

Using Textbook Illustration as Media for Developing Character among Primary Students: Some Research-based Suggestion

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ABSTRACT

Character building is usually being applied in everyday life at school and at home. It is expected that the character education is not only derived only from the teacher but also will be more attractive when it is included into the textbooks. In this literature study, the data were collected by analysing some research papers which relate to primary students' visual knowledge and character building theory. The results show that character buildings could be included in the illustrations in elementary school textbooks using the students' interest in illustrations. The illustration is drawn in the form of an overview of the positive values which touch children's affective aspects. Hopefully, by cultivating the positive values, it will gradually form good character of the primary students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

First president of Indonesia, Ir. Soekarno, ever said that Indonesia has to be built by preceding the character building because this can make Indonesian becoming a big, advanced and victorious also dignified nation. If this character building failed, Indonesia could become a heaver nation [1]

Character as mentioned by Cronbach (1977), is not an entity which eparate habits and ideas. Character is the aspect of behaviour, believe, feeling, and action which are interrelated one another so that if someone wants to change certain characters, they need to reorganize their basic characters elements which are knowing good thing (moral knowing), possess interest toward good things (moral feeling) and do good actions (moral action) [2].

Character education definitions of as an effort to educate children to make wise decisions and practice them in everyday life so that they can contribute positively to their environment. Character values that need to be imparted to children are universal values in which all religions, traditions, and cultures undoubtedly uphold those values. Universal values must be a glue for all members of different societies of ethnic and religious background [3].

The character is one of an important pillar in the life of the nation. It makes character education has become a central issue at the level of education discussion. The government through the National Education Ministry made seriously this issue as a priority [4]. In the Indonesia National Curriculum Center for the Development and Education of Culture and Character: School Guideline [5] formulated 18 values of the nation's character formers originating from religion, Pancasila, culture, and national education objectives, namely: (1) Religious, (2) Honest, (3) Tolerance, (4) Discipline, (5) Hard work, (6) Creative, (7) Self, (8) Democratic, (9) Want To Know, (10) (13) Friendly/Communicative, (14) Love of Peace, (15) Reading Fond,

(16) Caring for the Environment, (17) Caring for Social Care, (18) Responsibility. Eighteen elements of character education can be a reference in developing character for primary schools.

Developing Character is needed to be implanted and cultivated to young generation because this generation is the owner and the agent of change of the nation [2]. The young generation is started in primary school children which is started at 7 to 11 years old. Primary school children in Piaget's theory belong to the Concrete Operational Stage. In this stage, the child is able to think logically in which their thoughts concretely and specifically applied. In Piaget Theory, another feature of concrete operational thinking is the ability to classify and understand the relationships between things [6]. Although elementary school-aged children do not yet think like adults, they still see the world as it is and find difficulties when it comes to abstract thinking. Children at this stage can make concepts, see relationships, and solve familiar problems [7].

Another psychologist's opinion about image imaging (pictorial imagery) in children, namely how the child describes an object (human or object). Werner [8] argues that the child is still in the primitive stage of experience that is still in concrete thinking and has not reached a purely conceptual stage. While the dominant children have eidetic imaging (something that looks) or photographic memory is also called, namely: single-minded but detailed. Werner [8] also argues that children have a physiognomic perception which is a way of perceiving that the world has a soul or feeling. In physiognomic perception, there is an emotion in the rocks, wooden branches, cups and other soulless objects. Unlike children, they understand the environment is full of life and movement. They understand the world as naturally and passionately as what they feel in themselves. The illustrations understanding between primary students are different from the visualizer for children books. Primary school children (7-11 years old) are still concrete. It means what they see is true [6]. Understanding the images in the textbooks, the child will interpret the images as they are. The details of the images in the book will also be captured as pieces not a whole.

Primary school children are constantly encouraged to produce images and illustrate their written work. Whereas texts produced for early years of schooling are richly illustrated [9]. The existence of illustrative images in textbooks will be more meaningful and valuable when placed in the primary school level of the early grades [10]. This is due to the limited quality of individual psychic development in terms of abstract thinking ability. The children in primary school demand the simplest, practical, easy-to-make colourful image of visual message [11]. A number of recent studies have consistently showed that primary school children prefer colourful images to black and white, choosing photos rather than pictures, and selecting realism images.

The purpose of this paper is to summarize and synthesize some researchers to make suggestion that the character education is not only derived only from the teacher but also will be more attractive when it is included in the textbooks.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Research approach implemented here was literature method which was based on the printed data. Printed data was collected from journals, and books, another data was collected from the internet. Furthermore, the documentary materials were analysed by using content analysis [12]. In this literature study, the data were collected by analysing some research papers which are related to primary students' visual knowledge and character developing theory.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

One of the implementations of the National Education Act is the school curriculum. In preparing the curriculum, learning resources and media that are needed and available should be taken into consideration so that the so that students are able to gain a real, meaningful, extensive and profound learning experience. Learning resources are materials that can be used and needed to help teachers and students in the learning process. Learning resources can be textbooks, printed media, electronic media, resource persons, natural environment, and so forth that can increase the level of activity in the learning process. Learning resources are selected based on competence, learning materials, learning activities and indicators of achievement of basic competencies. The use of appropriate learning resources will support the effectiveness of the learning process [13].

In education, the concept of communication considers teachers, books, and modules as the source of information and students as the receiver. In addition, media can be used to fulfil the learning needs since media are considered as vehicle to convey information (messages) [14]. The Dale cone is the elaboration of learning media from the most concrete (experience) to the most abstract (words symbol). The highest abstract

media level is words and the lower level is symbols such as charts, graphs or words. When the visual symbol is added to the media, the level will take higher place and becomes more concrete [15].

The illustration is the art of the image that is used to give a visual explanation of a meaning or purpose. The form of illustrations can be: sketch, painting, graphic, design and cartoon [16]. Book illustration plays an important role in the delivery of material so that students can concrete the abstract words into learning materials. The primary school textbooks also display illustrations to support the subject matter or material. Illustrations consist of images that are created to reflect the narrative that exists in the text or the image which is used as the text itself [16].

An illustrative image is an image presented with text, as part of or companion for text, either to add text appeal or to clarify the text's intention. Illustrations basically help to interpret the text, or at least attempt to liven the text through visual imagery [17].

Illustration images provide clues that show verbal information to be more concretely accepted. When images are included in textbooks, they can help students to learn to organize information and clarify complex concepts. If the image is integrated with the words, images help students' understanding ability. The images make the words that appear in the text become more meaningful to the learners. In order to improve the effectiveness of learners' quality, the use of illustration in textbooks should consider several factors, among them is the purpose of learning in the applied level [10].

In addition to serving as a drawer of attention in the teaching and learning process through the illustration [11], illustration can also provide aspects of affection [10]. Primary school teachers defined the character education as moral values necessary to be taught to individuals and behaviours for their personality development [18]. One of the concept of character education is character is not taught but it is a habitual formation for example internalizing values, choosing good choice, doing them as habits, and providing examples [19]. Providing examples can come in many ways, one of them is through illustration drawing.

Lawrence Kohlberg, one of the psychologists who concerned about moral development divided a child's moral development to six stages. Primary school children are in the first stage where they consider compliance and punishment are authority-oriented [8]. As one of the authorities, school may influence the child's moral thinking. Therefore, the school should provide the positive examples both in reality (behaviour) and in the media used in the learning process (textbook).

Educational institution to not only pay attention to the needs of the academic competence of students, but also the character development [19]. The goals of character developing are thus essentially the goals of raising good children who understand, care about, and act upon the core ethical values (such as diligence, compassion, integrity, and fairness) that make for a productive, just, and democratic society [20]. Developing Character through illustration in primary School textbooks needs to consider the cognitive and moral development aspects of primary school children so that the textbooks can be understood. The cognitive aspect is needed to be focused on in this stage since the primary students are still thinking concretely [6]. It means that what they see are true. The scope that can be caught by the children is still limited. What they know are what exist in their environment only [7]. In this stage children consider as imitation of the adult. They will copy what they see and hear [21]. While the moral thinking which is needed to be considered is the child-oriented authority or existing power [7] is known, in this case the parents (family) and teachers (school) are people who have the power so that in providing moral building the child will see these figures.

Textbooks are print-based source of learning [15] which are constructed as education tools [22]. The textbook which is one of the instructional media used by the teacher in describing the subject matter in the classroom becomes one of the school's manifestations or authority (power). Therefore, the child will believe, obey and comply to what is said in the book through the explanation of his teacher. Thus, textbook can be a medium for shaping the moral thinking of children through school. Not infrequently the textbook brought home to be studied with parents. This makes the position of textbooks in the education of moral thinking to be wider not only in school but also at home. At home, even parents as the authority to provide assistance when the child has difficulty in learning with the textbook.

Textbook as the tool of intellectual activity can be formed as self education to help the development of primary student. Reading should be educated or, more precisely, to be an active component of education [23], in this case education in developing primary student character. Textbooks as learning media should be able to generate new desires and interests, generate motivation and stimulation of learning activities [15], and affect students psychologically, as well as help students improving their understanding. The textbook is not interesting if it is just writing without being embellished with illustrations [11]. Hence, school textbook comparison can even become a student activity rather than an exclusively academic undertaking [22].

Illustration in textbooks that are one of the application of visual art which has a main function as an explanation of the learning material. The displayed image will not be separated from the material presented. For the children, these visuals would be more interesting and desirable than writings [8].

Manifesting the interest of primary school children with illustrative pictures in the character developing textbook can be included visually into the pictures. Therefore, through the illustrations in the textbooks, positive values which may touch the children's affective aspects can be provided [20]. Through the cultivation of these moral values, it is expected that the children's character can be built slowly.

4. CONCLUSION

Besides being applied in real life, in school, and at home, character building can be included in the illustrations in the elementary school textbooks. Hopefully, by doing so, the character building is not only done by teachers but also by interesting textbooks. This can make elementary school children are guided to behave based on the character education at school and textbooks.

The illustrations shown should be adjusted to the character of elementary school children by considering the level of children's understanding considering their character who are still thinking concretely. The pictures shown are the realisms of the reality around them so that the illustration textbooks used to build the children's character are the manifestation of their real experience and people around them. In addition, the characters played should also give positive examples

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