

# DEVELOPING STUDENT'S EMPATHY THROUGH EXERCISE TECHNIQUES

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## DEVELOPING STUDENT'S EMPATHY THROUGH EXERCISE TECHNIQUES

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<p><b>Received</b> 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 <b>Accepted:</b> 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 <b>Published:</b> 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021</p>	<p>Various phenomena of negative social attitudes is apparent in today's global society. One of these phenomena includes student's school life that indicates that there are issues on the attitude of students' empathy and community members. Empathy is the ability to put oneself in someone else's position or place, or the capacity to share what someone else feels. Empathy will also prevent someone to offend somebody, which in turn helps create a harmony in social life. In regards to the empathy issue, its development on students needs to be strived through guidance and counselling service at schools. Exercise techniques can be used through guidance and counselling teachers as a way to develop student's empathy. The techniques include written, dyad and trial, fantasy, common reading, and feedback. By implementing these techniques continuously, the student will eventually possess the empathic attitude.</p>

**Keywords:** Empathy, exercise techniques

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Today's global society life has been occupied with various negative social attitudes phenomenon. Criminal acts such as wilful murder against school friend, roommate, and family have seemed to become a common thing in the community. This attitude phenomenon becomes an indicator that there is an issue of the lack of society member's empathic attitude include students' at schools. As explained by Goleman (1999, 149) that empathy is not found inside of the people who committed the most brutal crime. A psychological disorder that is found in rapists, paedophiles and domestic violence perpetrators evidently suggest that these people do not have empathy. Martin Hoffman, an empathy study researcher (in Goleman, 1999;147), states that the root of morality is in empathy because (as an example) having empathy towards a victim and feel his/her pain will push someone to offer help. Hoffman mentions that the ability to put our self in someone else's shoes makes someone possess certain moral principles.

The importance of each individual's empathy in social life affects on the empathy development of one's social life, including students. The guidance and counselling service as an integrated part of the education process at schools need to be done in sustainable efforts to shape and develop students' empathy.

### 2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

#### 2.1 Definition of Empathy

Empathy is an ability to feel what someone else feels, or capacity to put oneself into others' condition and problems. Empathy is one of social intelligence aspects. People who have empathy tend to be well accepted in any form of social interaction. Goleman in his book Emotional Intelligence (1999) has discussed the aspects of empathy. According to him, empathy is built based on self-awareness, the more open someone to his/her own emotion, and the more skilful he is to understand others' feeling. The empathic ability is an ability to know how the other feels. Konstantikaki. V. & Ioannidou. F (2008) says that empathy is the "capacity" to share and understand another's "state of mind" or emotion. It is often characterized as the ability to "put oneself into another's shoes", or in some way experience the outlook or emotions of another being within oneself.

According to Hurlock (1978), empathy is an ability to give a pressure or to put our self into other's position. Furthermore, Hurlock (1980) asserts that empathy needs capacity to understand other people feeling and emotion, and ability to imagine our self in the perspective of others. There is a correlation between empathy and concern: other people's pain is our sadness. Hoffman (1978) says that empathy refers to cognitive and affective aspects: (1) empathy as a cognitive awareness toward others internal condition (thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and intentions) and (2) affective responses toward others. Gervasioh, Kagure, Thou (2017) ask that empathy is a form of connection with a cognitive emotive response that stems from the apprehension of another person's emotional and physical state

of distress. According to Lord-Kambitsch: Empathy itself is understanding and ability to share in an emotional state or situation others by imagining yourself be in that person's situation (Rachmawati; Listiyandini; 2020). Empathy can also be defined from the perspective multidimensional, emphasizing on individual capacity to respond others, taking into account both cognitive aspects and affective aspects (Garaigordobil, 2009, in Rachmawati; Listiyandini; 2020). But according McKenna; Boyle; Brown; Williams; Molloy; Lewis; Molloy (2012) empathy is a predominantly cognitive (rather than emotional).

David (in Taufik, 2012:154) considers that empathy consists of:

- a. Cognitive components: (1) Perspective Talking (PT); someone's tendency to take other's psychological point of view spontaneously, and (2) Fantasy (FS); someone's ability to form their self imaginatively in experiencing feeling and action of fictitious characters in books, films, and stories being read and watched.
- b. Affective components: (1) Empathic Concern (EC); a tendency towards experiences which relate to warmth, compassions, and concern for others, and (2) Personal Distress (PD) emphasises on personal anxiety that oriented on our self and discomfort feeling toward other's inconvenience.

Developing empathy means to develop the cognitive and affective components of empathy. The schools' guidance and counselling service can be conducted as an effort to develop students' empathy.

## **2.2 Guidance and Counselling Service with Exercise Techniques to Develop Students' Empathy**

Empathy is developed consistently with human development. Hoffman (in Goleman, 1999) sees that there is a natural process of empathy since an early age to the next stages. However, it is also influenced by communities, such as home and school. Willis (2009) argues that empathy can be developed through exercises. Willis explains the use of exercise techniques to develop the empathy of the prospective counsellors. The exercise covers the ability of the counsellors to express their feelings, and diagnose feeling, experiences, minds (sphere of counselling), whether by using Primary Empathy=PE method or by using deeper (Advance Accurate Empathy\_AAE) method. Thus, students' empathy can be developed through guidance and counselling service by using exercises technique.

There are a number of methods or techniques that can be used in guidance and counselling service. Exercise technique can be used to shape, develop, or change people's attitude. According to Rusmana, (2009;15) the exercise technique is a method utilised in a group guidance which is oriented on well-measured, planned, and structured activities in its duration, content, and risk.

The exercise techniques that can be used to develop students' empathy are:

### **a. Writing**

Writing is expressing ideas, thoughts, opinions, and feelings through written language. Writing activities provide a chance to the writer to visualise the things being considered, desired and felt in written language to be known by others. Writing also can be used to express the experiences of someone or a situation as if the writer experiences it by himself.

According to Silberman (2006,198) writing activities allow students to think about the experiences they have. Writing is a dramatic way to increase the contemplation independently and express the ideas in writing form.

Writing exercise technique can be used in guidance and counselling service to develop students' empathy. This technique is conducted through following procedures:

- 1) Ask students to choose the types of emotion or recall past experience or to imagine a future event related to his/her feeling about object or events, for example, experience with a beggar, a friend's birthday party, their emotions when they are watching victims of disaster, and other things.
- 2) Explain to the students the aim of the contemplation and writing experience/feelings they have chosen.
- 3) Ask students to write about their experiences/feelings they have chosen. Try to get every student to write all his/her experiences or feelings.
- 4) Give students sufficient time to write. Ask students to read their writing when they have finished the task.
- 5) Discuss their writing result to draw a conclusion.
- 6) Ask every student to make a commitment to the experience and feeling that make him/her have empathy.

Writing technique is effective to develop a certain attitude on students. The result of Thalib's research (Thalib, Rahim, Usman: 2020) has shown that writing technique can affect on the naturalistic intelligence of elementary school students. In her research used poetry writing technique about nature, animals, and plants as a technique to develop students' naturalistic intelligence (Thalib, Rahim, Usman (2020).

### **b. Dyad and triad (triad)**

Dyad is an activity in which the group members are being paired to discuss some issues or to finish a task. Triad is an activity in which the team members are divided into smaller groups of three. Triad is used when the total of the group members is in odd numbers (Rusmana, 2009;20). Furthermore, it is explained by Rusmana (2009) that dyad and triad give the members a chance to have a more personal contact, express ideas, and diversifying group.

Developing students' empathy through dyad and triad technique can be conducted through the following procedures:

- 1) Ask students to make a group of two (dyad) or small group that consists of three students (triad)

- 2) Ask the group of two (dyad) to express their feeling at that time or at the past time to be responded by his/her partner. That rules also apply triad group. Give the students sufficient time so they can have a chance to tell and response their experience or feeling.
- 3) Discuss the empathic experience they have gained during the exercise.
- 4) Ask every student to make a commitment to the experience and feeling that make him/her have empathy.

Through the exercise of telling and responding experience or feeling, students' empathy will be gradually shape and developed. According to Rusmana(2009;20) dyad and triad technique is also useful to develop social interaction and practice some skills besides empathy.

**c. Fantasy**

Fantasy is usually interpreted as an ability to form new opinions (ideas) which are supported (assisted) by existed opinions (ideas). According to Rusmana (2009;23) fantasy exercise is usually used for group development and therapy, empowering imagination and group members' visual development. Fantasy helps the team members to be aware of thefeeling, hopes, doubts, and fear. Acoording Rahim, Puluhulawa, dan Madina (2021) fantasy as a method that is implemented by asking students to imagine themselves like an object (person, tree, plants,or other objects) for a specific reason.

The procedure of fantasy technique in guidance and counselling service involve the following:

- 1) Asking students to close their eyes and make their self as comfortable as possible.
  - 2) Asking students to recall a sad experience, or pleasant experience, or painful experience, and also imagine what they expect to be done by others when they experience those things.
  - 3) Asking every student to share his/her experience.
  - 4) Discussing the empathic experience they have gained during the exercise.
  - 5) Asking every student to make a commitment to the experience and feeling that make him/her have empathy.
- d. Common Reading

Common reading technique in developing students' empathy is a reading activity and discuss some writing results such as biography/autobiography, short story, poem, or fairy tale that contain empathic experience to train students to possess empathy.

Common reading technique in guidance and counselling service can be conducted through following procedures:

- 1) Preparing ready-to-read reading material for students that contains empathic experience.
- 2) Asking students to read and comprehend the reading content.
- 3) Asking students to present a summary of their reading.
- 4) Discussing the empathic experience that they have gained during the exercise.
- 5) Drawing a conclusion about empathic experience learned from the exercise.
- 6) Asking every student to make a commitment to the experience and feeling that make him/her have empathy.

For a practical effect, these following factors need to be considered: (1) student's ability to read and comprehend the reading content, and (2) make sure that the reading contains empathic experience.

**e. Feedback**

Feedback exercise allows students and counsellor share their feelings and minds over something (Rusmana, 2009;24). The procedures of feedback technique in developing students' empathy:

- 1) Asking students to express their feelings whether their feelings toward their own experience or someone else's experience.
- 2) Giving feedback about feelings from the counsellor and students.
- 3) Discussing the empathic experience, they have gained during the exercise.
- 4) Drawing a conclusion about empathic experience learned from the exercise.
- 5) Asking every student to make a commitment to the experience and feeling that make him/her have empathy.

The application of exercise techniques can be used in group guidance (Rusmana, 2009) besides authoritative guidance by complying the guidance stages either group guidance or authoritative guidance. Guidance and counselling teacher/counsellor's skills and creativity are required.

**3. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Empathy is one of social intelligence aspects that have to be possessed by every people/student in his/her social interaction. Students' empathy can be developed through guidance and counselling service by using exercise techniques, such as writing, dyad and triad, fantasy, common reading, and feedback. Therefore guidance and counselling teachers/counsellors are expected to create the other exercise techniques to shape and develop students' empathy. By implementing the exercise techniques continuously, the student will eventually possess the empathic attitude.



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