

Nurturing Students' Curiosity through Contextual Learning

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Abstract--The character of a country can be seen from the character of its citizens. Character education should be taught as early as possible from the age of children. Curiosity needs to be owned by everyone. Having the attitude of curiosity, students can know what is happening, can feel what is happening and can act in accordance with the moral they have to do something. Curiosity is an attitude and action that always strives to know more deeply and broadly from something that is learned, seen, and heard. Curiosity needs to be taught through character education. Character education, especially students' curiosity, can be taught using cooperative learning. In cooperative learning, students are asked to develop their thoughts to do more meaningful learning activities, to carry out their inquiry activities for all topics taught optimally, and to develop the students' curiosity through questions, as well as to create a learning community.

Keywords—character, curiosity, education

I. INTRODUCTION

The growing curiosity of students in elementary school (PAUD / SD) is very necessary. Nurturing character in students needs to be done as early as possible, because a student with good character will later make him/her be a superior person. Recently, character education has often been heard, but only few people can understand its meaning and make efforts to nurture it. This is in accordance with *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Nasional Tahun* (National Long Term Development Plan) in 2005-2025 by State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 2007, namely: the realization of a strong, competitive, noble, and moral national character based on Pancasila, characterized by human nature and behaviour of Indonesian people who are diverse, faithful and fearful of God Almighty, virtuous, solemn, collaborative, patriotic, dynamic, and

science-oriented (*Kemko Kesejahteraan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, 2010*). It is hoped that Indonesia has strong, competitive and noble generation in the future.

In accordance with Law Number 20 Year 2003, the National Education System Article 3, it states: "National Education functions to develop capabilities and shape dignified national character and civilization in order to educate the lives of the nation, ...". From the national education system, it can be interpreted that a good and dignified country is always related to its citizens with good characters.

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It is very important to nurture the character of the students as stated by Dumadi in Adisusilo (2014: 76) that the character comes from the Greek "*charassein*", which means goods or tools for scraping, which are later understood as stamps. In addition, Zuchdi (2008: 39) describes that the character as a trait is admired as a sign of goodness, policy and moral maturity. Characters become identities, personality, permanent traits that overcome the changing experience of contingencies. One's personal qualities can be seen from his/her character.

The component of moral education that results in character education according to Lickona (1991, 187), consists of three components of good character, namely: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral actions. Part of moral education is mentioned by Borba (2008: 4), who states that moral knowledge includes: moral awareness, moral values knowledge, foresight, moral reasoning, decision making, and self-knowledge. Moral feelings include: conscience, self-confidence, empathy, love of kindness, self-control, and humbleness. Moral intelligence includes: the ability to understand the right and wrong with strong ethical beliefs and to act on those beliefs with the

right attitude and respectable behaviour. These three components of the character cannot stand alone; it needs a connection among the three. Because moral knowledge is not enough, there is a need for a feeling of morality. Moral in one's feeling will encourage him/her to do moral deeds. When someone has shown his/her moral to anything he does, it can be said that the person has owned good character and morality. To realize people with good morals and characters, it needs character education at school or at home.

The principle of character education can be carried out effectively according to Lickona (1991: 187-189; 220-221), namely: 1. Developing universal values as a foundation, 2. Defining character comprehensively including aspects of mind, feeling and behaviour, 3.

Using a comprehensive and proactive approach, 4. Creating a school community with full attention to students, 5. Providing opportunities for students to do good deeds 6. Creating a meaningful academic curriculum, 7. Encouraging students, 8. Engaging all components of the school as a moral learning community, 9. Growing togetherness in moral leadership, 10. Involving families and community members as partners, and 11. Evaluating the character of the school both towards school staff as character educators and students in manifesting good character.

Character education formulated by the Ministry of National Education is 18 characters

Table 1. Eighteen National Education Character

No	Character Values	Description
1	Being Religious	Being obedient in carrying out the teachings of the religion he adheres to, being tolerant of the implementation of worship of other religions, and living in harmony with adherents of other religions
2	Being Honest	Attempting to make himself as a person who can always be trusted in words, actions, and work
3	Being Tolerated	Respecting differences in religion, ethnicity, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes and actions of others who are different from themselves
4	Discipline	Showing orderly behavior and complying with various rules and regulations
5	Hard work	Showing genuine effort in overcoming various obstacles to learning and assignments, as well as completing tasks as well as possible
6	Being Creative	Thinking and doing something to produce new ways or results from something that has been started
7	Being Autonomous	Being brave not to depend on others and being able to complete tasks
8	Being Democratic	Knowing how to think, behave and act to make the rights and obligations of himself and others balance
9	Being Curious	Striving to know more deeply and broadly from something they have already learnt, seen and heard
10	Nationalism	Being able to place the interests of the nation and state above the self and group interests
11	Loving Homeland	Showing great thought, attitude, and behavior of high level of loyalty, care and respect for the nation's language, physical environment, social, cultural, economic and political
12	Appreciating achievement	Encouraging self to produce something useful for the community, acknowledge and respect the success of others
13	Being Friendly/ Communicative	Showing pleasure in talking, associating, and collaborating with others
14	Loving peace	Having the attitudes, words, and actions that cause others happy and safe
15	Reading habit	Having good habit to read various readings that give goodness to him
16	Environment care	Trying to prevent damage to the surrounding and maintain natural environment
17	Social Care	Attempting to provide assistance to other people and communities in need
18	Being Responsible	Carrying out their duties and obligations to themselves, society, environment (natural, social, cultural), country and God

Curiosity is one of the characters formulated by the Ministry of National Education. It is very important for the school to nurture the sense of enthusiasm in the students' soul. Curiosity is supposed to make the students always get interested to learn new things that have not been known. Kurniawan (2017: 92), states that human beings have a sense of competitiveness to take life. Curiosity is the character that makes students more knowledgeable. The experts commonly agree that one of the characters of intelligent people is the ones with huge desire. The smart child will have a lot of questions, because he was really curious to the answers. When a child asks, he will have other questions following parents' answers. Even, the parents get difficulties in answering them.

Curiosity is of the utmost importance for the educational sector, because the sense of curiosity never makes the students passive only waiting for the teacher's direction. Yaumi (2014: 102), says, creating someone with high curiosity is not really difficult job. However, the resistance to doubts, fears, or perhaps their feeling of the unimportance of the case are still supposed to be the matters. Yaumi (2014: 102), states that people who always care about their ability to do things as follows: 1. Asking questions, 2. Always arising curiosity, 3. Digging, exploring, and investigating, 4. Being interested in various things without any answers yet, 5. Stalking, peering, uncovering various blurred things. The curiosity indicator is stated in table 2 below:

Table 2. Indicators of curiosity of elementary school students

Value	Indicators	
	Grade I-III	Grade IV-VI
Curiosity: Attitudes and actions that always strive to know more deeply and broadly from something that is learned, seen, and heard.	Asking teachers and friends about subject matter.	Asking or reading sources outside the textbook about material related to the lesson.
	Asking something about the new natural phenomenon.	Reading or discussing new natural phenomena.
	Asking the teacher about something heard from radio or television.	Asking about various new natural, social, cultural, economic and technological political events.
	Asking about various events read from print media	Asking about something related in the subject matter but outside of what is discussed in class.

One of the curiosities of students can be increased by using contextual learning. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model, according to Shoimin (2014: 42) is a learning concept that helps teachers associate material taught with the real-world situation of students and encourages students to make connections between the knowledge they possess and their application in life they have every day. In other words, contextual learning is more easily understood by students, because it is associated with everyday life and examples of learning that can be taken from real life.

The steps of contextual learning or CTL according to Rusman (2011: 192), include:

- a. Developing students' thinking to do more meaningful learning activities, whether by working on their own, finding the answers by themselves, or constructing their own new knowledge and skills.
- b. Carrying out inquiry activities for all topics taught as often as possible.
- c. Developing curious nature of learners through raising questions.
- d. Creating learning communities, such as through group activities, discussion, question and answer, and so on.
- e. Presenting models as examples of learning, can be through illustrations, models, even actual media.
- f. Familiarizing children to reflect on every learning activity that has been done.
- g. Conducting an objective assessment to assess the actual ability of each student.

II. CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, curiosity is one of the characters that need to be possessed by someone. Therefore curiosity character education must be applied to students. One way to instill it is by contextual learning or Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) because contextual learning is taken from the real life of students.

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