

Caring Teacher in Developing Empathy in Moral Education

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, a case study of an experienced teacher is highlighted illuminating her understanding as a caring agent in the classroom, her caring ways to enhance teacher-student relationships and how she incorporated empathy as a basis of caring in her moral lessons. Methods such as non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, teacher's journal and document analysis were adopted in over eight months of this study. The findings highlighted teacher modelling, engaging students and pedagogical content knowledge as central themes in teacher exhibiting care to students. In displaying caring, it also accentuates the approaches the teacher embarked in developing empathy among the culturally diverse students in the classroom.

Keywords: *Caring, Empathy, Teacher-student relationships*

INTRODUCTION

Do teachers educate students to excel academically or do they educate them on values? This question has put many teachers in a dilemma as in recent times, curriculum standardization, high-stakes testing and emphasis on economically demanding subjects like mathematics and science (Zhao, 2010) has sidelined values needed to balance out the material world. In this era of globalization, challenges to education are on the rise and teachers face tough situations. While it is the responsibility of teachers to cultivate global competence among students (Wang et al., 2011), it is also necessary for teachers to instill values in the students. Zhao (2010) affirms that in cultivating global competence among students, teachers should also model caring behaviours in their students. Not only that, he asserts that teachers should guide students or make students aware of the existing global problems such as human conflicts from multiple perspectives. Kohn (1998) emphasises that the development of perspective taking is necessary for students to imagine others how they think or feel. As Goleman (1995) puts it, as one takes in the perspectives of others, not only the cognitive component is involved, the affective component is also taken into account. One needs to have emotional literacy in order to recognise, apprehend and attend to the concerns of others. Emotional literacy can be nurtured and Sharp (2001) believes that emotional learning matters most as it allows students to strive for the best and to contribute greatly to society.

Empathy is recognised as one of the elements of emotional literacy. In the Malaysian Moral Education Syllabus, emotional literacy comes under the affective component domain. Cognitive, affective and behavioural are the known three domains in Moral Education Syllabus and are taught to the non-Muslim students through the Moral Education lessons. These three domains are set to develop a child holistically as stipulated in the Malaysia's National Philosophy of Education that forms the basis for the Ministry of Education's emphasis to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable, skilful and able to exhibit exemplary moral attributes (Ministry of Education, 2003). Moral cognitive or moral reasoning has taken centre stage all this while (Myry et al., 2010) and it is timely to look into moral affective. Empathy is considered under moral affective as it is derived as the ability to understand the perspectives of others and to feel the feelings of others (Goleman, 1995; Lyn, 2005) although cognitive processes is involved in it (Eisenberg, 2000). According to Damon (2010), a child's moral sense that includes empathy, requires nurturing if he or she is to develop into a mature, responsible and caring adult. Although parents play an important role in developing

empathy in their children, their contributions can be limited. The parents' background may halt the good developing of empathy. Lickona (1993) acknowledged that schools have to instil values in students because of disintegration of families. Studies done by Wentzel (2002) and Zhang (2007) supported that teachers can have a greater influence on students' motivation and behaviour displayed in their classrooms than can parents. Martin Jane Rowland (cited in Zhang, 2007) strongly advocated that 'if the domestic sphere is shrinking at home, it must be expanded in the school' (p. 157). Right from the beginning, society has given the task to teachers to instil acceptable behaviour in students. In fact, Skoe (2010) argues that teachers are moral models that contribute to development of care and empathy in students. Therefore, in order to accomplish this huge task, the teachers in schools need to play a very important role in developing empathy among students.

According to Hoffman (2003), empathy is congruence with caring. He states that "the link between empathic distress and caring are direct and obvious" (p. 225). His viewpoint is empathy is the basis of caring. In schools, caring teachers play vital role in instilling good values besides imparting knowledge to the students. Why a teacher should be caring? According to Rogers and Web (1991), caring teachers emerged from good and effective teachings. Caring teaching-learning relationships are prerequisite for cognitive growth and development (Goldstein, 2003; Lumpkin, 2007; Roberts, 2010), and Noddings (2005) believes that one needs to educate a child holistically that encompasses happiness to foster development. However, studies on teacher characteristics and teacher-student relationships have not been explored in secondary schools (Wentzel, 1997). Researches on caring teachers who model caring behaviour to students especially in secondary schools have not been much focused (Cooper, 2004; Gomez et al., 2004). For that reason, it is necessary to explore caring behaviour which is related to moral affective in Malaysian schools (Wan Hasmah, 2000). A caring teacher is one who is clear about the roles and responsibilities that he or she needs to have to impart the necessary skills to students (Abdul Jalil Othman, 2007). An effective teacher is one who cares to engage a lifelong quest to provide an optimal learning situation for the students and is committed to ensure that the enhancement of learning is taking place indefinitely (Day et al., 2007; Lumpkin, 2007; Shoffner, 2008). Therefore in order to develop empathy in students, caring teachers are needed to shoulder this responsibility.

The purpose of this article is to explore the ways a teacher exhibit her caring ways and steps taken to develop empathy among students in her moral lessons. The research questions conducted in this study is as follows: a) What is the teacher's understanding as the caring agent in the classroom; b) How does the teacher display caring during moral lessons; and c) How does the teacher incorporate empathy as a basis of caring in her moral lessons?

Theoretical perspective

The Ethics of Care has been associated with the teaching and learning in the educational research. Much has been written about the notion of care propagated by Gilligan and Noddings. Although Gilligan (1982) is a pioneer in care theory, it is Noddings' work which would be highlighted in this study as it is related to Moral Education.

Noddings (2002a) who is the proponent of Ethics of Care in Moral Education asserts that Moral Education that focuses on empathy should assist students to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their society. In order for that to materialise, empathy in children must be properly nurtured or it will remain dormant. According to Noddings (1984, 2003), the teacher exhibits caring through modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. Noddings (1984, 1992, 2002a) has introduced the Ethics of Care that constitutes both the one-caring and cared-for. This stems from Hume (1988/1960) who strongly viewed that science of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy and Natural Religion are related to mankind. He states that Logic, Morals, Criticism and Politics are integrated into our lives that can improve our human mind. He gratified that morality is based on feelings where all living entity are involved in relationships and credulous to virtues and vices. Based on that, Noddings (1984) asserts that morality on virtues involves natural caring and ethical caring. It is in ethical caring that the relationship between the one-caring and cared-for is in a dual manner or relational. It allows one to grow in a wholly and integrated manner. In fact, Noddings' Ethics of Care has some sense of connectedness to Mayeroff's (1971) definition of caring when he states caring as "having another person's growth and development in mind" (p.1).

Modelling is the utmost important aspect in Moral Education. Teachers are required to exhibit moral behaviour to students as advocated by Aristotle (1985) who postulated that virtues can be taught. A student learns to be responsive when a teacher shows care. The adequate experience that one has to get in order to care for someone is vital here. The role as a carer and the role as a model work simultaneously. A child can be too young to be a carer, but he or she can acquire ways to reciprocate care (Noddings, 1992, 2005). In moral education, the function of a model is more important than the function of a carer. Lickona (1993) stressed that teachers should model caring behaviours to the students to motivate altruistic attitudes.

Besides modelling, dialogue is a vital component where the carer or the teacher indulges in meaningful conversations with the cared-for or the students and not merely concentrating on intellectual discourse (Noddings, 2002a). The teacher makes connections with her students and interpersonal bonding is inevitable. Noddings (1984) equates engrossment as empathy when the teacher pays attention to and understands the feelings of students. Dialogue is a common search for understanding, empathy or appreciation (Noddings, 1984, 2003; Owens & Ennis, 2005). In other words, open communication reduces the gap between the teacher and students and thus deepens understanding between the two parties.

Modelling and dialogue can further be enhanced through practice. Students learn to care and empathise through social services. Co-operation among students should be encouraged as it fosters good relationships between them. The school and classroom settings are excellent platforms for students that provide opportunities for them to develop interpersonal skills before they embark into the real world. Wentzel (1998) asserts that children develop social skills, moral competencies and intellectual skills well when they are supported well by teachers and peers in the school.

Confirmation takes place when the teacher approves positive or caring acts by students. However, confirmation can only be utilised if there is a good relation between the teacher and the student (Noddings, 1984, 2002a). In other words, if the teacher knows the student well and approves his or her actions, only then confirmation is valid.

However, Noddings has received criticisms from other theories that assumed that she is only looking at the Western perspectives. Thompson (1998) criticises Noddings for not taking account of the cultural and political background of the child, however, Noddings (2002b) has conceded that one should take the cultural relevance associated to a child. Noddings stated that “two students in the same class are roughly in the same situation, but they may need very different forms of care from their teacher” (p.20).

Although Noddings’ (1984) Ethics of Care has focused less on the diverse background of the students or the cared for, her subsequent writings have shown that students from multicultural backgrounds need to be encouraged to engage in dialogues so that they are able to recognise the strengths and weaknesses in each other (Bergman, 2004).

METHODS

This eighth-month study adopted a case study approach which was seen as the relevant and befitting the way to investigate the understanding of the teacher regarding care and empathy and the approaches undertaken to develop empathy among students. It was also considered as an instrumental case study (Stake, 2005) as it revealed the caring notions in the classroom.

For this paper, Bing, a female, aged 43 years old was highlighted over four teacher-participants. Bing was chosen as she accentuated her caring behaviour to the students as well as demonstrates different approaches for developing empathy among the students more than the other three participants despite being not an *Excellent Teacher* in Moral Education. In the Malaysian system, teachers will be conferred as *Excellent Teacher* in their respective fields if they display exceptional traits in personality, teaching and learning in the classrooms as well as producing excellent results in public examinations. Bing was also chosen based on her willingness to participate. Nevertheless, she was also an experienced teacher and was considered an expert in this field. Bing was a recipient of an Excellent Service award in her school for her overall performance in 2005.

The selection process for the teacher began with the permission and facilitation of the State Education Department. A list of teachers that are considered as experts in Moral Education was made available to the researcher. The researcher then selected the school located in Petaling Jaya, in the state of Selangor where Bing was teaching. Visits to the school were made to seek permission from the principal to gain entry to the site as well as Bing’s consent to participate. Data was collected over a time frame of eight months (August 2010 – March 2011).

Data Collection Method and Analysis

In this study, triangulation method was employed to collect data. In order to achieve validity and reliability, ‘triangulation’ involves the use of multiple independent sources of data to establish the truth and accuracy of a claim

(Sagor, 2000) as detailed explanation is needed so that others can see the situation themselves (Gay et al., 2009).

Non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, teacher's journal and document analysis were used in this study. Non-participant observer was undertaken to elicit information on the interactions between Bing and her students and the planned and unplanned activities that were taking place in the classroom. The observation in the classroom provided an opportunity to probe Bing in the interview session as this was necessary to gain more insights of her understanding of care, empathy, her approaches in teachings as well as her beliefs and values when instructing students in the classroom. No consent was given to video tape her lessons but she allowed the researcher to audio-tape them. Approximately, ten observations were done and seven semi-structured interviews were carried out. The purpose of the interviews was to gain insights on Bing's feelings and thoughts on her caring relationships with her students. Besides prolonged engagement to ensure validity, member checking was also employed as every expanded fieldnotes, and interview transcriptions were given to the participant to ensure the accuracy of her opinions, thoughts, feelings and experiences. Besides, the Moral Education syllabus, Teachers' Record Books, Minutes of Meetings and teacher's journal were considered documents. The Moral Education syllabus was looked into to see whether moral affective has been properly addressed in the syllabus. It was also to ascertain whether care and empathy has been identified as one of the moral affective component. The teachers' record books, as well as the minutes of the meetings were also examined thoroughly to see whether moral affection was given equal importance as content knowledge in developing the students' character. The teacher's journal was also an important source of data to interpret her thoughts and feelings in the teaching and learning of Moral Education.

After every round of observation (1 hour ten minutes), fieldnotes were expanded. All seven interviews (between 30 minutes to an hour) were transcribed verbatim. The expanded fieldnotes and transcribed interviews were uploaded in NVivo software. Bing's entry journal, the fieldnotes and transcriptions were coded as free nodes initially. Names such as *'encourage students'*, *'patience'*, *'showing concern for students'*, *'motivation'*, *'role-play'*, *'showing empathy'* and *'explanation on content knowledge'* were coded as these depicted Bing's understanding on caring, her display of caring towards her students and her incorporation of empathy in her lessons. After all rounds of observations and interviews, patterns that emerged from the various sources of data were identified. How Bing treated her students and interpreted her actions were understood more clearly. Codes that were similar were merged and categories were formed to identify Bing's conduct towards her students. From 108 open codes, 13 categories were formed. From 13 categories, four themes emerged from the findings. The themes are Modelling, Engaging Students, Pedagogical Content Knowledge, and Developing Empathy.

FINDINGS

Modelling

From the analysis of observations, interviews, document analysis and Bing's journal, it was found that Bing praised students who did their work. She praised a student who had done all the essays by saying 'good' and told the other students to emulate her (the student). In another lesson, she praised students for their efforts in answering questions regarding Patriotism by uttering the word 'good'. Students who tried giving appropriate answers although not accurate were also praised as it was a good try from the group. In the very same way, Wentzel (1997) found that caring teachers makes special effort to recognize the effort and talent of students.

Besides that, Bing's patience was also a good modelling for other students. From the observations meted out, she allowed them freedom to be in their groups as long as the work was done. In fact, a student went to her table and enlarged the font in her laptop so that he could see the words clearly on the LCD. She did not show any anger as caring teacher is perceived as one who remains calm and relaxed (Hayes et al. 1994). However she kept reminding them about their work. When probed further she said:

every week I will be reminding them, you know ,then one fine day they will be ready, then it shows that they are responsible... they have to give people time to mature and grow because we cannot sort off brush them aside,... we have to give them time and opportunity to grow.... Because last year I have this girl, she was in Form Four, when I did group activity, she was just on her own, she just didn't bother, you scold her also, she won't do... but this year I could see the change in her, she starts asking questions, you knowahm, you take time for the person to change...

(B-60910-124-130)

Besides, Bing acted as a motivator to the students. Her praises acted as encouraging students to believe in themselves and also to support their friends. Once she told a student who did a class presentation to speak louder in class as the student seemed to be a little timid. She told her that she could not live in this way if she was always scared. The student tried and Bing praised her willingness to try, besides telling it was a good try from the group. Some students clapped their hands. Bing told the students that encouragement from friends was good.

In other lessons, it was noted that she encouraged students to give support to their group so that they would be able to progress in life.

Teacher: So, kudos to our friends, although they are shy at the beginning, you have also succeed to act out and give your co-operation to your group.

Teacher: Ok, good, Wei Leong you cannot get the words from your mouth, the voice comes from See Mei.

Wei Leong: Help the group.

Teacher: Ah, help the group, good.

The support of friends, teachers and parents are important. Like our three friends, maybe they did not get support from their friends. The next time, give support to one another, No reason why you cannot make the activities successful. Your responsibility to understand and appreciate self-esteem.

When asked later the reason that she encouraged them to give support to their peers, she said:

Because all of us progress, by end of it all of us should progress, I believe, I strongly believe in their values, in wherever they are, in position they are. I care that they should be able to progress. If they are shy and they learn to be not so shy in front of the class. So I have to identify all this.

(B-170211-182-185)

Bing also showed concern to students who were not well or injured. In one lesson, she gave attention to one student who seemed to be injured in his leg. Bing wished him good morning and asked,

Teacher: What happened to your leg?

Student: I fell.

Teacher: Fell? You played football? Have you seen the doctor or not?

Her concern also showed that she did not give up on difficult students. By showing perseverance, students would realise the good intentions of the teacher and later change their behaviour. Wentzel (1997) stated that teacher who cares does not ignore and pays attention to a particular student who needs help.

Bing recalled:

What I did was..., one day she was showing her temper in the class, so I did not let it go because I found that she was rude to me and over reacted, because what I did was for her own good but she didn't seem to see eye to eye over that situation. So, I called her mum and talked to her mum about it.

(B-290910-186-189)

Bing strongly believed that teachers need to show their caring ways to the students so that students emulate from them. She viewed:

We need to show our care for our students not only this and that and then I believe people say lessons

are not taught are caught. If the teachers practice it, they will know.

(B-210311-156-158)

Her opinion was that the teachers need to display caring behaviour so that students improve their behaviour. It was further expounded in her journal that the difficult students changed because of her caring ways.

My conversation with two students revealed that they were not hostile towards me. They were more approachable. I commented to them, "You have changed to a better person. You are more attentive and less playful. What made you change?"

Their response was that my caring approach.

(B-J-300810)

Engaging Students

Bing engaged in dialogue session with students to enhance teacher-student relationship. When students were sleeping in the class, she gave personal attention to them and enquired their well-being. A particular student was sleeping and she spoke to him. At first she asked another student, 'Why is he sleeping every time?' A student answered, 'He is like that in my class too.' Then Bing proceeded to ask the student.

Teacher: What did you do last night? Ah... what did you do last night... play video games
or watching video.

Student: Work...

Teacher: Ah.

Student: Work.

Teacher: Work? What work?

Student: Sell clothes.

Teacher: Sell clothes... in Sunway Pyramid, ya.. ah.. You came back at what time?

Student: Eleven.

Teacher: Then you went to work at what time? After school, ... Ah? After this, are you
going to work?

Student: Today off.

Teacher: Ah?

Student: Today off.

Teacher: Today off, so Saturday and Sunday you work, Monday off.

The conversation that took place between Bing and the student allowed the student to give some attention to the lesson. Although he said that Moral Education was not an important subject, Bing thanked him and told him to pay attention in class. She was seen smiling at him and nodded her head and the student smiled too at Bing. The dialogue session that took place allowed Bing to get to know her student and understood his problem. It was written in her journal to indicate why she understood that he was sleeping.

Student A (a Chinese boy) slept late the previous night for he worked over the weekend. He slept at 11p.m. He said he was too tired. He mentioned that he works not because there is a financial need in the family. He works because he wants to save money for future use.

(B-J-230810)

However, Bing felt that she did not have enough time to take care of every student. She felt that the

enrolment of the class was beyond her capacity. Noddings (2005) acknowledged that classes should be smaller so that teachers could give attention to the welfare of the students. Bing said:

Hmm, this class is too big, it a bit difficult to for me to care for everybody but when I observe something which is not right, I usually go to them and talk to them, you know individually,... Sometimes it's too much then I had to reprimand him in front of the whole class.

(B-290910-64-67)

She also did not want to spend too much time engaging with a particular student as other students would consider her bias.

students perceive teachers as not fair, why teacher shower so much attention to that person and not me, you know and teacher is prejudice, you know teacher like certain people, or teacher don't like certain people, so I try not to do that usually, you know in class, students class time.

(B-290910-73-76)

Giving advice was always one of Bing's routine in the classroom. When a teacher advises, it is part of showing concern to the students that she cares and this inevitably engages the students. Bing often acted as advisor to the students. She told her students:

No reason why you cannot make the activities successful. Your responsibility to understand and appreciate self-esteem. If you have low self-esteem, you won't be brave enough to voice out. For example, two friends at the back, when they act, they're quiet, when they are at the back, they make noise and disturb friends. Ok, they have shown their low self esteem. Ok, I want you to improve your image as students as friends to give support to your own group.

When asked later, she said that she wanted the students to improve themselves. She firmly states that:

Ahm, all of us, wherever we start from, there is always a beginning point, so there is always room for improvement, so I want to see that to improve further. Which ever level they are, I want them to improve further, not only just thinking emotion but later on maybe opportunities for them to show it out to their friends.

(B-210311-95-98)

She also advised students that they needed to have a balance in their lives as academic were not everything. She advised them to have time for resting, playing, eating and going for tuition. She told them not to study all the time – 'study, study, and study'.

Teacher: Do an appropriate time management – not only for academic only. Academic is not everything.'

One way of engaging students is Bing also showed that she was empathising with them. She understood a student who was sick and told the class to leave him alone.

Teacher: Today, we shall leave Vikneswarama alone because he is not well.

In one lesson, she showed a profile picture of a role-model student and asked a student how he felt when putting himself in that role-model's shoes. He replied that he was sad. Immediately, she understood the feelings of that student by saying:

"Do you think your performance in as great as the student? Ah, he felt sad because if he compared himself to the student, his achievement is not as good as hers. He may not get the Co-curricular Achiever, am I right?"

The student agreed with Bing. When probed later, she said:

Because somebody successful, I wish I am in that place but I cannot achieve it, so you feel sad but you know you are not doing enough to achieve that place. In fact, that student may feel that, I also should be the one going up, not somebody else.

(B-170211-89-91)

In all her lessons, Bing did not push the students very hard to do their presentations in front of the class. She understood their background and their personality very well as she has spoken to them individually. She commented:

Because of inferiority complex, maybe when they were young, they were being laughed at, some did share with me that when they were young, they were being laughed at, so they cannot come out and talk in front of a lot of people.

(B-170211-209-211)

In fact, she understood the feelings of a large female student in the class and never forced her to participate in the class discussions. When asked later, she said:

I believe that when you are very big, you are very self conscious. So you come up here, people will be looking at you and not the other two girls, so she won't feel comfortable to act, so I have to understand that. And if she comes out there, maybe it's our human nature, you know, so the boys will not let her go, you make her feel more shy and she will be withdrawing to her own corner, so I don't want that to happen to her.

(B-170211-307-312)

Her feelings for the students were later enhanced in her thoughts as she penned in her journal. Her empathy with the student was clearly seen in her entry journal, she wrote:

I did not want to force because one of the group member is rather big size and I do not want to embarrass her. I will want to encourage her to overcome the low self-image of being laughed at.

(B-J-240111)

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Based on the observations done, a lot of focus on the content knowledge of the subject was done by Bing. But before she went into the subject matter, she engaged in small talks with the students. She praised students who attended school on Saturday. She also asked them whether they have received her e-mail regarding the course work which is due next year. Later, she introduced the topic by showing a video clip on the history of a legendary warrior. She explained a lot regarding the history of achieving independence in this country, the sufferings of the warriors that protected and defended the country. A lot of drilling was done and repeats need to be reinforced so that students remember not only the content but also the values. Bing further explained that they have achieved independence without blood shed, and without blood shed and war, they achieved it with peace and harmony. Bing showed a list of questions on the board through the LCD.

In another lesson, Bing explained about Vision 2020 and the nine challenges in attaining Vision 2020 in the country. Then she asked a student what he knew about One Malaysia. He replied by saying Malays, Chinese and Indians as three races together. Bing went on explaining about unity among various races to achieve stability, peace and unity that will make the nation progress. When the next observation was done, Bing resumed her teaching regarding ASEAN and asked the student to name the countries of ASEAN. She explained the traits of ZOPFAN. Bing believed that subject matter is important in the class and therefore could not afford the time to concentrate on a single student. She firmly stated that:

our core business in the class is to present the subject matter and the objective and the lessons that we do but if you want to care during the group work you may do that time you can go individual time so I find that if I need to teach them, I need to teach those subject matter that being done for that day for certain, ahm... I mean for that students, you cannot say you know, you left 35 students and just concentrate on one student, what about the time for the 35 students, it's not fair, you have to take care of the 35 and not the one. If you want to take care of the one, then you have to on your own call, them out and talk to them and you see them. Make an appointment and not using the class time, it's not fair for the rest of them because the rest of them need to learn.

(B-290910-80-89)

From the observations done, Bing used IT to deliver her lessons to the students. In an earlier lesson, she showed a video clip on Leftenan Adnan, a legendary warrior who fought for independence for the country. After explaining to the students, she showed a list of questions on the LCD. In another lesson, Bing was in the class earlier to prepare her lesson, using the computer and LCD to show puzzles to the students. Only eight students came into the class. Bing told a prefect to call the other students from the assembly court to come into the classroom. While waiting for other students to come in, Bing told the others to try to do a cross-word puzzle shown on the LCD. Bing was also keen to put information on her facebook.

Teacher: Have you read this story? Or this e-mail. I'll put in my facebook. Then you can read it.

Student: What's your ID, teacher?

Teacher: ID? Type Mrs. B, then you get to find me.

Student: Mrs. B.

Teacher: ah... Ok, I've put Lesson 1 that is Unit 1- Notes in Facebook. Go and read.

Student: Teacher, your e-mail.

Bing's expertise in using the ICT was also noticed. She believed in using ICT to gauge the students' attention and engage the students' learning.

.....I believe in using ICT, actually I can use charts, I can use revision books in the class. I can also use games, but then as I said the same method is the worst method so I try to vary....but most of the time I try to use ICT because it caters to the needs of the students because we have sound effect, we have visual, pictures... if I have much time I put in animation to make alive, to help them to be more focus to make lesson learning more fun... I believe in an interacting way of answering , so I ask them to join website to learn..

(B-60910-61-67)

In fact, she believed that her students would learn better if the teaching and learning process was done through information technology. Her reflection on this matter was written in her journal.

I felt the lesson could be improved if students have multimedia reference rather that printed material on revision books.

(B-J-90810)

I am happy with my lesson.

I included elements of fun in learning through games using power point games templates as evaluation. Students were interested and participated actively in giving the answers.

(B-J-160810)

Developing Empathy

One of the approaches that Bing used to incorporate empathy among students is through role-play. She wanted the students to understand the perspectives of other people by requiring them to act out the roles. In one lesson, a group of students took the roles of residents and vandalises. Below is the excerpt of how the students carried out their roles.

S1: So boring.. look at the sign board it's clean. Let us scribble on it. (Students scribble on the sign board). (Then 2 girls come by)

G1: What are you doing?

S1: We are scribbling.

G1: How are we going to find the address?

S1: Is it?

G2: The ambulance will not be able to find the address. You are wasting other people's time.

S2: The lives of other people, I'm afraid.

S1: Sorry, we'll erase it.

From the role-play, it was noted that the students were able to know the consequences of their actions and decided to not to vandalise the sign board so that the ambulance would be able to find the address of patients. Bing explained:

Because that girl actually able to portray out and cause the rest to think when they do vandalism, right? So, indirectly they are catching the values, instead of me teaching them. They have already caught it and they are portraying it out. This can be evaluated in that way.

(B-170211-286-289)

She also believed that students engaging in role-play could influence the others so that they act in appropriate way. She said:

They read more into my lesson, the values that I teach, because, in this kind of role play, when they portray their answers, it's their group idea and yet they can show the maturity of the students, they can be evaluated in that way and in fact it will be very effective for them to do like that and influencing that class.

(B-170211-291-294)

Her thoughts in her journal also reflected that she wanted the students to understand other people's perspectives or empathise with others through role-play.

I make them role-play so that they learn to say no to negative behaviour.

(B-J-240111)

Bing also encouraged the students to spend time with their families so that they know their families better. She even asked them whether they were concerned for their parents' well being. She asked them whether they knew their parents' interest.

Teacher: Do you know whether your parents are sick, or not happy? Do you see their faces and show concern? Do you know if your parents are sad?

When probed later, she explained:

Yes, I want them to understand their parents because I said in family charity work, they need to spend time with their parents because before that they won't need, some of them even won't have time for their parents, so I want to instil the values love for parents.

(B-170211-363-366)

so when they spend more time together, they can understand their parents point of view and their parents, when they have time to talk to the child, we are giving them opportunity to get to know each other better because most of the time, you find that you need money so they just give them money. They don't have time communicating, but we provide them opportunity to do things together, which is very good.

(B-210211-85-90)

She also wanted them to communicate with their parents so that they would be able to look at their perspectives and later would be able to communicate with others effectively which would be beneficial in their career. She stated:

Because they are improving the communication skills to the people who are older than them, if they are able to communicate with their parents, treating them with respect and proper way, so when they go out to work, they are prepared to talk to their boss from the higher authority.

(B-210211-92-95)

It was also observed that Bing showed a movie to the students on one Saturday to instil empathy among the students. She wanted them to watch the movie so that they would be able to identify the roles and learn something from the values shown. From the movie, she needed the students to learn to understand others who were not as privileged like them. The students were supposed to take the perspective of other people and feel for others. When asked why she showed the movie, she said:

we can put ourselves in that person's shoes. I've shown it, the first time I've seen it, I've shown it to many other people. It gave the same effect, that it help us to think about that situation, using that situation we realise that, we are so fortunate in sympathising with this character.

(B-210311-35-38)

In fact, in her journal, she wrote:

...I had consciously and carefully selected the movie "Home Run" because I want the students to catch the values which I intended them to have. I want them to think and feel like the characters in the movie.

(B-J-210311)

She also wanted the students to learn from the movie because it had the same effect on her. She explained:

Because it has the same effect and I have shown it to the student, the students were able to respond with that kind of emotion, like what I expected them to be... to be they actually learning from this different characters in life and they able to put themselves in that situation

(B-210311-46-49)

Bing also explained how the students could acquire values from the character shown such as learn to understand other people and how that particular character changed when other characters showed tremendous love and support to one another. She commented:

So the rich boy didn't understand that because he could not put himself into their shoes but after that race he began to see, he entered that cross country race, he wanted to get number one, he gave up number three and he was still not satisfied whereas that boy didn't want to get number one, he just wanted to get number three in order to get the shoes

(B-210311-115-119)

He gave away to him and the number ... the rich boy couldn't understand it, you know but he went back and he threw the shoes away when the boy told him he didn't want to get number one. He wanted to get number three to get the shoes for his sister. Then only he understood and from then realise, and he decided that he would supply shoes for both boys and girls so that they would be able to go to school.

(B-210311-122-126)

She also wanted the students to learn the empathy trait from the character of a poor girl who was so giving towards another character who was poorer than her. The poor girl understood that the poorer girl needed the shoes more than her.

She was so poor yet she didn't ask from the girl who took her shoes because she noticed that that girl who took her shoes was worse than her, the father was blind and didn't have a mother, so the father was actually collecting the recycle items and took her shoes by mistake, so that actually touched me.

(B-210311-134-137)

She also felt that the students could actually identify themselves with the characters and empathise with the character. In her journal, she said:

From the discussion which I had in class, I clearly noticed students, who were present, could actually identify and talk about the characters and their values learned. For example, how rich kid could not understand why and how the poor kid wanted the pair of school shoes and football boots. They could also identify how the poor girl who had lost her pair of school shoes, yet willingly gave them away to another girl who is less fortunate than her. In a way, I made them to put themselves in another person's shoes.

(B-J-210311)

The One Malaysia concept was being encouraged by Bing so that students learn to understand one another. In a moral education classroom in Malaysia, students of non-Muslim faith such as the Chinese, Indian and other ethnic race are considered compulsory to take up the subject. In all National schools, under the Education Act of 1961 and other subsequent education reports, Malay Language is used as a medium of instruction to achieve national unity from the 70's onwards (Rahimah, 1998). From the observations done, Bing encouraged the use of National Language (Malay Language) or English as a unity of all races so that they understand each other in most lessons. In one lesson, Bing explained, six boys on the left side of the classroom were seen talking in Tamil language. She looked at them and reminded them about using the Malay or English language. In one lesson, Bing reminded the students again about using the language and made them understand her plight as she said:

Teacher: Because you have to understand if this is a Tamil class, where it involves all Indian, you can use Tamil but here we have the Chinese in class where the Malay students are also here, we have three races in the class. So the use of Tamil or Chinese Languages only will cause problems because we do not understand one another, ok and make the situation very noisy. So, can I get your permission from you to use BM in class?

In another lesson, she reminded the students who spoke in their mother tongue. Teacher wrote big letters on the board (I do not understand Tamil).

Teacher: I do not understand Tamil language. So... so... (looking at the boys).. for us to understand each other, ok, I'm encouraging you to use the Malay Language, ok. Can you co-operate?

It was obvious that Bing wanted the students to empathise with others who do not know their language so that their behaviour would not disrupt the learning process. She also told the students she encouraged the use of Malay Language because it is a unity language. Language plays as a tool for unity as misunderstanding of cultural differences could lead to racism (Cooper, 2011).

Teacher: I am encouraging you to use BM because it is a unity language. Because if we do not understand each other, that's why riot happens.

When probed later, she firmly believed that students need to live together and learn to understand each other to avoid misunderstanding. She explained:

Because whether we want to accept it or deny it, is a fact that we are living together, so how are we going to improve the situation if we don't know their culture, you don't know them, then you need to learn about them because they say to know Malaysia is to love Malaysia, right? So to know another race is to love them, then you get to know them.

(B-170211-492-496)

They have to learn, ahmm, learn to live with one another because we have to accept that we all are different... how different or how similar, we need to accept one another but if we don't learn to live with one another, then we cannot accept... But I think there should have no problem but it's just, you know, we have to give and take, so that everybody will win in the argument.

(B-210211-115-119)

DISCUSSION

Teacher modelling, engaging students and pedagogical caring are the main traits of the teacher displaying caring to students in this study. The emergent data are seen to correlate to the Ethics of Care propagated by Noddings except Pedagogical Caring. McAllister and Irvine (2002) found that teachers who listen, being patient and supportive effectively contribute to the enhancement of classroom interactions between teacher and student as how Bing portrayed to her students. Caring is a two-way relation and should be part of teachers' professionalism (Vogt, 2002). Teachers who show emphatic behaviour have an edge compared to those who showed none as they are able to foster better relationships with their students. As Noddings (2010) puts it, good teachers are always observant of the students' behaviour and affirmed their actions. Teacher modelling is always the most important trait in Moral Education (Noddings, 2010) and students at this impressionable age will always consciously or unconsciously emulate teachers' behaviour in schools. In this study, praises were given to students who showed effort in doing their work. The teacher who provided praise as a form of encouragement is one of the traits of a caring teacher (Hayes, Ryan & Zsellar, 1994).

Noddings (2005) affirmed that caring relations is the foundation for pedagogical activity. In this study, Bing took effort to explain and give information to students to equip themselves with knowledge and for examinations. Wentzel (1997) found that teachers who were caring were considered interested in encouraging students to do their best in academic achievements. Besides, the teacher engages in dialogue session with students to enhance teacher-student relationship. Murray and Pianta (2007) advocated that one-on-one interactions between students and teachers can promote students motivation in learning and enhance social-emotional functioning. Zhang (2007) stated that teacher should get to know the students emotionally and establish an attachment with them so that they know they could trust the teacher although they are 'unlikeable'.

Since Moral Education is taken up by students of non-Muslim faith, which means students of other races or non-Malays are compulsory to take up this subject, it is imperative that Moral Education teachers should have caring and emphatic dispositions in dealing with culturally diverse students. Gay (2002) advocated that taking the perspectives of ethnically diverse students is a necessary form of effective teachings. Mastery of content knowledge and pedagogical skills are not enough. It is culturally responsive caring that will allow the teachers to act in the best interest of their students. Gay (2000) equates teachers who practice culturally responsive caring as 'teachers is an ethical, emotional, and academic partnership with ethnically diverse students, a partnership that is anchored in respect, honor, integrity, resource sharing, and a deep believe in the possibility of transcendence' (p. 52).

As discussed earlier, nurturing empathy which is part of caring is considered as a desirable trait to be embedded in students from various ethnic backgrounds. Students need to take the perspective of others in order for them to be caring individuals and exhibit prosocial behaviour (Kohn, 1998). Therefore, various approaches such as role playing or watching a meaningful movie inevitably projecting students in other people's situations so that they will be able to function effectively in a culturally diverse society (Hollingsworth, Didelot & Smith, 2003; Richardson, Tolson, Tse-Yang Huang & Yi-Huan Lee, 2009; Stetson, Hurley & Miller, 2003). This is especially so in Moral Education. Slote (2010) proposed that inductive training should be practiced in schools so that students learn to be emphatic of others before they move on to be caring people. In fact, he asserts that if Care Ethics takes more interest in applying empathy in Moral Education, it will make Care Ethics more compelling and forceful.

CONCLUSION

Care ethics, despite being in existence for more than thirty years, has received many criticisms. Although it may be thought that care practiced in the classroom prevents adequate time for formal testing (Noddings, 2005), it may not be so. It takes an exemplary teacher to balance up between the two. Caring can be executed effectively through the support of school administrators, colleagues, parents and community associated with the school. It is also noteworthy that the present teachers' training colleges should consider care ethics more seriously as it deals more with culturally diverse groups in this era of globalization. As Gomes, Allen & Clinton (2004) stress, teachers must absorb in their system that care should be seen as core ethics in their teaching profession to develop a student's whole being in terms of physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual dimensions in tandem with Malaysia's National Philosophy of Education.

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