

## Improvement of Teachers' Ability to Carry on Positive Expectation Towards Students

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In the learning process at the classroom, the teachers' teaching practice contributes significantly to the students' academic achievement. One of the aspects of teaching practice, teachers' positive expectation towards students, has been proved to play important roles in improving students' academic performance. However, in fact, many students especially low achieving students believed that they were not treated accordingly. This study was conducted with the following purposes: (1) to improve the teachers' positive expectations towards their students, especially low academic achieving students, and (2) to prosper the positive perception of students regarding their relationships with their teachers, classroom climate, and their academic ability. This study was designed as an action research. Although the results could only be observed in improving the classroom climate, and not yet on the understanding learning materials and improving thinking skills, but implementation of the program on a longer-term and more intensive feedback sessions could bring more valuable results regarding teaching effectiveness.

*Keywords:* teaching practice, learning process, positive expectations

Dalam proses pembelajaran di kelas, cara guru memandu pembelajaran akan memengaruhi keberhasilan dalam belajar. Salah satu aspek yang memengaruhi belajar siswa adalah harapan guru terhadapnya. Akan tetapi dari survei awal diperoleh bahwa para siswa, khususnya siswa dengan prestasi kurang, menilai guru kurang memberikan harapan positif terhadapnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk 1) meningkatkan harapan guru terhadap siswa khususnya siswa dengan prestasi kurang dan 2) mengembangkan persepsi yang positif pada diri siswa terkait dengan relasinya dengan guru, iklim kelas, serta terhadap kemampuan belajarnya. Desain penelitian adalah penelitian tindakan, yang menghasilkan semakin positifnya persepsi siswa terhadap relasinya dengan guru serta iklim kelasnya setelah penerapan tindakan. Akan tetapi peningkatan pada persepsi terhadap kemampuan belajar serta prestasi akademik masih belum tampak. Penerapan tindakan yang berulang serta penyampaian balikan terhadap guru, diharapkan akan menghasilkan cara pembelajaran yang lebih efektif.

*Kata kunci:* cara pembelajaran, proses mengajar, harapan positif

In teaching learning process at school, mental involvement and students success in following the learning process are not only determined by intellectual ability but also by psychological aspect. This psychological aspect can support or hinder the learning process. Comfortable, happy, not anxious, being recognized and other positive feeling can be very supportive for expected teaching learning process. Negligence of affective aspect of learning process is against what was found by experts in neuroscience about the role of

emotion in learning. Learning process involves affective as well as cognitive activity (Jalongo, 2007).

In fact, many students did not get positive feeling while they were learning. Some of them felt that learning atmosphere was not encouraging, stressing and not supporting self efficacy. This condition would eventually influence perception about learning process and self concept. Development of negative perception of students about learning process and themselves could start from teachers' treatment. Very often certain students were given low expectation, especially those who did not show good academic performance.

UNICEF study in Central Java, South Sulawesi and North Sumatra in 2006 as published in Jawa Pos (Kekerasan

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Terhadap Anak, 2007) showed that child abuse was mostly done by teachers (80%). Abuse could exist in the form of physical or verbal or excessive workload. It is a pity that not all teachers or educators are aware of the fact that they have done child abuse especially non-physical abuse and they perceived what they did as for the benefit of the children. As an example, a teacher reprimanded his student in front of his friends, this would influence his/her psychological condition.

From an early observation in four primary schools in Surabaya, a questionnaire was spread over 494 students from 12 classes, it was found that mostly students perceived that their academic performance were between fair to not good. They also perceived their ability to study from good enough to not good enough. This showed that many students evaluated themselves as not having good enough ability to learn well. Low expectation on certain students showed in teacher's behavior during teaching learning process, through verbal and nonverbal communication and less effort to help students who had troubles in trying to understand the teaching. In one of the class, teacher placed students with less performance in one group and all pupils understood the difference made by the teacher. Students in this group would be often reprimanded by their classmates. Bad comments that did not motivate students like "though stupid... you still talk a lot or how can you get good grades if questions like this you can't answer" were said by the teachers. This practice would make students not certain of their ability and lower their will to try. Students with less academic performance were vulnerable to be treated bad and not supported by their teachers.

The authors felt certain that positive experiences in student's interaction with somebody else, especially with somebody significant to him, would form a positive self concept later on. Teacher's behavior would be monitored by his pupils and would also form value system that influences pupils' behavior later on.

Based on the previous explanation, the purpose of this study was 1) to find any actions done by teachers that pupils with less performance value their teachers as giving positive expectation to them, 2) what would the effects of giving positive expectations towards pupils be on pupils' perception towards their teacher and learning atmosphere in the class.

### **Teachers' Role Towards Pupils**

Students' attitude and behavior were influenced by inner and outer factors. In the beginning, while still young, outer factors like teachers, friends, parents and class environment gave a stronger influence towards students' learning process. In order for good attitude and

good learning behavior to grow, outer factors like teachers and parents played a big role.

Teaching practice was considered to have the most direct influence on students' learning process. Two main efforts should be built in learning process, that was to increase students' ability to think and to build good self efficacy or confidence through respect and positive relationship with students. A good student teacher relationship can be built through mutual trust and mutual respect (Wilmes, 2008).

The purpose of teaching ideally was not only to carry on curriculum materials, but also to motivate students' lives. The bond between teachers and students was full of emotion and responsibility to understand and satisfy students' needs. Fulfillment of basic need would lead to the needs of actualization. In this circumstance, it was the need of the students to learn and be respected (Cao, 2005).

The teachers' beliefs played an important role in teaching learning process. Effective teachers did not only have positive qualities in the abilities and scientific knowledge, but also had positive personalities (beliefs, attitude, and so on) (Brown, 2007). Effective teachers were determined by knowledge and abilities, and disposition factors like values, beliefs, concepts they had in mind. All these things influenced the way he/she carry on his/her job as a teacher.

### **Carrying on Positive Expectation and Its Impact on Students**

Different expectation of the teachers bring up different behavior of the students, such as in giving questions, giving time to answer, grouping of students, giving honor and evaluating students' behavior (Arends, 2004). Able students tended to be given more difficult questions than less able students. Hughes, Gleason, and Duan Zhang (2005) found that evaluation on students linked to the quality of teacher-student relation, so was the academic ability of students. The quality of teacher-student relation was influenced by student's background such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Rist (2000) found in St. Louis schools, USA, in kindergarten, first grade and second grade classes, students were grouped according to physical appearance, language, behavior linked to academic ability. This condition made different treatment by the teachers.

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) found that students would show better learning performance if their teachers gave them high hope (cited in Kierein, 2000; Rist, 2000). Besides the impact in learning performance and

academic achievement, teacher's positive expectation influenced students' psychological condition. There was a connection between teacher's expectation and student's self concept. Self concept developed in the early life and it was influenced by people close to the individual, such as parents and teachers (Mook, 2000). Teacher's beliefs and expectation towards his students influenced teacher student interaction. Teacher's affective support would develop positive relation with students (Davis, 2006). Wheatley (2005) found that positive teacher student relation and good learning experience was also influenced by good expectation of teachers towards his/her students.

The influence of teacher's expectation can be viewed from transactional perspective. Better academic achievement would lead to more positive expectation of the teacher, appeared as more challenging and responsive teaching instructions, and warmer approach that eventually lead to increased student performance (Hughes, Gleason, & Zhang, 2005).

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) also found positive correlation between teacher's expectation, different treatment and self-fulfilling prophecy of the students. In the process of self-fulfilling prophecy, there was a pygmalion effect meaning that one individual or a group of individuals acted as expected by other individuals. That individual or group at certain level would internalize expectations given to them and acted in order to fulfill those expectations.

Students who got support from teachers would develop positive attitude towards their school, being active academically and got acceptance from classmates and friends (Hughes, 2001). On the opposite, students who often got conflicts with their teachers tended to drop out, did not pass grade, and did not get acceptance from their classmates and friends.

The Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement program (TESA) was developed by Los Angeles County Office of Education in early 1970 based on

results of studies that stated: 1) students tend to picture themselves as expected by their teachers, and 2) teachers responded more positively on students with high achievement. This program would be applied to increase teachers expectation towards their students. The Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA) was a training program aimed at increasing awareness of teachers' treatment towards students and how teachers handled students with less performance. The difficult thing in teaching learning process was to push students to participate in class activities. TESA was a program to train teachers to interact with students based on equality. The approach was based on expectancy theory.

The purpose of TESA : (a) To make teachers sensitive about students' expectations, (b) To show how teacher's expectation influence student's learning process, (c) To make teachers being involved in reflective process and developing a new behavior, (d) To help teachers practice talking to students with less performance inside or outside of the class, (e) To push teachers to give questions to inactive students in a pleasant way so that they participate in class activities. This program was widely used nationally in the US for 30 years. In this period of time, teachers learned 15 teaching abilities grouped in three major areas, namely; to push students by giving questions and make follow up students' response; to give feedback and show appreciation as seen in table of interaction of learning with expectation (see Table 1).

## Method

### Research Design

Design used in this study was action research, small groups-collaborative action research, in which author and some teachers were involved. Small group was in the form of small face to face group consisted of three to

Table 1  
*Interaction of Teaching Learning With Positive Expectation*

How teachers interact with students		
A	B	C
To push participation	To give feedback	To show expectation
To give chance for response evenly	To give reinforcement, correctional response	To stay close to students
To offer individual help	To appreciate	To respect and being emphatic
To give students time to respond	To give reasons for praise	To show interest and praise
To dig materials deeper	To listen attentively	To give touch for a good relationship
To give question with high level of understanding	To accept students' feeling	To manage unacceptable behavior with st respecting students

10 people, characterized by regular meeting, problem solving and discussion of the next steps to be taken (McNiff, 2004). Action plan was designed to follow TESA, applied in several action cycles.

### Research Participation

Five teachers of class IV and V and its 33 students of state schools with less performance were involved. Active involvement for long and continuous time of teachers were needed. Teachers' involvement based on willingness to make changes in teaching learning process, agreement with school principals, and permission of authors to be present to make regular observation in the class.

Young students were vulnerable to teachers' treatment behavior of their teachers. Besides, in primary schools, students started to form attitude towards learning process that later on would influence adaptation towards the schools. Uncomfortable experiences with teaching learning process and the school would lower interest and motivation to learn.

### Data Collection

Data was collected through qualitative and quantitative techniques (Bordens & Bruce, 2005). Students' perception about class atmosphere, relation with teachers and teachers' expectation was made through questionnaire and sentence completion test adapted from Forer test. Individual and group interview were used to collect data of students' perception about their interaction with their teachers and their view of learning abilities. Group interview was done with consideration of comfortable situation, students would be comfortable to express opinion together with classmates. Individual interview was done to know background of teachers' lives and his/her perception about students' learning abilities and the means of teaching learning processes.

Teaching learning process in the classroom would be observed to get information about interaction and activities between teacher and students who had less performance. Observation would be in anecdotal record by writing down every detailed verbal and non-verbal interaction that happened between teachers and students.

### Data Analysis

Stages in the action research cycle would be monitored to get information that would be presented descriptively. Description of each stage would be useful to give a picture of effort being done, result being achieved, and

problems to be solved, that could be used as learning process by other parties. General narration was used to represent and explain what happened while process was going on (M.D. Gall, J.P. Gall, & Borg, 2003).

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis was done in this research (McNiff, 2004; Yaffe, 2003). Qualitative data was in the form of: observation of teacher's teaching learning process that had positive expectations, reflective diary of teachers, and monitoring record of authors about the process that happened in each cycle. Interpretative analysis would be used for those data. Data or information was collected in the form of text and it was considered as group of symbols with certain meaning (Berg, 2004; M.D. Gall, J.P. Gall, & Borg, 2003). Quantitative data was obtained through measurement using a questionnaire about students' perception towards relation with their teacher before and after intervention. Quantitative data was analyzed using *T*-test through SPSS 12.0 for Windows.

## Results and Discussion

There were two stages of action applied, namely 1) first stage with the purpose of largely to build positive relation of teacher and students and prepare affective aspect of students in learning and 2) second stage with the purpose of increasing students' thinking ability.

From observation, teacher's reflection, and daily journal, it can be concluded from the first stage application, that:

1. Teachers become more aware of necessary attention to students with less performance just like any-body else. They gave them chance to answer questions, to comment positively, to stay close to where they sat, and to communicate as often as possible. Every teacher tried to do those things every day as recorded in their journal.

2. From observation, there was an increase of students' courage to answer questions, to ask questions, to stay close to teachers and to talk to them. In two observation classes, there were still one or two students who kept a distance to their teacher until the third week. One of those students was hard to be close to, and his teacher was hopeless because the student was disrespectful. One student in the other class was an introvert and very quiet, and his teacher sometimes asked him to run some errands so that the student might feel that he was needed.

3. From journal, at first application, the obstacles were students' difficulty to understand learning material, showing negative attitude, passive and annoying in the class. Teachers saw it as external factors. In the following

process, teachers tried to understand their weaknesses that influence ineffectiveness of their teaching meaning that they made self correction. Teachers' internal obstacles were: less effort to get to know students, did not know how to start a relation, still had negative evaluation about certain students, need to improve skill like to make student express opinion without being scared or reprimanded. Mostly teachers reported that target students still found it difficult to solve problems although they were more enthusiastic. When in the first week most teachers could not find a positive change, some students showed more enthusiasm, more relaxed teacher-students relation. Certain students started to be brave enough to express any difficulties, and they were happier because they felt needed and attended.

Based on observation and teachers' journal, it was concluded from the action application of stage 2 that teachers had tried to ask questions that pushed students to think, compare, and to find the differences or similarities between one thing from another. Teachers became more creative, from lecturing to demonstrating, case studies and linked material to real life.

1. Different from stage 1 where treatment was given evenly to all students, in stage 2, treatment was given through classical. In some opportunities several students were given questions that made them think better but in general treatment was applied to all students.
2. Students showed increased enthusiasm because teachers used many different teaching strategies by using demonstration, exploration of things in the classroom, and story-telling before asking questions.
3. It was still difficult to give follow up students' questions through analytical and critical dialog since the abilities of students were limited. Students were still not fluent in writing and calculating so that it was difficult to make an analytical dialog with them.

After action applied, to see the perception difference of 33 students with less performance, statistical analysis was done using *T*-test. *T*-test = -6.210 with  $p = .000$  meaning that there is a significant difference between pre- and post-perception of students towards teacher's positive expectation. Students' perception towards class climate, *t*-test = -10.299 with  $p = .000$  meaning that there is a significant difference. Mean value before treatment = 26.81 while mean after treatment = 34.09. this means that students' perception towards class climate is better.

### **Based on Research Result, These Questions Could be Answered**

- (1) What did the teachers do in order that students

with less performance appraise teachers' action in giving more positive expectation towards them? Actions taken by teachers in order to impress students that give positive expectation are: Appreciative attitude towards students shown by greeting, good comments even out of learning context, listening and watching their eyes while they are talking. Setting up a close relation with students by staying close to their seats and listening to them attentively, patting to show attention. Giving students chance to make response to answer questions or to do on school board. Giving guidance when they meet difficulty by giving additional information. Giving feedback, praise them when they give right answers, and give information about what is still lacking

The above actions primarily lead to setting up a close relation and respecting students. This is important because teachers' commitment to care and show willingness to help proved to be linked with academic performance and students' behavior at school. The important goal to be achieved is to increase students' psychological health. (Strahan & Layell, 2006)

Students' minds mingle between studying and happy feeling with a good relation with their teachers. A good, supportive relation with teachers would increase learning activities in class, because comfortable environment makes students able to open up themselves and listen more to the teachers. Students would be willing to try hard.

Teachers are weak in the aspect of students' understanding the material, not only memorize it. According to teachers during reflection, the students' abilities were limited to think analytically, so they use the old way in teaching, passing information from the book without developing it.

Teachers' competence in finding students' learning needs is weak so that students' difficulty in understanding the material could not be helped while the material goes on and on and students are left behind. While giving teaching material, teachers should check the students' understanding and reteach them if necessary in a way that they could understand. If the trouble is detected early and not accumulated, the students would be helped more easily. (Dolezal & Welsh, 2003). The main characteristics of teachers to do their job is the faith that every students could learn and understand if taught many times and the commitment to explain the material in every possible way so that it can be understood.

This condition made the second stage of action plan not very successful because students with less academic performance were not optimally helped. Teachers' perception towards students was not consistent meaning that they were not fully certain that all students were

able to increase performance. The ability to stimulate students by giving questions cannot be obtained in a short time. From students' side, generally they do not have a strong understanding as taught so that developing their way of thinking is not easy to do.

(2). What is the effect of giving positive expectation to the less performance students? Students valued their teachers more positively also the class climate. Statistical analysis showed significant difference in the students' perception towards class climate. Students felt secure, taken care of and understood by their teachers.

Class climate is a condition in class where students were all involved and positive expectation was made by teachers with no disturbance. (Freiberg & Fraser, 1999). Interpersonal relation and positive class climate are significant predictors of students' motivation to learn. The bottom line, class climate is perception of students towards relation with their teachers (Davis, 2006).

There is a problem in one class originated from a teacher's weak management. A weak management would cause a bad class climate. Rule and procedure to treat annoying behavior of students are weak, and a break between classes is long as to give chance certain students to show inappropriate behavior. This condition made a noisy and not supportive class. This weak class management was not anticipated by the authors.

Negative emotional reaction of teachers like shouting, threatening or negative comment towards annoying students made teaching learning not effective and limit teaching ideas. These problems were treated in the first stage. Teachers could be angry and frustrated by students' behavior like going against the rule, being lazy and not attentive (Sutton, 2005). So, condition was not as optimal as expected, and in one class teacher's teaching ability was also lacking.

Application of teacher's positive expectation causes changes like: Students are brave enough to be close and start to talk to teachers. Students are brave enough as to ask and express opinion, not only ask their friends when they faced learning problems. Some students used to be labeled "naughty" start to be calm and easy to lead.

Application of action plan caused better teacher-students relation and student felt to be more appreciated, important psychological involvement. Emotion influences motivation, thinking ability and also memory (Sutton, 2005). Attention to students, psychological support, students' feeling of competence, and social relation combined with learning environment such as enthusiastic teachers, appropriate material, good instruction, and clear demand would form a good teaching learning activities.

Not all students felt an increase in their learning ability. From the open questionnaire, it was found that only eight out of 33 students valued an increase in their learning ability, while others still thought that their learning ability was the same, even a small number of them felt that their learning ability was worse. Students got feedback from difficult material in the end semester and grades did not show any progress.

## Conclusion

It is concluded from this study that from between cycle process, it is known that teacher's action plan has a positive impact on students' perception towards teacher-students relation and class climate, even chance is given to all students to answer questions or to do class work in the front, to give guidance and additional information to help, to praise their effort and to make positive comment to motivate, to get close acquaintance by talking and staying close to them.

The perception of students towards their teacher gets better after the action plan applied. They value their teachers give positive treatment to them and they felt more appreciated. The action applied made change in students' affective condition, they felt more comfortable in teacher-students interaction and they felt that they were involved during teaching learning process. Actions aimed at helping students to understand the learning material and developing their thinking ability does not work because teachers were not able to see the difficulty in learning and being capable of helping them in understanding the learning material and making questions that could develop their ways of thinking. Teachers were uncertain that they could guide the dialogue and discussion with students or between students.

## Suggestions

**For the teachers and the school involved.** Warm class climate gives psychological comfort to students and would bring positive influence for the development of self concept and better learning behavior. School positive environment should be a school policy where every components give supportive learning environment. School should give teachers chance to develop teaching ability, questioning ability and class management. Teachers' development program should be aimed at developing dominant-cooperative communication with students characterized by standardized, control, empathy, and willingness to listen to students. Teachers' ability is still weak and it is not good in the attempt of setting up a good teaching learning process

that is supposed to develop students' healthy personalities. Teachers could start to develop class action research of their own to analyze teaching learning process in their classes and make some changes that support students' needs.

**For Teachers' Institution.** Development program for teachers proved to be effective for increasing teachers' quality in doing their profession, being done inside or outside of school. Teachers' Educational institution could offer development program so that teachers still have the chance to develop themselves continuously. A huge volume of teaching learning process still demand students to memorize teaching material and not yet guide them to understand deeper, in accordance with the paradigm: "*product is more important than process*," and evaluation is still in the form of paper and pencil test. Teacher candidates should be trained to be able to develop students' thinking ability, able to develop measurement of learning results and able to see students' deep understanding of the material being taught.

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