

THE PROMOTION OF THE CONCEPT OF RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY THROUGH PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN BASED ON THE PERSPECTIVES OF A WOMAN ACADEMIA

Liah Rosdiani Nasution

Pendidikan Agama Islam Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan Institut Agama Islam Negeri
Padangsidempuan

Email: liahnasution@gmail.com

Abstract

This article explores the journey of a woman academia in the schooling contexts throughout her academic and professional course. This article specifically encourage those who teach in schools of education to accept greater responsibility for the inadequate preparation of educators for work in racially, religiously, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse academic post secondary institutions. Furthermore, this paper also invites educators to do more to make our findings actionable so we can contribute to the end of these educational inequities.

Keywords: *diversity; respect; teachers; academic institutions.*

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas perjalanan seorang akademisi wanita dalam konteks persekolahan dalam perjalanan akademis dan profesionalnya. Artikel ini secara khusus bertujuan untuk mendorong mereka yang mengajar di institusi pendidikan yang beragam secara ras, agama, etnis, budaya, dan bahasa. Selain itu, makalah ini juga mengajak para pendidik untuk berbuat lebih banyak agar dapat berkontribusi untuk mengakhiri ketidaksetaraan pendidikan ini.

Keywords: *Keanekaragaman; hormat; guru; institusi pendidikan.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world. Indonesia has more than 17,000 islands, of which only around 7,000 are inhabited. Kalimantan, Java, Sulawesi, Sumatra and

Papua are the main islands in Indonesia. "Unity in Diversity" which means "diverse but one" is the national logo of the Republic of Indonesia. This logo depicts a pluralistic but still unified Indonesian society, which is also a part of the life of Indonesian people. Until 2016, Indonesian citizens are estimated to reach 250 million. Indonesia is the 4th most populous country in the world after China, India and America. Indonesian society consists of around 300 tribes, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Bataks, Chinese, Dayaks and Papuans. Each tribe has its own dialect. In total there are more than 360 dialects which enrich Indonesian culture. However, "Indonesian" is the national language which is also a unifying Indonesian nation. English which is an international language is also a language that is often used in Indonesia. English is included in the elementary school curriculum in Indonesia and is the language of business. In addition, Indonesia also has a plurality in religious life. Most of Indonesia's population is Muslim. Less than 10% of Indonesian people are divided into several religious groups such as Roman Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. A small portion of Indonesian people also still adheres to traditional religions such as kejawen which is often found on Java.

Born and raised in Indonesia, Liah has always been part of the major part of the population, the Muslim population. Indonesia is not a country based on religion, but a country based on Pancasila (the state philosophy) and the 1945 Constitution but religious life and worship according to each other's beliefs are highly protected by law. As a country that protects religious life, 6 religions in Indonesia are recognized, namely Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, and Confucianism. Each of these religions has the same rights and obligations in law. Although the six religions differ in their beliefs and teachings, they do not create conflict in Indonesia. This is due to the fact that each religious adherent is well aware of the importance of harmony and tolerance to religious freedom in the context of maintaining the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). In Islam itself, a good Muslims should be well aware that in the teachings of Islam there is a sense of respect for others of different religions (Tolerance Against Religious Freedom). Interfaith discussions and gatherings are commonly practiced in Indonesia.

The plurality of the Indonesian nation has basically led to the birth of social stratification because initially this plurality distinguished certain groups of people, such as Europeans, Chinese and Indigenous people. However, after Indonesian independence was achieved, the European groups which previously had an important role in the system and

social structure of Indonesian society then left this social structure. In line with that, Hefner¹ explains that there are four reasons that lead to the birth of plurality in Indonesia. First, Social ecologies states that in Indonesia there are three economic zones located in Java and Bali with rice fields, Sumatra, South Sulawesi and South Kalimantan with their coastal areas, as well as other areas around the mountains. The second is that Indonesia was used as a stopover by foreigners, so this caused many Europeans and Tioghoa to decide to settle in Indonesia. Third, there are differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia.² This explains that the plurality that exists in Indonesia is a form and a result of the diversity that exists in the Indonesian nation. Fourth, the rapid movement of urban growth in industrial development.

This pluralistic system and structure of society can also lead to the birth of various conflicts in Indonesia. Conflicts that are usually found in post-independence Indonesian society are not conflicts between groups that are exclusive to what happened during the colonial period, but conflicts about intergroups that intersect with each other. Various conflicts in Indonesian society involving majority and minority ethnicities are one of the conflicts that often occur in Indonesia. Furthermore, the intensity of conflicts that occur in Indonesian society can be measured with four indicators, namely demonstrations, riots, armed attacks and the number of deaths due to political violence.³ First, it is defined as a number of people who file protests against a regime, government and leaders who do not use violence. Second, namely riots, this is not much different from demonstrations and what makes it different is riots using physical violence. Third, namely armed attacks, which are acts of violence carried out by a certain group that has an interest with the intention of weakening and destroying other groups. The fourth is indicators through data and statistics on victims who died during an armed attack. Needless to say, there are a lot of threats to the nation peace because of the plurality and the diversity of the nation itself.

Each student in a classroom brings something new and distinct to the table, such as global views, backgrounds, experiences, cultural contexts, preferences, dislikes, personalities, etc. Making sure every student feels like they belong in the study room is crucial with a

¹ Hefner, Robert W. 2005. "Social Legacies and Possible Futures", dalam Bresnan, John (ed.), *Indonesia: the Great Transition*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher.

² Anderson, Benedict. 1991. "The Last Wave", dalam *Imagined Community: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.

³ Nasikun. 1995. "Struktur Majemuk Masyarakat Indonesia", dalam *Sistem Sosial Indonesia*, Jakarta: PT RajaGrafindo Persada.

purpose to maximize the effectiveness of the studying process. If a student doesn't sense as they belong, or that they aren't valued for who they are, they're much less probable to have any interest in being involved in the class. Teachers will be aware of reduced participation, low self-esteem, brief attention spans, and standard emotions of detachment from students who are struggling to feel included.

Teachers cannot definitely manage to treat each student the same. Uniform requirements don't observe while there's always numerous variety inside the classrooms. Therefore instructors have to clearly consider a way to make the classroom as inclusive as possible. This is where it is important to instill and teach the concept of respect for diversity so that Indonesia's young generation can be more tolerant of facing differences in customs, culture, religion and economy that they encounter in their daily lives.

For that to happen, schools and communities can be used as a stomping ground to instil the sense of respect for diversity. In the long run, the hope is that the conflicts that are prone to occur in Indonesian society can be minimized as much as possible by the application of respect for diversity from all Indonesian people. An education that promotes range withinside the classroom teaches students some thing that's extra important: the way to coexist in a society in which each character is unique. In a more and more fragmented society, the capacity to connect with peers, coworkers and neighbours with various backgrounds, competencies, skills and abilities is invaluable. The diversity improves critical-questioning skills, builds empathy and encourages college students to assume differently.

Students go to school to be prepared for the workforce, so teaching must effectively address and embrace the realities that come with living and working in a diverse school, community and country. Not only that, but there are other research-backed reasons for promoting diversity in the classroom.

Tackling this big issue is definitely not a single individual's responsibility but all parties involved in the society itself. However, a teacher plays a crucial significant influence in this role. Schools in the United States are exceptionally diverse. They consist of college students of various color, cultural backgrounds, and languages. In Indonesia, although the diversity rate of the society is not as high as the ones in the US, it is still one of the richest culture in Southeast Asian culture. With this in mind, the importance of respect for diversity is high in these two settings, be it in Indonesia or US. This way, students in various colleges can increase their knowledge of various cultural backgrounds exist at schools. Yet, to assure

students' fair access to education, the teaching instructions used have to be culturally aware of all backgrounds of all students to ensure the restoration of equity in schools.

PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED IN DIVERSE INSTITUTIONS

When discussing about equity in school and how we should look at the importance of respect for diversity at schools, it is good to look at Freire's insights about the oppressed. Oppressions, whether internally or externally, deliberately or indeliberately, are one of the most common side effects of the lack of respect for diversity at schools. Freire⁴, in her "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*", discusses the concept of humanization and dehumanization. Humanity, according to her, includes some qualities that make us human such as understanding, freedom, and integrity which need to be applied both ways, towards others and ourselves. Furthermore, it is important to understand the terms humanization and dehumanization so that we understand our position in the game of oppression. Humanization, in this case, refers to the condition in which we treat some people as human as others. In order to recognize humanization, however, we must also acknowledge dehumanization. With dehumanization, a person or a group of people is/are treated less human than others which make this person or people oppressed. Some examples from school settings would be how students of color are treated in schools in the manifestation of Cultural Deficit theory, Economic and Social Reproduction, Cultural Incompatibilities theories. People who oppress others see these oppressed people as things or objects, not humans to be treated with integrity⁵. Oppressors also feel the oppressed are in their situation because they are "lazy" and ungrateful to the generosity of the elitist class. Therefore, they deserve what they got. However, if we look closer, as the oppressors engage in oppression, they violate the rights of others which make them dehumanized themselves. To restore the humanity of both, the oppressed must struggle to change their situation but must not become oppressors in the process.

When it comes to the restoration of the humanity both for the oppressed and the oppressors, the oppressed are said to have the "fear of freedom" feeling. This fear prohibits the oppressed from being proactive regarding their situation partially because they have

⁴ Freire, Paulo. 2000. "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*". New York: Continuum.

⁵ Richardson et. al. 2003. "*Race, Ethnicity and Education: What Is Not Taught In School*". University of New Mexico: Information Age Publishing Inc.

adopted the guidelines of their oppressor⁶. Freire goes on to state that “Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Thus, in order for the oppressed to gain recognition or the acceptance from the oppressors, they have to work extremely hard. This system still confirms the notion “no pain, no gain”. While on one hand it is good because this system enables an oppressed to gain access to the system of domination and do, or ideally, change something about it, it is also not very advantageous for the oppressed on the other hand because very often, the oppressed who gain this access tend to change or liberate only themselves which finally will help nothing to change the cycle of oppression. The example of this manifested in this following true scenario I learn from my friend’s experience. A year ago, she applied for a Fulbright master scholarship and passed all the tests. In Indonesia, studying in an American university is a great deal. Thus, a few months after she left Indonesia for her program in the US, she already received a few offers from the head of some educational institutions in Indonesia to teach in their schools upon the completion of her study in the US later. She decided to choose her previous institution as a place to come back to. While it is true that she worked very hard to get these future opportunities, she is reinforcing the system which favors the title of an American university graduate degree over local university graduate degree, for instance, regardless of her or other students’ academic competence who might apply for the same job in the same university. Thus, in this case, I would like to consider the system, the directors of the institutions, the recruiters, or the government which institutionally supporting this system as the oppressors and those who apply for the position and do not possess an American graduate degree as the oppressed. However, if we look further, it can also be said that the directors, the recruiters are the oppressed because they might do to follow the government instruction. In order to overcome this, the oppressed must work together. That is where the need for pedagogy—learning a new strategy to overcome the injustices frequented upon them and others like them—is necessary.

Now, what should be done in order to free the oppressed? In this case, a pedagogy must be forged with the oppressed and not for them. The central problem is that the oppressed must participate in the development of the pedagogy of their own liberation. However, in order for the oppressed to do that, they need to realize and actively involved in making a transformation of how the situation is currently organized, not blindly following

⁶ Nieto. 2004. “*Affirming Diversity: Toward an Understanding of School Achievement*”. University of Massachusetts Amherst: Pearson

the system and taking it for granted. In other words, they have to be actively engage in the activism. In an academic setting, the example would be when the faculty, students, and directors reflect on the system and take an action needed. The action taken must be carefully considered for all people who will be impacted by this pedagogy. The progress should involve dialogue and avoid violence in any fashion. Actions and dialogues must come from the oppressed (all elements of the school) with consideration of oppressors (educational stakeholders) who may recognize and align themselves with the pedagogy. Again, there must be proceedings in which liberation is the focus and not the possibility of the oppressed becoming the oppressors.

HOW CAN EDUCATORS HELP PROMOTE RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Taken from the experiences with interacting in a very diverse classrooms as an Internasional student in one of the most diverse countries in the world, the writer managed to take some wisdoms from the field that can be used to instill respect for diversity attitude in various academic settings in Indonesia. Since range is some thing that desires to be fostered withinside the study room, right here are some recommendations that instructors must hold in mind:

1. Accepting that our college students are different from each other

One of the first-rate methods to foster an inclusive surroundings withinside the study room is via way of means of knowledge every man or woman scholar. Take the time to apprehend the strengths, weaknesses, character traits, and mastering sorts of the scholars for your study room.

As a teacher, this degree of engagement with the scholars indicates which you have a vested hobby of their success. Always take into account that each one college students analyze differently, so via way of means of taking the time to apprehend every scholar, you'll additionally make the coaching manner less complicated on you.

2. Integrating specific coaching patterns in the teaching and learning processes

As mentioned, every scholar learns in specific methods. Some college students can be greater visible than others, even as a few college students can be greater hands-on in phrases of mastering. By incorporating specific coaching patterns to deal with specific methods of

mastering, now no longer best do you make sure that every scholar is mastering the cloth effectively, you furthermore may develop college students' abilities.

If college students who usually analyze higher in a single precise manner are continuously uncovered to a whole lot of specific mastering techniques they'll grow to be willing to strive specific tactics to mastering. This will assist them to push their limits and genuinely step outdoor in their consolation zones.

3. Providing Equal Access to Opportunities for all students

Make certain every scholar has an identical risk to take part and make a contribution to what's taking place withinside the study room. If you word that a few college students aren't contributing as lots as others, it's first-rate to discover a manner to get them greater involved.

It is probably useful to introduce activities, lesson plans, and tasks which mandate everyone's participation.

4. Rejoicing range

Diversity is some thing which must be pointed out and celebrated. The simplest manner to deliver range into the study room is via way of means of spotting it and inspiring college students to rejoice it. In a single classroom on my own there may be an awesome quantity of differences present. Taking the possibility to permit college students to project their differences with their peers might allow for some respect to emerge. This can eventually let in others to enjoy the diversity that they in any other case in no way have acknowledged or heard of.

5. Appreciating Differing Perspectives

In classrooms, there might be sufficient possibilities for college students to return back collectively to look at troubles or conflicts. Another exquisite manner to deliver diversity into the classrooms is by examining the troubles that they're confronted with. Encouraging specific methods to remedy troubles lets in college students to return back collectively and together make a contribution through a whole lot of answers.

This exercise additionally teaches college students the worthwhile lesson that there may be frequently nobody accurate manner to do things. If college students are endorsed to make a contribution specific answers to a problem, now no longer best will participation boom withinside the complete class, however college students may even sense as though their enter is valuable. They'll then be endorsed to undertaking themselves to provide you with answers.

6. Using various mastering materials in the teaching and learning processes

Whenever possible, instructors must attempt to encompass coaching cloth which represents the wealthy range of the world. For instance, encompass cloth which represents a couple of viewpoints and perspectives. Think seriously approximately cloth which touches upon such things as nationality, race, political views, backgrounds, specific languages, abilities, personalities, age, modern-day affairs, socio-monetary matters, etc.

Including various mastering cloth is a certain shot manner to deliver range into the partitions of classrooms. In a quick area of time you may divulge college students to an impossible range of various things. Fostering range is relatively important, and one of the first-rate locations to start doing this is the study room. There are several methods to deliver more range; instructors need to take the initiative to take each step to deliver range into the study room.

CONCLUSIONS

There are enormous advantages to teaching diversity in the classrooms. When we talk about diversity, we should also speak about ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-financial status, being able-bodied and diverse learning styles. Teaching diversity is essential despite the fact that many colleges throughout the country continue to be culturally and socioeconomically segregated. It is essential to remind ourselves why diversity and cultural awareness is so important in the classroom and the advantages it can have on college students now and in the long-term. Teaching diversity exposes college students to diverse cultural and social groups, helping them ready to become better residents of their communities.

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