

STUDENTS' CENTRED AND CREATIVITY OF TEACHERS DURING HISTORY CLASS

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ABSTRACT

The focus of teaching and learning is to increase students understanding of subject matter with teacher serves as a medium of information and creatively conduct the lesson particularly in highlighting the cultural diversity element in history by providing exciting learning activities. At the same time, the teacher also inherits the ethnicity values so that we can achieve the construction of identity as Malaysians through History. Students' centred needs a well-planned activity and the creativity of teachers in organizing and managing the learning of history so that it will have an impact on the understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage values through the content in History. Teachers should aware that history is a unique subject because it can strengthen the nations culture during the process of teaching and learning compared to other subjects. Thus, it will also help to achieve the country's vision to highlight the curriculum history as an agent of unity and reveal the diversity elements of Malaysian society as well as creating the relationship between ethnicity elements as the students' existing knowledge to enrich the information and strengthen national identity. Cultural Diversity and Students' Centred Module used in this study can be extended to cultural diversity (multi-cultural theory) and it is not only limited to the value of culture, the ethnic and national values alone, but can be added and adapted to the study and implemented as local values, global values as well.

Keywords: creativity, students centred, learning history, identity, cultural diversity

INTRODUCTION

As a formal institution in the centre of a heterogeneous society, the role of a school requires a full shift of intelligent thought to carry the mission and vision of national education but at the same time, it needs to fulfil the aspirations of society of various races. Teachers are agents of socialization and heir of cultural values to the younger generation, therefore through knowledge, expertise, coaching, and skills of a teacher, students can appreciate the curriculum with the universal values.

Zainal Abidin Abdul Wahid (1982) pointed out that the narrow content of a curriculum can be expanded with the teachers' idea, students' prior knowledge and learning experience to preserve nation heritage among the younger generation. Through this way, educational goals can be accomplished.

According to Husband (1996), history and society are two elements that are closely aligned "History in reality is the movement of time through the medium of society" therefore, history continues to repeat and take place according to time and age. The teaching and learning of history is very different from other subjects, because during history class, students do not get information about historical events only, but the

important thing is to give students an understanding of the historical heritage, universal values and elements of national unity. Thus, the teachers can use issues, analysis of ethnic relations, cultural diversity, and national integration in history class as a mean of encourage awareness to appreciate the diversity of cultures and understand the development of ethnicity values among the students. Teachers must use creativity in designing fun activities so that the lesson would be more interesting and happening.

To establish an effective teaching, the researcher concludes that teaching approaches should be based on teachers, students, and activities with a ratio of 1: 2: 3 meaning in the history lesson, the teacher became the medium of ideas and information; students were given a more active role to highlight the potential and talent through various forms of activity.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the context of teaching and learning of history, the teacher failed to use creative attitude to relate students' existing knowledge with ethnicity values of curriculum development efforts to strengthen the qualities and embrace the values of solidarity. Teachers always dominant, employ instructional process more than discussions to enrich the students with history information through a more useful and more meaningful experience.

In addition, the interpretation of historical materials is not extended in the context of public relations and sometimes teachers ignore certain perspective that can lead to national unity and integration, in which each student can receive, understand, recognize, and appreciate the existence, culture, involvement, and contribution of other races in the national development agenda and nation building of Malaysia. Consequently, we cannot fully utilize curriculum goals as an agent of unity.

Teaching and learning in the classroom is not simply to finish the syllabus for examination purpose only but teachers need to understand how to apply the nation building through ethnicity values by taking into account the cultural backgrounds that exist among students. Teachers still lingering with teaching routine regardless of the diversity of elements that can be addressed through the history curriculum.

RESEARCH AIM

This study aims to explore how teachers lead the process of teaching history by providing the elements of ethnicity values creatively ethnicity through student-centred activities by using various methods for the structuring of teaching steps.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify ethnicity values in highlighting the topics of history lesson so it will be relevant to existing knowledge and interest students.
2. To plan history lesson by restructuring the steps of teaching using various methods of teaching in order to expose ethnicity values.
3. To determine forms of activities to lead the instructional process of teaching history that is student-centred.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of research studies conducted to examine the teaching of history by teachers reveals that there are three major perspectives in highlighting the ethnicity values to suit the needs of this research based on the theory of multi-cultural theory (cultural diversity) to establish the effectiveness of teaching and learning of history through the efforts and measures of creative teaching. Some of these studies are discussed here. Hassan (1994) explores that the understanding in students is they can: (1) accept elements of socio-cultural

differences that exist between the races, (2) accept and understand the culture of each ethnic group with an open heart, (3) explore the unique culture that exists, (4) recognize the cultural differences between ethnic groups, and (5) recognizes the element of cultural differences and the uniqueness of every community.

Shamsul Amri (2007) emphasized the importance of every community to recognize the difference and find the values that can be shared as a Malaysian. The measures to adopt the elements of unity in the teaching of history are intertwining between the content, methods, and activities. In accordance with the purpose of this research, the values of ethnicity, which has been consolidated in the teaching of remedial classes derived from the three cultural diversity perspectives of treatment, is to highlight the cultural diversity of the different ethnics and at national level.

In a related work, Stavenhagen (1986) points out that the values of ethnicity is a summary of a range of aspects that include culture, ethnicity, religion, traditional practices that lead to the trend and give people an understanding of one another. Kymlicka (1999) on the other hand observes values of ethnicity as the diversity that exists in a community focussing on: (1) understand the phenomenon of change of each society as universally (universal perspective), (2) study the problems and conflicts of every ethnicity (ethnic perspectives) and (3) review the manner in which each ethnic express their culture.

According to Banks (2001) the values of ethnicity is a concept or idea regarding faith, acceptance, and recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity that exist in lifestyles, social experience, and personal identity of a nation. Highlighting the ethnicity values through the learning of history aims to: (1) develop an understanding of other cultures, (2) develop attitude towards cultural and racial diversity, and (3) is a process of learning new experiences and cultural values of others.

Dadang Supardan (2004), put forward these values in the context of teaching by using the elements of culture, ethnicity, and national identity to enhance the unity and harmony among the various ethnic groups. Therefore, in this study the researcher has developed a lesson plan for 15 weeks using the Cultural Diversity and Students Centred Module for teachers to creatively interpret and expand the ethnicity values through instructional history.

Williams (1986) recognizes the need for displaying changes in the teaching of history in order to attract students to learn, as the students will attract to the study of the past if studied according to the present perspective. For Habibah (1996), the teaching of history will be active if the chosen method of teaching is a student-oriented activities and not the teacher alone. On the other hand, teachers should creatively develop education materials by wisely incorporated ethnicity values and link existing knowledge with organizing fun activities.

DEVELOPING ETHNICITY VALUES

Mohamed Anuar (1997) stressed the main objective in treating history as a compulsory subject in KBSM is for the students to have knowledge of the historical development of the country and be grateful in the development and unity in the country. Actual practice of teaching history is still a black hole which requires comprehensive research and descriptive, especially referring to the application of values ethnicity, which still does not show positive improvement in students, cultural understanding has yet to be built in sound, plus aspects of tolerance and understanding of national identity. However, in such a case, no doubt there are efforts made by teachers to improve this situation, but still within the scope of traditional teaching (Wahid Zainal Abidin, 1972). Accordingly, Jagdish Raj Sharma (1985), emphasize the importance of teachers' to think about strategies, approaches, methods and appropriate techniques to highlight the values of ethnicity in the process of teaching instructional history.

Since independence, curriculum development of history subject is very good, therefore the government has upgraded the subject as a core subject in the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS). This change is certainly has a rationale due to the packed of history with opinions and values (Afzalur Rahman. 1996). Through the history lesson as well, students are able to meet curiosity and get real information about the history and development of society.

Cultural education in history lesson is able to introduce Malaysian society with the culture of every ethnic in order to create a better understanding as well as to avoid prejudice. History lesson can provide awareness of the history of civilization and the nations' development based on integration and unity among ethnic groups. Lee May (2002) acknowledges the history curriculum is the right avenue to talk about the social transformation of society in Malaysia and the formation of a uniform identity, because history is about the social and community affairs.

Students are encouraged to give ideas using their prior knowledge. Teachers can encourage the students by stimulating those using visual aids, such as posters, documentary, and displays news topics of the unity, ethnic and cultural diversity in the plural society in the country. Suwardi (2003) points out that social history will be easily understood and learned if the cultural background, ethnicity, and race are detailed when studying history. Pierre Nora (1989) in her study found that documents could enhance students' understanding of ethnicity value such as archival materials, newspapers, magazines, articles and film (video).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

DESIGN OF STUDY

In order to implement the values of ethnicity, which involves cultural values, ethnicity and nationalism in the process of instructional, students centred methods that involve various methods and techniques adapted from the diversity of the PPP method (Abdul Rahim Rashid, 1993 and Abdul Razaq Ahmad & Andi Suwirta, 2000) is used. It is how a teacher creatively develops teaching and structure measures to establish the suitability and consistency with the activities conducted in the classroom.

Variety teaching approaches (PPP) module direct the creativity of teachers in combining teaching methods with various forms of innovative changes that suits the needs using a variety of teaching aids and student centred activities, attractive and can search for talent. Overview of the PPP model can be seen on figure 1.1 below.

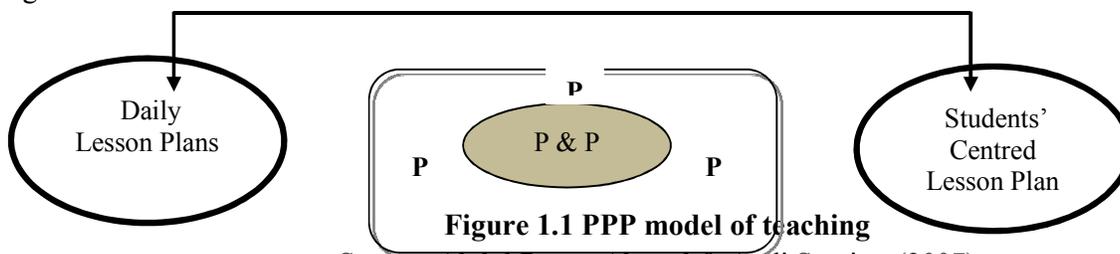


Figure 1.1 PPP model of teaching

Source: Abdul Razaq Ahmad & Andi Suwirta (2007)

For this purpose, Cultural Diversity and Students' Centred Module has been developed and it involves a 15-week teaching experiment to an experiment class by comparing with the results of normal controls class. Pre and post-tests are being carried out to see the changes in terms of cognitive and affective in order to meet the requirements of this research.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected on the study were analysed using inferential statistics that includes; pre and post tests. Specifically, the study provided answers to the research objectives. The results of the study were

presented in tables below. The table below shows the mean score and standard deviation for each construct pre-test values of ethnicity, which refers to cultural value, ethnic values and national values for the control and treatment groups.

Table 1.1 Mean pre test for control and treatment group

Ethnicity Values	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Cultural Value	Control	80	1.93	0.211
	Treatment	81	1.88	0.290
Ethnic Value	Control	80	1.99	0.326
	Treatment	81	2.09	0.322
National Value	Control	80	1.87	0.310
	Treatment	81	1.91	0.270

Posttest results showed that cultural value among students in treatment group (mean = 4.28, sp = 0.27) is at higher levels than the control group (mean = 3.13, sp = 0.35). Similarly, ethnic values are also at high levels among students in the treatment group (mean = 4.32, sp = 0.28) compared with the control group (mean = 3.09, sp = 0.27) and national values showed an improvement to the treatment group students (mean = 4.27, sp = 0.29) compared with the control group (mean = 3.29, sp = 0.29). This clearly shows the use of Cultural Diversity and Student’s Centred Module has been successful in providing a conducive learning climate and highlighted the values of ethnicity in teaching and learning of History.

STRUCTURING MEASURES FOR TEACHING

Based on the interviews after the experiment the teachers gave very positive responses about the implementation of Cultural Diversity and Students’ Centred Module in inculcation of ethnicity values among teachers. This is because restructuring of teaching emphasizes on organizing of activities and the relations with prior knowledge of students and the use of suitable elements to attract students to appreciate the cultural values, ethnic and national level.

Teaching measures is being structured according to the topic, the use of teaching aids, and the provision of learning climate through various methods and innovative pedagogical elements and relevant with the need to increase student involvement. The measures are based on the three themes of history lesson materials as set forth below.

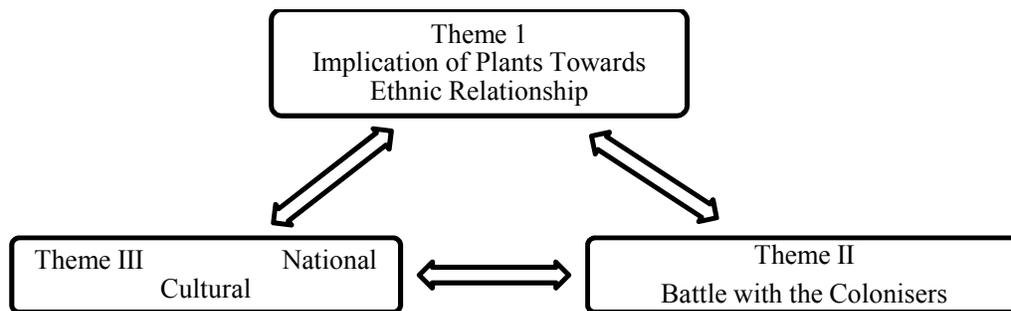


Figure 1.2 Restructuring Measures of Teaching through History

Theme 1 introduces students about the emergence of a plural society impact of British policy bringing Chinese and Indian immigrants to Malaya. In the initial stage of treatment class, the teacher introduces students to the cause for the introduction of commercial crops and mining activities. Apart from that, the participation of Chinese and Indian in the mining and commercial crops and its implications on social relations between the local population (Malays) with Chinese and Indian nationals working in tin mines and rubber plantations and other cash crops).

Teachers make the students understand how to distinguish between traditional crops and commercial crops, and then explain to the students that the arrival of immigrants also bring in elements of cultural and historical heritage of each ethnic to Malaya, thus bringing a new dimension in the formation of the Malay community and society compound. Students are introduced to the demographic background of every race, and then students are asked to submit examples of cultures that flourished in the plantations and mines. Chinese and Indian students can highlight their prior knowledge on the related subject.

Teachers use ethnicity values to create exciting events in history class, such as asking students to act out the social interaction that occurs, a clash of cultural and economic activities in multi-ethnic population. Even a picture of this situation can also be developed in a more creative, such as unrequited rhyme sessions, recitation of poems, singing songs of ethnic,

Theme II is conducted through discussions, brainstorming, Internet access through video, articles from web sites and discussion groups conducted to provide opportunities for students of all races to highlight the personalities of their community and state the contributions to national development. As a token of appreciation, students are asked to write poems, poetry and so to appreciate their personalities and raise awareness of all students that every community has a role and contribution. Aminuddin Baki, Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Helmi, Clergy Za'aba, Dato 'Bahaman, Mat Salleh, Dato' Onn or Lee Hau Shik, Yap Ah Loy, Leong Yew Koh, Tan Cheng Lock, Tan Siew Sin, or V. T. Sambanthan, John Thivy, Dr. Seenivasagam and others are the personality names that can be discussed with students.

On the other hand, theme III shows how students can identify the characteristics of the differences and similarities that exist between the races can be absorbed as a shared national identity, the identity of the people of Malaysia, once a well preserved cultural heritage as a platform nurturing the values of national integration and unity national.

NATURE OF ACTIVITIES IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

Ting Chew Peh (In Fadzilah Chik 1992) points out that the relationship between history lesson and national unity could not be separated at all. History lesson is different from other subjects, because of the characteristics and the subject matter is a mean of construction of the nation. In a study conducted by Harris and Moran (2001), they discovered there are three important sub values in the plurality of cultures that need to be addressed through education in schools. The first is to learn other people's cultural heritage and to know their identity. Second sub-value is to identify the differences and similarities in order to avoid conflict. While the third is to look at holistic view of cultural diversity as a country asset and these can be developed through history.

The subject can expand the capabilities and intellectual skills of students through a discussion of each phase of development of the country, the abstract concept and the relationship between the histories of the past with the realities of life today. Wan Zahid Noordin. (1992) himself agreed that the discussion and interpretation of history can open students' minds, making them more matured in thinking and to speak and produce brilliant ideas and reasonable.

The topics in the textbook can be expand by referring to other sources so that the students can adapt the element of unity in the minds of students and analyzed with an open mind and strengthen the values of independent study. The use of teaching resources that are relevant can direct students to understand the issues of unity and nation building.

In teaching and learning moral values through history lesson, students need to feel, identify, observe, reach, engage, comment, analyze, consult and evaluate a theme or topic, with the help of support materials, an attractive model of teaching and fun learning methods. A variety of historical sources will form an active learning climate and find answers to the question of unity or national integration.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Callan (1997), in his research found that the atmosphere of history lesson must be attractive and should be students centred using various methods, teaching resources and learning activities. Effective history lesson especially in terms of inculcating the values of community and unity elements need support materials such as audio, visual and multi media. Use of these materials will facilitate the message conveyed, as students can hear the voice; see the picture of history atmosphere and search for historical events in the real event. Teachers need to introduce the culture of community through activities that are appropriate and suitable methods, without the dominant attitude of teachers.

History teacher needs to modify the contents of the curriculum and vary the teaching methods with one goal, namely the success of unity through the teaching of history and student centred. Descriptive method is still the most dominant method and medium of information transfer to the students, before applying other methods. At the same time, information is only effective if teachers use audio-visual media or internet access until the interactive displays taking place simultaneously.

Diversity and cultural differences within a society is not a problem but an asset that must be protected, inherited, and enriched to form a united Malaysian in cultural diversity. This is because each ethnic have the privileges that can be used to enhance the civilization of the nation. Elements of ethnic values can lead the society to respect the views and contributions of each ethnic so that there is a sense of racial understanding and harmony. In addition, national values comprise all-important aspects of each ethnics and the memorable events for those who contributed to the formation of the nation, advancement of the race and other races.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Restructuring the teaching started from the simple to the complex and from the domain knowledge until evaluation has demonstrated the effectiveness in applying ethnicity values among students. Selection of methods and the appropriate usage has attracted students of history class as well as attract active participation.

As the history for Form 2 text books do not contain the element of unity in a clear and specific contents, researcher has came out with a teaching module based on cultural diversity in an integrated methods. The teaching module involves four steps to enhance the teaching of history. Translate existing materials for the history lesson from the textbook using the expertise of creative teachers to interpret and translate the curriculum. This step needs the help of expertise in history to translate it. Secondly, the step involves is using other related and relevant resources with the topics of study such as archival materials, newspapers, magazines, posters and so on. With the help of other resources, the teachers can smoothly run the lesson. Thirdly by using the medium of instruction (teaching aids) that will strengthen the effort to blend

elements such as documentaries, films, video and graphic material. Finally the teacher need to organize learning activities that involve collaboration among students through group discussions, debates, quizzes, role-play and so forth.

The students-centred method is used and arranged according to behavioural categories, which involves: (1) the medium of ideas and information (PIM), (2) test students' comprehension (UKP), (3) implementation of the integration value (IS) and (4) highlight the potential and talent (MPB) to facilitate the delivery of a message of unity through cultural diversity perspective. Thus, the desired effect of changes in student behaviour has changed.

From the findings, the researcher found that the Cultural Diversity and Students' Centred Module successfully removed the negative perceptions of students' towards history class as the curriculum of a dead man and replaced with a more active and valuable use. This method will ensure the class to be livelier in which dull classes often become obstacles and barriers to history teachers.

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

To accomplish the goal of unity through the history curriculum and teaching of history, the teachers need to consider and examine the following things. A good teacher needs to refer to a variety of teaching resources in developing the elements of unity. Besides that, the teacher also needs to utilize media that opens the mind of students, such as audio material, audio visual and multimedia. In addition, prompt students' potential and talent by using a variety of student-oriented methods as well as, connect element in the life history with students' life to facilitate student understanding. Finally, the teacher needs to raise issues related to ethnic relations as the basis and theme in lessons and activities.

Cultural Diversity and Students' Centred Module used in this study can be extended by reference to theories related to cultural diversity (multi-cultural theory) and it is not only limited to the value of culture, the ethnic and national values alone, but can be added and adapted to the study and implemented as local values, global values and so on.

We must bring materials forward. For the purpose of interpretation of existing materials (text book), the use of other sources (newspapers, archival materials and the Internet), use of teaching aids (audio-visual medium of teaching and multi-media) and the organizing of activities that promote racial composition of teaching is the principle that need to be developed in the restructuring measures for the teaching of values ethnicity.

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