

Creating a Class Climate to Enhance the Ability to Think Creatively

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the factors that create a classroom climate in order to improve students' creative thinking abilities. This article is a grounded theory study; a research strategy producing general and abstract theories of a process of interaction originates from the views of participants. In the perspective of social studies, the class is a space for learning activities, there are interactions in it, and has goals. For this reason, teachers need to design classrooms so that a class climate supports learning, namely a good classroom atmosphere, that can build student interaction so that they can focus on learning and confidence to convey creative ideas. The results of the investigations showed that several indicators of classroom climate management could influence the students' ability to think creatively.

Keywords: *Classroom climate, Creative thinking, Social studies*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social studies as subjects of schools play a role in forming students into good citizenship, one of which has the characteristics of creative thinking skills, which can help students to solve the problems, to develop themselves optimally, and to improve the quality of social live environment. Critical thinking analysis can help students to inspire, to convey original ideas, and the most important they are able to solve problems in creative ways [1].

However, the existing learning process has not been able to make students active in developing students' thinking potential. This is due to traditional learning patterns that make students less creativity in solving problems. This is contrary to the understanding that all children have the same right to be creative and get creative learning [2]. Students' creative thinking skills can be created in the classroom that has a good climate.

Previous research on class climate focus on the impact of class climate is that increase motivation, safe conditions, to have provision of facilities [3, 4]. The research did not discuss what kind of class climate can achieve learning. Therefore, in this study presented a class climate picture that can improve students' creative thinking skills.

2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with grounded theory strategy, by emphasizing on creative thinking abilities that are stimulated from the class climate. The choice of method is based on the curiosity of researchers to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the factors that create a classroom climate to improve the creative thinking skills of vocational students during social studies. Participants consisted of a social studies teacher and three students. Data obtained by conducting observations and in-depth interviews. The focus of research is related to class climate and creative thinking. The process of data analysis includes: data reduction, categorization, synthesis, compiling work hypotheses [5].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Class climate is a psychological environment that characterizes positive interactions so as to create a feeling of connection between teachers and students in the classroom [6-8]. Class climate that constructed such class would make students comfortable so that students can easily think because tranquility is created in the class, Anderson and West call it by *relaxing and joyful atmosphere* [9].

The classroom atmosphere in social studies classes is quite crowded, but the teacher can still control it so that

students can still focus on the material. At the beginning of learning, the teacher conveyed the discipline of the learning process and the objectives of social studies learning. The order made was not to limit students but to create a conducive classroom climate can be conducive. And the teacher did not forbid students to submit ideas, to ask questions, to deliver comment, even some students gave jokes when learning took place. When the teacher explained the material, students could ask without waiting for the teacher to finish explaining the material. This is done so that students do not forget the things they want to ask.

The teacher challenges students to stimulate their abilities, can be discussion and decision-making activities [10], students can select social issues to be discussed, which have an impact on the transformation of knowledge to achieve learning goals. Therefore, learning activities must involve students to be active in learning with teacher attitudes that provide space for students to express their ideas. Thus, the class climate that is built is a goal-oriented atmosphere, namely the classroom climate that remains conducive and students achieve the desired competencies after completion of learning. A goal-oriented class climate is also indicated by a positive vision or slogan in the classroom. The set goals must be able to be socialized to all students. Students as subjects of education play a role in realizing learning objectives. With the goal, students will arrange themselves to achieve these goals, so that they have a self-concept [11] which is able to increase academic value in research.

The togetherness in the class seems to have been awakened by the establishment of tolerance in the classroom. Quite often in the mass media lately, it has been a lot of violence in the schools. Violence arises because of the absence of mutual respect and appreciation. The feeling that the group is superior to other groups, and psychic abnormalities of happiness when seeing other people suffer. Therefore, students should be taught the beauty of diversity, differences are not an obstacle for them to have friendship. To reorient friendships and create togetherness in the classroom, teachers can use the model of social interaction and pre-service carried out by teachers [12]. A sense of togetherness can also be grown by instilling social care. Students can be invited to participate in community social activities. This activity is a concrete form of applying social skills in social studies. Before starting social activities, the teacher can develop creative thinking skills by asking students' opinions in solving social problems.

To realize a classroom climate, cannot be separated from the physical environment. The physical environment means clean, comfortable class conditions, adequate ventilation, and more perfect if supported by the availability of ICT-based learning media. Teachers must plan classroom arrangement [13, 14] which can influence students in the class to interact with each other. Classrooms can strengthen the relationship between teachers and students and between students and students. Classroom arrangement has a paradigm. In open classes, students will learn better because they are adapted to the strengths and weaknesses of students. Learning is based on students' unique interests and experiences; students are trained to connect a concept with real social

problems. Classrooms can provide attractive visual stimulation so that it can be a stimulus for students to think. Psychologically, the boundaries of the classroom actually limit the thinking. In open classrooms, the social studies learning process is designed to be challenging, namely the classroom atmosphere that can arouse students' curiosity, which is done by utilizing the visual media around the class by the teachers. With this condition will encourage students to explore and actively discuss.

The positive communication is built in the classroom so that it creates positive interaction. In learning, the teacher gives chance to students in expressing their ideas so that they feel challenged to think creatively. Stimulus delivered by the teacher; the teacher raised social issues so that these communications can help students to be able to solve the existing problems. The teacher also admitted, when outside school, often received WhatsApp messages from students. This proves communication in the digital era is not limited by distance, teachers and students communicate not because of face to face communication, but they can interact with each other online [15]. In this way, distance is no longer the reason for lack of communication. Every time students can discuss with teachers or fellow students.

The very interesting thing from in-depth interviews conducted to students, they want warmth of the classroom. Warmth, here, is not meant because of the availability of heating. However, they have a desire to having a home-like class with full of family love. Likewise, warmth of school, students felt the concern of the teacher as the second parent in the school. Thus, the warmth they felt from the colleagues. They appreciated the opinions he conveyed, and this became a manifestation of the existence of students in the class. In addition, the warmth that students feel in the class is believed to be able to foster common sense [16]. But if the class climate is not able to accommodate the talents and interests of students, this can affect students' moods [17]. If students have a depressed, uncomfortable, and sad mood because they are not able to achieve what is targeted by the teacher or school, students will be trapped in a psychological condition which has implications for the decline in achievement. Then the class climate filled with warmth can bring students to a comfortable mood for creative thinking.

Class imitations built with fun activities can make students comfortable to think and stay focused on learning. The teacher organizes pleasant learning. Social studies learning activities are not focused on memorizing activities, but they can be presented in more contextual and interactive contexts. The teacher of social studies associates content with the real condition and asked students to express their opinions. Existing learning must be holistic [18] so that students are able to master the material taught. Usually, students who are lazy to think or have the ability to think creatively are weak because of not mastering the material.

Classes created in such a way can challenge students to stimulate their abilities. Students who are capable of creative thinking, will have a high sensitivity to problems, and associative and elaborative thinking. As a result, in turn it can improve the ability of teachers to make new useful and flexible combinations, based on data, information or its elements [19].

Teacher is capable of designing creative patterns in the classroom setting. But the seating arrangement position tends to be monotonous, so the teacher needs to identify where he will stand or work in front of all students. The teacher identifies the areas of the classroom based on the location of the chalkboard or writing desk to place the items needed in the presentation. Table location becomes the most functional. Many alternatives can be used in desk settings. The class climate builds positive perceptions of students in the class so that it has implications for student achievement [20].

Students who think creatively are shown by several traits, namely fluency of thinking, flexibility of thinking, and originality of thinking. Fluency of thinking includes the ability to realize various ideas freely, either individually or in groups. While the flexibility of thinking of students will produce ideas that are diverse, not rigid, and not limited by certain climates. The third feature of creative thinking is originality of thinking, namely ideas produced are original.

In social studies learning at the Vocational School level discuss material social structure, causes of social conflict, and social mobility. To measure fluency of thinking, students are to mention the factors that cause social conflict. These factors include the existence of differences of opinion, the existence of cultural differences, differences in interests, and the existence of social change. Next the teacher asks students to mention case examples of each of the factors that cause social conflict.

To measure flexibility of thinking, students are to express efforts that can be done to overcome social conflict. Each student gives his idea to overcome social conflict. There are those who propose cultural tourism so that each tribe or culture knows other cultures. With this tour, it is expected that each culture can respect differences, seeing differences as a wealth of the archipelago and foster tolerance. There were also those who suggested giving strict punishment so that the provocateurs who caused the conflict were deterred. But from several ideas delivered, a student proposed the existence of an archipelago diversity event. This idea received a lot of support from other students. According to them, events are appropriate for the military and are more effective in socializing conflict resolution in adolescents.

While the originality of thinking is that students are expected to be able to spark ideas in new and original ways. To measure originality, the teacher delivers a case of social conflict that has occurred in Indonesia, where the methods carried out have not been successful. Students are to provide other solutions for solving the conflict problem.

The efforts made by the teacher can be carried out in the supportive class conditions as described above. Teachers together with students can create a classroom climate that builds interaction, which places students as subjects of learning.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that a good class climate that can enhance creative thinking skills is shown by a goal-oriented atmosphere, a sense of togetherness,

physical environment, positive communication, warmth, and pleasant activities. From these factors, the warmth factor in the class is the most expected factor for students. In warm relationships in the classroom, students become relaxed to convey creative ideas.

The ability of important creative thinking is possessed by students because the material in social studies is fast changing and a lot of new knowledge. With the competence, the teacher can create classrooms that make students comfortable to think. The warmth of the classroom climate was able to improve students' creative thinking skills. In this climate, the classroom atmosphere that is built is family like at home. Students do not feel isolated in their own class. Like at home, they are valued for their existence, opinions, and desires. The teacher acts as a parent in the class, providing guidance and direction. This climate can stimulate students to think creatively.

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