energies so that their students are able to consciously deal with the life-changing circumstances that surround them. The first objective education has to achieve is developing students' abilities to think, therefore institutions has to develop all curriculum, tools, courses, teachers, school building and assessment strategies. The creative teacher is one who can plan an educational position based on a set of integrated and organized behavioral objectives, and work to achieve them through active multilateral interaction to be evident through:

- Quiet and serious dialogue between all the interlocutors in the hall.
- The ability to understand the needs of the students and work to satisfy and meet them.
- Build human relationships based on friendship and mutual respect.
- Strengthen the student's self-confidence to play their role without disturbance.
- Equip students with skills that could benefit them in dealing with issues of life successfully.
- Care to take into account individual differences among students.
- Application of methods and tools to suit the level of the students and their ability to think.
- Graduation in addressing the goals from easy to difficult.
- Complementarity between cognitive, emotional, skills-related and social goals, to bring about a change in behavior and in the modes of thinking. (AL Khadra, Fadia 2004: 142-145)

Reasons for the Development of Thinking Skills:

Canaan, Atef (2000: 171) also indicates that effective learning of thinking skills is a need imposed by information and communication technology in all aspects of human life. Success in the face of these challenges depends on how you use and apply knowledge. The era of rapid changes imposes on educators to deal with education and teaching as two continuous operations because they continue with the human as a necessity to facilitate adaptation to new developments, which requires learning new skills, and the use of knowledge in new situations. Canaan lists the reasons that makes it imperative for educational institutions to continuously have interest in providing appropriate opportunities to develop thinking skills of students in an orderly and purposeful manner, and these reasons are:

1. Giving the individual a valid preparation to face the conditions of life, so as to allow him a way to acquire the skills that make him capable of making decisions or find solutions to the problems that arise in his life.
2. .The need for developing and industrial societies alike to qualify their children with the skills to think while working, so that they can master their profession.
3. .The need of politicians to the appropriate thinking skills without which, their decisions become only slogans. The absence of thinking skills from the political sphere would lead politicians to manage their affairs in a manner based on hollow slogans.

Relationship between thinking skills and probing questions:

Probing questions depends on gradually leading students to the correct answer, and to the interpretation and critique of each answer to make it easier for the student to correct his mistakes and reach the correct generalization. They also work on analyzing the dimensions of knowledge and connecting previous and current learning. Reflective thinking as well is based on the same principles. Students are pushed to participate in the think ing session by stimulating them with a certain ambiguity or by formulating a specific problem. The teacher can hence use probing questions as a way of stimulating students to classroom interaction and effective reflection. The interrogative method guides students toward different thinking skills, and get them answer the questions (Why ?, how ?, and what happens when you take specific decisions?)

The development of thinking skills using probing questions helps in providing students with the following characteristics: (Abdul Hadi and Mustafa 2001: 219)

-Concentration and accuracy.

-The use of logical analysis and interpretation.

-Extract results - in some cases - from insufficient information.

-The need to retrieve information on an ongoing basis, and connect evident information with each other to reach the underlying reasons related to the problem or situation to be thought of.

-Draw conclusions, categorize and review it for authenticity.

On the basis of the foregoing I need to highlight the necessity to focus on stimulating thinking skills of students through the use of questions. Probing questions are the best stimulus and observer during the stages of students' arrival to the solution, because they guide their thinking towards the right direction to start an answer. They bring them to think about the question, analyze knowledge, understand the links between the parts, avoid the wrong relationships that may lead to an incorrect answer, and help them to evaluate and critique the answers to reach proficiency suitable for different thinking skills.

Relationships Between the Skills of Understanding the Quranic Text and Thinking Skills:

The relationship between the skills of understanding the Quranic text and thinking skills goes back to the fact that both are the results of mental operations carried out by the individual. The difference between them lies

in the kind of experience that will help the thinking individual in the understanding of the Quranic text in general and in dealing with other religious and non-religious texts. One can combine the two by training on non-religious texts, and then trying to apply the acquired skills and mental processes on religious texts, or vice versa. Hence the learning effect is transferred, depending on the combination of both experiences with religious and non-religious texts.

The follower of the thinking skills addressed by researchers and theorists of thought processes and skills finds that they resemble those skills or rules referred to by exegetes of Quran. The refocusing skill which means the existence of a link between two things in the form of one occurring before or beyond the other, or in a sequential and steady manner, symmetry relationship, which means the existence of a partial or substantial analogy between a couple of concepts or things, causal relationships, which means the existence of a link between the two things, or any other relationships and links (Jerwan, Fathi 2005: 223). All of these issues were discussed by exegetes and Islamic jurisprudence specialists. When interpreting Quran exegetes start with a rule which is a skill in thinking and understanding the Quranic text, which is "the link of a Quranic sentence with the subject of Surah and its objective association with other verses in the Qur'an." They believe that the scrutinizer of Allah's words has to look for the link between a meaning learned from one Quranic sentence with the other meanings scattered in the text and that share the same topic. Every particular meaning learned from a Quranic sentence has a link with the other meanings scattered in the text and that share the topic and which has another close link with the meaning of the other sentences in the Verse. The verse itself has a close link with the thematic unity of the text (Hanbaqa, Ibrahim 1400 AH: 9). There are sequential links in the Quran. The night and the day are mentioned sequentially, the same is true for bliss and torment as well as faith and good work.

The skill of interpretation as a thinking skills means " processing, analyzing information and drawing conclusions, identifying implications, giving meaning to experience and justifying it" (Jerwan, Fathi 2005, p. 319). It is very much like the skill of interpreting the Quranic text, which at the linguistic level means "exposition, disclosure and illustrating sense. In the convention of exegetes, interpreting looks at how to pronounce the words of Quran, their meanings and provisions at unit and sentence level and the connotative meanings (Al-Qattan, Manna 1405 AH: 323-324)

Azzarkashi defines exegisis as "the science by which we understand the Koran and explain its meanings and extract its provisions and wisdoms (Zarkashi, Tom 2, D.t: 174)

The aim of exegetes and interpreters is to access to all the meanings that Quran - the subject of exegesis and interpretation - can convey regardless of its kind, whether linguistic, dogmatic, historical, doctrinal, moral or emotional (Saleh, Aiman, 2005: 37)

As for the skill of induction it is a mental process aimed at reaching conclusions or generalizations. Induction by nature seeks to explore the rules and laws (Jerwan, Fathi 2005: 319). And as a thinking skill it is widely used in Sharia Sciences and provisions. When the Fakih wants to reach a doctrinal rule he extrapolates or reads in the traces of religious texts then concludes the rule. For example, the rule (there should be neither harm nor malice) is one of the five major rules, which is a cornerstone of Islamic theology, upon which a lot of branches and issues in the various sections of *fikh* are built..

The base of the rule "you should do neither harm nor malice" is a strong Hadith with a trusted chain of narrators and agreed upon between scientists. What is intended by doing neither harm nor malice is forbidding harming someone without a just reason. The reader of Quran sees clearly the significance of this rule as in verse 231 of Surat AL Baqara "When ye divorce women, and they are about to fulfill the term of their Iddat, either take them back on equitable terms or set them free on equitable terms; but do not take them back to injure them or to take undue advantage". The prevention of magic falls under this rule because it is harmful and implies damaging a third party without a just right, the same is applies to adulterated medication because it is harmful and damaging to others , and many other issues that fall under this rule. (Saidan, Walid bin Rashid, D.t: 8)

The skill of inference is one of the thinking skills that reflect a mental process including organizing facts or information, processing them in a manner that leads to a conclusion, decision, or solving a problem. There is also what is called logical inference, which means the thinking process based on specific rules and strategies aimed at generating new knowledge. This skill can be used to demonstrate the legal provisions of Sharia, and can be used to demonstrate on matters of faith. Hence there are many kinds of inference, which is one of the skills to understand the Quranic text. The legal provisions though of different kinds share the same primary source which is Quran. The *faqih* when seeking evidence tracks it back in Quran, which evidencing needs a lot of thought and consideration, especially if the text is not explicit in the presentation of evidence.

Procedures of the study:

First: the community of the study and its sample:

The application of the current study is limited to a deliberate sample composed of 65 students from an intermediate second grade class divided into two groups. The first is the experimental group made of (33) students who were taught using the probing questions method, the other is the control group made of (32) students, and was taught in the traditional way.

 Second: tool of the study:

As this study aims to determine the level of intermediate students in the skills of understanding the Quranic text, as well as their skills in thinking, I prepared a questionnaire for teachers of Islamic education before applying the study experience to identify their level in using the strategy of probing questions in teaching Islamic Education to intermediate second graders. As an exploratory study I distributed Appendix No. 1 to a number of teachers, ,its results were analyzed as shown in Appendix (2), and a list of thinking skills to understand the Quranic text. I relied in the choice of the four skills on the following sources:

- Previous studies, which dealt with the skills to understand the Quranic text or the thinking skills.

 - the literature on monitoring skills in general and the skills of understanding the Quranic text, and thinking skills in particular.

- Specialized writings in the field of interpretation of the Koran and its rules.

The field study

I adopted the design of equal groups, which requires the presence of two groups (experimental and control groups). The first group is exposed to the independent variable (probing questions strategy) and the second group is taught in the traditional manner. As shown in the table. Table (1)

N	Group	A priori test	Independent variable	A Posteriori test
1	Experimental group	Thinking skills in understanding Quranic text	Probing questions strategy	Thinking skills in understanding the Quranic text
2	Control group		Traditional method	

Group	Number	Arithmetic Average	Standard deviation	T Value	
				Calculated	tabular
Experimental	32	11.2188	2.91530	0.141	1.999
Control	33	11.1212	2.65468		

The test shows no statistically significant difference at the level of significance (0.05), and so the two groups are equal in the assessment of the thinking Skills in the understanding of the Quranic text, which means that the two groups have begun to learn from almost the same level of thinking, and therefore any change that may occur at the level of students can be attributed to the effect of the experimental variable (probing questions strategy)

.Thus the first hypothesis of the study is achieved:

"There is no statistically significant differences between the average scores of the experimental group and the control group students at the level of ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) in the a priori test of the thinking skills meant to understand the Quranic text"

.Carrying out the experiment:

I developed the teaching plans to implement the strategy of probing questions along with the classic teaching plans. I provided teachers of Islamic education with some training sessions for clarification and training on how to practice a strategy of probing questions and the I was in constant contact with the teachers of the subject.

After the a priori test of thinking skills to understand the Quranic text the application of the experience lasted for eight weeks at a rate of two sessions per week for both groups (experimental and control) At the end of the experiment students of both groups sat for the same test in order to verify the validity of the second hypothesis on the development of thinking skills in the understanding of the Quranic text.

Results of the study and Discussion:

Having taught the two groups according to the two teaching methods, and having applied the test of thinking skills to understand the Quranic text, the responses of the sample were corrected and analyzed statistically. The following results ensue:

Results for the second hypothesis:

I calculated the average scores of students' a posteriori test of thinking skills to understand the Quranic text. The experimental group was taught using probing questions strategy while the control group studied in the traditional method. Using two samples of t-test for independent samples, the difference between the average score of two groups was statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) and the independence degree was (63) and in favor of the experimental group, Table 3 illustrates the result.

Table 3

Group	Number	Arithmetic Average	Deviation Standard	T Value	
Experimental	32	13.8125	3.21727	Calculated	Tabular
Control	33	11.3636	2.57170	3.395	1.999

This result suggests the superiority of the experimental group which used the strategy of probing questions over the control group.

Thus hypothesis zero is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, which states that:

"There are significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) between the average scores of the experimental and the control group students in the a posteriori application of the test on the skills to understand the Quranic text. The difference was in favor of the experimental group".

Discussion of Results

The difference between the average of students' scores in the a posteriori test of thinking skills to understand the Quranic text in the research groups was in favor of the experimental group which was taught using the strategy of probing questions. This advantage is due to the fact that:

1. probing questions were used in different positions for multiple purposes:
   *to clarify or increase the level of thinking skills,
   *to upgrade students' answers to a higher mental level,
   *to re-focus on answers and achieve accuracy and validity,
   * to reduce the generalizations that are not supported
   *To achieve customization

*to justify and strengthen the evidence to confirm the answer, and help Students contribute in increasing participation in the probing thinking and situations organized by the teacher

* ability to infer - refocusing relations - Interpretation - induction a thinking skills to understand the Quranic text.

2. The probing questions work to back up dialogue and interaction between the teacher and the student of the initial response until the latter reaches himself the correct answer or complete the lack of response , infer something specific, shows correlation between two things. All this was reflected on student responses in the test of thinking skills to understand the Quranic text.

Recommendations and suggestions:

In the light of the results of the study we can provide the following recommendations and proposals:

I: Recommendations:

1 .greater use of the strategy of probing questions in Islamic Education in all its branches because they contribute to the development of thinking skills.

2 .Training students on each of the skills of understanding the Quranic text as well as other thinking skills in view of the impact not only in the area of student achievement in the understanding of the Quranic text, but with other subjects.

3 .When teaching students the interpretation of Quran focus on understanding and avoid memorization and remembrance. Traditionally students are pushed to memorize what they learn, without giving them the opportunity to participate in the operations of eliciting implicit and explicit meanings from the Quranic text.

4 .Take advantage of educational programs offered to students like Quranic interpretations which will help them acquire the skills to understand the Quranic text and thus gain associated thinking skills.

II. Suggestions:

To Complement the current research I suggest conducting the following studies:

1. The effect of using the strategy of probing questions on the achievement of pupils in the first cycle of basic education in the courses of Islamic education.

2 .Designing training programs in skills of understanding the Quranic text for intermediate school students, and study their impact on the development of their thinking skills and on their understanding of the Quranic text.

3 conduct similar studies to highlight the relationship between thinking skills, and skills gained in other courses such as science of Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence.

4. conduct research and studies to analyze the paths of thinking adopted by diligent scholars of jurisprudence, as well as scholars in interpretation and Hadith. Take advantage of such studies in developing the skills to understand the Quranic text, and include it in the programs and courses of Islamic education.

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