

## Character Education in Indonesia : Theory and Practise

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Abstract : The framework of this paper based on the the role of school in applying character education under various ways especially in Indonesian schools. The reality is that education today (Creswell, 2008) more emphasis on teaching, which prioritizes the material. Yet the essence of education is to humanize humans through a human process. Humans were not created in silence. So that the necessary autonomy and freedom, encounter the assumption, the balance between action and reflection (Raka, 1996). Therefore to make the changes (transformation), then education must be based on reality (social), as stated by Pearsons (1995) that changes must be made through the assumption based on the dimensions of the structure, construction and organization. Dimensional structures are among the activities with the environment is a relational relationships, meaningful relationships; particularly related to social problems. The structure of world assumptions reflected in the form of consciousness, perception of continuity of action. The structure of the world assuming the form of the symbols of consciousness and orientation to direct action. While the construction world assumption is a product of humans with their environment.

Keywords : Character Education in Indonesia

## A. Introduction

In line with the spirit of the function in education; curricula, administration and teaching, principals have been given greater opportunities to implement the various functions of their three roles. The first role is that teachers provide some materials to their students. To carry out this role successfully, they have to be first, technically capable. The second role is to provide administration. And the third role is how to transfer some materials and to manage in implementing character education in school.

Character education should become a regular part of education in the Indonesia for three major reasons: the social realities of Indonesian schools society, the influence of culture and ethnicity on human growth and development, and the conditions of effective teaching and learning. These reasons explain not only the need for character education, but also what its content emphasis should be and how it should be taught. Each reason plays an important and unique role in establishing the justifications, parameters, and directions for character education.

Assumptions from Solomon (1989) character education is should be synonymous with educational innovation and reform. Classroom interaction between teachers and students constitutes the major part of the educational process for most students.

## B. Character Education In Indonesia

Since its earliest conceptualizations in the 1930s, character education has been transformed, refocused, reconceptualized, and in a constant state of evolution both in theory and in practice. It is rare that any two classroom teachers or education scholars will have the same definition for character education. As with any dialogue on education, individuals tend to mold concepts to fit their particular focus. Some discuss character education as a shift in curriculum, perhaps as simple as adding new and diverse materials and perspectives to be more inclusive of traditionally underrepresented groups. Others talk about classroom climate issues or teaching styles that serve certain groups while presenting barriers for others. Still others focus on institutional and systemic issues such as tracking, standardized testing, or funding discrepancies. Some go farther still, insisting on education change as part of a larger

societal transformation in which we more closely explore and criticize the oppressive foundations of society and how education serves to maintain the status quo -- foundations such as white supremacy, capitalism, global socioeconomic situations, and exploitation. Despite a multitude of differing conceptualizations of character education (some of which will be laid out more fully below), several shared ideals provide a basis for its understanding. While some focus on individual students or teachers, and others are much more "macro" in scope, these ideals are all, at their roots, about transformation:

- Every student must have an equal opportunity to achieve to her or his full potential.
- Education must become more fully student-centered and inclusive of the voices and experiences of the students.
- Educators, activists, and others must take a more active role in reexamining all educational practices and how they affect the learning of all students: testing methods, teaching approaches, evaluation and assessment, school psychology and counseling, educational materials and textbooks, etc.

Every child comes to school with an ethnic identity whether these identifications are conscious or unconscious. This identification must be recognized and respected by the teacher. It must be the basis for the learning activities in the classroom. The point here is to acknowledge differences rather than ignore them. It is equally critical that the children recognize and appreciate their own ethnicity and learn to appreciate those of the other children in the class. This recognition of individual ethnic identities is the beginning point, it is a connector of both the teacher to the student and the students to each other. It is the basic building block in the learning process which requires knowing where the child is relative to him/herself and the content to be addressed. This ethnic identification is a continual point of focus throughout the education process and is the basis for developing the next level of identification which is a national identification. The national identity of the individual requires his/her understanding and commitment to the democratic ideals such as human dignity, justice and equality. Here the focus is on becoming effective members of a democratic society. An individual's strong national identification is essential to his/her development of a global identity. As our society becomes more and more dependent on other societies, it is critical that the schools address the problems of the world as a whole. The development of the global identification provides the students with the opportunity to see

how as a nation we fit into the world society. It allows students to better understand that the actions of a nation must not only be viewed in terms of the implications for that nation but what are the effects on the whole world. Children who have developed both a strong ethnic and national identity should have the perspective to also develop a global identification which should in turn make them better citizens of the world community. At this point in time it is important to realize that the identifications discussed above are hierarchical. In other words the curriculum and the learning needs to proceed by first recognizing the ethnic identity, then the national and finally the global. The development of the latter are dependent upon the development of the former. It is also important that the individual identities are not static but continually evolving and so it is important for the curriculum to emphasize all three types of identities as learning progresses.

Successful life, one not solely determined by academic ability, but many factors that influence it. David suggests that a person's performance is strongly influenced by the ability and skills and the drive and attitude. Various factors beyond the academic often called soft skills. Baron and Markham as told by Rev. Widhiarso (2009) found that individual skills in managing emotions and decision support effective coping. So did Jordan et al. in his research found that individuals with low intelligence are less visible perform when working in a team. According to him it is visible from the inability to adapt, to read social situations and managing the tension teams. Based on the results of these studies it is clear that that needs to be developed not only limited to the academic ability but also the non-academic, ie the ability to be able to understand each other. This capability is often referred to as soft skills. According to Revelation Widhiarso (2009) Projects Are soft skills set of capabilities that influence how we interact with others. Further said that soft skills include effective communication, critical and creative thinking, team building and other capabilities related to the capacity of individual personality.

The results Sudiyono, et al. (2003) committed against a school teacher in coaching behaviors and social skills suggests that social skills are developed by teachers is an ability to work, empathy, mutual respect, express their opinions and care about the social situation. The next conclusion is that the pattern of development of social skills through intra and extra curricular activities and social care activities.

The pattern of development of social skills through activities conducted in a way designed intrakurikuler through the topics or materials, assignments and discussions, while coaching is not designed that is a good example of that done by the teachers themselves to the students in the classroom as well as examples of explanations of cases or events that occur in the classroom and in the form of assignment for the picket. The pattern of development of social skills through extra-curricular activities conducted through the ceremony, scouts and students lightning. While the pattern of development of social skills through social care carried out by visiting takziah, syawalan and visiting friends or family who are sick. The results Sudyono, et al (2009) conducted on the art of dance students to demonstrate improvement in soft skills through focused discussion method. The results Yuliani Conscience (2003) showed that the learning model awareness training can improve emotional development. On the basis of various research results, the selected learning model fitting awareness training to actualize the basic values in character education.

Effective is the lecture is the lecture that is packed with good attention to the development of various aspects of the understanding, motivation, innovation, creativity, independence, and democratic attitudes.

Based on the various proposals diverse group seminars, character education Formulating Team in Yogyakarta State University, UNY (Darmiyati Zuchdi, et al. 2009) concluded that the basic values of character education that need to be developed in character education are devout worship, honest, responsible, disciplined, have a work ethic, independent, synergistic, critical, creative and innovative, visionary, compassion and caring, sincere, fair, simple, nationalism, internationalism. In other words, classes should be designed to actualize or manifest the soft skills. Lectures should be designed to be an active lecture, which is active lecturers act as facilitators in helping students and students themselves are also active to develop her potential. One possible model of learning that can actualize the fundamental values of character education is through learning model awareness training (awareness training). Through this method, according to Milliam Schult (in Yulianai Conscience, 2003) there are 4 types of development needed to realize the full potential of individuals, namely a) the functions of the body; b) personnel functions including the acquisition of knowledge and experience, ability to think logically and creatively and intellectual integration; c) interpersonal development, and d) individual relationships with social institutions, social organizations and cultural societies. Therefore the purpose of this

research is to increase self-understanding and awareness of one's own behavior and the behavior of others so as to help students develop personal and social development.

In this regard Freire (1985) suggested that the concept of a style of education facing the problem (problematic) will be able to bring progress compared with purely educational practice recall (repeat). Such a concept of education toward self-realization. This can be done through dialogue. In this context it will happen *penyadaraan* between educators with the educated to the reality. Therefore, Freire (1985) suggests:

1. Education based on reality, not distort or even hide the reality
2. To uncover the reality of dialogue is needed.
3. Students as subjects, so that they become critical thinkers.
4. Prioritize reflection and action.
5. The human essence is the process of becoming, not perfect, and aware of the imperfections.
6. present, so it tends to revolutionary
7. Revolutionary against the future.
8. solidarity.
9. Distancing fatalistic nature.
10. Distancing authoritarianism.

The reality is that education today by Illich, 1982 (Creswell, 2008) more emphasis on teaching, which prioritizes the material. Yet the essence of education is to humanize humans through a human process. Humans were not created in silence. So that the necessary autonomy and freedom (Wayne, 1995), encounter the assumption, the balance between action and reflection (Raka, 1996). Therefore to make the changes (transformation), then education must be based on reality (social), as stated by Pearsons (1995) that changes must be made through the assumption based on the dimensions of the structure, construction and organization. Dimensional structures are among the activities with the environment is a relational relationships, meaningful relationships; particularly related to social problems. The structure of world assumptions reflected in the form of consciousness, perception of continuity of action. The structure of the world assuming the form of the symbols of consciousness and orientation to direct action. While the construction world assumption is a

product of humans with their environment. According to Young (Pearsons, 1995) human interaction with the world created a social reality, as a deep concretization. Human interaction is important to find the objectivity of the world. Objectivity built man who produces the real world. Society is an objective reality. Every new person in the process of being human must understand the real social world. On the dimension of the organization, placing confidence and interrelated in a hierarchical structure, depicted symbolically and ideologically regulated in the real world.

While it is important to develop a deeper understanding of the various models of multicultural and character education and where these points fit into them:

1. The Schoolwide Considerations section provides information on multicultural and character benchmarks and characteristics of a multicultural and character school.
2. The Studying Ethnic and Cultural Groups provides information to guide the study of cultural groups.
3. The Curriculum Considerations section provides information on actual lesson plans and units, approaches to multicultural and character education, a multicultural and character calendar, multicultural and character planning questions, cooperative learning, multicultural and character goals and strategies, evaluating children's books for bias, and cultural responsiveness.
4. The Using Media to Support Multicultural and characterism section provides information on evaluating media for bias, activities to promote understanding of stereotypes in the media, video stores that offer free rentals, and lists of movies that portray various cultural and ethnic groups.
5. The Resources section provides direction on where to go to find more information about multicultural and character education and related topics.
6. The Evaluation section provides information on both program assessment and self-evaluation of one's own culture.
7. The Build a Case Study section is a tool used for analyzing teaching strategies with a multicultural and character perspective based on the characteristics of a specific classroom.

8. The Watch a Video with Probing Questions section is a guide for viewing videos with pre-viewing and post-viewing questions. This allows the viewer to focus and reflect on multicultural and character issues in the classroom.

What would real Multicultural & Character Education Management look like?

Multicultural and character education must have, as its crux, the below defining characteristics to achieve its purposes for students, teachers, parents, and administrators of the school system: a) a learning environment that supports positive interracial contact; b) a multicultural and character curriculum; c) positive teacher expectations; d) administrative support; and, e) teacher training workshops. If one of the features is absent, frustration and heightened resentment may occur as backlash behaviors multiply. The effects of a positive multicultural and character climate may manifest in a number of ways, such as: a) diminished pockets of segregation among student body; b) less racial tension in the schools; c) increased ethnic minority retention and classroom performance; and, d) inclusion of a multicultural and character curriculum. In short, the multicultural and character educational environment should not be a microcosm of our present American society, with regard to issues of diversity and tolerance. Many factors determine a successful multicultural and character atmosphere, but the features as outlined above may be important indications of success. Administrative support for multicultural and character education is critical. How can a house stand if the foundation is fragile. Multicultural and character education will be as successful as commitment to it by school administrators. Regardless of the level of commitment (local, state, and/or national), programs initiated under the guise of multicultural and characterism must receive reinforcement from administrators who are accountable for the success of established multicultural and character initiatives. A key factor in any proposed multicultural and character initiative is curriculum development. A multicultural and character curriculum should be considered for several reasons: a) provides alternative points of view relative to information already taught in most educational systems; b) provides ethnic minorities with a sense of being inclusive in history, science etc.; and, c) decreases stereotypes, prejudice, bigotry, and racism in America and the world. A significant demographic transformation is on the horizon for American schools. Educational institutions have been dictated too long by attitudes, values, beliefs, and value systems of one race and class of people. The future of our universe is demanding a positive change for all

## What Approaches to Multicultural & Character Education

Advocates of multicultural and character education offer many different suggestions for how it can be accomplished in school practice. Christine Bennett, James Banks, Ricardo Garcia, Sonia Nieto, Geneva Gay, Christine Sleeter, Carl Grant, and Margaret Gibson are among the leaders in the field who have developed models for implementing multicultural and character education. These models tend to be developmental and cumulative, as well as somewhat historical in nature. They start with the simplest techniques and proceed to more complex ones. They also tend to indicate how current efforts to implement multicultural and character education have evolved from those that appeared when the movement began in the late 1960s. For example, (Herbert 1993) identifies four approaches to multicultural and character education, each increasingly more significant and comprehensive: (1) teaching about contributions of culturally different groups and individuals; (2) an additive approach in which multicultural and character lessons and units of study are supplements or appendages to existing curricula; (3) a transformation approach in which the basic nature of curriculum and instruction are changed to reflect the perspective and experiences of diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, and social groups; and (4) a decisionmaking and social action approach that teaches students how to clarify their ethnic and cultural values, and to engage in socio political action for greater equality, freedom, and justice for everyone.

Sleeter and Grant reviewed the published literature on multicultural and character education to determine how the field was being conceptualized. Their analysis generated four common approaches: (1) teaching culturally different students to fit into mainstream society; (2) a human relations approach that emphasizes diverse peoples living together harmoniously; (3) the single group studies approach, which concentrates on developing awareness, respect, and acceptance of one group at a time; (4) focusing on prejudice reduction, providing equal opportunities and social justice for all groups, and the effects of inequitable power distribution on ethnic or cultural groups. To this list they added a fifth: education that is multicultural and character and social reconstructionist and teaches students to become analytical and critical thinkers and social reformers who are committed to redistribution of power and other resources among diverse groups.

Since other proposed approaches to multicultural and character education are variations on these suggestions by Banks and Grant and Sleeter, there is no need to elaborate upon them

here. However, three general approaches can be extrapolated from these more specific approaches: (1) teaching content about cultural pluralism, (2) teaching culturally different students, and (3) using cultural pluralism to teach other academic subjects and intellectual skills. Teaching about cultural pluralism is the most traditional and common approach. It is primarily contentcentered, with an emphasis on developing units of instruction (lessons, modules, courses) about the history, heritage, contributions, and social issues of ethnic groups. These units may be designed to be included in any school subject, but most often appear in social studies, language arts, and fine arts. Another manifestation of this approach is analyzing textbooks and other instructional materials for their treatment of people of color and revising them when necessary to increase their accuracy and overall representation of cultural diversity. Regardless of the particular strategy used, teaching about cultural diversity tends to concentrate on providing more factually correct information about ethnic and cultural groups that traditionally have been underrepresented in U.S. society and educational programs or have been treated with prejudice and bias.

Teaching the culturally different is more processoriented than contentoriented. Its center of attention is establishing more effective instructional relationships and rapport with students from different ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds as a basis for improving educational opportunities and outcomes. Teachers, administrators, counselors, and supervisors learn about the cultural values and experiences of different cultural groups to determine how they may affect attitudes and actions in teachinglearning situations. The new insights gained are then used to determine the kinds of changes that are needed in the educational process to make learning opportunities for ethnically different students more comparable in kind and quality to their middleclass, Anglo counterparts.

The underlying premise of this approach to multicultural and character education is that an interactive relationship exists between culture and cognition, education and ethnicity, and teaching learning styles and cultural conditioning. The extent to which these concepts are made explicit in educational decision making has a significant impact on culturally different students' access to equal status knowledge. Whereas teaching about cultural pluralism emphasizes materials development and curriculum design, teaching the culturally different gives priority to teacher education, staff development, and classroom instruction. The idea behind it is that if the attitudes, values, and knowledge teachers have about culturally different students are improved, then the decisions they make and actions they take in planning and

implementing programs will reflect these changes. That is, teachers will be able to provide more culturally relevant instruction for students from different ethnic, racial, and social backgrounds.

The third approach to multicultural and character education combines content and process, and is often referred to as infusion. In practice, it means using culturally pluralistic content, experiences, and perspectives in teaching other knowledge and skills. Ethnic and cultural materials provide the contexts for students to practice and demonstrate mastery of more general academic and subject matter skills. For example, ethnic novels, poetry, stories, and folklore are used in the process of teaching various reading skills, such as comprehension, vocabulary, and inferring meaning. Patterns of ethnic migration and settlement might be used to teach geographic directions and locations. Ethnic and gender employment trends could be used for students to practice and demonstrate such mathematical skills as ratio, percentages, proportions, and probabilities. Critical thinking, problem solving, and values analysis skills might be developed as students examine issues, events, and situations particularly germane to the historical and contemporary experiences of different groups of color and social class in the United States, such as their images and portrayals in mass media, affirmative action, economic exploitation, and political oppression. Additionally, the knowledge that teachers and other school leaders acquire about how cultural conditioning affects behavior in learning situations is employed in making decisions about what instructional strategies, performance appraisal, curricular materials, needs assessment, and learning climates are most appropriate to maximize the educational opportunities of culturally different students.

Using cultural pluralism in all teaching and learning activities as a way to implement multicultural and character education is based on four major premises: (1) using diversified means to achieve common learning outcomes is the best way to give culturally different students an equal chance at comparable quality educational opportunities; (2) cultural diversity is a characteristic trait of American society, and since a major function of schooling is socialization into the national culture, ethnic and cultural pluralism should be a core element of the educational process; (3) it is more pedagogically sound for the study of cultural pluralism to permeate all dimensions of the educational process, rather than being taught as a separate and isolated entity; and (4) effective multicultural and character education requires comprehensive efforts that integrate attitudes, values, content, and actions and involve all aspects of the education system simultaneously.

## Conclusion

Advocates agree on some common features of multicultural and character education. These features provide the conceptual directions and parameters of reform initiatives for implementation of multicultural and character education in school practice. Effective multicultural and character education (1) requires total school reform; (2) is for all students in all grades and subjects; (3) involves acquiring knowledge, clarifying attitudes and values, and developing social actions and skills about ethnic and cultural pluralism; and (4) includes recognizing, accepting, and celebrating diversity as a fundamental fact and salient feature in human life, society, and world communities.

These conditions are necessary if schools are to prepare all students for the realities of living in a racially, ethnically, socially, and culturally pluralistic world, and to become change agents to transform society so that it will be more humane, egalitarian, and openly receptive to pluralism of all kinds. In content, spirit, intent, and emphasis, multicultural and character education is highly compatible with the democratic ideals of the United States, principles of good pedagogy, and conceptions of educational equity. It has both intrinsic and instrumental value for improving the overall quality, relevance, and effectiveness of education in the United States for all students.

The following are more specific instructional messages gleaned from this synthesis for multicultural and character education summarized above:

- Efforts undertaken to implement multicultural and character education should be developmentally appropriate for the teachers, students, subjects, and school community contexts.
- Multiple techniques are required to make multicultural and character education effective.
- Both the content and processes of education should be changed to reflect cultural diversity.
- Efforts for change need to be targeted for specific dimensions of the educational enterprise and guided by deliberate and intentional purposes and activities.

- Students and teachers should be allowed to engage in the process of reform at multiple levels and in various ways.
- Cooperative learning efforts that engage culturally diverse students in equal status interactions and relationships should be a common feature of reform initiatives.
- Teaching styles should be modified to incorporate sensitivity to a wider variety of learning styles.
- Diverse formats of classroom organizations and activity structures should be frequently used to allow for variability, active participation, and novelty in learning.
- A conceptual orientation to multicultural and character education should be selected or developed to use as a guideline for determining appropriate action strategies and as a yardstick to determine progress.

Much remains to be done before the promise and potential of multicultural and character education are fully realized. Its theoretical conceptualization is progressing nicely. School practice and establishing the effects of multicultural and character education are not nearly as advanced. Both of these steps offer numerous challenges and opportunities for committed education to make a difference. Many action and research possibilities are embedded in the theory of multicultural and character education.

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