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## **LEARNING JOURNAL**

# **Improving Teaching Strategies Through Students' Reflections**

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### **Abstract**

*This study is concerned with how teachers use students' reflections to improve their teaching strategies. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of students' reflections in the learning process, and how the teachers use those reflections to improve teaching strategies. This research used a qualitative approach. The results of the study indicated that the role of students' journals in learning was to know students' points of view and to explore students' needs. In addition, the ways the teachers improved were by changing their teaching methods and changing their attitudes. Therefore, it was*

*considered that the teachers were able to develop their pedagogical competence. Additionally, the students remarked that a good relationship with the teacher is more important than a good teaching strategy.*

*[Artikel ini membahas strategi guru menggunakan umpan balik dari siswa untuk memperbaiki strategi pengajaran. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi peran umpan balik siswa dalam proses pembelajaran dan penggunaannya untuk memperbaiki strategi pengajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jurnal siswa dalam pembelajaran berfungsi untuk mengetahui sudut pandang siswa dan untuk mengeksplorasi kebutuhan siswa. Dengan dasar itulah para guru dapat memperbaiki metode dan sikap dalam proses pengajaran, sehingga dapat mengembangkan kompetensi pedagogis mereka. Selain itu, bagi siswa, hubungan yang baik dengan guru lebih berpengaruh daripada strategi pengajaran.]*

**Keywords:** student reflection, teaching strategy, teacher-student relation

## **Introduction**

In the learning process, teachers usually teach and evaluate their students. Basically, the teacher has frequent interaction with students. Mostly, during the learning activities the interaction between the teacher and students becomes more intense. When the learning took place, the teacher usually measured the student's understanding of the learning material by giving a test because they consider that the successfulness of a learning process is depended on the students' achievement. They rarely consider what actually the students feel during the learning process. On the other hand, when the students acquired a low score, the teacher tends to judge that the students have low ability in learning.

Related to these issues, the problem appeared when some students did not feel satisfied. However, they could not express their thoughts to the teacher. Sometimes the students complained to another teacher if they could not understand what the teacher taught and how they felt during the class and it did not have any effect on the teacher which they directed their critique to. What the students did next was accepting everything that the teacher did. And the teacher also thought that they made their students agreeable in the class because there was no feedback from the students and the complain only remains with the other teachers. In addition, the teacher also tend to judge the student who misbehave in the class without knowing what exactly make them do so.

Based on the problem, I attempt to propose a tool that can be used to mediate between the teacher and the student on promoting reflection for the learning activities by using a learning Journal. Basically, in Sukma Bangsa School, the reflection was done by the teacher. The reflection can consist of what happened in the class, however, the teacher never considered why the students do not pay attention in class or how the students feel in -class. Nonetheless, by using the learning Journal, the teacher can notice not only what the students understand or do not understand during the class but also about what the students feel during the learning process. Shuck, et al. (2007) claimed that emotions can have positive effects on learning as well as can block the learning process. Moreover, the teacher can develop -new ideas from the student's reflection related to what the students need on the next class. Therefore, in this study, I explored the role of students' journals in learning process and how the teacher improve their teaching strategies by using students' journals.

## **From Students' Reflections to Better Teaching Strategies**

### ***Learning Journal and Students' Reflections***

There are some words to describe a learning journal which

can be called a diary, a log or a learning log. The journal can contain observation, feeling, impression, memories and also plan and analysis. Furthermore, Bolton (2010) defined a journal as a reflection that can be written freely based on one's thought. Reflection itself has been introduced by Dewey (1933), he stated that reflection is a sequence thought that can be used in the next term. In agreement with Dewey, Brockbank and McGill (2007) stated that reflection is a thought or feeling related to one's experience. Considering the usage of learning journal, Bolton (2010) claimed that students can use the journal to spill out their impression toward the activities in the classroom and it allows the students to express their learning experience.

Beside the advantage for students, O'Connell and Dymont (2013) claimed that the teacher also can acquire the information about students understanding related to the material that they accept during the learning process. The teachers often have difficulties to recognize students' difficulties when they face a big number of students in one class. Hence, by reading students' journals, the teacher can discern the problems of each student. When the teacher knows students' difficulties, the teacher can help students in the next meeting. Furthermore, the teacher also can notice students' feelings during the learning process. Loughran (1996) emphasized that a journal is a writing that will not be graded, so that the students can write freely and honestly about their experience and their impression toward the learning process.

Learning journals have been used in many researches. The purposes of using the journal are various. Moon (2006) stated that the journal can improve students-teacher relationship since the students can write openly whether it is a good or a bad comment, thus, the teacher can maintain the relationship with the students. Moreover, learning journals also have been used to measure students' engagement in learning (Park, 2003), students' creativity (O'Connell & Smith, 2015), students' self regulated learning (Al-Balushi & Al-Rawahi, 2015), improving course performance (Cisero, 2006), and exploring the learning outcome and benefit

from the student experience using the reflective learning journal during the first year (Everett, 2013)

### ***Teaching Strategies***

Smilansky (1968, 1990) as cited in Perry (2001) defined teaching strategies as the way of a teacher to play with children. Moreover OECD (2010) also described teacher strategy as a combination of process where the teacher manages the class and used all the facilities to enhance students' understanding. There are some types of teaching strategies such as expository strategies, cooperative learning, inquiry, contextual teaching and learning and problem based learning. All of those strategies are not fit for all the material. It depended on the context. One strategy might fit to one particular topic but it does not certainly fit to the other topic so that the teacher has to have the ability to choose the best one.

In addition, Balachandran (2015) claimed that there are some factors that influence teaching strategies. Those factors are related to teacher, student, environment and the lesson. The factors relating to the teachers include the knowledge to use the resources, the ability to manage the class, doing adjustment based on students' learning styles. Moreover, the factors relating to the students are class composition, grade level, benefit from a certain instruction and students' engagement. Meanwhile, the factors relating to environment consist of the resources of learning that support the learning process. At last, the factor relating to the lesson is fostering contextual learning which relates the lesson with the real life.

Furthermore, some research deals with improving teaching strategies through self reflection. Those researches have been done in some ways such as self-reflection by the teacher using reflective question, using tape and reflective journals (Hale, 2010), peer teaching, evaluation by the colleagues (Cruickshank and Applegate 1981), reflection and observation in one's teaching (Richard, 1995). The ways to improve teaching strategies can be

seen as the implication of assessment. The purposes of assessment are to discover what the students learn and how well they learn (Angelo and Cross, 1993). In this study, I attempted to ask students' reflections toward the learning process that later could be used to improve teaching strategies.

### ***Teacher Competence and Pedagogical Competence***

Teacher competence is associated with professional virtue and the ability to do self-improvement. When teachers become professionals, they do not achieve high level of competence and technical criteria, they also become a caring teacher for student, have passions for the subject knowledge and always encourage their students (ACTEQ, 2003). Furthermore, one of the competences that are demanded to the teacher is pedagogical competence. Olsson et al (2010) stated that the first step to develop education is developing pedagogical competence.

Apelgren and Giertz (2010) defined pedagogical competence is the ability to apply attitude, knowledge, and skill in the best way regularly. Moreover, there are some factors that included in pedagogical competence as describe below:

- 1) **Attitude.** Apelgren and Giertz (2010) argued that teachers who have an attitude will promote best students' learning. The term of attitude means teacher' awareness toward their role as a teacher and their responsibility toward their students. Furthermore, they will attempt to give a good environment for their students and will consider choosing the content, the teaching method, examination and evaluation to promote students' learning. In this term, they play the best role in enhancing student outcome.
- 2) **Knowledge.** Apelgren and Giertz (2010) stated that in pedagogical competence, teachers need knowledge about the subject, how students learn, teaching methods, the teaching process and the aim of the course. Moreover, they can use their knowledge and apply their skill in the teaching process to promote the students' learning. It is also possible for

teachers to learn something new to keep improving their knowledge.

- 3) **Ability.** Apelgren and Giertz (2010) stated that teachers who have pedagogical competence will have ability to arrange a planning, to organize the teaching process, to structure the material properly and to adapt the way to teach for particular situation and group of students. They have the ability to recognize the students' learning style and can cover it in the teaching process. They are also well-prepared in teaching.
- 4) **Adapting to the situation.** Apelgren and Giertz (2010) indicated that teachers need to have ability to adapt with various situations that confront them in class. They are capable of handling any kind of situation in order to enhance the best outcome in the learning process. They can easily adjust their teaching if something happens in the learning process. They can also change the way they teach if they get suggestion from others.
- 5) **Perseverance.** In teaching, teacher needs to have perseverance. As affirmed by Apelgren and Giertz (2010) that teachers need to have the ability and willingness to teach in the best way. They show commitment to teach the best way in the long term, even on the same course. They do not reduce their quality of their teaching even though they teach the same course for several times
- 6) **Continuous development.** Apelgren and Giertz (2010) stated that pedagogical competence is not static. The teacher who has the ability and willingness always works best to develop the new knowledge, learn from new experience and develop his/her professional in one's subject. Pedagogical competence means continually evaluate their professional teaching to promote student's learning. Teachers attempt to improve their knowledge and teaching style continually.

## **Methodology**

This research was a qualitative research which had been

participated by 17 students at grade nine and two teachers in two different subjects, Physics and English. The research was done in four cycles using some instruments such as classroom observations, students' journals, students interviews and teachers interviews. The data was analyzed by using narrative analysis. The journal consisted of five questions: (1) How do you feel during learning activities? Why?; (2) What have you learnt in the class?; (3) What is the content that you do not understand yet? Why?; (4) What do you do during learning activities?; and (5) Any suggestion that you want to tell the teacher?

Meanwhile, the teachers' interviews were done in semi-structured interviews which have four themes. The themes were about teachers' preparations for the class, what they have done in their teaching, how they perceived students' reflection and their next planning to improve teaching strategies based on students' reflections. Equally important, the students' interview were also done in semi-structured interviews. The students who had been chosen for the interview were based on their answers in the learning journals. The classroom observations were done for five times for each subject. The cycles for the data collection began with classroom observations, students' journals, students' interview and teachers' interviews.

### **Understanding Students' Points of View**

Students' learning journal gave the information for the teacher about how students felt during the learning process. In addition, the feeling appeared as a cause of a learning process. By noticing students' feeling teacher could decide whether or not the strategy that she applied could make students enjoy the learning. If the students said that they had a positive feeling, it might affect their motivation in learning. On the contrary, if the students acquired negative feeling, the learning process could be disabled (Trigwell, et al. 2012). Moreover, the teacher could consider using the same strategy in the future if the students enjoy learning, but if students said that they did not enjoy the



learning processes, the teacher could consider stopping teaching in that way.

Moreover, the findings suggest that most students felt happy when they could understand the content easily, could practice the topic and had their own intrinsic motivation to learn (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

I am happy because the content is easy to understand (s5, entry 3a).

I feel happy because I think I can understand faster if I do an experiment (s2, entry 1a).

I am happy because I love English (s16, entry4)[...] when I was a child I had a dream to study abroad especially in Europe and England (interview s16,entry4).

When the students understand easily they acquired the meaningful learning, so that they felt satisfied toward learning.

I am happy because the content is easy to understand (s5, entry 3a).

Additionally, when the students could practice something contextual in their learning, the students also would feel happy. Because the student could easily understand the content and they could connect the content to their real life (Thayamani, 2013). Equally important, if the student has intrinsic motivation such as love of the subject, they would feel happy and enjoy the learning process.

I really love English, [...] cause it is so fun to study English every time, and I never get bored (s4, entry3).

The other reasons why students felt happy were because the teacher taught in fun ways and could make a joke (Zhou, et al, 2015) and treat students in equal.

I like because the teacher is not focused on learning content, she makes a joke (s2, interview 2).

My feeling in learning is happy though I am somewhat dizzy, but I enjoy the learning because the teacher is so fun [...] (s1, entry 2a)[...]I do not feel bored with this teacher because sometimes we practice experiment, watching movie, taking note, she is also fair and pay attention to the students. (s1,interview 4a).

This finding suggests that the teacher's attitude such as making joke become one of the factors that make the students feel happy in the learning process. It is in line with Thayamani, et al. (2013) who stated that making joke is one way to improve positive emotion for students. This finding is in agreement with Hamre and Pianta (2006) findings which showed the warmth of communication between a teacher and students can maintain students' interests in learning. On the other hand, a few students felt bored if they could not understand the content.

I feel sleepy when I learn English because I do not like English, I do not understand at all, maybe if I am given more vocabularies, I will like English, no one gives me vocabularies, I feel so sad. (s15, entry 1).

When the students did not understand the topic, it made the them felt bored since they did not acquire the learning. In addition, students also felt bored if the learning process was so rigid,

I feel burdened if the teacher only focuses on the content. (s2,interview 1a).

When the teacher was too focused on content and there was no joke during the learning process, the students also would not enjoy the learning process. Besides knowing the students feeling, some students were not in a good condition during the learning process.

I do not feel well because I got flu, I only talk with my friends, and it is really horrible because I have to go to the toilet for several times. (s12,entry 1).

The teacher also should notice students' well-beings during the learning process (Everest, 2013). Hence, the teacher might not judge students if sometimes, during the learning process, the students did not really pay attention to the teachers.

Moreover, students' journals also give teacher the information about students' understanding and students' difficulties in learning. When many students said that they do not understand one topic, the teacher could consider reviewing the content instead of continue with the lesson.

The content that I do not understand is knowing the meaning of the paragraph because I do not know many vocabularies ( s12, entry1 ).

It seems that the problem that the students faced was because they were lacking of vocabularies, hence, the teacher could not hope that the students could acquire a good achievement while the students did not understand the topic yet. Moreover, the students were more aware of their comprehension.

Meanwhile, the teacher could also notice the students' activities during the learning processes even though the teacher could know students' activities without reading the journals. However, there were students' activities that the teacher did not realize like in one journal, student said "I sit, do nothing, because the teacher does not call me". In this case, the teacher could notice that she/he had a blind spot in teaching whereas there a student who did not get a chance to answer the question. Thus, by using the journal the teacher could realize what she had done in the classroom. Furthermore, some students mentioned their activities even though they did not participate actively during the learning process.

Paying attention, talking with my friend, day dreaming and scratching my book (s12, entry1).

It clearly could be seen that the students honestly told the teacher what they did during the learning. They did not hesitate to mention their activities although they did not participate

actively during the learning process.

### Exploring Students' Needs

Reading the journal was one way to understand the students' needs (Everest, 2013). The students could tell everything in their journals either what they liked or what they did not like. They could also criticize the way the teacher teaches (Loughran 1996). The journal gave some information about students' needs which related to teaching method, subject, facilities, and teacher's attitude. Related to teaching strategies, the finding suggests that many students asked teacher to teach something contextual

Hopefully, next time, learning English could be more fun (s, entry 4) [...] I prefer to learn something contextual that I can apply in my daily life (s4, interview4).

When they can learn by doing, it becomes easy for them to understand the subject. Moreover students could relate their knowledge in learning to their life (Berns and Erickson (2001). In addition, students asked teacher to make cooperative learning.

I want the teacher often apply group discussion (s1, entry 1) [...] I like if we work together, we can help each other, more understand, and easier to remember (s1, interview 1).

In cooperative learning, students could learn and work together, the students who has high achievement could help the students having low achieving so it help them to understand better. When they were able to help their friend in learning, it means that they have understood the content. Surely, they would have attained a good understanding (world education,2009). Moreover, one student wanted the teacher to make a game during the learning process.

I want the teacher to give more game and free time (s11, entry 4a).

One student asked the teacher to make a game and give them free time when they were learning. The student asked a

game to make them enjoy and not get bored easily in learning. Based on teacher interview, the teacher explained that free time means that the teacher did not teach anything during the learning process. For this suggestions, the teacher could consider to make a game in learning. However, it is impossible to give free time by doing nothing during the learning process.

In Physics subject, students asked teacher to do many experiments instead of the theories. Actually, in the first meeting, students did an experiment in the laboratory and they wanted the teacher to do more experiment in the next meeting.

I hope next time, we can practice another topic in the laboratory (s8, entry 1a).

[...] deep explanation in experiment (s16, interview 1a).

The students felt enjoyed when they learned in laboratory and practice the experiment by themselves. It made them easily understand the content. Additionally, one student asked the teacher to explain the lesson slowly and repeatedly, because some of them could not understand all the content easily, it seemed that they realize their capability in understanding the topic.

I want the teacher to explain content slowly to make me easy to understand (s14, entry1a).

In physics subject, the student could not understand the content well if the teacher explained the content so fast. It should be a consideration for the teachers when the teacher explained the content since the ability of students to understand the content was different. Therefore, the teacher could adjust the way to explain the content slower in order to enhance students' understandings. Moreover, one student added another suggestion on the interview. She wanted the teacher did not mind repeating the explanation of the content for several times if there was a student who did not understand yet.

I want that when one does not understand yet, the teacher will explain again, in fact when there are half of the students

in the class does not understand, she keeps continuing (s11, interview2). Sometimes when we ask a question, she does not respond, sometimes, her explanation is only a half (s11, interview4).

In learning English, this student seemed quite disappointed with the teacher's treatment when the teacher kept continuing to the next content although some students did not understand yet. Sometimes, the student saw that the teacher did not respond well when a student asked something or the teacher only explained in a few explanations. Meanwhile, in Physics subject, the students suggested the teacher to do practice more often like the teacher did in the second meeting. At the time, the teacher asked the students to practice imperative sentence in pairs in front of the class.

When we practice in front of the class, it makes us more confident (s10, interview 3).

The students claimed that they could remember the content easier when they practiced instead of listening to the explanation from the teacher. It also could improve their confidence if they practiced in front of the class. This finding suggested that students' confidence can be improved by asking them to practice in front of the class. The teacher also said that most students felt happy because they could practice directly at the time.

Most of the students prefer doing direct conversation rather than just writing and reading [...].they are active. They also pay attention when their friends come forward to the class, they are curious of what their friend will do[...] (teacher1, interview 2).

The teacher had the same perception with the students that they became more enthusiastic in learning when they practiced the lesson. Therefore, the teacher need to improve his teaching strategies.

Furthermore, related to the facilities, the students thought that learning in language lab, laboratory or multimedia is more

interesting than learning in the classroom.

If learning in the language lab, we can learn while listening music, we can also watch funny videos, learning in the classroom will be boring because we only see the textbook, chair, and the face of my friends that I always see every day (s8, interview 1).

The students thought that learning in the language lab or multimedia was more interesting than learning in the classroom. When they learned in the language lab or multimedia, they could ask teacher to show some videos or playing music. Thus, they would not easily feel bored during the learning process. It indicated that the facilities also become the factor that support students to learn more relaxed.

Similarly, related to teacher' attitude students asked teacher to be more relaxed in teaching which means the teacher did not be too focused to the content and the teacher could tell something fun during the learning process.

I want to learn in relaxed (s3, entry 1) the teacher do not be so focused on content, she is supposed to make a joke (s3, interview 1).

The students emphasized that they really needed humor to make them not felt bored (Zhou, 2015). Another student stated that actually, he was comfortable to learn with the teacher. However, he gave suggestion on behalf of his friends' opinions because he stated that his friend wanted the teacher to teach in relaxed, not so focus, no temper and no sarcasm. This student quite cared about his friends. Even though he had already felt comfortable, he also wanted the teacher to make his friend comfortable in the learning process.

My friends said that the teacher is too serious in teaching, so they do not like [...] they want to learn more relaxed, no temper, no sarcasm when they do not collect the task (s16, interview 4).

The students felt empathy for his friends and he wanted his

friend to enjoy the learning as well. The other students suggested that they wanted the teacher not to have a temper in the learning process.

If a teacher teaches with a temper, I will not understand (s12, interview3).

The student perceived that if the teacher taught with temper they would not understand in learning. Basically, the teacher wants students to learn. However, if she notices that students do not learn, the teacher initiates to teach harder, with a temper. When students are afraid in a general level, they do not learn anything but fear, and it made them did not understand the content.

Furthermore, despite hoping that learning process would be more fun, some students emphasized that they needed more attention from the teacher, they wanted the teacher to pay attention to all the students in the class.

The teacher is not supposed to be too focused on the clever students, she should pay attention to all of the students in the class (s9, entry 1).

The student suggested the demand on fairness that the teacher gave the same chance to all students. In this case, the students saw that teacher treated them quite unfair because the teacher only paid attention to some clever students in the classroom. Uniquely, though the teacher has applied a good strategy in learning, some students did not feel satisfied because they perceived the teacher does not treat them fairly. Thus, the students suggested the teacher to treat them fairly, which means the teacher give them the same chances and pay attention to all students in the class. The students emphasized that they need a caring teacher who cares for all the students in the class and treat them equally (Daniels & Arapostathis 2005, as cited in Wentzel 2009).

On the other hand, the other students who basically actively participated in learning asked the teacher to treat them



equally which means that all students attained the same chance to practice the experiment. In my observation, the student had a good chance to do the experiment and was quite active in doing the experiment. However, she gave this suggestion to consider her friend who did not have the chance to try string up the circuit. At the same time, one student who did not have the opportunity to try the experiment also complained to the teacher because she perceived that the teacher only pay attention to some students.

I hope that all of the students will have the same chance to see, to listen, to try, to touch [...] (s4, entry 1a).

In the previous study Daniels, E., & Arapostathis, M. ( 2005), as cited in Wentzel, 2009, stated that only student in low level ask teacher to be fair, while the students in low level ask teacher to give them more challenge. However, the finding shows that the students in high level also asked the teacher to give the same chance for all students. In addition, they give that suggestion to consider their friends' satisfaction in learning. Furthermore, one student hoped that the teacher kept being patient when teaching. The student perceived that the teacher never got mad at them although they made noise, the teacher was so patient in dealing with them.

I hope the teacher always be patient (s9, entry 4a).

The student asked the teacher not to get mad if they made mistakes. If the teacher taught with temper students would feel anxious and they would not understand the content (Thayamani et al. 2013). Another student was quite sensitive in the classroom. He thought that his noisy friend disturbed him and he wanted the teacher to warn when they make noise.

I want teacher to warn the students who make noise during the learning process because it will disturb the learning (s13, entry 1a).

It could be seen that the student felt disturbed because of the noise from the other students. Thus, the teacher was supposed to admonish the students who made noise. Moreover, related to

the lesson, the students wanted the teacher to give them many examples in learning,

Be better, please give us many examples in order to understand the content to make us easy to do examination (s16, entry2a).

Having more examples make the students easy to understand the material. in addition, the students asked the teacher to give them more vocabularies.

My suggestion in English is that the teacher gives me more vocabularies and more note (s12, entry 1).

The student faced difficulty in learning because of lack of vocabularies. It seemed that it was the main challenge for teacher to teach in English because many students did not know vocabularies. For Physics subject, the student asked the teacher to give a deep explanation in the experiment.

The teacher is supposed to explain step by step about the experiment, and give deep explanation (s16, interview1a).

It seemed that it could be useless if the students only practice, but they did not know what theory was applied in that practice, what happened, and why things happened in that way. The teacher was supposed to explain it clearly in order to enhance students' comprehension

### **Commitment to Improve Teaching Strategies**

This study proposed that learning journal could improve teaching strategies. The teacher who taught English subject used cooperative learning in the first meeting. The students seemed quite active during the learning process. Some students wrote that they enjoy the learning process. However, surprisingly, some students gave bad comment to teacher related to teacher's behavior. When reading the learning journal, the teacher noted caring issues as an important issue for her, because it is related to her behavior to the students.

The teacher was quite surprised when the students asked

her to be fairer in teaching which meant the teacher had to pay attention to all students and gave them the same opportunity in learning. This finding supported the idea of Wentzel (1988) who stated that the students perceived a caring teacher if a teacher could give the equal support in learning.

On the contrary, the teacher saw that the students had misunderstood, she considered if she asked the students who were low achieving, it would make them felt ashamed when they could not answer her questions.

The students sometimes misunderstand the teacher. When I ask them to answer a question, they feel ashamed if they cannot answer. Actually, I want them to participate actively in learning, and they should think that teacher pay attention to them as well. But they have the perception that the teacher intentionally wants to make students feel ashamed and it will make them feel down. So, when I do not ask them, they think that I do not pay attention to them (T1, Interview 1).

The teacher claimed that she did not mean to treat the student unfairly but she thought that if she asked the student to answer the question and they could not answer it, the students would feel ashamed. In this case, students and teacher had different perceptions. The journal became a media to notice students' perceptions toward teacher. By noticing that thought from students the teacher attempted to change her behavior toward the student. Moreover, the teacher tried to call all students especially the student who needed more attention in learning. The teacher attempted to ask them at first time she gave an example. The perception of student changed for a moment after the teacher gave different treatment. Nevertheless, when the teacher forgot to call the student, again, the student's perception would change. The student was quite sensitive with teacher's treatment.

On the other hand, the teacher also attempted to fulfill students' academic needs. The teacher was well-prepared in teaching,

In the class, the level of students understanding is various. If I make all examples are difficult, how about the students in low ability. But if I make easy examples, I consider students in high ability. They will not be challenged in learning. So I made four examples included two in low level and the rest for a higher level. So for those who are low in understanding at least could understand two of examples if they could not catch up all. (T1, interview1).

The teacher also had academic attitude which meant she considered the level of students' abilities in preparing the content for students (Apelgren & Giertz ,2010). As the students wrote in their journals that they needed more practice, contextual and more vocabularies in learning, the teacher attempted to use various methods in applying contextual learning, she lead students to do the conversation in pair in front of the class. Thus, the students would have skill to apply the content in their real life. Moreover, the students also knew the connection between the lesson and their daily life (Berns and Erickson, 2001). On the other meeting, the teacher applied problem-based learning by giving students the situation and asking them to create their own conversation. In this situation, the students were challenged to solve their problem by creating a conversation (Barrows and Tamblyn,1980). Furthermore, the teacher also gave more vocabularies as the students' needs because most of students were lacking of vocabularies.

Meanwhile, the other teacher in different lesson was not really well-prepared as the previous one. In the first meeting, she taught in the laboratory using inquiry strategies, hence, the students were so enthusiastic to practice except the student who did not have a chance to practice. Moreover, after reading the learning journal, the Physics teacher focused on students' reflections which mentioned that one student did not have chance to practice. The teacher perceived that the student was an unconfident student. Therefore, she needed to approach the student personally. On the other hand, when the other students did not

pay attention during learning process, the teacher assumed that the students needed more attention from her. Hence, she attempted to approach them in learning.

Furthermore, most students perceived that the teacher was a fun and caring teacher, this was why the students liked studying with her even though she only taught in conventional way. Based on my observation, from five times I observed her in teaching, only in the first meeting the teacher applied inquiry strategies using experiment method, in the other meetings, the teacher taught using expository strategies which emphasize the role of teacher as the main resource of information (Joyce et al., 2009 as cited in Hannay, 2015). Nevertheless, the students quite enjoyed learning with her because she was not only focused to the content, but she also tried to make joke with student. Moreover, she also paid attention and checked students understanding one by one to make sure that all students have understood the content.

In addition, the teacher always does not mind to repeat the explanation even though if only one student did not understand. The way she treated students make students enjoy the learning process. Moreover, the teacher also fulfill academic' needs of students when the students asked her to give them more example and exercise to enhance better understanding. Equally important, the teacher also reviewed some topic that the students did not understand yet. On the other hand, the teacher was not consistent in planning and practicing, when I interviewed her, she said that she would change the teaching strategies for the next meeting. In fact, when I observed I found that she did not alternate her strategy in teaching. Furthermore, the teacher also promised to repeat the experiment because she noticed that many students did not understand the experiment, but she did not do it instead she continued with her lesson.

In conclusion, both of teachers had attempted to improve their teaching. The first teacher had a good commitment and perseverance to improve her teaching strategies by following students' needs such as changing her teaching methods by doing

contextual learning, trying to be fairer and more care, giving more vocabularies. She also has good ability to use various strategies in teaching. Moreover, she was also well-prepared in teaching, always tried to keep learning and to do her best in teaching. It means that the teacher has all aspects that are required in pedagogical competence which are attitude, knowledge, ability, adapting to the situation, perseverance and continuous development

Meanwhile, the latter teacher had improved the way she taught by following the suggestions from students such as, giving more examples, paying attention to all of the students, reviewing the material when needed. However, the teacher did not change the teaching method as the students suggested. She keep doing lecturing during the meeting and she did not have perseverance to teach in the best way. Considering pedagogical competence, the teacher already had some aspects that are required in pedagogical competence which are attitude, knowledge, ability, and adapting the situation. Nonetheless, the teacher need to have perseverance and continuous development to develop her teaching from time to time.

## **Conclusion**

The finding showed the role of students journal in learning process are to understand students' points of view and exploring students' needs. Furthermore, both of the teachers had attempted to improve as well as to assess their teaching. Thus, it can be considered that the teachers are able to develop their pedagogical competence. Moreover, the first teacher did a significant improvement in both teaching methods and in the way she maintained her attitude toward the students. However, sometimes, she went back to her previous attitude whereas she only paid attention to some particular students. It seemed that the teacher might need time to change her attitude permanently to care for all the students. Meanwhile, the latter teacher did some improvements in teaching but not the teaching methods because

the most prevailing method that she used was only the conventional method. However, she was good in the way she treated the students and in the way she managed the relationship with the students. This was why most of the students liked studying with her because the students perceived her as a caring teacher.

Additionally, when the first teacher taught in a conventional method such as lecturing, she acquired bad comments from the students since the students remarked that the teacher was so rigid in teaching and there was no laugh or jokes. However, when the latter applied the conventional method, the students told it was fine since the teacher taught them in a fun way and the teacher treated them fairly. Hence, students perceived that the relationship between the teacher and student was more important compared to teaching method. However, it would be better if the teacher could apply a good strategy and had a good relationship with them as well.

Moreover, the result of this study may give the impact on the teacher in the school and teacher education. For the teachers, they can consider applying learning journals in their teaching in order to notice students' points of views and to meet students needs. Moreover, the teachers can use students' journals to improve their teaching strategies. For teacher education, the faculty may consider to train teachers not only about teaching methods but also how to build a good relationship between teachers and students. Since teaching is not only about a technical thing but it is also about treating students as human being.

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