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The Use of Information Technology in The Tarbiyah Department of The Faculty of Islamic Studies, Muhammadiyah University of Malang

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the reasons why the Tarbiyah Department emphasizes competence in the field of Information Technology (IT) for its students and to explain the efforts made by the department to provide such competence. This research uses a qualitative approach, with the subjects consisting of the Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FAI) at Muhammadiyah University of Malang (UMM) for the 2005–2009 period, Drs. Khozin, M.Si; the Vice Dean I of FAI UMM for the 2005–2009 period, Drs. Sunarto, M.Ag; the Head of the Tarbiyah Department, Dra. Romlah, M.Ag; and the lecturer of IT-based courses in the Tarbiyah Department, Ir. Wahono, MT. The Tarbiyah Department of FAI UMM was chosen as the research setting based on field findings. First, among 29 students taking the Educational Technology course in the sixth semester of the 2008–2009 academic year, only five achieved a "very good" score. Second, there was a "contradictory implementation" in which two of four students who had completed their teaching practicum (PPL) at a multimedia-based school—Madrasah Aliyah Negeri III Malang, Jalan Bandung—did not apply several materials previously taught, particularly those from the Educational Technology course. Third, 65% of 28 students who had completed the Educational Information System Planning course in the odd semester of the 2007–2008 academic year were unable to re-operate (had forgotten) the material taught. Data collection techniques included participatory observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative data analysis model. The results of the study show that there are two main reasons why the Tarbiyah Department of FAI UMM emphasizes competence in IT: (1) to support the professional competence of Tarbiyah students in their respective fields, and (2) to serve as a distinctive advantage of graduates from the Tarbiyah Department of the Islamic Education Study Program at FAI UMM, differentiating them from graduates of other Islamic Education Study Programs. Efforts to provide IT competence are carried out through two processes: (1) curriculum design and development, and (2) teaching and practicum in IT-based courses.

Keywords: Information Technology, Tarbiyah Department

INTRODUCTION

At present, the development of Information Technology (IT) has been advancing at an extraordinary pace. This rapid progress has had a profound impact not only on the field of information technology itself but also on nearly every aspect of human life. The swift evolution of IT has significantly influenced patterns of relationships between individuals, communities, and even nations.

Globalization and modernization have shifted human civilization from an agricultural (agrarian) foundation to an industrial one, and now into the information age. It can even be said that the most valuable commodity today is *information*. The advancement of both software and hardware technologies, along with the expansion of information networks, has progressed rapidly. This development has also been accompanied by the growing diversity of information and communication content — ranging from high-quality, educational, and useful information to misleading "junk" content that contributes to ignorance and the degradation of moral and cultural values.

As a university based on information technology, Muhammadiyah University of Malang (UMM) consistently strives to equip its students with the ability to utilize IT in the development

of learning processes. The Faculty of Islamic Studies (FAI), as one of the founding faculties of UMM, also works to realize this vision by prioritizing graduate competencies in the IT field—particularly in the Tarbiyah Department of the Islamic Education Study Program (PAI). The goal is to produce not only religious education teachers but also educators who possess practical skills in information technology.

"A religious teacher who masters information technology" is one of the core graduate competencies promoted by the Tarbiyah Department of FAI UMM. To achieve this goal, one of the efforts made is through curriculum design in the *Work Behavior Courses* (MPB), which include IT-based courses such as *Educational Technology* and *Educational Information System Planning* (2005–2006 curriculum), as well as *Instructional Media* (2006–2007 curriculum). Later developments introduced *Instructional Media I and II* and three elective courses—*Computer Applications*, *Graphic Design*, and *Web Design* (2008–2009 curriculum).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study focuses on describing the reasons and processes through which the Tarbiyah Department emphasizes competence in the field of Information Technology (IT) for its students. To achieve this objective, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach—an approach aimed at describing and analyzing phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts of individuals or groups (Sukmadinata, 2006).

This approach was chosen because it possesses specific characteristics that enable the researcher to obtain information from within the research setting. Moreover, the information required in this study is descriptive in nature, consisting of detailed explanations and statements from informants who serve as the primary data sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tarbiyah Department

In general, the Tarbiyah Department is directed toward producing skilled and professional educators. The department functions to provide both academic and professional education with the goal of developing graduates in Islamic Education who possess expertise in teaching and Islamic pedagogy, with specializations in Islamic Religious Education, Arabic, and English. Graduates of the undergraduate (Strata One) program earn the degree of *Sarjana Pendidikan Islam* (S.Pd.I).

Mastery of Information Technology (IT)

In today's advanced era, teachers are required to continuously develop their knowledge and abilities in the teaching and learning process. A teacher's broad perspective is expected to support their instructional activities and foster a progressive outlook in assessing various matters. The skills or competencies of teachers in the teaching-learning process are essential to their role as professional educators. A teacher's morality is key to self-improvement and the fulfillment of competencies necessary for enhancing the overall quality of education.

Research-supported assumptions indicate a significant correlation between lecturers' behavior and students' perceptions of their academic performance. Thus, a learner's achievement is fundamentally influenced by the competence of the educator. In this context, two essential definitions of teacher competence must be understood:

1. Teacher competence refers to the set of knowledge, abilities, and beliefs possessed by a teacher and demonstrated in teaching situations.
2. Teaching competence refers to the observable behaviors of teachers during the teaching process.

Utilization of Instructional Technology

The shift toward computer-based learning has had a substantial impact on teacher professionalism, requiring them to acquire new understanding and competencies to facilitate learning effectively. With computer-assisted learning systems, education is no longer confined to classroom walls but can extend into the broader world—especially through the internet.

Teachers are therefore expected to develop the ability to organize, analyze, and select the most appropriate and relevant information that directly supports student competency development and learning objectives. Consequently, a teacher's mastery of instructional technology standards can serve as one of the key indicators for teacher competency standards and certification.

Below are some examples of internet facilities and instructional media that educators are expected to master as part of technological proficiency in the teaching and learning process.

Role of Cognitive Tools	**example**	**Technology**
I. Information Search: These tools enable learners to obtain data and identify information in learning situations that require information searching.	*Database* *Search engine*	*Google* *Yahoo* *Alta Vista*
II. Information Presentation: These tools allow information to be presented in more meaningful and comprehensive ways.	*Graphic Organizer* *Concept Map*	*PowerPoint* *Word* *MindMap*
III. Knowledge Organization: These tools support learners in building relationships between pieces of information by structuring or restructuring them through manipulation.	*Spreadsheets* *Presentation Tools* *Notebook Tools*	*Inspiration* *Excel* *Word* *Hyper Author*
IV. Knowledge Integration: These tools enable learners to connect new information to existing knowledge, helping them build larger information constructs.	Piranti pemetaan Simulasi	*Diskusi online* *Teleconference* *Video streaming* *Podcasting* (*Learn OutLoud*)

Table. Four Roles of Cognitive Devices

Curriculum of Information Technology Mastery in the Tarbiyah Department, Faculty of Islamic Studies (FAI) at Muhammadiyah University of Malang (UMM)

The efforts of the Tarbiyah Department in providing competence in the field of Information Technology (IT) began in the 1989–1990 academic year through the elective course *Computer Applications*, which continued until the 1995–1996 academic year. In the 1996–1997 academic year, the course was developed into *Computer Applications I* and *Computer Applications II* until 1997–1998, before being replaced in 1998–1999 by the course *Educational Management Information Systems*, marking the end of *Computer Applications*. However, this course was reintroduced and further developed in the 2008–2009 academic year.

In the Tarbiyah Department curriculum, IT-based courses are included in the *Work Behavior Courses* (MPB). The 2008–2009 curriculum represents the most recent and specific development, as seen from the addition of *Instructional Media II*, which focuses more on IT-based media. Meanwhile, *Educational Technology* was further specified into elective courses such as *Computer Applications*, *Web Design*, and *Graphic Design*.

From the development of the IT-based curriculum above, it can be concluded that the Tarbiyah Department of FAI UMM seeks to strengthen students' IT competencies through courses that directly provide these skills. This is evident in the 2008–2009 curriculum, which is more specific in its inclusion of IT-oriented courses.

IT-Based and Practicum Courses

The strategy used by the Tarbiyah Department to enhance students' IT skills is through direct practice in various practicum-based courses, including *Tafsir*, *Hadith*, *Statistics*, *Educational Management Information Systems*, and *Educational Technology*. In addition, the department utilizes instructional media such as multimedia classrooms, computer laboratories, and microteaching rooms.

According to Mager, several criteria can be used in selecting instructional strategies:

1. Orientation toward learning objectives – The type of behavior expected from students should determine the method used. For example, if the goal is to create a learning analysis chart, the most suitable method is hands-on practice or exercises.
2. Select learning techniques aligned with workplace skills – Techniques should relate to real-world applications in future work environments.
3. Use instructional media that stimulate as many learner senses as possible.

Based on these theoretical foundations, the strategy used in IT-based courses at the Tarbiyah Department of FAI UMM is oriented toward learning objectives through practical exercises. Learning does not only take place in classrooms but also in computer laboratories. The teaching techniques emphasize skill development, equipping students with proficiency in Islamic study software such as *CD al-Qur'an*, *CD Hadith*, *CD Fiqh Books*, and other related applications.

Regarding instructional media, the Tarbiyah Department of FAI UMM is equipped with facilities such as:

- Microteaching laboratories equipped with LCD projectors, computers, and cameras for recording teaching practice.
- Computer laboratories supported by educational software such as digital *Hadith* and *Tafsir* tools, *SPSS* for educational statistics, *Microsoft Word* with Arabic fonts for producing Arabic-language academic papers, and educational media software like *MindMap*, *HotPotatoes*, *Italic*, *Macromedia Flash*, and *Ulead Studio 11* for video editing—enabling students to create IT-based instructional media products.
- Multimedia classrooms supported by LCD projectors and computers.

In terms of learning models, the department implements distance learning through an Online Learning Management System (eLMU), particularly in *Educational Technology* and *Educational Management Information Systems* courses. This system is supported by UMM's *Hotspot Area* network.

Additionally, UMM conducts an Integrated Internet Application Training Program for new students every odd semester, which has a positive impact on faculties under UMM by strengthening IT-based course development. This training serves as a foundational IT introduction for new students.

To further enhance IT competence, the leadership of FAI UMM has implemented the "The Future" policy, which includes IT training programs for lecturers. This initiative demonstrates

FAI UMM's commitment to prioritizing IT competence not only among students but also among its teaching staff.

CONCLUSION

There are two main reasons why the Tarbiyah Department emphasizes IT competence for its students, to support the professional competence of Tarbiyah students in their respective fields, to serve as a distinguishing feature of graduates from the Islamic Education Study Program (PAI) at FAI UMM, setting them apart from graduates of similar programs at other institutions. There are also two main processes through which the Tarbiyah Department develops IT competence, through curriculum design and development, integrating IT-based learning into the academic structure. Through IT-based and practicum courses, including *Educational Management Information Systems*, *Educational Technology*, *Instructional Media*, *Computer Applications*, *Web Design*, and *Graphic Design* (as elective courses), along with practicum courses such as *Tafsir*, *Hadith*, and *Educational Statistics*, all supported by specialized software. Theoretically, the learning strategies employed in these IT-based courses are oriented toward learning objectives—emphasizing practice and hands-on experience to ensure that students achieve professional-level technological competence.

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