

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Humans are social being that needs the presence of the other human. The relationship between human is an important factor that influence their attitude and personality. Therefore it is important for a teacher to generate and maintain a good relationship with the students.

Having a good relationship with the students influences at least two factors inside the classroom: classroom environment and classroom management. Every teacher, even those who have been working as a teacher for decades, finds it challenging to manage new students every year. But once the teacher has successfully had a positive relationship with the students, the two factors will trouble the teacher no more.

“Teachers and students share the belief that learning should be fun” (Shultz & LoSchiavo, 2006). I always think that a lesson should be fun if teachers and students can get along with each other. Hassan Hussein said that if teachers can maintain relationship with the students they will be able to develop effective classroom managements (Hussein, 2009). Moreover, Arthur, Gordon, and Butterfield (2003, p. 57) said that “with positive relationships established, effective engagement in learning activities is more easily attained”. This means that generating a good relationship with the students will make a good classroom environment and enhance effective classroom management. I am humorous, but

the problem was I came from different background of culture with my students. How can I start a teacher-student relationship when I was aware that I would offend the student with my humor?

Dee Dickinson has an idea that “a sense of humor is one of the tools to unite people”; he also shows how humor can help students in several intelligences (Dickinson, 2001). Since making joke is a part of my personality; I have always done it anywhere, anytime. I choose it as a way to start a positive relationship with people. Jennings Bryant and his colleague Dolf Zillmann of Indiana University; found that humor is like a double-edged sword, it has positive and negative effects. “It can enhance students’ attention, improve the classroom environment or lower students’ test anxieties, but the overdone humor can also make the students distracted from the lesson” (Stambor, 2006). Fortunately I believe that I have a great intensity of seriousness in order to balance my humor.

In my practicum I got an opportunity to be a real teacher; to manage my own class. So I put my style into my teaching. I was joking everytime I saw an opportunity. I joked when the students misbehave, I joked when the students were losing their concentration, and when I gave them examples during lesson. I did this not only because I like it but I did it on purpose as well. I can get angry or punish the students, as most the teachers do, but as been written in a blog by Principal Kendrick (2007), “negative focus on the lesson almost always results in negative thinking by students”. So I choose to use different approach. I do believe in my heart that my students can be better, so I would not give up shaping them, because ”students will live up to our expectations, whatever they might be”

(Kendrick, 2007). This statement is also being said by Jones & Jones (2007, p. 22) that “students seem to perform as teachers expect them to”.

I have been a teenager as well and I liked to do silly things, sometimes being naughty and saying that it is just for fun. So I did understand my students’ behavior and I reminded them to behave through humor. I see the students as gift that are given by God, that God has His own plan to send them into my life so I will do my best not to harm them, but to help them to change. God has a big plan in this world and each of the Christian is a part of it.

Therefore I will always trust that every single student is worthy to be shaped. Just as Jesus trusted Peter even though He knew that Peter will fail him (Matthew 26:75). Just like Jesus does, it is through Holy Spirit that I can recognize the students’ ability; but first I have to see them as God’s gift, that they are precious.

I use humor because I want my students to enjoy the lesson, not to get stressed during my explanation, not to be afraid to ask questions and discuss their thinking. I was trying to make a good and exciting classroom environment for the students, hoping that they felt safe and comfortable during my lesson. As Van Brummelen (2009, p. 36) said that teacher is a facilitator that provides the right environment and motivation not only for learning but also for wisdom. Also a positive classroom environment encourages participation and risk-taking because students know they will not be harassed or belittled by the teacher (Principal Kendrick, 2007).

If the students trust me and feel safe, I hope they will be open. Then I can work with them more, motivate them to think and learn, moreover I can encourage them in their faith and believe. This is the best opportunity toward the ministry. This means that teacher has become a shepherd or guide for the students. At this point, Van Brummelen suggests that teacher puts the components of Christian teaching such as enabling, guiding, structuring and unfolding as the primary target.

Van Brumelen (2009, p. 34) defines teaching as the deliberate attempt to bring about learning, therefore in my opinion the teacher is a very important aspect in the school for the students, teacher is usually the key whether the students learn the lesson or not. For some subjects that are known to be the ‘killer’ subject such as mathematics and science, many of the students are usually afraid of it or worse they hate it. But when they feel comfortable with the teacher, perhaps they will listen to the explanation and as they do, they are doing the most crucial thing in the learning process, trying to understand the lesson.

I don’t say that it will be easy, but in ‘life’s dictionary’ we are told we should not give up, even though I consider that there could be negative consequences of using humor. When the students feel comfortable they may go wild, and lose their respect. At this stage, it depends on the teacher’s attitude of how to control them and keep them on track. The dangerous aspect of using humor is the teacher’s own emotion. It is hard to keep your head cool when you are teaching a class of disrespectful teenagers, so I think self control is one of the important aspects that need to be considered before a teacher tries to do this.

When I was using humor to interact with the students, I was treated as one of them, they liked the classroom environment that was set up, they did feel comfortable but at some point I needed to be serious. This was another thing that I expected; I wanted to know the students as deep as possible, to the personal level that I could know who they are and finally help them to develop their attitude to be a true Christian; as an Indonesian proverb said, ‘tak kenal maka tak sayang’¹.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How can a teacher create a good classroom environment so that students can enjoy their class?
2. Can humor enhance the learning process?
3. How to use humor as part of a teaching style?

1.3 Purpose

1. Knowing how to create and maintain a good classroom environment so that students can enjoy their class.
2. Knowing the effect of using humor toward the learning process.
3. Knowing the right way to use humor as part of a teaching style.

¹ Not knowing, not loving

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study was meant to bring impact for the students, teachers, and educational institutions related to the attitude toward the learning process.

1. For students

Learning through humor will help the students to be comfortable inside the classroom; they will feel safe because they trust that the teacher will not harm them. It will enhance the students' achievement as well, because they will enjoy their learning activities and start to appreciate the knowledge that they get. At last it may help the students to be lifetime learners (knowledge addict).

2. For teachers

Learning through humor will enable the teachers to have a new way to deal with students' behavior. It will help the teachers to create good relationship with their students. It will help them to know the students better, to interact with them and shape them to become better person. With humorous learning the teachers will be able to create and maintain positive classroom environment that will be one of the ways toward good classroom management. And the best thing is that it helps the teachers to enjoy and have fun instead of getting stressed when they are teaching.

1.5 Definition of terms

There are some terms used in this study and the definitions of the terms are stated as follows:

- † Classroom Environment is the climate inside the classroom that is being set up by the teacher in order to give certain mood to the students.
- † Classroom Management is the teacher's strategies that create and maintain an orderly learning environment (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007, p. 371).
- † Humor is the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing; the ability to laugh at things that are amusing (Hornby, 2002).
- † Teaching is a call from God "to guide young persons into the knowledge and discernment that leads to service for God and fellow human beings." (Van Brummelen, 2009, P.42)

