

Leading Empathic Engagement Through Teamwork Interaction in Classroom

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Abstract: Empathic engagement in the classroom is feeling of students who perceive connected with their friends in learning activities in the classroom. Empathic engagement is very important to emerge respect to the others, to be awarded of the diversity in life and to realize and concern to human beings. Empathic engagement can be taught from an early age in primary school students. With the right methods, students in elementary school can have a sense of empathy for the involvement of their friends that it will be very useful to give the best practice to adulthood process. The study aimed to explain how an empathic engagement was taught in primary school students. Empathic engagement is through teamwork interaction in the classroom. Subjects of the research were students aged 9 years in primary school in Lamongan. The results showed that the teamwork interaction in classroom used by teachers in learning could deliver an empathic engagement. Students with an empathic engagement have awareness to always care for their fellow students and seek to participate in every learning activity in the classroom.

Key Words: empathic engagement, interaction, teamwork

Abstrak: Keterlibatan empatik di kelas adalah perasaan siswa yang merasa terhubung dengan teman mereka dalam kegiatan belajar di kelas. Keterlibatan empatik sangat penting untuk memunculkan sikap menghargai terhadap orang lain, untuk dianugerahi keragaman dalam kehidupan dan untuk menyadari serta memperhatikan manusia. Keterlibatan secara empatik dapat diajarkan sejak usia dini pada siswa sekolah dasar. Dengan metode yang tepat, siswa di sekolah dasar dapat memiliki rasa empati atas keterlibatan teman-teman mereka sehingga akan sangat berguna untuk memberikan praktik terbaik untuk proses pendewasaan diri mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana keterlibatan empatik diajarkan pada siswa sekolah dasar. Keterlibatan empatik adalah melalui interaksi kerja tim di kelas. Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa berusia 9 tahun di sekolah dasar di Lamongan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interaksi timbal balik di kelas yang digunakan oleh guru dalam pembelajaran dapat memberikan keterlibatan empatik. Siswa dengan keterlibatan empatik memiliki kesadaran untuk selalu peduli terhadap sesama siswa dan berusaha untuk berpartisipasi dalam setiap aktivitas belajar di kelas.

Kata kunci: keterlibatan empatik, interaksi, kerja tim

Increasingly rapid development of science makes the students easy to access the information more widely and easily. Actually it has two conflicting sides. On the one hand, students can gain learning experiences because of abundant enough of information, but on the other hand students who do not take advantage of this development will fall and even be stuck in a despicable act. Many students deviated during school hours even nearly one week in a row before the exam time. In addition there are still many students involved in the brawl among students as if they had forgotten

that the person who they faced was his own friend. Students have lost their sense of empathy (Kompas, 2012).

Empathy is the feeling of someone who has a deep connection with others, so it seemed to be able to feel what the other person's experience. Therefore developing empathy in students is very important. Empathy can train their sensitivity to other people so that they will not seek to harm others if they have had a sense of empathy. Why empathy attitude should be developed early on. According to Cooper (2011), the

development of empathy is very important to do especially when we are entering an era where so real differences occur. Differences in religion, race, wealth and poverty, were including the dilemma of the global community, which has taken place before our eyes. Developing empathy is useful to cure the fear of the global community these differences that allow for social cleavages.

In addition, sense of empathy is not just important to foster social attitudes of students, but also can be used to reinforce the sense of belonging of students at their *alma mater*. Students who have high empathy will care not only to their friends but also to the activities which organized by the school. Concern students in school are a form of student participation and may be referred to as part of the increasing student engagement. From this description, it can be observed that student engagement can be associated with empathy students. Engagement is a form of student participation in each activity both at school and in the classroom. Engagement is a positive attitude because students had the attention and pride in the school they inhabit.

Conversely, if students do not have an engagement, then there will be a negative thing that develops in the student. Related to this case, Skinner and Belmont (1993) explained that as a result of absence engagement, students can be passive, less trying hard. Farther from the consequences is that students will have the potential for dropouts (Reschly & Christenson, 2006). This research to explain how an empathic engagement was taught in primary school students so that with the increased of empathic engagement, students can improve their sense of empathy to their friend as well to their madrasah.

Engagement was a multi construct and has evolved over time. At first engagement was defined as “on-task” behavior. This definition emerged from a study conducted by Natriello, who then expanded the definition of “on-task” to mean that student engagement was the participation of students in certain activities as part of the school program (Bardin & Lewis, 2011). The definition implied that if students did not participate in school activities then they would be said to have no engagement.

Engagement was defined as active student participation in the learning process in classroom (Bardin & Lewis, 2011). Engagement of students can result the positive education for all students (Appleton et al, 2008). Engagement of students was an important cause in student achievement (Conner, 2009; Carini, 2006; Appleton, 2006). Finn (1993) revealed that

students who had high engagement demonstrated high academic achievement. This study also proved that students with lower engagement had a negative effect on student achievement. This meant that the more students not engaged, the lower academic achievement.

Sharkey (2008) stated that the engagement of students related to academic success and was able to predict mastery learning (school completion). Success in school depended on the level of student engagement in class task completion. Christenson and Thurlow (2004) found that engagement can be seen from the students’ attention continuously in the process of learning, mastery of academic assignments, attendance, and participation in class. According to Chapman (2003) student engagement in learning was often used to refer to an effective response to the students’ learning. Engagement played a key role for students in learning. Natriello in Chapman (2003) also defined engagement of students as student participation in activities such as part of the school program. Engagement of students had three constructs which consisted of cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and behavioral engagement (Finn, 1993; Chapman, 2003; Appleton et al, 2008).

Cognitive engagement included in factor of learning, thinking, efforts and strategies used in problem solving, the desire to achieve in excess required, and will to face challenges. The examples where such as flexibility in solving problems, encouraging to work hard, learning more, effort and desire to complete the task. In their research, Klenn and Connell (2004) showed that students who were cognitively involved in school had higher rank test scores and did not show disruptive behavior, ditching or dropout from school. Emotional engagement included in terms of ownership of the school and the acceptance of the objectives of the school as well as the values of the schools. Examples of emotional involvement were reactions or feelings which focused on teachers, identifying them with the school, sense of belonging, appreciating the success in the classroom. Stipek (2002) stated that students who are emotionally involved in the school showed high academic achievement.

Behavioral engagement was a form of participation in class, taking initiative and in the governance of classroom, and the level of student attendance in class. Examples of this engagement was the consistency of behavior describing efforts, persistence, concentration, attention, asking questions, contributing to class discussions, follow the rules of class, completing the

assigned task and not disturbing friends in the classroom. Sbrocco (2009) showed that behavioral engagement demonstrated academic and non-academic related to the positive behavior of students in the classroom.

Based on the above explanation can be concluded that engagement was the behavior of students actively involved in the learning process in the classroom including cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement. The three constructs placed simultaneously within individual. Indicators and forms of engagement included (a) willing to face challenges, with form of behavior of answering questions or challenge the behavior of the teacher/other students explicitly; (b) strive to reach more than required, with forms of behavior in collecting assignments before the deadline; (c) creating strategies used in problem solving, with a form of behavior expressing the idea/alternative solution when working in a group or in class; (d) have a sense of enthusiasm, with behaviors of raising their hands to ask questions or argue; (E) have a sense of pride, to shape the behavior of making arguments stated in the group or class; (f) have a sense of satisfaction, with a form of behavior of expressing smile after listening to the opinions of others; (g) have a sense of interest, with the behaviors of viewing in the direction of the teacher or friend who had opinion; (h) willing to work in teams, with behaviors of helping or receiving help from other students; (i) have intensive participation, with behaviors of asking questions to the teacher or friend; (j) to take initiation in the classroom, with a form of behavior of expressing the idea the first time; (k) describing the behavior of concentration, with the forms of behavior of seeing and heard while noting the teacher's explanations; (l) describing the behavior diligently, with the form of behavior of bringing textbooks and reading.

There were several perspectives in understanding the engagement, one of which was a perspective constructivistic. The concept of engagement was based on a constructivist perspective that learning was influenced by how individuals participate in meaningful learning activities (Coates, 2005). Vygotsky (1978) focused on the socio cultural talent in learning occurred when students worked in zone of proximal development zone of proximal development was the level of development between the actual development level and potential of students. This meant that students learned through social interaction with teachers and peers were more capable and appropriately, than the students those were in the learning process.

The learning process was a unique and complex process, that every student in the learning process had characteristics (uniqueness), each of which had different behavior in learning (Degeng, 2006). Students will involve all aspects of the personality of both physical and mental manifested in behavioral studies. The occurrence of learning was not always followed by behavioral changes appearance, but evidence of a change in mental structures can also be shown (Hiti-peuw, 2009).

After the philosophical foundation laid by Dewey, many psychologist developed their theoretical support, including Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky (Arend, 2007). The psychologists had an important role in developing the concept of constructivist and then become the base of problem-based learning. Constructivist perspective indicated that the engagement was from the students' learning activities (Maloshonok, 2014).

The word of empathy evolved from German literature, *Einführung*, which can be interpreted as the power of mental identification of a person on another person or object that he/she thought (Brown, 1993). The identification indicated that someone attempted to understand or even enter the mind of another person so the events happened to someone else, as if he personally experienced.. Feelings that emerged showed an emotional closeness. Therefore, in the other literature it mentioned that empathy was feeling more in *with* someone not just *for* such person. The feeling indicated that the other person was a subject for us not an object for us (Rogers, 1975, Noddings, 1986). From this literature can be said that empathy was the feeling of someone who had a deep connection with others, so it seemed to be able to feel what the other person's experience.

Empathy was not a single, but had a wide range of types and levels (Cooper, 2011). However in it type and level, empathy was often associated with a person's emotions. Because empathy was a psychological feeling, then empathy can happen to everyone in each other's activities, such as work, social relationships, including research and education. Watts (2008) pointed out in the study of empathy, emotion work associated with developing and cultivating rapport on informants in qualitative research activities. The empathy can cause a sense of trust and attention of participants to the researchers.

In the process of emergence, empathy can arise simply because event ever experienced by person also experienced by others. However, later in the process of empathy can also be presented to someone, espe-

cially associated with things that are positive. Rogers (1975) explained that empathy can be further developed in human beings through training and education. In 1972 in England it was held a special training to ensure teachers' attention to his so-called empathy training (Hargreaves, 1972), after which the empathy training was also growing in other countries.

In education, fostering empathy among students was very important. With empathy, the students did not just meet, socialize and interact, but they also can feel each other's feelings that led to concern among students. Feelings of empathy that appeared can also increase students' sense of belonging at school alma mater, even when they had been full of school. Coaching sensitivity required to have empathy since childhood. The earlier empathy possessed the greater the possibility of empathy grow in students. Therefore, in the schools, the cultivation of empathy can be done since the child entered school. Growing empathy from childhood can help a child's mental development.

According to Cooper (2011) fundamental empathy that can be identified in the classroom, were characteristics and meaning of communication. Both of these were part of the social interactions occurred in daily learning, and these can be divided into several sections. There are six important characters in the empathy that can be seen during the learning process, namely accepting and open, pay attention, hearing, sense of interest, to take the positives and affirmative approach, and antisiasm. The sixth was a character trait that often appeared in visible learning in students and teachers when they showed their empathy to others in the class.

In addition, empathy must be supported by good communication. If a teacher wanted to give learning empathy must master how to communicate well, which were able to show face expressions and interactions on the students, gestures of body language and movements that can touch the students' attention, as well as the use of language and tone appropriate, Both characteristics and way of communication were indispensable in teaching empathy in the classroom.

Furthermore, to be able to know how empathy raised in learning, we can see such empathy in three categories, namely the interaction of personal, focused group interaction and unfocused group interaction. On the personal interaction, empathy could be viewed of the association among students. Instead the focused group interaction and unfocused group interaction, teachers can observe students in group empathy in the classroom or in the school. For focus group interac-

tions can be addressed to a collection of more than 2 students who formed study groups, while in unfocused group interaction, empathy can be observed in students associated with other friends in school.

The construct of engagement which consisted of various scopes made this term flexible to be associated with a variety of other fields of study including empathy. The relationship engagement and empathy have a very strong relationship, especially in the construct of emotional engagement. The essence of emotional engagement was to foster a good relationship between teachers and students in learning. Students who feel the presence of the teacher in the learning will respect to the teachers so that they can establish a positive relationship. Likewise empathy was a trait that rose because of interaction of the individual with other individuals (Muniroh, 2015).

In this regard, relations with empathy emotional engagement in learning can be seen as follows. First, emotional engagement and empathy equally emphasize the psychological aspects, which wanted a deeper relationship between teachers and students, or between students. The psychological aspect was indicated by their shared feelings in the learning process. Students empathized with other students and teachers, instead of teachers also empathized with the students.

The emphasis on the psychological aspects of empathy were also delivered by Brown, 1993, Rogers, (1975), Noddings, (1986), who explained that empathy was associated with feelings of others, while the psychological aspect, engagement was emphasized by Appleton, et al (2006), Ryan & Deci (2000). Emotional engagement can be obtained from the interaction (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007), and if the interaction led in a positive direction, it can support the learning process Skinner, et al (2008).

Second, in learning the interaction between teachers and students can positively develop students' empathy. Empathy students can be seen from the students and teachers in the delivery of learning. The important characters in empathy were to accept and to open, to pay attention, to hear, to sense of interest, to take the positives and affirmative approach, and to be enthusiastic.

Third, the relationship between emotional engagement and the development of empathy was in an effort to predict the level of student achievement. As well known, one of the roles of engagement was to predict student success in learning achievement. The students who have a high degree of empathy can be predicted to have a high level of academic success as well, in-

stead of students who have low levels of empathy can be predicted to have a low academic success as well.

Hence the task of teachers in improving emotional engagement was constantly developing relationships of mutual support in learning. The positive relationships can provide learning of empathy to students. Students who initially had low empathy expected to increase empathy with the interaction of teachers and students.

METHOD

This study used a single-subject experimental design. Single-subject research design was the design used to evaluate the behavior of individuals (Alberto & Troutman, 2009). Each subject of the research served as control over himself that can be seen from the performance in before, during, and after the given intervention. The design provided an opportunity for researchers to find deeper and detail on the changes produced during the intervention.

The selected students in this study served as subject of research, when they were in intervention, as well as control participant. Researchers measured the behavior of subject at least two phases, when the intervention had not been given and when intervention was granted (Lodico, et al, 2010). The research was conducted in the class, and therefore intervention was applied in one class. However student only who had a stable low level in engagement selected to be used as subjects of the research.

This research was conducted in Islamic primary school (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) Miftahul Huda, Tengkulun, Solokuro, Lamongan. Subjects of the research were drawn from students of madrasah in third-grade. The setting of this study conducted in learning session. The data well collected twice a week according to the schedule hours of Madrasah. Each of research was conducted in classroom where the teachers acted as facilitators, and researchers acted as observer. In these observations, researchers assisted by other selected teachers. Data analysis techniques in this study used graphic visual data analysis. Analysis by reading a chart was to determine whether there appeared a change in the conditions before and after the intervention (Schult & Engel, 2012).

RESULTS

Based on identification given to the students in the madrasah, the following table showed every aspect

of engagement which consists of (a) willing to face challenges, with form of behavior of answering questions or challenge the behavior of the teacher/other students explicitly; (b) strive to reach more than required, with forms of behavior in collecting assignments before the deadline; (c) creating strategies used in problem solving, with a form of behavior expressing the idea /alternative solution when working in a group or in class; (d) have a sense of enthusiasm, with behaviors of raising their hands to ask questions or argue; (e) have a sense of pride, to shape the behavior of making arguments stated in the group or class; (f) have a sense of satisfaction, with a form of behavior of expressing smile after listening to the opinions of others; (g) have a sense of interest, with the behaviors of viewing in the direction of the teacher or friend who had opinion; (h) willing to work in teams, with behaviors of receiving help from other students; (i) have intensive participation, with behaviors of asking questions to the teacher or friend; (j) to take initiation in the classroom, with a form of behavior of expressing the idea the first time; (k) describing the behavior of concentration, with the forms of behavior of seeing and heard while noting the teacher’s explanations; (l) describing the behavior diligently, with the form of behavior of bringing textbooks and reading.

Here was presented a research subject engagement behavior the published table of the overall indicator engagement of the research subjects at baseline phase to the intervention phase as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Measurement Results of Empathy Engagement

	Baseline				Intervention			
Rate	30	31	32	31	37	51	52	56
Mean	31.0				49.0			

According to the Table 1, we saw that students had increased by 18 points. The subject of research was at a low level during the baseline phase, but when the intervention phase, the study subjects experienced an increase in level. Furthermore, we saw from the trend, in the baseline phase, the research subjects had a third direction, which is down slowly, stable, and rising slowly. Then in the intervention phase, the study subjects were on high enhancement.

DISCUSSION

Empathic Engagement of students before being treated was in the low category. It was because the

tasks given by the teacher less attracted students. Skinner, et al (2009) stated the characteristics of children who have no engagement among others are passive, procrastinating, surrendered, withdrawn, anxious, confused, uninterested, shy, bored or tired, dodge, refused. Meanwhile (Goslin (2003) revealed that the interaction between the students and the teacher can affect engagement in the learning process. Nevertheless, when students feel emotional support from teachers, academic support from friends, and encouragement of teachers to discuss the work, they adopted a strategy of self-regulation and involved in interactions associated with the task (Patrick et al, 2007).

The findings of this study indicated that: first, the application of appropriate learning can increase student's empathic engagement. Increased empathic engagement was very important to motivate students and make students feel better and get involved in their class. According to Conner (2009) the involved students enjoyed the activity in doing their job, and, they did their task as important and valuable as work.

Secondly, directing students to solve a problem in learning can improve collaboration and connectedness of students in one group or in a class. In one group, students will try to find alternative the best solution. In one class, each group will try and race to find solutions to the problems resulting in the competition proper and connectedness among all students. Furrer and Skinner (2003) emphasized the importance of this connection. A feeling of connectedness students, whether with friends, parents, or teachers played an important role in academic achievement and motivation. Smaller grouping students can improve interaction between students one with the other students, so that they can interact more intensively. Likewise with the teacher, when in small classes, teachers can make easier and actively guide to students than students in larger classes. Interaction between students and the teacher can affect engagement in the learning process (Goslin, 2003).

Third, empathy of students to their friend encouraged students to have positive behavior in class. Empathy brought a sense of compassion, respect, and camaraderie in others. Empathy also encouraged more students to share on other students. This was in accordance with the opinion of Rogers (1975) and Nodongs (1986) that human life was among other subjects. All human beings were subject to the other, not an object. Thus, students who considered their friends were students that need to be respected as well, which can prevent bullying in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that with increasing student engagement, empathy of students can be developed. With the appropriate learning, engagement of students can be enhanced to encourage the students to empathize with the other students. In this research, the teacher-student interaction and support of teachers to students were the important key in learning to develop empathy of student in the class. With emergence of empathy, students respected others and accepted differences between them, and supported each other to achieve a common goal.

Learning empathy should be able to embody the character of students include accepting and opening, paying attention, hearing, sensing of interest, taking the positives and affirmative approach, and enthusiasm. The characters were very important to be developed from an early age so that when they grow up, the students have been accustomed to face differences among communities. Therefore empathy should be through on learning in the classroom.

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