

Reflection Talk as an Enrichment Strategy for Educational Quality Improvement in an Islamic Boarding School

Shabrina Nur Hasan¹, Doris Apriani Ritonga², Yenny Sitanggang³, Viktor Edyward Marbun⁴

{shabshabnur@gmail.com¹, dorisritonga@unimed.ac.id², yennysitanggang1972@gmail.com³,
viktoredyward94@gmail.com⁴}

Al-Azhar Asy-Syarif Islamic Boarding School, Medan, Indonesia¹, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia^{2,4},
PTKI, Indonesia³

Abstract. This study examines the effectiveness of a Reflection Talk-based enrichment program in improving educational quality management at an Islamic boarding school. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, the study involved 30 teachers at Al-Azhar Asy-Syarif Islamic Boarding School, Medan. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-intervention questionnaires and analyzed using paired-sample analysis, while qualitative data were obtained from interviews, observations, and reflection logs and analyzed thematically. The findings reveal statistically significant improvements across all reflective practice indicators ($t = 8.97-10.21$, $p < 0.001$), including structured reflection, student participation, collaborative reflection, and teacher reflective awareness, with increases ranging from 40% to 45%. Qualitative results indicate enhanced dialogic interaction, strengthened collaborative learning, and integration of reflection into institutional decision-making. These findings demonstrate that structured reflective dialogue functions not only as an instructional strategy.

Keywords: educational management, enrichment program, Islamic boarding school, reflection talk

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Enhancing educational

Improving educational quality requires not only effective instruction but also reflective practices that support continuous improvement. In Islamic boarding schools, learning processes often remain teacher-centered, with limited opportunities for structured reflection and student participation. As a result, feedback mechanisms tend to be directive rather than dialogic, reducing opportunities for professional growth and institutional learning. Reflection Talk is defined in this study as a structured post-class dialogue between teachers and students aimed at examining learning experiences,

identifying strengths, and improving instructional quality. Previous studies highlight the importance of reflective practice and enrichment-based learning; however, few have examined their integration within boarding school management systems [7,8].

Empirical observations at Al-Azhar Asy-Syarif Islamic Boarding School indicate that only 30% of teachers regularly conduct reflective activities, while 70% rely on directive feedback [13]. This condition reveals a gap between ideal reflective pedagogy and actual practice. Furthermore, existing research rarely explores how structured reflection contributes to institutional quality management in Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, this study aims to develop and evaluate a Reflection Talk–based enrichment program to enhance student participation, teacher reflective awareness, and educational quality management [8,10].

2 Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design using a convergent parallel approach, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and then integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the Reflection Talk Enrichment Program. This design was selected to capture both measurable changes in reflective practices and in-depth insights into participants' experiences and institutional learning processes [3,15].

The quantitative component focused on examining changes in reflective practice indicators before and after the implementation of Reflection Talk, while the qualitative component explored how reflective dialogue influenced instructional practices, student engagement, and collaborative learning culture within the institution[15].

2.2 Participants and Setting

The study was conducted at Al-Azhar Asy-Syarif Islamic Boarding School, Medan, Indonesia, during one academic semester over a six-month period. The participants consisted of 30 teachers who were directly involved in classroom instruction and participated in the Reflection Talk Enrichment Program.

Participants were selected using a total sampling technique, as all teachers involved in the program were included to ensure comprehensive representation and to capture institutional-level reflective practices. In addition, qualitative data were supported by inputs from selected students and school leaders to enrich contextual understanding.

The Reflection Talk Enrichment Program was implemented as a structured post-instructional reflective dialogue conducted after teaching sessions. The program emphasized guided reflection through dialogic interaction between teachers and students, focusing on:

1. Analysis of learning objectives and instructional strategies
2. Evaluation of student participation and learning responses
3. Collaborative identification of instructional strengths and areas for improvement

Reflection Talk sessions were conducted regularly and documented through reflection logs, which served as both learning tools and qualitative data sources.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using multiple instruments to ensure methodological rigor and triangulation:

1. Questionnaires. Quantitative data were gathered using structured questionnaires administered before and after the implementation of the program. The questionnaires measured four reflective practice indicators: structured reflection, student participation, collaborative reflection, and teacher reflective awareness.
2. Semi-Structured Interviews. Interviews were conducted with teachers and selected students to explore perceptions, experiences, and changes in reflective and participatory practices resulting from the Reflection Talk implementation.
3. Classroom and Post-Class Observations. Observations were carried out to document instructional interactions, student engagement, and the implementation of reflective dialogue during and after learning sessions.
4. Document Analysis. Reflection logs and institutional records were analyzed to examine the consistency, depth, and utilization of reflective practices in instructional planning and quality management.

2.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample statistical analysis to compare pre-test and post-test mean scores across the four reflective practice indicators. Mean differences, t-values, and significance levels (p-values) were calculated to determine the effectiveness of the Reflection Talk Enrichment Program [1.3].

Qualitative data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis followed systematic stages of data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation to identify recurring patterns related to reflective awareness, student engagement, collaborative reflection, and leadership support [5]

Finally, data triangulation was applied by integrating quantitative and qualitative findings to enhance.

3 Result

3.1 Quantitative Results

Table 1. Statistical Test of Increasing Teacher Reflective Practice (n = 30)

Indicator	Mean Pre	Mean Post	Δ Mean	t-value	p-value
Structured Reflection	2.41	4.12	+1.71	9.84	<0.001
Student Participation	2.56	4.35	+1.79	10.21	<0.001
Collaborative Reflection	2.32	4.08	+1.76	10.12	<0.001
Teacher Reflective Awareness	2.76	4.35	+1.59	8.97	<0.001

Table 1 shows all variables a statistically significant increase, confirming that Reflection Talk is not only descriptively impactful, but empirically effective. This study examined the effectiveness of the *Reflection Talk Enrichment Program* in strengthening reflective practices among participants (n = 30). A paired-sample statistical analysis was conducted to compare pre-test and post-test scores across four reflective practice indicators: structured reflection, student participation, collaborative reflection, and teacher reflective awareness. The results, as summarized in Table 1, reveal statistically significant improvements across all indicators, with t-values ranging from 8.97 to 10.21 and p-values consistently below 0.001. These findings indicate a strong intervention effect and provide empirical confirmation of the program's effectiveness.

Table 2. The Impact of Reflection Talk on Education Quality Management Dimensions

Indicator	Before (%)	After (%)	Improvement
Structured reflection	30	70	+40
Student participation	35	80	+45
Collaborative reflection	28	72	+44
Teacher reflective awareness	42	82	+40

3.1.1 Impact on Structured Reflection

The increase in structured reflection (from M = 2.41 to M = 4.12; Δ Mean = +1.71) suggests a substantial shift from intuitive and incidental reflection toward a more systematic and analytical reflective process. This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing that effective reflection requires explicit scaffolding and structured prompts to move learners beyond descriptive accounts

toward critical analysis [23,28]. Without such structure, reflection often remains superficial and fails to contribute meaningfully to professional learning [25].

The Reflection Talk Enrichment Program appears to operationalize reflective theory into practice by embedding structured reflection within guided dialogue. This is consistent with Schön's (1983) conception of reflection as a disciplined inquiry into practice, yet the present findings extend this framework by demonstrating that structured reflection can be measurably strengthened through dialogic intervention, rather than relying solely on individual introspection.

3.1.2 Student Participation as an Active Reflective Dimension

Student participation showed the highest mean increase (Δ Mean = +1.79), rising from 2.56 to 4.35. This result highlights the effectiveness of the program in transforming reflection into an active, participatory learning process. Previous studies have emphasized that reflective learning is significantly enhanced when learners are positioned as active contributors rather than passive recipients [20,21].

The increase in participation indicates heightened learner agency and engagement, suggesting that Reflection Talk functions as a dialogic space that legitimizes student voice. This aligns with dialogic learning theory, which posits that meaning-making emerges through interaction, questioning, and shared reasoning [18,27]. Importantly, the present study contributes empirical evidence showing that dialogic reflection not only improves participation qualitatively but also produces statistically significant gains in reflective practice.

3.1.3 Strengthening Collaborative Reflection

The collaborative reflection indicator improved from $M = 2.32$ to $M = 4.08$ (Δ Mean = +1.76), indicating that participants increasingly engaged in collective reflective processes. This finding supports socio-constructivist perspectives that view reflection as a socially situated activity, where understanding is co-constructed through interaction with others [26,30].

While collaborative reflection has been widely advocated in professional learning communities, empirical studies often report challenges in translating collaboration into meaningful reflective depth [24]. The present findings address this gap by demonstrating that structured reflection talk can effectively scaffold collaborative reflection, enabling participants to move beyond surface-level discussion toward shared critical inquiry. This represents a methodological contribution by providing quantitative evidence for the efficacy of collaborative reflective design.

3.1.4 Development of Teacher Reflective Awareness

Teacher reflective awareness increased significantly from 2.76 to 4.35 (Δ Mean = +1.59). Although this indicator showed the smallest mean difference, the improvement remains educationally

significant. Reflective awareness is widely recognized as a core component of professional competence, influencing instructional decision-making, adaptability, and pedagogical judgment [22,31].

The findings suggest that the Reflection Talk Enrichment Program supported teachers in developing a more conscious and evaluative stance toward their own practice. This aligns with research indicating that sustained reflective dialogue enhances teachers' capacity for self-regulation and professional growth [19]. Moreover, increased teacher reflective awareness likely reinforced other reflective dimensions, positioning educators as reflective models within the learning environment.

Collectively, the findings reveal a coherent pattern of reflective growth across all indicators, suggesting that the intervention fostered holistic reflective development. Unlike prior studies that conceptualize reflection as a singular construct, this study empirically demonstrates reflection as a multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing structural, participatory, collaborative, and awareness-based dimensions. The pre-post comparison graph visually corroborates the statistical findings, illustrating consistent improvements across all reflective practice indicators. The clear separation between pre-test and post-test mean scores confirms the effectiveness of the intervention, while the convergence of post-test scores suggests that Reflection Talk served as a balancing mechanism—strengthening weaker reflective dimensions while refining more developed ones. This visual pattern supports the conclusion that dialogic reflection promotes integrated, rather than fragmented, reflective development.

3.2 Qualitative Findings

The qualitative analysis was conducted through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis of reflection logs. Using thematic analysis, the data revealed three major interrelated themes that explain how the Reflection Talk Enrichment Program influenced instructional practice, learner engagement, and institutional learning culture.

3.2.1 Enhanced Teacher Reflective Awareness

One dominant theme emerging from the data was a marked increase in teachers' reflective awareness. Prior to the implementation of Reflection Talk, reflection was largely informal and intuitive, often limited to brief post-teaching impressions without systematic analysis. Teachers reported that instructional decisions were mostly based on routine and experience rather than critical examination of learning processes.

After participating in Reflection Talk sessions, teachers demonstrated a more conscious, analytical, and evaluative stance toward their instructional practices. Interview data revealed that teachers became more aware of the alignment between learning objectives, teaching strategies, and student responses. Reflection logs further indicated a shift from descriptive reflections (what happened) to interpretive and critical reflections (why it happened and how it could be improved). Several

teachers explicitly stated that structured dialogue helped them recognize previously unnoticed classroom dynamics, such as uneven student participation, ineffective questioning techniques, and missed opportunities for formative feedback. This qualitative evidence supports the quantitative finding of increased teacher reflective awareness and confirms that Reflection Talk functioned as a catalyst for deeper professional self-examination rather than surface-level reflection.

3.2.2 Improved Student Engagement and Voice

The second theme highlights significant improvements in student engagement and the legitimization of student voice within the learning process. Observational data showed that prior classroom interactions were predominantly teacher-centered, with students responding passively to instructions and feedback. Reflection activities, when present, were largely unidirectional and evaluative.

Following the implementation of Reflection Talk, students became more actively involved in reflective discussions, both during and after instructional sessions. Teachers reported that students were increasingly willing to articulate learning difficulties, express opinions about teaching methods, and suggest improvements for future lessons. This shift was particularly evident during post-class reflection sessions, where students participated in dialogue rather than merely receiving feedback[18].

Students' interview responses indicated that Reflection Talk created a safe and respectful space for expressing ideas without fear of judgment. This sense of psychological safety encouraged active participation and fostered greater learning ownership. The qualitative findings thus explain the substantial quantitative increase in student participation, demonstrating that engagement was not merely behavioral but also cognitive and dialogic in nature.

3.2.3 Strengthened Collaborative Reflection and Leadership Support

The third theme concerns the development of collaborative reflection supported by institutional leadership. Qualitative data revealed that reflection practices gradually evolved from isolated individual activities into collective and shared learning processes. Teachers reported increased peer interaction, including shared reflection sessions, collaborative problem-solving, and joint evaluation of instructional challenges [17].

Leadership played a crucial enabling role in this process. School leaders were observed actively participating in Reflection Talk sessions, facilitating dialogue, and encouraging open communication across hierarchical boundaries. Document analysis of institutional records showed that reflection outcomes were increasingly used as inputs for instructional planning and quality improvement discussions[11].

This theme indicates that Reflection Talk extended beyond classroom practice to become an organizational learning mechanism, reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement. The

qualitative findings thus complement the quantitative gains in collaborative reflection by demonstrating how structured dialogue, when supported by leadership, can embed reflective practice within institutional management systems[18,20].

3.3 Discussion

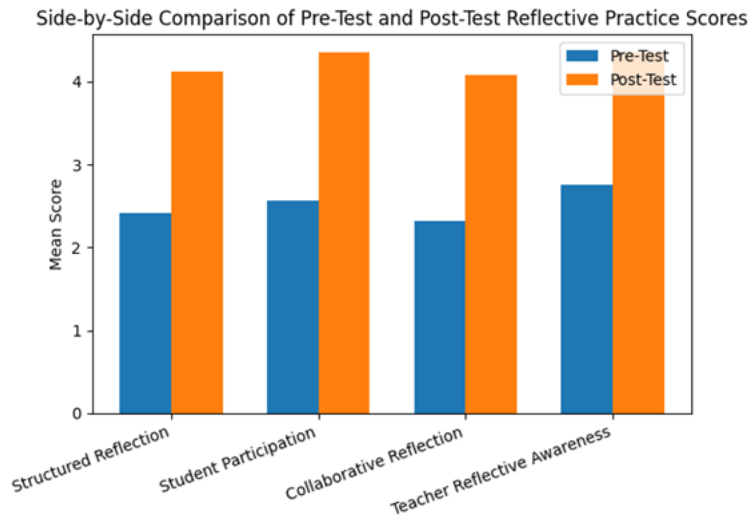


Figure 1. Side-by-Side Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Reflective Practice Scores

Figure 1 presents a side-by-side comparison of mean pre-test and post-test scores across four reflective practice indicators: structured reflection, student participation, collaborative reflection, and teacher reflective awareness. The visualization clearly demonstrates that post-test scores consistently exceed pre-test scores across all indicators, indicating substantial improvement following the implementation of the Reflection Talk Enrichment Program.

The parallel arrangement of bars allows for direct comparison between conditions and highlights the magnitude of change attributable to the intervention. Notably, student participation and collaborative reflection exhibit pronounced gains, suggesting that the dialogic and interactive nature of the program effectively transformed reflection into an active and socially mediated learning process. Similarly, the marked increase in structured reflection confirms that reflective activities shifted from intuitive and informal practices toward more systematic and intentional forms.

Overall, the visual pattern reinforces the statistical findings by illustrating a coherent and uniform upward trend across all reflective dimensions. The consistency of improvement supports the conclusion that the Reflection Talk Enrichment Program promotes holistic reflective development rather than isolated gains, thereby strengthening its pedagogical significance and empirical contribution [31].

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

This study provides robust empirical evidence that the Reflection Talk Enrichment Program constitutes a high-impact and theoretically grounded intervention for improving educational quality management in Islamic boarding schools. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, the findings demonstrate that structured, dialogic reflection significantly strengthens reflective practices at both instructional and institutional levels, confirming the value of integrating qualitative and quantitative perspectives in educational evaluation [15,1]

Quantitatively, the consistently high t-values across all indicators ($t = 8.97\text{--}10.21$, $p < 0.001$) indicate that the observed improvements are not merely statistically significant but also substantively meaningful, reflecting strong intervention effects. These results align with prior research emphasizing that structured and scaffolded reflection leads to deeper professional learning and instructional improvement [23,28]. The strongest effects were observed in student participation and collaborative reflection, reinforcing dialogic learning theories that view reflection as a socially mediated process of meaning-making [18,27].

The qualitative findings further substantiate these statistical results by revealing increased teacher reflective awareness, enhanced student voice, and strengthened collaborative reflection supported by leadership. This convergence confirms that reflective dialogue fosters both individual professional growth and collective organizational learning [19,21]. In this regard, Reflection Talk operationalizes Schön's (1983) concept of reflective practice by embedding disciplined inquiry into everyday instructional and managerial routines. Overall, the study confirms that dialogically structured reflection can serve as a sustainable bridge between instructional improvement and educational management, responding to global calls for reflective, participatory, and adaptive education systems [16,17].

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and supported by existing literature, several recommendations are proposed:

1. Institutional Integration of Reflection Talk.

Educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools, should formally integrate Reflection Talk into instructional supervision, post-class review sessions, and quality assurance systems. Embedding reflection into institutional routines ensures sustainability and aligns reflective practice with school-based management frameworks [13,17]

2. Professional Development and Reflective Capacity Building.

Teachers and school leaders should receive systematic training in facilitating structured and dialogic reflection, focusing on reflective questioning, collaborative inquiry, and evidence-based instructional decision-making. Such professional development has been shown to enhance reflective awareness and long-term teaching effectiveness [11,19,22].

3. Leadership Engagement and Policy Support.

School leadership should actively support reflective practices by allocating time, legitimizing reflective dialogue, and utilizing reflection outcomes for institutional planning and evaluation. Leadership involvement is critical in transforming reflection into an organizational learning culture rather than an individual endeavor [9,17]

4. Methodological Expansion in Future Research.

Future studies should employ longitudinal and comparative designs to examine the sustainability and transferability of Reflection Talk across different educational contexts. Incorporating advanced mixed-methods strategies, including joint displays and effect size analysis, would further strengthen empirical rigor [1,2,6].

5. Scaling Reflection Talk as a Quality Enhancement Model.

Policymakers and practitioners are encouraged to adapt Reflection Talk as a scalable model for educational quality improvement. When aligned with institutional values and leadership structures, reflective dialogue can support broader reform initiatives aimed at professional accountability and continuous learning [16,17].

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