

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ON DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CHARACTER THROUGH STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING IN TOTTO-CHAN: THE LITTLE GIRL AT THE WINDOW NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

Many people consider that school has become an important place to achieve education. School has outcomes not only on children's educational achievement, but also on their achievement of literacy, numeracy, scientific knowledge and character.

The objectives of the study were as follows: (1) to find out the school's role on developing students' character, and (2) to analyse the school on developing students' character through the student centered learning in the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at The Window* by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. This research method was descriptive qualitative research, which utilised content analysis on the novel. The subject of the study was the novel. The technique of collecting data was by selecting the novel, reading the novel primarily, identifying the data connected to the research and remarking the important information written in the novel.

The findings of the research were as follows: (1) Five data were collected as the samples of the role of school on developing Tomoe Gakuen students character. (2) Five other data were also composed on how the school develops students' character through student centered learning. Through this paper, the researcher expects that it can provide broader information about student centered learning to the readers.

Keywords: School, development, character, students' character, student centered learning

INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential thing for every person. Everyone who achieves education can have more knowledge and benefits for their future as they learn many things from education. Generally, educational process is divided into 3 environments, such as family, society and school.

One of the 3 environments is school. Many people consider that school has become the important place to achieve education, alongside achieving it through family and society. As a place to teach and guide students in certain range of ages, especially at the range age of children, school can bring many knowledge and experience to someone from the early age. It is a common place

for teachers and students to share and give educational benefit through teaching-learning activities. Schooling has direct effects on children's educational achievement, their acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and scientific knowledge (Sylva, 1994). There is an idea that the school existence is a prominent factor on producing students to become good citizens. It has become a place where policy, curriculum orientations, expectations and education philosophies are created to perform a formal education procedure and requirement. Formal educational requirements, precisely through school, are the key to students' entry into higher education or training and also employment. The learning of specific knowledge and skills is a direct effect of classroom teaching (Good & Brophy, 1986b).

A student is a learner, or someone who attends an educational institution, in this case is school. Many people believe that a good student is a manifestation of a school institution. Therefore, a school influence including the atmosphere within, its teachers and facility can develop students' character to create a satisfactory educational achievement. Although their designs have been criticized in terms of scope and methodology (Raudenbusch, 1989) the truth that the schools have taken place in some different countries, with children in primary school, and on children from a wide range of social backgrounds all

give support and wield a strong influence on students' development. School characteristics influence their pupils' attitudes to school, as measured in attendance and also their feelings about classes and subjects (Tizard, Blatchford, Burke, Farquhar & Plewis, 1988).

The novel "Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window" shows a good role school's in managing the students' activities. Tomoe Gakuen, the school as a place where the background of the novel's story takes, has a unique teaching-learning procedure. Every student, including the main character of the novel: Totto-chan, is offered by a liberating yet educating program and learning strategy. It has a different class management as well as attractive classroom as every student can choose their own desks to sit and the class room itself is a railway wagon. Furthermore, the school is managed by a kind and wise headmaster who implants educational lesson not only inside the classrooms, but also outside the classroom. The teachers are also supportive on implementing the smart school's way on sharing knowledge and learning substance to students, such as giving students a question for subject they want to learn first and giving students a chance to do something at school based on what they think is good. Furthermore, the subjects they teach to students are transferred based on students' preference and choice as definitely reflected on students centered learning strategy. All

students do and learn everything at school in lively way because of what school offers to them.

The objectives of the study are as follows: to find out the school's role on developing students' character, and to analyze the school on developing students' character through student centered learning.

The unique ways of Tomoe Gakuen on giving educational lessons and experience are attracting me to choose the topic of the paper. The novel gives me many inspirations about creating good teaching atmosphere at school institutions. It also gives a wider idea on applying a student centered learning strategy for students. For the reasons mentioned before, those become the significances to conduct a research entitled "The Role of School on Developing Students' Character through Student Centered Learning in Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at the Window Novel".

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method was descriptive qualitative research, which utilised content analysis on the novel. A qualitative research deals with a kind of research which doesn't use statistic procedures in analyzing data (Moleong, 2003: 3)

The subjects of the study are the researcher and the novel Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at The Window by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi.

The instrument of the research is the novel. The researcher intends to discover the school's role on developing students' character and how the school manages to develop students' character through student centered learning.

The technique of collecting data that is utilized by the researcher is by doing as follows: selecting the source of research in which the novel of Tetsuko Kuroyanagi is used, reading the novel primarily, identifying the data connected to the research and remarking the important information written in the novel.

The technique of analyzing data is as follows: the researcher prepares the data for being analyzed, collects relevant references for the novel analysis, presents the findings, interprets the findings, and making conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the novel, the researcher categorized it into two parts based on the objectives of the study as follows: the role of school on developing students' character, and how the school develops students' character through student centered learning.

The Role of School on Developing Students' Character

There are five roles of school on developing the student's character.

Going to school in a railroad car seemed unusual enough, but the seating

arrangements turned out to be unusual, too. At the other school each pupil was assigned a specific desk. But here they were allowed to sit anywhere they liked at any time (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 16).

The first data showed that the students have freedom to choose wherever they like to sit by the school. It means that the school implants the learning of freedom of choice to the students and thus the students can also respect to the choices of their classmates.

The pile was a real mountain by now and the tank was almost empty, but there was still no sign of the purse. Maybe it had stuck to the rim of the tank or to the bottom. But Totto-chan didn't care. She was satisfied she had done all she could. Totto-chan's satisfaction was undoubtedly due in part to the self-respect the headmaster made her feel by not scolding her and by trusting her. But that was too complicated for Tottochan to realize then. Most adults, on discovering Totto-chan in such a situation, would have reacted by exclaiming, "What on earth are you doing!" or "Stop that, it's dangerous!" or, alternatively, offering to help. Imagine just saying, "You'll put it all back when you've finished, won't you? " What a marvelous headmaster, thought Mother when she heard the story from Totto-chan (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 26).

On the second data, it is explained that the headmaster as the embodiment of the school chose to give

his student a trust to take care of the mess she made. In this case, it would guide students to be responsible to take care of the mistake they did without judging or scolding them.

Japanese children are usually taught at home not to talk at mealtimes. But as a result of his experience abroad, the headmaster used to encourage his pupils to take plenty of time over their meals and enjoy conversation... .."You needn't worry about trying to be a good speaker," he said. "And you can talk about anything you like. You can talk about things you'd like to do. Anything. At any rate, let's give it a try" (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 58).

On the third data, it is defined that the headmaster encourages the students to express their ideas clearly and freely whenever they want to speak.

Totto-chan and her friends learned lots of things about America. Japan and America were becoming friends at Tomoe. But outside Tomoe, America had become an enemy, and since English had become an enemy language, it was dropped from the curriculum of all the schools. "Americans are devils," the government announced. But at Tomoe the children kept chanting in chorus, "Utsukushii is beautiful." And the breezes that blew across Tomoe were soft and warm, and the children themselves were beautiful (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 107).

The researcher can interpret the fourth data that the school teaches the students to put a respect on everyone no matter what background or country the people come from.

Unlike camping inside the school and the Bravery Test, the three-day stay at Toi Spa was a real-life experience. For example, they were sent in turns to buy vegetables and fish for dinner, and when strangers asked them what school they went to and where they were from, they had to answer politely. Some of the children nearly got lost in the woods. Others swam so far they couldn't get back and had everyone worried. Others cut their feet on broken glass on the beach. In each case everyone had to do their best to help (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 36).

On the last data about the role of school on developing the students' character, it can be concluded that the school teaches them to be cooperative on doing their tasks. The school also introduces them to develop their skill in the society, such as going for shopping and communicating with strangers.

How the School Develops Students' Character through Student Centered Learning

There are five findings on how the school develop students' character through student centered learning.

"How funny," thought Totto-chan. I wonder what he means by 'something

from the ocean and something from the hills.' This school was different. It was fun. She never thought lunch at school could be as much fun as this. The thought that tomorrow she would be sitting at one of those desks, showing the headmaster her lunch with "something from the ocean and something from the hills" made Totto-chan so happy she wanted to jump for joy. (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 12).

The first data shows that the headmaster gives a description about food that the students have to bring and eat at school without limiting the interpretation of the students. It gives autonomy for the students to choose what they imagine from the context.

Schools normally schedule one subject, for example, Japanese, the first period, when you just do Japanese; then, say, arithmetic the second period, when you just do arithmetic. But here it was quite different. At the beginning of the first period, the teacher made a list of all the problems and questions in the subjects to be studied that day. Then she would say, "Now, start with any of these you like" (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 16).

On the second data obtained, it can be interpreted that the school guides the children to enlist the problems and gives freedom to the students to ask about the lesson that they had before. It indicates the using of student centered

learning with focus on what the students need.

After they had walked for about ten minutes, the teacher stopped. She pointed to some yellow flowers, and said, "Look at these mustard flowers. Do you know why flowers bloom?" She explained about pistils and stamens while the children crouched by the road and examined the flowers. The teacher told them how butterflies helped flowers bloom. And, indeed, the butterflies seemed very busy helping (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 21).

The understanding of the third data is that the school contributes to the nature learning for the students. It encourages the students to do the observation on the learning object, while the teacher guides them.

"This is your library," the headmaster said. "Any of these books may be read by anyone. You needn't fear that some books are reserved for certain grades, or anything like that. You can come in here any time you like. If you want to borrow a book and take it home, you may. When you've read it, be sure and bring it back! And if you've got any books at home you think the others would like to read, I'd be delighted if you'd bring them here. At any rate, please do as much reading as you can" (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 79).

The researcher can analyze the fourth data above that the students are

allowed the access to library for their own learning activity. In addition, they are also offered to bring books from home so other students can read and learn about new books.

At Tomoe, where the children were allowed to work on their subjects in any order they pleased, it would have been awkward if the children let themselves be disturbed by what others were doing. They were trained to concentrate no matter what was going on around them. So nobody paid any attention to the child singing aloud while drawing the hausfrau. One or two had joined in, but all the others were absorbed in their books (Kuroyanagi, 1981: 80).

On the last data, the researcher can conclude that the school provides the students with opportunities to organize their subjects. The students are also trained to focus on their own task while their classmates doing other different tasks.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the researcher collected ten findings on the novel *Totto-Chan: The Little Girl at The Window*. The data that were collected consist of five role of school on developing students' character and five data on how the school develops students' character through student centered learning.

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