

## THE ROLES OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY LEARNING

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### Abstract

National character development is seen as a collective-systemic effort of a nation-state to bring into reality the life of the nation and state in accordance with its foundations and ideology, constitution, state direction, and its collective potential in the context of civilized national, regional and global life to form a nation that is strong, competitive, with noble character, moral, tolerant, mutual cooperation, patriotic, dynamic, cultured and science-oriented based on Pancasila and imbued with iman and taqwa to Allah The Almighty. The 21st century is known to everyone as the age of knowledge, main foundation for various aspects of life. The 21st century learning paradigm emphasizes the ability of students to think critically, be able to connect knowledge with the real world, master information technology, communicate and collaborate. The achievement of these skills can be achieved by applying appropriate learning methods in terms of materials and skills mastery.

**Keywords:** Role, Education, Character, Learning, 21st Century

### Abstrak

Pembangunan karakter bangsa dipandang sebagai upaya kolektif-sistemik suatu negara kebangsaan untuk mewujudkan kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara yang sesuai dengan dasar dan ideologi, konstitusi, haluan negara, serta potensi kolektifnya dalam konteks kehidupan nasional, regional dan global yang berkeadaban untuk membentuk bangsa yang tangguh, kompetitif, berakhlak mulia, bermoral, bertoleran, bergotong royong, patriotik, dinamis, berbudaya dan berorientasi ipteks berdasarkan Pancasila dan dijiwai oleh iman dan takwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa. Abad 21 yang dikenal semua orang sebagai abad pengetahuan yang merupakan landasan utama untuk berbagai aspek kehidupan. Paradigma pembelajaran abad 21 menekankan kepada kemampuan peserta didik untuk berpikir kritis, mampu menghubungkan ilmu dengan dunia nyata, menguasai teknologi informasi, berkomunikasi dan berkolaborasi. Pencapaian keterampilan tersebut dapat dicapai dengan penerapan metode pembelajaran yang sesuai dari sisi penguasaan materi dan keterampilan.

**Kata Kunci:** Peran, Pendidikan, Karakter, Pembelajaran, Abad 21

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### INTRODUCTION

Character education is often interpreted as the education of value, character, moral, and character which aims to develop the ability of students or children to judge and give good and bad decisions about something. This is done so that they can maintain something good and bring into reality that goodness in everyday life wholeheartedly. Practically, character education will be easier to do if it includes spiritual and moral education. Therefore, actions

that need to be instilled in shaping character are knowledge of character attributes that should be owned or required in religion, habituation to apply character attributes, and ownership of character attributes in children.

There are several methods often applied in developing character. These methods generally need applying in accordance with the conditions and situations at hand. Most of the times, an educator (lecturer, teacher or parent) must implement several integrated methods, for example inviting children to think wisely and giving examples of wise behavior. In general, the character learning method includes components of thinking (for example, why do I have to have good morals?), Attitude (for example, animating good behavior and being absorbed in the heart), and application (for example, implementing good actions).

According to Abdullah Sani and Muhammad Kadri (2016: 23), several methods that can be applied in developing children's character include: First, showing good exemplary behavior and guiding children to behave according to the examples shown. Second, accustoming them to take good actions; for example, respecting their parents, being honest, never giving up, being fair, paying attention, helping others, and being empathetic. Third, discussing or inviting them to think of good actions, then, encourage them to do good things. Fourth, telling stories and taking lessons from a story.

Based on this method, there are several stages that can be followed in shaping children's character through education, including: arousing their curiosity, inviting them to discuss, guiding them to plan something to be done, facilitating them children in carrying out plans that have been compiled, and discussing with them in evaluating what they have done.

Furthermore, a number of actions that can be implemented by parents or teachers in an effort to develop children's character include: First is to understand their behavior, even though it looks annoying like screaming. Second is to ignore their inappropriate behavior, such as whining. Third is to distract them from unwelcome actions by asking questions in another direction or inviting them to do something. Fourth is to apply role models according to the character to be formed. Fifth is to give gifts if they do commendable acts. Sixth is to make an agreement containing sanctions if they break the rules. Seventh is to change your behavior so that you can do something responsible enough. Eighth is to give praise so that they are motivated to do good actions. Ninth, to prevent negative behavior is more effective than correcting it. Tenth, inviting them to do something that arouses feelings, encourages, or achieves goals. Eleventh, challenging them to do better. Twelfth, letting them accept the natural consequences of their actions. Thirteenth is to make suggestions for them to animate their actions. Fourteenth is encourage children to do something for parents. Fifteenth is to give verbal and nonverbal warnings or cues. Sixteenth is to implement routine actions and habituation. Seventeenth is to expose them to a problem. Eighteenth is to resolve disputes between them. Nineteenth is to define the boundaries of the rules clearly and specifically.

Building children's character should start as early as possible or if necessary from birth. It must be done continuously and focused because character is not born, but created. With character education, parents and teachers can develop all children's potential of children so that they become fully human. Comprehensive education can also be aimed at forming true lifelong learners.

The development of the 21st century is marked by the use of information and communication technology in all aspects of life. Technology connects the world that transcends geographic

barriers so that the world is without borders. Air transportation technology makes it easy to take long trips. Through television media, events in one place can be immediately known and seen in other places that are very far away at the same time. The development of information and communication technology via the Internet makes it easy to send money at a very short time, even in real time. Technological developments lead to changes in workforce qualifications and competencies.

Yet, the quality of education in Indonesia is currently still low. This is supported by Trisdiono (2013) that in entering the 21st century, Indonesia's human resources are not competitive yet. The development of the 21st century is marked by the use of information and communication technology in all aspects of life, including in the learning process. The world of work demands a change in competence. The ability to think critically, solve problems, and be collaborative is the important competencies in entering the life of the 21st century. Schools are required to be able to prepare students to enter the 21st century.

The 21st century is the age of knowledge, a century where information is widely spread and technology is developing. The characteristics of the 21st century are marked by the increasingly interconnected world of science, so that the synergy between them becomes even faster. In the context of using information and communication technology in the world of education, it has been proven by the narrowing and melting of the "space and time" factors which have been the determining aspects of the speed and success of science by mankind (BSNP, 2010).

The 21st century national education aims to bring into reality the ideals of the nation, namely a prosperous and happy Indonesian people, with an honorable and equal position with other nations in the global world, through the formation of a society consisting of quality human resources, which are independent individuals, having good will and able to bring into reality the ideals of the nation (BNSP, 2010).

In line with this, the Ministry of Education and Culture formulates that the 21st century learning paradigm emphasizes the ability of students to find out from various sources, formulate problems, think analytically and collaborate collaboratively in solving problems (Litbang Kemdikbud, 2013).

Other forms of utilization of information technology that contribute to preparing 21st century learning are the use of MOOCs (Goto, Batchelor, & Lautenbach, 2015), video game-based learning (Nino & Evans, 2015), e-learning using both LMS (Learning management) system) or other learning applications (Tamimudin H, 2013) and the use of mobile learning as a learning medium (Lai & Hawang, 2014).

Conceptually, teachers as professionals must be qualified in various competency requirements to carry out their duties and authority professionally; yet, the real conditions in the real world are still very apprehensive, both in terms of quantity, quality and professionalism of teachers. This problem is still compounded by the various challenges ahead that are still complex in this global era.

In general, as expressed by Tilaar (1995), during the Long Term Development (PJP) II, the society could not accept teachers who were not professional; one of the ways was that they had passed teacher certification. This is in accordance with UNESCO's recommendations which emphasize three demands, namely: First, teachers must be considered as professional

workers who provide services to society. Second, teachers are required to master specialist knowledge and skills. Third, the knowledge and skills are obtained from in-depth and continuous education.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Role of Character Education**

There are so many and varied types of characters identified by observers of character education. In its implementation, the number and types of characters chosen of course differ from one region or school to another, depending on the interests and conditions of each. But nationally, the main values can be developed which are emphasized according to the conditions of Indonesian nation and state. For example, the characters of tolerance and love of peace are very important to be emphasized because of the diversity of the nation and state. The value of honesty and responsibility is very urgent when this nation is facing various corruption cases. The value of discipline is very important because Indonesian people are known for having cultural mentality that lacks discipline (Koentjaraningrat, 1999). The value of caring and being helpful is very necessary to be developed when various natural calamities and disasters hit Indonesia and claimed many victims. For the addition of other values that will be developed, of course, it is adjusted to the interests and conditions of the school.

Gerakan Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK) or The Movement for Strengthening Character Education launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) identified 5 (five) main character values that are interrelated to form a value network that needs to be developed as a priority; namely religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity. Furthermore, Komalasari, Kokom and Didin Saripudin (2017) explain five main values of the nation's character, among others: First is religious. This character values reflect faith in God Almighty, manifested in the behavior of implementing religious teachings and beliefs, respecting religious differences, upholding the a high tolerance attitude towards the implementation of religious worship and other beliefs, living in harmony and peace with followers of other religions. The value of this religious character includes three dimensions of relationship at once, namely the relationship of individuals with God, individuals with others, and individuals with the universe (environment). The value of this religious character is shown in loving behavior and maintaining the integrity of creation. Religious sub-values, among others; love peace, tolerance, respect for differences in religion and belief, steadfastness, self-confidence, cooperation between religions and beliefs, anti-violence and violence, friendship, sincerity, not imposing one's will, loving the environment, protecting the small and the excluded.

Second is nationalist. This character is a way of thinking, behaving, and acting that shows loyalty, concern and high respect for language, the physical, social, cultural, economic and political environment of the nation, placing the interests of the nation and the state above self-interest and the group. Nationalist sub-values include: appreciating the nation's own culture, maintaining its cultural wealth, being willing to sacrifice, being superior and achieving, loving the country, protecting the environment, obeying laws, discipline, respecting cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.

Third is independent. This character is the attitude and behavior of not depending on others and using all energy, thoughts, time to realize hopes, dreams and ideals. The independent sub-values include: work ethic (hard work), resilience, fighting power, professionalism, creativity, courage, and maintaining lifelong learning.

Fourth is mutual cooperation. This character reflects the act of appreciating the spirit of cooperation and working hand in hand to solve common problems, establish communication and friendship, provide assistance/assistance to people in need. The sub-values of mutual cooperation include respect, cooperation, inclusion, commitment to joint decisions, deliberation to reach consensus, helping out, solidarity, empathy, anti-discrimination, anti-violence, and voluntary attitudes.

Fifth is integrity. This character is a value that underlies behavior based on efforts to make himself a person who can always be trusted in his words, actions and work, has commitment and loyalty to human and moral values (moral integrity). The character of integrity includes: an attitude of responsibility as a citizen, being actively involved in social life, through consistency of actions and words based on truth, loyalty, moral commitment, anti-corruption, justice, responsibility, exemplary, and respecting individual dignity (especially people with disabilities).

Lickona (1992: 51) emphasizes the importance of three components of a good character where "Character so conceived has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior. Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good-habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action." This means that a good character consists of knowing the good, loving or wanting goodness (Loving or desiring the good), and doing good things (acting the good). Therefore, the way to form an effective character is to involve these three aspects. Lickona (1992: 52) describes the components of the three specs as follows: (1) Moral knowing (moral awareness, knowing moral values, perspective taking, moral reasoning, decision making, and self-knowledge); (2) Moral feeling (conscience, self-esteem, empathy, loving the good, self-control, and humanity); (3) Moral action (competence, will, and habit).

Lickona (1992) further explains the identification of moral knowing or knowledge of moral, moral feeling or feelings about moral and moral action. Moral knowing is an important thing to teach, which consists of six things, namely: 1) moral awareness, 2) moral values, 3) perspective taking, 4) moral reasoning, 5) decision making, and (6) self-knowledge. Moral feeling is another aspect that must be instilled in students which is a source of energy from humans to act in accordance with moral principles. There are six things that are emotional aspects that a person must be able to feel to become a human being with character, namely: 1) conscience, 2) self-esteem (self-confidence), 3) empathy (feeling the suffering of others), 4) loving the good (loving the truth), 5) self-control (being able to control oneself), and 6) humility. Moral action is how to make moral knowledge and feelings transformed into real action. This moral action is the result (outcome) of the other two component characters. To understand what drives someone to act morally, we must look at three other aspects of character, namely: 1) competency, 2) will, and 3) habit.

The Indonesia Heritage Foundation (Megawangi, 2000: 94) has compiled the three components of character into a series of values that should be taught to children, which include: (a) the love of God and all of His creation; (b) independence and responsibility; (c) honesty / trustworthy, wise; (d) respect and courtesy; (e) generous, helpful, and mutual cooperation; (f) confident, creative, and hardworking; (g) leadership and justice; (h) kind and humble; and (i) tolerance, peace and unity. An expert of Moral education, Lickona (1992) states that at least there are characters: honest, compassion, courage, kindness, self-control, perseverance. Meanwhile, the Aspen Declaration includes 6 (six) values: 1) trustworthy which

includes honesty and integrity; 2) treats people with respect; 3) responsible; 4) fair; 5) caring; and 6) good citizen. The values contained in this character are used as basic characters in character education.

**Tabel 1.** The difference in basic characters between the two can be seen in the following table.

No.	Indonesia Heritage Foundation	Character Count USA
1.	The love of God and all of His creation	Trustworthy includes honesty and integrity
2.	Independence and responsible	Treating other people with respect
3.	Honesty/trustworthy, wise	Responsible
4.	Respect and polite	Fair
5.	Generous, like to help and mutual cooperation	Caring
6.	Self-confidence, creative and hard worker	Good citizens
7.	Leadership and justice	
8.	Nice and humble	
9.	Tolerance and polite	

## 2. 21st Century Learning

International demands for teachers' duties entering the 21st century are not easy. They are expected to be able to carry out a learning process that is based on and implements the four pillars recommended by the UNESCO International Commission for Education, namely: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together.

If we look closely at the four pillars, it requires a teacher to be creative, work diligently and must be able and willing to improve his abilities. Based on these demands, a teacher is finally required to play a more active and creative role. As explained by Daryanto and Syaiful Karim (2017: 7), teachers must be more active and creative in the learning process, including: First, teachers do not only master science as a product, but as a process. He or she must understand the scientific disciplines he works on as ways of knowing because it is more than scholars who use science but must master the epistemology of these disciplines. Second, teachers must recognize students in their characteristics as individuals who are in the process of development, both in their way of thinking, social and emotional development, and moral development. Third, teachers must understand education as a cultural process so that they are able to choose a learning model and an evaluation system that allows the socialization process to occur as abilities, values, attitudes, in the process of studying various disciplines. Fourth, further, it is also stated about the role of teachers related to teaching activities and education administration, self-oriented, and from a psychological point of view.

In relation to learning activities and education administration, teachers have the following roles: 1) initiator, director and assessor of education; 2) community representatives in schools, meaning that teachers act as voice carriers and community interests in education; 3) an expert in the field, namely mastering the material in which he teaches; 4) disciplinary enforcers, namely teachers must ensure that students carry out discipline; 5) implementing education administration, namely teachers are responsible for education to take place well; 6) young generation leaders, meaning that teachers are responsible for directing the development of students as young people who will become future heirs; 7) translator to the community,

namely the teacher's role to convey various scientific and technological advances to the community.

From a personal point of view (self-oriented), a teacher acts as: First, a social worker (social worker), a person who must provide services to the community. Second, students and scientists, namely someone who must constantly learn continuously to develop their scientific mastery. Third, parents; it means that the teacher is the representative of the parents of the students for every student in the school. Fourth, exemplary model means that the teacher is a model of behavior that students must emulate. Fifth, provide opportunities for every student. Students are expected to feel safe in their teacher education.

From a psychological perspective, the teacher acts as: First, an educational psychology expert, meaning that the teacher is someone who understands educational psychology and is able to practice it in carrying out his duties as an educator. Second, artists in human relations; it means that teachers are people who have the ability to create an atmosphere of human relations, especially with students so that they can achieve educational goals. Third, forming a group (group builder), which is being able to form or create groups and their activities as a way to achieve educational goals. Fourth, catalytic agent or innovator, namely the teacher is a person who is able to create a renewal in terms of making something good. Fifth, mental health workers; it means that the teacher is responsible for the creation of mental health for students.

Meanwhile, Jennifer Nichols explained four main principles of 21st century learning, including: (1) Instructional should be student-centered (learning development should use a learner-centered learning approach); (2) Education should be collaborative (students must be taught to collaborate with others); (3) Learning should have context (learning is meaningless if it does not have an impact on the lives of students outside of school); (4) Schools should be integrated with society (schools should be able to facilitate students to be involved in their social environment).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on some of the explanations above, the following can be concluded:

The characters of tolerance and peace-loving are very important to be emphasized because of the diversity of the nation and state. The value of honesty and responsibility is very urgent when this nation is facing various corruption cases. The value of discipline is very important because this nation is known to have a cultural mentality that lacks discipline.

The Movement for Strengthening Character Education that needs to be developed as a priority, namely religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity. The main principles of 21st century learning include: First, the development of learning should use a student-centered learning approach. Second, students must be taught to collaborate with others. Third, the subject matter needs to be linked to the daily life of students. Fourth, schools should be able to facilitate students to be involved in their social environment.

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