

Designing a Learning Strategy for Theory and History of Literary Courses Using the Theory of Multiple Intelligences in Higher Education

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Abstract. This study is driven by the limited quality of learning in the Theory and History of Literature course at the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program (PBSI) Unimed. The aim is to explore the integration of Multiple Intelligences (MI) into the learning syntax of the course. Using a descriptive qualitative method, this research applies library study by synthesizing expert perspectives from reputable journal articles and books. The findings propose a set of learning strategies based on MI that can be implemented by lecturers to enrich the teaching of literature theory and history. Through this approach, students are encouraged to engage not only with theoretical knowledge but also with contextual and creative learning experiences tailored to diverse learning styles. Each topic—ranging from literary history (Balai Pustaka Generation, New Poets, Generation 45, contemporary literature) to literary theory (structuralism, sociology of literature)—can be taught using MI strategies to enhance conceptual understanding and analytical skills.

Keywords: learning strategy, multiple intelligences, higher education

1 Introduction

The course of theory and history of literature is one of the courses that must be mastered by students as prospective Indonesian language and literature educators as a provision for teaching literature in schools. Students in this case are required to be able to understand literary works and relate them to various historical events contained in the literary works. Therefore, various forms of intelligence are needed in understanding it. In the problematic conditions that occur in the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program (hereinafter abbreviated as PBSI), students have not been able to relate various historical events in literary appreciation activities. The practice of teaching literature by students in schools has not been able to show new progress for the development of literary learning. Students have not been able to provide meaningful literary teaching experiences for students in schools. This is also triggered by the learning process and the use of teaching materials that are not well facilitated by literature teaching lecturers.

The process of learning Indonesian language & literature and thinking skills are two different dimensions that need to be synchronized holistically and integrated. Alignment between the learning process and thinking skills will raise learning motivation. According to [1], students find it easier to learn or grasp the material being taught if the material is presented according to their outstanding intelligence. For example, if students excel in terms of musical intelligence, learning to write essays is explained in the form of music, rhythm, or singing. Meanwhile, if they excel in terms of kinesthetics, writing materials are presented using more movement, dramatization, role playing. This is based on the fact that students are the subjects of learning. Students have almost all types of learning styles but in general they are tactile and auditory learners. Three groups of intelligence, namely naturalistic, visual, and kinesthetic intelligence as types of intelligence that are widely possessed by students. It was also stated that most types of intelligence and learning styles have a positive correlation [2].

Literary ability is a manifestation of linguistic intelligence [3]. However, this does not just appear, but requires a process of practice. Apart from that, when studying literary history, students are required to always be sensitive to the circumstances around them, whether it be past circumstances or their relationships with other people. This means that a student who studies literary history must be able to come up with creative ideas to be able to relate them to knowledge of literary works and the period in which they were created and to be able to appreciate them well. This ability can only be realized in students who have multiple intelligences (abbreviated as MI).

Some recent research on the effectiveness of MI by students can be presented below. Research by [4] attempts to develop MI-based teaching materials to improve elementary school students' learning outcomes. The results of the study indicate that the products developed can be implemented well, are useful, and interesting and effective, so that they can be used as new innovations in elementary school institutions and can be developed on other themes. Furthermore, research by [5] discusses teaching materials developed based on MI can improve critical thinking skills. Then, research by [6] aims to describe the application of the MI learning model that is oriented towards student participation, which results in increased achievement in writing scientific papers. This MI-based learning is believed to be able to condition students to become literate. Research by [7] analyzes how to develop MI as a strategy to maximize student potential in the era of society 5.0. The results of this study indicate that MI is the answer to all demands of the progress of the times and all its obstacles. Furthermore, [8] examines the optimization of learning activities through MI, this is because the learning conditions are still one-way, teachers claim to be the only source of the most correct learning and there is no new innovation from the learning activities carried out. The results of this study indicate that students are enthusiastic about participating in learning activities.

In line with the research set above, various recent research results on the trend of literary theory and history studies in schools and universities can also be mentioned as follows. Research by [9] developed teaching materials for literary history theory courses adjusted to the applicable curriculum and the implementation of multiple intelligences, through this teaching material, the material presented is simpler to implement, with the addition of crossword puzzles, and the addition of author pictures in each literary class. Research by [10] examined the needs of teaching materials for students, namely: students and lecturers both expect complete teaching materials, systematically arranged materials, interesting and easy to understand with communicative language. With the research and development method in this study, it succeeded in developing teaching materials based on the flipbook maker kvisof that are suitable for use by students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education study program. Furthermore, [11]

analyzed the need for developing teaching materials for literary theory and appreciation for Elementary School Teacher Education students based on cultural literacy.

This research is part of a preliminary research of the development of teaching materials for history and literary theory courses using the theory of multiple intelligences in the PBSI Unimed Study Program. The formulation answered in this scientific article is how to design a learning strategy for the theory and history of literature courses using the MI theory approach intended for students in higher education. The theory used is multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner. According to him, human intelligence can be formed from: 1) linguistic intelligence, 2) logical-mathematical, 3) musical, 4) kinesthetic, 5) interpersonal, 6) intrapersonal, 7) spatial, and 8) naturalistic intelligence.

Previously, researchers and/or members of the research team have conducted various studies related to improving the quality of learning in higher education, especially in the Indonesian Language and Literature Department at Unimed, such as [12] developing teaching materials for courses on writing scientific articles and publications, [13] teaching materials for Indonesian language courses at higher education, and [14] teaching materials for leadership courses at higher education.

2 Methods

This research is part of research and development (RnD). However, this research was conducted focusing on a preliminary study in the form of a learning strategy design for literary theory and history courses through the MI theory approach. Therefore, this study applies a descriptive qualitative method in the form of library research by exploring and concocting various opinions of experts obtained from references to scientific articles published in various reputable journals, and also from book sources. The results obtained from this scientific paper are learning strategies in the form of learning steps using the MI approach that can be applied by lecturers when giving lectures on literary theory and history to students.

3 Results and Discussion

The following is a summary of the material contained in the teaching materials for the Theory and History of Literature course developed through the MI approach. As mentioned in the introduction above, the MI theory according to [15] states that there are eight types of intelligence that can be developed in the learning process: 1) linguistic-verbal, 2) logical-mathematical, 3) visual-spatial, 4) musical, 5) kinesthetic-bodily, 6) interpersonal, 7) intrapersonal, and 8) naturalist. According to him, this MI approach is very suitable for learning literature, because of its multidimensional nature and closeness to human expression, interpretation, and experience.

Table 1. MI learning strategies in lecture material introduction to the historical development of modern Indonesian

Learning achievement indicators: Students are able to: a) Explain the development of the history of Indonesian literature from the Balai Pustaka era to the Reformation, b) Analyze literary works in the context of their time, and c) Express their understanding through various media according to their respective intelligence.	
Learning strategies	
Types of Intelligence	Learning Activities
Linguistic-Verbal	Writing an essay or review about the development of literature in a particular period (for example the Balai Pustaka Generation)
Logical-Mathematical	Create a timeline of literary history and map out patterns of genre/theme development.
Visual-Spatial	Design infographics about the characteristics of each literary generation or create a concept map of the relationships between writers.
Musical	Create rhythmic songs or poems based on the works of Chairil Anwar or W.S. Rendra.
Kinesthetic	Create a short drama based on a literary work from a period. You can also role-play as a literary figure.
Interpersonal	Group discussion on the influence of history on the content and form of literary works.
Intrapersonal	Writing a personal reflection: What does literature mean to me? How do I see literature reflecting life?
Naturalist	Connecting nature and the environment with literary themes, for example in the poems of Sapardi Djoko Damono.

Table 2. MI learning strategy in lecture material: understanding the history of the development of literary works and writers of the *Balai Pustaka* generation/ 1920 period

Learning achievement indicators: Students are able to: a) Explain the general characteristics of the Balai Pustaka Generation, b) Identify important works and authors during that period, and c) Analyze the content and socio-political context of literary works from the Balai Pustaka era, and d) Express their understanding of the Balai Pustaka Generation through various media in accordance with MI.	
Learning strategies	
Types of Intelligence	Learning Activities
Linguistic-Verbal	Writing a review or academic commentary on the novel Sitti Nurbaya
Logical-Mathematical	Creating an interactive timeline of the development of Balai Pustaka's works and policies
Visual-Spatial	Designing infographics about the characteristics of the Balai Pustaka generation or a map of figures
Musical	Transforming excerpts from novels by the Balai Pustaka generation into songs or musical narratives
Kinesthetic	Performing a mini drama based on the conflict in the novel Salah Asuhan.
Interpersonal	Group discussion on the impact of colonialism on literature of this era
Intrapersonal	Writing a reflection: What did I learn from the conflict between custom and modern in Siti Nurbaya?
Naturalist	Analyze how natural settings and local culture are depicted in the early works of Balai Pustaka.

Table 3. MI learning strategy in lecture material: understanding the history of the development of literary works and writers of the *Pujangga Baru* generation / 1930 period

Learning achievement indicators: Students are able to: a) Explain the general characteristics of *Pujangga Baru* generation, b) Analyze the literary works of *Pujangga Baru* in the context of the ideology and culture of their time, and c) Express their understanding through media in accordance with MI.

Learning strategies

Types of Intelligence	Learning Activities
Linguistic-Verbal	Writing an essay or literary criticism about Amir Hamzah's poetry. You can also write an open letter as a " <i>Pujangga Baru</i> member" for the current young generation of literature.
Logical-Mathematical	Create a comparison table between the <i>Pujangga Baru</i> Generation and Balai Pustaka in terms of theme, language style, ideology, and form of work. Or compile a timeline of the development of the work and the thoughts of its figures
Visual-Spatial	Design posters/graphics containing inspirational quotes from <i>Pujangga Baru</i> , poetry illustrations, or thematic maps of their literary thoughts.
Musical	Composing a simple musical composition or melody based on the poem "Padamu Jua" by Amir Hamzah, or reciting poetry accompanied by music (musicalization poetry).
Kinesthetic	Create a mini theater or dramatization of the conflict of ideas between Sutan Takdir Alisyahbana and traditionalist figures. You can also create a role-play vlog as a <i>Pujangga Baru</i> .
Interpersonal	Panel discussions and group debates on modernization in literature and the role of the <i>Pujangga Baru</i> as its pioneers.
Intrapersonal	Personal reflection writing assignment: "What is the meaning of modernity and idealism in my life after knowing <i>Pujangga Baru</i> ?"
Naturalist	Analysis of poems related to nature, such as the symbols of nature in the works of Amir Hamzah, and how their religious and philosophical meanings are derived from nature.

Table 4. Introductory lecture material on structuralism as a theory of literary study

Learning achievement indicators: Students are able to: a) Explain the basics of structuralism theory in literary studies, b) Identify the structure of literary texts based on a structural approach, c) Analyze poetry, short stories, or drama using structuralism theory, and d) Present their understanding in various forms of media and creative expression.

Learning strategies

Types of Intelligence	Learning Activities
Linguistic-Verbal	Writing a structural analysis of a classic poem or short story (for example "Aku" by Chairil Anwar or "Robohnya Surau Kami" by A.A. Navis)
Logical-Mathematical	Create a narrative structure chart: exposition, conflict, climax, resolution, based on the structural model
Visual-Spatial	Designing a concept map or infographic about structuralism theory or a map of the relationships between elements in a story
Musical	Analyzing the structure of sound, rhyme, and repetition in poetry from a structural approach
Kinesthetic	Role-playing the story and then discussing the narrative structure analytically. You can also use the story cube or story mapping method
Interpersonal	Group discussions to dissect the intrinsic elements and structure of literary texts using a layered question-and-answer model
Intrapersonal	Writing a reflection: "How do I understand literature differently after studying structuralism?"

Naturalist	Using nature-themed stories or poems to show how the story structure symbolizes order in nature.
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Table 5. Introductory lecture material on structuralism as a theory of literary study

Learning achievement indicators: Students are able to: a) Explain the concept and scope of the sociology of literature. b) Identify the relationship between literary works and social conditions of society. c) Analyze literary texts with a sociological approach. d) Express their understanding through various forms according to multiple intelligences.

Learning strategies

Types of Intelligence	Learning Activities
Linguistic-Verbal	Write an essay about how a short story/novel reflects social conflict (e.g. <i>The Fall of Our Surau, Laskar Pelangi, or Maryam</i>).
Logical-Mathematical	Create a relationship chart between social elements in a work (characters-social class-conflict), or create a model of the relationship between author-society-reader.
Visual-Spatial	Designing sociological posters: for example, "Portraits of Poverty in Indonesian Literature" or illustrations of social conflict in poetry.
Musical	Creating musical songs or poems based on social realities in the work, for example social inequality or life struggles.
Kinesthetic	Performing dramas based on folk tales, short stories, or novels that contain social issues (poverty, injustice, gender inequality).
Interpersonal	Debate or group discussion: Should literature side with the people? What is the position of writers in society?
Intrapersonal	Reflection: "What social issue touched me the most from the literary work I read, and why?"
Naturalist	Analyze environmental and ecological issues in contemporary literature, for example short stories/pantuns/modern pantuns that describe natural disasters or crises.

Substantially, the Literary Theory and History course demands a complex conceptual understanding and analytical skills towards the dynamics of literary development over time. Therefore, the traditional one-way approach is often ineffective in encouraging active student involvement. The multiple intelligence strategy answers this challenge by providing a wider space for exploration and expression.

For example, in learning the theory of literary structuralism, students with logical-mathematical intelligence can be invited to analyze narrative structures using flowcharts or structural schemes. Meanwhile, students with musical intelligence can express their understanding through the creation of short songs that reflect the characteristics of the theory. Activities such as group discussions, reflective writing, and role-playing have also proven effective in accommodating students' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

Furthermore, this strategy also contributes to the achievement of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), where students not only memorize literary theory and history, but also analyze, evaluate, and create representations of understanding in creative forms. This is in line with the goals of higher education which emphasize the development of critical, communicative, and collaborative thinking competencies.

The results of this study strengthen the findings of previous studies [16], [17], & [18] which show that the application of multiple intelligences in learning can increase students' motivation, participation, and conceptual understanding. This strategy is not only pedagogically relevant,

but also in accordance with the spirit of student-centered learning which is the main principle of the current higher education curriculum.

4 Conclusion

The development of teaching materials for Literary Theory and History based on the Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach provides opportunities for students to understand literature not only theoretically, but also through contextual, creative learning experiences that are in accordance with their learning styles. Each topic—both literary history such as the Balai Pustaka Generation, New Poets, Generation 45, to contemporary literature (post-2000), and literary theories such as structuralism and literary sociology—can be designed with MI learning strategies to strengthen students' mastery of concepts and analytical skills.

Through MI, students are not only invited to memorize the characteristics and figures of literary generations, but also to express their understanding through various intelligences: writing, visualizing, playing music, discussing, performing, and reflecting. This strategy allows the integration of literary knowledge with critical thinking skills, social empathy, aesthetic appreciation, and awareness of culture and the realities of the times.

In its application, each topic is accompanied by project-based learning scenarios, collaborative activities, and assessment rubrics that encourage a variety of forms of assessment. The teaching materials are also designed to be more open to the development of digital media and the latest literary phenomena, so that students do not only learn literature as text, but also as a living cultural practice. Thus, the MI approach in teaching literary theory and history becomes a strategic way to form students who not only understand the content, but are also able to articulate their understanding creatively, reflectively, and meaningfully.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank to the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) Universitas Negeri Medan who provided research funding so that it can be implemented in 2025. Thanks also go to all who participated in this study.

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