

Arguments in Critical Thinking Ability

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Abstract—The ability to think critically is an essential skill and becomes one of the primary goals in college. A person who can think critically will be able to use appropriate criteria to evaluate an argument. There must be clear evidence and accompanied by a plausible explanation. This study aims to investigate students' critical thinking skills in determining an argument. The subject is the students of mathematics education program at one private university in Pasuruan, i.e., 31 students. Then, some students who have unique answers are selected to be interviewed further about their critical thinking ability to an argument. This research is a descriptive qualitative research. Based on the results of a written test of 31 students, there is one student who has a unique answer. The answer is different from other students, so from the results of these tests, the student is selected for the further interview. The findings of this study highlighted that the student can mention arguments with the accurate reasons and has a potential to have the ability to think critically.

Keywords— argument, Critical Thinking Ability

I. INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking is an essential skill that every student in Higher Education should develop. This skill is vital to assess any information, explain the reasons and be able to solve problems that have not known the solution. In addition, Douglas also said that critical thinking skills are generally recognized as essential skills and become one of the primary goals in college [1]. Critical thinking skills are preferred over algorithmic cognitive abilities. It is also expressed by Amit and Azikovitch that the current reformation in mathematics education throughout the world includes the transition from algorithmic cognitive abilities towards higher cognitive abilities, i.e., critical thinking skills [2].

According to Ennis, critical thinking is a reflective thought which is plausible and focuses on what decisions to believe or what to do [3]. Ennis defines the ability to think critically related to decision making whether someone should believe or not in an argument [4]. One indicator of people who have the ability to think critically is he/she can evaluate the accuracy of various arguments. In the same way, Cottrell also conveys that evaluation is an essential part of critical thinking, involving a series of cognitive processes aimed identifying a problem, choosing a solution plan, and evaluating. Assuming this, people who have the ability to think critically can use appropriate criteria to evaluate an argument [5].

In a study conducted by Norris and Phillips shows that there are still many students who have difficulty in determining a claim/argument and provide a proof of the claim/argument that has been given to him [6]. Therefore, students' critical thinking skill – in this case is the skill in analyzing an argument- needs to be provoked. Furthermore,

providing a proof is a crucial aspect of explaining a reason for the claim/argument [9].

Students who can examine and evaluate arguments/claims are supporting evidence that the student has critical thinking skills [10]. The ability to think critically can encourage students to think independently and solve problems in the context of everyday life [11]. As'ari states that a person who has the ability to think critically is the one who can determine whether a statement or an issue has been given arguments/claims or not [12]. A person who has the ability to think critically should be able to evaluate information from various sources of information.

Arguments are a core component of critical thinking, which includes the ability to construct its own argument, agree or disagree with claims to the information/news that has been heard [14;15;16]. Accordingly, someone who has the ability to think critically should be able to criticize news or reports from various sources of information. It involves critical thinking and argumentation skills to determine whether the claim/argument has been given right or wrong [13]. Students must justify their arguments supported by the evidence to argue that arguments must be accompanied by contradictory examples or facts that do not support

As was discussed above, students' ability in determining argument becomes an important indicator for students who have critical thinking ability. For this reason, this research has been participated by the mathematics students who have the answers which is unique or different from the others in order to find out if students who have unique answers or have the potential to have critical thinking skills. Is argument an important indicator used to track one's critical thinking ability.

II. METHODS

This research has been administered using a qualitative descriptive research. The subject of the research was the students of Mathematics Education Study Program at one of the private universities in Pasuruan force year 2015 amounted to 31 students. There were 31 students tested and then some of them, who have unique answers, have been selected and interviewed further. A semi-structured interview was conducted to investigate the results of tests that have been done in depth. The instrument used is the critical thinking ability of the material of triangular congruence which is made in the form of proof which refers to the indicator of critical thinking ability, namely argument identification. The instrument that is examined to the students as a following Fig. 1.

Interviews were carried out with the questions that focused on how they explained the answers already done to know whether there was a potential for critical thinking skills or not. Interviews are conducted for 20-30 minutes. The

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