Student Character Building Methods on Distance Education

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Abstract

Character building is very important to be applied to the student at school. Students' character affects their ethics and awareness of the right thing to do that leading them to be great decision-makers for themselves. This paper aims to discuss several methods to build students' character in distance education. The methods used include: giving assignments, creating a comfortable learning environment, making a schedule, providing the chance to ask questions, making a learning consent, conducting some surveys, and watching movies. The results of the methods used indicate that the method is effective to be applied to the students during distance education with the support from parents, teachers, and students.

Keywords: Character building, distance education, student

1. Introduction

Education holds an important role to prepare individuals for work in economy as well as to integrate them into society. According to Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System, education means conscious and well-planned effort in creating a learning environment and learning process so that learners will be able to develop their full potential for acquiring spiritual and religious strengths, develop self-control, personality, intelligence, morals and noble character and skills that one needs for him/herself, for the community, for the nation, and for the State.

Learning is a must for every student to increase their knowledge and insight in facing challenges to solve them (Lodge, et al. 2018). Considering the importance of education, it becomes mandatory to undertake formal education required by law in a given country. The duration of compulsory education varies among states. Indonesia requires students to attend school for twelve years which consists of elementary, middle, and high school levels. The amount of time that students have to spend in school is not small. They spend most of their childhood years in school. It is most likely that there will be common arguments as the school is a waste of time because it's not always a completely productive use of their time. To make sure it doesn't become an actual matter, there must be an effort to build their character and broaden the range of skills that can be opportunities once the students graduate from school.

Schools prepare the student to be academically competent that reflects in attitudes, behaviors, and skills that contribute to their academic success. In early childhood education, there are personal approaches to ensure all children have a good start (Brown, et al. 2022). These approaches include character building which is the proactive effort to instill the students about ethics. It is a means to teach them about character and moral values. Character building also helps students to be more conscious of the right thing to do that leads them to be great decision-makers for themselves.

While it's already a busy school day, building students' character can be a challenge for teachers. However, producing students with just good grades is not enough to help them have a fruitful life. The activities within the classroom will encourage students to develop ethical principles and behaviors that can last far beyond the classroom (Dubey & Pandey, 2020). Here, the teachers take on a leading role to create a conducive environment in character building. As a baby step, teachers can make clear and concise rules that leave no room for students to wonder about how they should and should not behave, resulting in a more effective classroom.

The sudden outbreak of Covid-19 has influenced everything and completely changed normal life. It has called a pause in the ways and means of every sector of society including education (Aini, et al. 2020). On behalf of prioritizing students and teaching staff's health, the government has issued a circular letter on distance education. The activity is provided in which students are separated from their teachers. They are expected to be trained to use technologies in maintaining their interaction. Integration of technologies into education provides effective interaction only when it is used correctly. By analyzing present days, one can clearly tell that the educators, as well as the learners, are facing a really difficult time.

Under these prevailing circumstances, it becomes more and more challenging to monitor students' character development gradually and persistently as the teachers can't make direct contact with students. However, the bad things come together with good things. This influential pandemic can offer us some positive outcomes in the end. It allows the educational field to evolve to be more advanced in adaptation, creativity, and innovation of skills. But considering the short amount of time to adapt, the path to reach such achievement is not really pleasing (Magomedov et al., 2020). Therefore, there must be some strategy and guidance that aims to provide a complete education.

The education sector along with its personnel have been striving to give the best learning experience for their students. Every teacher has her or his own way of teaching, especially when it comes to implementing the concept of character development. There are various methods to build students' good character. Moreover, the pandemic makes it more varied and unique.

This paper presents several character-building methods on distance education and highlights the characteristics we are trying to develop. The study aims to find out the methods to produce quality students and provide teaching staff with some strategies to improve the performance of learning under the given situation.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Materials.

The materials used in this study are from scientific articles, Act of the Republic of Indonesia, and some articles published through the website.

2.2. Methods

The methods used in this study on building the character of students in distance education include:
a) Giving assignment; after the teacher provides the learning materials, give some other learning activities outside the regular class period to students such as assignments. Assignments encourage students to improve their comprehension of the material they have learned.
b) Creating a comfortable learning environment; start by giving time to rest, drink, ice breaking, etc. that allow students to concentrate more on learning.
c) Make a schedule; manage time for students to do the assignment, play, eat, rest, etc. Give them time to play when they have completed the task.
d) Provide the chance to ask questions; create question-and-answer sessions during class and give some points to students who have asked questions to stimulate and make them get used to it.
e) Make a learning consent; make rules and punishment that are compatible and appropriate to apply. Rules that are made will form a good habit for students.
f) Conduct some surveys; create a list of questions about students' daily activities outside the class period. The teacher can analyze the results and write a report about students' character development progress.
g) Watching movies; showing video content and movies that have educational value as a part of a lesson. Find the best movies for students' learning which is appropriate for students.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Giving assignments.

It is the students' responsibility to participate in learning activities. There are so many learning activities that can be applied by students. Paying attention to the teacher during class is one of the activities that are most often applied by schools. However, to build the student's character, the teacher gives assignments to the students. The assignment will build a sense of responsibility for students because they have to complete it as a form of participating in learning activities.

Through the assignments, the students can also develop hard-working habits while building their sense of responsibility. The teacher can increase the difficulty of given assignments to teach students hard work and determination. The efforts made by students depend on their respective understandings. Some students who are a little

bit left behind in understanding the material will need more effort than students who can understand the material presented easily. However, in this way the teacher can build the hard-working habits of the students.

When the students face a dead end, there is nothing wrong with looking for material on the internet to complete the assignment. Likewise, by asking friends and teachers. Friends can be the right place for asking. It feels more comfortable to talk with friends of the same age because it doesn't feel like teaching or being taught. Compared to asking, discussion can be righter thing to do with friends. The teacher is also present as their friend, by putting her/himself in students' shoes. Don't impose students for asking because they haven't understood the material. Each student has different abilities. Give a response that makes students comfortable to talk, ask questions, and discuss. In other words, the role of the internet, friends, and teachers is a place to build students' curiosity.

Students don't feel uncomfortable when asking for help from their friends. There are things better asked to friends, but there are also things that should not be done such as asking for answers for assignments because it can be considered cheating. The teacher should emphasize to students not to ask for answers from their friends and they are not allowed to give their answers as well. Small things like this build students' honesty.

Based on the number of students involved in the assignment, there are group assignments and individual assignments. In group assignments, students are trained to work together to complete the assignment. Doing group assignments is not just as easy as dividing the task. Students have to socialize with different people and keep working together. Friendly characteristics will make it easier to do group assignments because when the students face some problem, they will have friends to discuss. That is different from the individual assignment that is not dependent on other students. Students must complete the assignment independently.

Student creativity can be applied through assignments given by the teacher. Especially on the assignments of arts and crafts or presentations assignment. In arts and crafts assignments, students think about the picture or forms of their creation then they pour out their thoughts onto their crafting. Meanwhile, for the presentation's assignment, students must prepare the material to be presented as creatively as possible.

Assignments that have been completed are then submitted to the teacher. Teacher assessment is not only determined by what students have done but also the assessment regarding the time of submission of the assignment. The accuracy and overdue can also affect the points of the assessment. The penalty points are given by the teacher to build students' discipline characteristics (Istiqomah, 2021; Yuliana, 2021).

3.2. Creating A Comfortable Learning Environment

It is boring for students to pay attention to the teachers during class for hours from Monday to Friday. Moreover, during distance learning, students just sit and stare at the screen. The students will be bored as time goes by. Changing the learning styles will create a fresher environment than before. Different learning styles will build different characters. Through learning by discussion, students will be trained to appreciate each other and not to spread hate speech on different opinions of other people. Self-study sessions can increase students' independence, love of reading, and curiosity. Students are required to find their own study material through their reference books or e-books on the internet. To understand the material, students must read the material they found and if they have something they don't understand they can keep on looking for other references. Many other learning styles can change the learning atmosphere to be more comfortable.

The teacher does not always apply a different learning style for each different class. There are times when the teacher continues to provide study material directly and students must pay attention to it. Students' ability to focus will continue to decline so they can't fully pay attention. Giving them time to drink and rest for a few minutes in between lessons can increase students' concentration on learning so that students are able to study with full attention (Yuliana, 2021).

3.3. Make a schedule

There are major changes in students' routines on distance learning. When the class requires too much staring at the screen, students have to take more hours of sleep to rest, resulting in them waking up late. It will lead to bad morning routines. There is no time for bathing, breakfast, etc. Worse still, we can see the likelihood of the student doing their morning routines when the class is taking place. This bad habit allows lowering student discipline. Here parental support is very necessary.

To develop a good lifestyle, it can be started with making a regular schedule. However, it's quite challenging to stay consistent on the schedule. Therefore, instilling a sense of responsibility from a young age is important to maintain consistency. Students must be responsible for the schedule that has been made (Faisal & Sauri, 2021; Yuliana, 2021).

3.4. Provide the chance to ask questions

The delivery of study material by the teacher is just a process of transferring the teacher's knowledge to the students. They need to try understanding the material themselves. Students can take benefit from the teacher's role as a presenter of a lesson. Although the source of the study material is not only from the teacher, students can try to ask some questions related to the material that hasn't been understood. The teachers answering the questions will support them in building students' curiosity. Some students can be a little bit confused when to ask questions. They may think that it would be impolite to ask in the middle of class because it interrupts the teacher. Therefore, it would be better for the teacher to give them the opportunity to ask (Yuliana, 2021).

3.5. Make a learning consent

Before starting the whole year of study, make rules of dos and don'ts. Give punishment to the student who does not follow the rules. Make sure to discuss the rules and punishment with the students and ensure the parents agree too. The rules that are usually applied in distance education such as turning on the camera during class, turning off the microphone when the teacher is explaining the lesson, wearing uniform, and submitting the assignments on time. The rules make a conducive learning environment. It also helps students to build their discipline. Some rules can also instill students' religious values such as praying before and after the class (Istiqomah, 2021; Yuliana, 2021).

3.6. Conduct a survey

It is the teachers' responsibility to observe the students' character development progress. When there is no progress at all, the teacher can think of another way to build their students' character. Conduct some surveys with a list of questions about their daily activities. The answer can be a frequency scale of how often the students do the activity. Create a numerical scale to gather quantitative data. Therefore, it will be easier to analyze the result and more effective to supervise students' character development. The survey is about students' daily activities such as prayer time to supervise their religious values, getting up on time to supervise their discipline, doing school assignments to supervise their responsibility, cleaning their own dish to supervise their independence, and other questions related to students' daily activities that are able to build their character. On the other hand, the survey is not only to monitor the development of student's character but also used as a method to instill their honesty. They are directed to answer the questions according to how often they do the activities. If the teachers feel unsure about the results of the survey, they can take an interview with the parents because the students spend more time with their parents.

Collaboration between parents and teachers is very necessary to students' education. Parents take an important part as a crucial link between their children and schools. Several studies have proven that this parent-teacher collaboration can improve students' academic achievement, work habits, social skills, and character. They can also commiserate on students' strengths and weaknesses. Through the communication between parents and teachers, it will be easier to develop a strategy of action to strengthen their character (Dewantara & Dibia, 2021).

3.7. Watching movies

This method may be an engaging and fun way to teach students about values. Each of the students has their own unique style of learning. Some of them are visual learners, some are auditory learners, some are reading and writing learners, and some prefer to kinesthetic learning style. But school tends to generalize them and teach them with the same learning style. Auditory learning and learning through reading are the common ways used during class. Sometimes those learning styles don't come easily to students. Movies are an excellent resource since they allow students to understand concepts without the hurdles that might hinder learning. Just like books, movies serve concepts or stories with different characters. Movies show students how different people live their lives in other parts of the world. They can broaden students' perspectives and give them new insights.

There are so many great movies for kids out there with various genres such as romance, adventure, horror, comedy, etc. Students can explore the concepts, themes, and even values through these kinds of movies. However, teachers often feel reluctant to show a movie in class. Therefore, teachers must make a plan so that this method can be an effective learning experience for the students. First and foremost, teachers must review if the school or district has policies on the use of movies in class. After the teachers make sure to follow the rules, they can get started with reviewing the movies to enhance students' learning. There are film ratings that teachers may adopt for movies shown in class such as G-rated films, PG-rated films, and PG-13-rated films. Checking on the film policy is a must for the teachers to determine how it fits the lesson plans. With so many options out there, teachers may feel hard to determine which movie to be shown in class. To make it more practical, teachers have to specify what moral values can be taught through this method, whether it's religious value, honesty, creativity, hard-working, or independence. Lastly, start reading some reviews about the movie to ensure it suits the lesson.

At the end of the class, give a feedback form or assign a resume task about the movie for the students. The form or the assignment is a tool for evaluating the students in grasping the concepts and values of the movie. This method is a

wonderful way of delivering cultural information to help students have a life-long knowledge base and build their character (Rumapea et al., 2021).

4. Conclusion

This paper has described several methods for student character building. Based on the result and discussion, it can be concluded that there are various appropriate methods for building student character during distance education. One can clearly tell the crucial role of the teacher in distance education. However, it must be supported by the students too. Moreover, some methods require support from the parents as well so that the character of the student remains in accordance with the character of the nation.

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