A. Introduction

Human beings are zoon historicon. Human beings are creatures who continuously make, own, and create history. ‘History’ comes from syajara, istor, or historia which mean ‘happen’, ‘wise man’ or ‘the past time of human beings’.

Past time is a very important part of history and human dynamic. It always follows and embeds every activity the humans do. Realized or not realized, directly or indirectly, past time becomes memory supplying experience, lesson, image, and message for the living of human beings. This is the significant meaning of learning history. By learning history, human beings can gain self-identity that gives important meaning to the existence of the humans. Through teaching and learning history, humans obtain reference from the past time to build wise behavior to be able to make decision on important aspect critically in the present time. This leads to maintain the humans’ existence in order to be able to survive in future. Therefore, history can be the lesson and give experience as well as be a mirror guiding humans’ life to head to the betterment. To infuse the lesson and the experience, process of teaching and learning of history is needed.

The explanation above implies that learning of history does not only mean as learning about the past time, but also to gain benefits to be used to run a better life of society at present. Learning and teaching of history means building wisdom in society and help this nation to be literate in all aspects. However, experience of teaching and learning of history in Indonesia tends to show worsening quality. The teaching and learning of history tends to be so cognitive and memorizing oriented, and more on facts accumulating that the building of critical thinking in facing various events at present time is not yet realized. Those who find difficulty to think critically tend to be lazy and extreme. It is depicted from the low intelligent of members of this nation, as in the youths, who tend to be impatient in solving some problems. This conduct leads to the more problematic actions like repeated violence, complicated and unsolved corruption, and instant action such as selling this nation’s strategic assets. Realizing this problem, this paper tries to explore ‘The Teaching and Learning of History and The Developing of Critical Thinking: A Study in Developing Critical Thinking Through the Teaching of History: An Experience in Indonesia’. Indonesia’ aiming at giving an auto criticism to get solution. Insight and comparison with other countries are worth considered in this study.

B. The Teaching of History at Glance

Studying refers to concept of teaching and learning. In this matter, interaction between teachers and students exists. Studying activity is an activity aiming not only to change knowledge-centered-behavior but also to develop skills, mental, and moral values (Raka Joni: 1977:7). In line with this concept, Nasution (1988: 10) states that process of education and teaching and learning must be able to build philosophical foundation and enliven or develop values embedded in any substance and process of humans’ interaction (teachers and students). Therefore, studying, and teaching and learning can be also said as process of directing and developing students’ behavior in the interest of character building equipping them to know him/herself; who is he/she, where does she/he from, and where does
she/he head (Sardimian AM, 2005:61). The expected result is not only knowledge but also experience, mental, broad interest, respects to norms, and live skills.

Regarding the expected product above, the meaning of teaching must be directed to the meaning of teaching and learning, that is a process of supplying stimulating condition to direct students to develop their potential, to gain knowledge, to own skills that are expected to be used to change their behavior and to develop their personality. Hence, the process of teaching and learning at schools does not only contain transfer of knowledge but also transfer of values and even, reconstruct of knowledge and of values.

Based on the definition above, the teaching and learning of history is a process that supports and stimulates students to develop their potential, to be able to reconstruct and gain knowledge on history, understand and apply the existing historical values to help students develop their characters. In other words, the teaching and learning of history is a process to direct students through the subjects of history in order to build the awareness of history.

History is a totality of the activities at the past time (Walsh, 1967:16). Past time cannot be interpreted as a stagnant phase, but rather as a continuation of the present time and the future. Therefore, history can mean as a discipline that systematically studies and makes researches overall development of society and human beings at past time with all related aspects to be reflected as the guidance of the now condition and as the mirror for the future.

Moreover, the definition of history is also related to humanity ad morality matters. History is a theater in which people play their roles based o their understanding, experience, and the existing examples. History educates people to know their origin and their existence so that people can set identity, in a broader sense, related to values strengthening national and nation identity (Soedjatmoko, 1986:6). In addition, history functions to awaken students to know the process of change and historical awareness. Awareness of history is an intellectual orientation, a manner to understand people’s being. Therefore, Abdullah (1974:9) emphasizes that awareness of history is no more a self-awareness, an awareness of having personality, of being members of society, being social creatures, and of being God’s creatures as well as members of a nation.

Regarding the benefit and the core of study, history can be divided into history that is academic theoretic and pragmatic that is commonly stated as empiric and normative history. Empiric history talks about the history as events. Normative one is a study that explores the historical substance composed in the order of normative criteria.

Related to the illustration above, Suryo (1991:10) divides the objectives of teaching and learning of history into two. First, the academic-scientific objective as has been developed in higher education, particularly for the sake of research on history. Second, the pragmatic objective that is used to gain the purpose of education in primary and secondary schools.

C. Developing Critical Thinking

In education context, Suryo (1991:11) also states that the teaching and learning of history demands two things to actualize. They are (1) education and intellectual learning, and (2) education and learning on nation’s morality, civic society that is democratic and responsible for the future of the nation. The first demands the teaching and learning of history to serve not only factual knowledge but also exercise enabling students to think critically, draw conclusion, understand meaning from events according to the principles and the norms of the discipline. This is in line with what Ibn Khaldun views that history is a critical understanding, a careful effort to search the truth, an intelligent explanation on the cause and effect and on the origins, and a deep understanding of why and how an event happens.
Therefore, questions about why and how are important to develop in the teaching and learning of history to stimulate students to have critical thinking. Critical thinking is a deep thinking to explore and judge a problem based on rational reasoning to get a precise solution. Hence, those who think critically do not easily believe in common judgments of a problem.

One of the weaknesses of the teaching and learning in Indonesia is the lack of effort to build critical thinking. In teaching and learning of history, teachers tend to push students to memorize the materials aiming to direct students to able to answer questions in the examination. The style of the teaching tends to be formalistic leading to the negligence of students. Realizing this fact, it the time to develop critical thinking in the teaching and learning of history that is by Eric Jensen (2008: xi) called as brain-based teaching.

The second refers to the orientation of humanity dealing with wisdom, norm, and other humanity aspects like empathy, and social wisdom. Responding this, Seignobos states that history is a method that is related to strategy to gain educative purposes (Asmuni, 1992: 8). This legitimizes that the teaching and learning of history plays its role as the inscriber of moral education or nation character's building. History always serves facts and depiction of events that can be employed as mirror showing which of the events can be the guidance to set examples so that people can also avoid the repeated worse events. It triggers people's wisdom to be able to avoid the second mistake. All decisions are based on wise consideration heading to the need of critical thinking.

How do we teach history interestingly and that enables students to think critically? One of the models is the teaching based on pictures/photo. This model gives the balance working of the brain. To gain complete intelligence, the working of the left and right brain should be in balance. Therefore, the assignment given should explore those two sides of the brain. The left brain refers to the written forms and the right one is close to the music, picture, and colors (Pasiak, 2002: 148 – 149). With the balanced working of the brain, the teaching of history through pictures (and even an illustrated music) increases the ability of students to memorize the materials. This picture-based teaching trains students to think critically and analytically. This model can also develop students' imagination (Garvey and Krug, 1977: 27). Imagination is a thinking power to imagine or create a depiction of an event based on the imagination and students' experience. The realization can be seen from the ability of the students to draw connection between one picture to another, between the pictures and the reality. The ability to describe the message in every picture and to draw connection among the pictures needs skills of critical and analytical thinking. Reconstructing historical events through various messages behind the existing pictures to be comprehensive and communicative construction needs imagination. By applying this model, teachers will train students' critical thinking and imagination.

In the implementation, class can be divided into six smaller groups consisting of 5 to 6 members each. This model is also known as a cooperative learning (Slavin, 2008: 9-10). Each group is given as set of pictures with questions or problems statements that refer to the pictures given. Then, teachers allow discussion among members of groups to solve the problems or to answer the questions. After finishing the discussion, each group must present the result of the discussion before the class. Other students can raise questions, clarification, criticism, and suggestion. Teachers apply this to other groups.

Below is the example of the implementation of the cooperative learning model based on pictures/photo, the topic of discussion is “around Proclamation".
Based on several pictures above, there are three groups of pictures each showing problems to discuss. The first set of picture is related to the events before the proclamation. The second one is about the Proclamation, the independence day of August 17, 1945. The last one refers to responses of society toward the proclamation. In the six groups of the class, group I and IV discuss the first set of picture. Group II and V discuss the second set of picture and group III and VI are responsible to discuss the third set of pictures. What is to remember is that students must discuss to solve the problem within their own group. Therefore, teachers should provide two copies of each set of pictures. The students are active in the discussion. They describe and relate the pictures to get a depiction of an event. In this activity, students are active to think, to explain, and to respond. Hence, this model of learning can train students’ critical thinking.

D. Conclusion

Great nation is a nation that respects her history of nation’s struggle. Unfortunately, that principle sounds unpopular now or even is forgotten. Consequently, students are not interested in the study of history. It results in the worsening quality of proud of history and culture of the nation. In a continuous phase, it will be a nationalism crisis.

Why are students not interested in history? The common criticisms head to the reason that it is a memory oriented, unimportant, and uninteresting subject. To solve this problem, reformation on the method of teaching is needed. Teaching model-based pictures is one of the models that can maintain students’ attention, particularly when it is accompanied by music illustration. This model of teaching can train students’ critical thinking and even train their imagination. These two skills are important to make balance of the right and left side of brain. In consequence, it will build balanced students’ intelligent.
References


