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IMPROVING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN CIVIC EDUCATION LEARNING THROUGH GROUPED-DISCUSSION METHOD FOR THE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

ABSTRACT: This study was aimed at improving the students' democratic values among the students in higher education institution through a grouped-discussion method. This was triggered by a lack of understanding on democratic values among the students in the university level. They also indicated less-democratic attitudes and behavior. This was an action research study following the model of Stephen Kemmis & Robin McTaggart (1988). The subject of the research was the fourth-semester students at the Study Program of Indonesia and Local Languages Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto) in Central Java, Indonesia. There were 60 students. The action (treatment) given was an application of grouped-discussion in the Civic Education courses. The data collection was through observation from which the results was noted in an observation guide. In addition, it was also done through testing of essay questions and an interview. Two types of data were collected, i.e. qualitative data from document, results of observation, and recorded interview; and the quantitative data were from testing of pre- and post-test. Based on the analysis, it was proved that the democratic values among the students can be improved through grouped-discussion method applied in Civic Education course. Their average learning score was 63.75 before the treatment and it increased to 72.77 after the first cycle. At the end of the second cycle, it became 80.68. Besides, another increase was indicated from their democratic attitude and behavior. They acknowledged that every individual has a freedom of giving his/her opinion, of making a group of organization, and participating in any organization, appreciating citizen and gender equity, and respecting other people's opinion.

KEY WORDS: Democratic values, grouped-discussion, civic education, students, democratic attitude and behavior, and good citizen of Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The issues emerging in the globalization time among others include democracy, human right, civil society, and environment. Those issues, for the international society, are made into parts of requirements to be accepted in the international relation. The countries who do not comply with them will be seen to be isolating themselves and they are regarded as abnormal and violating the rules (Allen White, 2000; Rodriguez *et al.*, 2000; and Winataputra, 2006).

Democracy, as one of the global issues, is viewed by many as a social system that will enable the people to pursue a good living (Branson, 1999; Azra, 2002b; and

Budimansyah, 2007). Going in the line with the belief, many countries, including Indonesia, have made countless efforts to transform their states to lead into a democratic society—particularly for Indonesia, after its three decades of experience under an authoritarian ruler (Ibnu Chamim *et al.*, 2003:vi).

Manifesting democracy in a society and a state is not something easy to do; it is, in fact, a complicated process which possibly comes into a dead-end, meaning it fails to achieve. Among the factors for such failure is a lack of main prerequisite to be, i.e. the democratic culture and socio-politics.

Gabriel Almond explained that a nation developing their democratic culture shall

undertake two following stages (cited in Ibnu Chamim *et al.*, 2003:viii). The first stage is to develop democratic institutions. At this stage, it is aimed at creating a social condition and individual personalities which will promote the democracy. The second stage is a process to nurture individual attitudes supporting democracy. The first stage is to set a democratic social-structure and political-culture.

Indonesia is a democratic state. This can be seen from the formal and judicial evidences of its Constitution or UUD (*Undang-Undang Dasar*) 1945, as it is ruled in Chapter 1 on the Form and the Authority, Article 1 paragraph (2) saying that “*the authority is on people and it is conducted according to the Constitution*” (Ubaidillah *et al.*, 2000). Based on its historical experience, democracy as a system of state rules a balance relation between the government, state, and people. These three parties control each other in conducting their rights and obligations. The balance position and inter-controlling are to avoid an anarchy and tyranny which may be done by one of the parties (Dahl, 1971; Budiardjo, 1977; Sartori, 1987; and Wuryani & Syaifullah, 2006).

This time, Indonesia is at the stage of coming into the learning process of applying democracy in all aspects of nation and state run after its long waiting for the momentum. In national conference held by Central Committee of Muhammadiyah on Board of Higher Education, Research and Development (*Majelis Pendidikan Tinggi, Penelitian dan Pengembangan, Pengurus Pusat Muhammadiyah*), Zamroni argued as follows:

This can be well understood since the past legacy either of the Old Order or of the New Order did not promote the democratization process, and the lack of education contribution to nurture the democratic culture. Evenmore, the education have gone against it; it has made the cultural democracy a means to eliminate the democracy itself (Zamroni, 2001:xvii).

The break of Reform waves in 1990's has brought a new hope of demoracy development and of realizing a civil society in Indonesia, though it left many unresolved social phatologies in the transition periods. Building a strong foundation of democracy and civil society, particularly in the transition times,

should not only be fought; it shall be nurtured, grown through well-planned efforts targetted to all layers of the whole society (Ubaidillah *et al.*, 2000).

This is to make sure that “the tree of democracy and civil society” starting to grow, along with the “big wave” of democracy, human rights, and civil society in the world will not be withered and dry-dead even before it is rooted well. To this point, Azyumardi Azra explains that:

One of the democartic infrastructures having an important effect on realization of democracy, democratic culture, and even civil society is education. It is not a ready-to-use product which needs only to be *taken for granted*. In fact, it needs to be learned and is sustainably practiced (Azra, 2002a:6).

Civic Education (CE) subject in the higher education has a strategic position in nurturing the understanding of democratic basic concepts, including the democratic values. It also teaches the application of the concepts and the values in society and in government. It is a step to grow the students' awareness to practice the democratic concepts and values in the academic and social life of their educational setting and in the society in which they live (Azizy *et al.*, 2002).

Thus, the CE strategic learning is needed to establish a safe and critical atmosphere. This also functions to maintain a dialogue and participation of the students in the class. To achieve the objectives, some important aspects need to consider in planning and implementing the learning process. Those include objectives, materials, method, media, learning facilities, learning atmosphere, and the students (Djajadisastra, 1981; Ali, 1987; and Ahmadi & Prasetya, 1997).

The CE learning should employ a participative learning method and approach, i.e. learning approach and method to interest tthe students' motivation to actively participate in the learning process. On the topics of democratic values, the right method to apply is a grouped-discussion. In practice, the usual method taken tended to indoctrinate, like a usual lecture with a little question and answer session. In such a process, students were only passive objects of learning. In fact, they should

be active subjects in the learning. This will put bad impacts on the students on the learning of democratic living which later will guide them in handling the problems in social life. They should be prepared to anticipate the complex and dynamic problems of realities which need right solutions (Rosyada, 2003).

The CE learning ideally is done in a democratic atmosphere. It refers to a class which provides all students with freedom to hold an open and fear-free discussion in criticizing actual social problems concerning the implementation of democratic values. It also have to entertain them with an active participation in the learning. Thus, the role of the lecturer is only a facilitator to ease the students in learning a democratic life and he/she is also a motivator to encourage them to learn actively a democratic living (Numan Somantri, 2001).

Based on the reasons above, a grouped-discussion is an appropriate method to apply in the learning of democratic values. It is to train the students to practice a democratic life in the classroom, in the society where they live, and in Indonesia as a nation-state. Through its application, it was expected that the democratic values among the students would be improved: they would understand the values of civic knowledge more deeply, they would have a civic disposition, and they could implement the values (civic skills) in the daily practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

This is a classroom-action research adopting the model of Stephen Kemmis & Robin McTaggart (1988). The method used is qualitative and quantitative descriptive method. The data of the research were collected through testing, observation, interview, questionnaire, and documentation (Arikunto, 1998; and Muhyadi, 2008). The instruments of the data collection include: (1) evaluation instrument, post-treatment testing; (2) observation guide; (3) interview guide; and (4) questionnaire.

The subject of the research was the fourth-semester students at the Study Program of Indonesia and Local Languages Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training

UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto) in Central Java, Indonesia. There were 60 students. The action (treatment) given was an application of grouped-discussion in the Civic Education courses. The researcher here was also the actor of the treatment and two of his colleagues became the observers.

The data collection was through observation from which the results was noted in an observation guide. In addition, it was also done through testing of essay questions and an interview. Two types of data were collected, i.e. qualitative data from document, results of observation, and recorded interview; and the quantitative data were from testing of pre- and post-test. They were then analyzed through descriptive-quantitative method to analyze the learning achievements of democratic values, and the qualitative-descriptive was also applied to analyze the data driven from the observation and the interview. The formula used to analyze the quantitative data is as follows:

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{\text{Frequency (F)}}{N} \times 100$$

Note:

Frequency (F) = the sum of the students' score.
N = the number of students (subject of the research)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, the Analysis of Average Score of the Democratic Values Learning. The result of improvement of students' democratic values among the subjects from the pre-treatment, post-treatment of first cycle, and post-treatment of second cycle is displayed in table 1.

Based on the table 1, it can be concluded that the average score of the learning of democratic values among the subject indicated a consistent improvement. The evaluation of pre-treatment gave an average score of 63.75. From the second test given after the first cycle, it increased to 72.77 and it went up more after the second cycle, 80.68. In other words, the improvements in the stages were 14.15% (from the first cycle) and 10.87% (from the second cycle). The improvement of students' score on democratic values learning is depicted in the diagram 1.

Table 1:
 The Improvement of Students' Democratic Values

	Pre-Test	Post-Test of Cycle 1	Post-Test of Cycle 2
Average score	63.75	72.77	80.68
% improvement		14.15	10.87

Table 2:
 The Students' Learning Mastery at the Pre-Treatment

No	Total	Score Below the Required Standard	Score Above the Required Standard
N	60	54	6
%	100%	90%	10%

Second, an Analysis of Students' Learning Mastery. The bottom limit of learning mastery in UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto) in Central Java, Indonesia is 70, based on the Rector's Decree (Rektor UMP, 2008). The data analysis of the students' learning mastery can be seen in the table 2.

As it is seen in the table 2, the students' understanding on the democratic values is low as it is indicated by the small percentage of those achieving the score above the required standard of learning mastery, 70. Finding this fact, the researcher did an evaluation with two collaborators. It was done through observation on the learning process. The result of the observation revealed that the students had no much involvement in the learning process. This fact was seen in the students' few responses after the lecturer's presentation. Only 3 students (5%) gave comment/question. Some students were seen to chat with others, especially among those in the back row. The lecturer, then, warned and asked a question to regain their attention on the material discussed.

Based on the evaluation result, it is found that the alternative solution for the problems in learning the subject, especially on the democratic values, is a proper learning method. It is a method which goes in line with its material characteristics. It was, then,

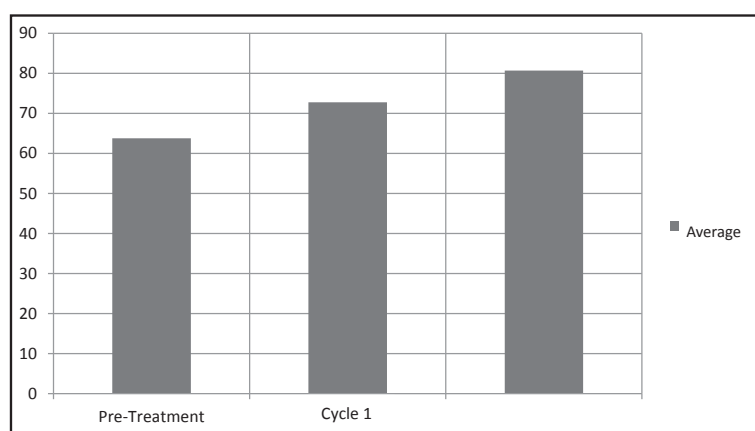


Diagram 1:
 A Diagram of Students' Learning Score of Democratic Values among the Subjects

decided that the right method is a grouped-discussion method. The method is rarely put, and even, is never used in the CE (Civic Education) learning, especially in the class as the subject of this study. It used to use a lecture method complemented with question-answer method (Djajadisastra, 1981; and Ahmadi & Prasetya, 1997).

Thus, it was then concluded that the grouped-discussion method is the most appropriate method to be used in the CE subject, especially in the topic of democratic values (freedom, equality, responsibility, cooperation, belief, and legal obedience).

From the table 3, it is seen a dramatic increase in which most students (90%) had made scores equal to or above the required standard of learning mastery. This was in contrast to the previous condition of pre-

Table 3:
The Students' Learning Mastery at the Post-Treatment of Cycle 1

No	Total	Score Below the Required Standard	Score Equal/Above the Required Standard
N	60	6	54
%	100%	10%	90%

Table 4:
The Students' Learning Mastery at the Post-Treatment of Cycle 2

No	Total	Score Below the Required Standard	Score Equal/Above the Required Standard
N	60	2	58
%	100%	3.33%	96.66%

treatment in which 90% of them were unable to reach the minimum score.

Based on the on-spot observation, during the treatment of the first cycle, it was noted that all three meetings had changed in terms of the behavior of the students and the lecturer (observation notes I, 17/4/2013). As it has been known that, in the pre-treatment classes, the students were passive and they were reluctant to engage in the learning process; they did not ask any question and some even chatted to each other. The class was not conducive. It was only a one-way communication in which the lecturer always feeded in everything and the students were only passive audience. In short, the lecturer was the center of the learning process (Ali, 1987; and Sudjana, 1989).

In the first cycle of the treatment, the condition had changed. The chances for the students to actively engage were there by opening a grouped-discussion sessions. The atmosphere was so conducive and much better than the pre-treatment. The students focused on the class work and they were involved more actively in the learning process. This could be seen from their activities in the discussion either the members of the presenting group or those of the audience group. This proved an increase of democratic values implemented by the students.

Seen from their average score of 72.77, which was more than the previous score of 63.75, it was obviously found that the academic improvement was really there. The data of the students having gained a score

equal to or more than the required standard of learning mastery was displayed in the table 3.

As it was seen in table 4, the students who achieved below the standard were only minor, 3.33%. Most of them (96.66%) had successfully achieved the standard score. In sum, the increase of the students' learning of democratic values between three stages was 80% and 6.67%. There was a very dramatic increase from the pre-treatment to the post-treatment of the first cycle, as follows: (1) Pre-treatment = 10%; (2) Post-treatment of first cycle = 90%; and (3) Post-treatment of second cycle = 96.67%.

The observation on the second cycle is basically the same as the one on the first. It was targetted to the activities of lecturer and students during the learning, particularly on the learning of democratic values using grouped-discussion method. The lecturer took a role of facilitator, motivator, and the drive (observation notes II, 24/4/2013).

The role of the lecturer as facilitator is to facilitate the discussion implementation like planning the learning activities and the grouped discussions, designing the rules of grouped discussion, guiding the paper writing, explaining the aspects of evaluation, providing the references for the students, and suggesting the students to actively update the information/news in electronic media as well as those reported in the printed media (journals, magazines, and newspapers), and also preparing the learning media.

Lecturers as a motivator is encouraging students to get involved in the learning

process, namely the implementation of grouped-discussion on the actual social problems associated with democratic values (Kirschenbaun, 1995). The ways taken by lecturer to motivate the students were through reinforcement, such as giving a reward and punishment. The prizing can be in the words of praise and in giving a score; meanwhile the punishment can be in the form of reducing the score or even cancelling the score of the subject.

The lecturer as a dynamic factor is to ensure that the discussion can run well and it can achieve the targetted objective. In acting the role, the lecturer became a moderator of the discussion and gave a review of the discussions by providing case examples of actual social problems associated with democratic values (Zamroni, 2003; and Wantoro, 2008). The lecturer could make some humors in between, so the learning activities and group discussions can run more interesting and fun.

However, it is undeniable that there are still some students who have not been involved in the learning process optimally and the grouped-discussion in teaching the democratic values. Hence, they could not gain the learning objectives. The students, in the implementation of the second cycle, looked more active and creative. This can be seen from the students' learning motivation which is generally better than that of the first cycle. More activities and higher motivation were proved in both groups (observation notes II, 24/4/2013).

The presenting group was better than the one in the first cycle, in terms of their mutual cooperation in the presentation, their topic mastery, their self-control/emotional control, their ability to respect the different opinion of others, and their reaction to answer the questions in polite way. The same improvement also appeared in the audience groups. They have a higher motivation to involve in the discussion as it was seen from the increased number of students who ask questions or respond comments from the audience, their questions were also about the topics discussed.

Their questions also explored the actual social problems. Their competence was good: the ability to respect other ideas, the ability to control emotions, and the ability to use of

the language properly and politely. Thus, the interaction between the groups of students who presented papers and other groups of students who responded as well as among fellow students in the class was good and it created a conducive condition.

The data in table 5 is depicted in a diagram 2.

Based on the percentage of learning mastery in each cycle, it proved that there was a very significant increase as the result of the second cycle shows a high proportion of 96.67% which can categorized as excellence. Considering this achievement, the research was decided to be in two cycles only.

Discussion. Through the grouped-discussion method, the students were trained to have a freedom of thinking, a freedom of giving opinion, and a freedom of participating. They were also trained to control their behavior; and their emotion and to respect others' opinion, though their opinion was perhaps different from theirs. Hence, they were trained not to be egocentric, and they learned to see thing in others' perspectives.

The application of the group discussion method in CE (Civic Education) learning can increase the students' democratic value in the Study Program of Indonesia and Local Languages Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto) in Central Java, Indonesia, since a group discussion is the decision-making process through consultation among several groups in order to solve problems that arise due to problems of common interest in order to reach an mutually agreed decision.

The group discussions for students can increase their courage to put forward the ideas and opinions about the alternatives of solving a problem (solution) of the actual social problems discussed in the paper as well as to propose the arguments in proper manner. It has improved the students' critical thinking and sensitivity to social problems that require the actual solution, widened their insights related to social life, of the nation and of the state by means of studying the actual social problems (Gutmann, 1999; Cipto *et al.*, 2000; and Muhaimin, 2002). It also has improved their

Table 5:
The Data of Students' Scores between Three Stages

No	Evaluation	Below the Standard of Learning Mastery	Equal and Above the Standard of Learning Mastery
1	Pre-Treatment	54	6
2	Cycle 1	6	54
3	Cycle 2	2	58

self-confidence and self-control ability, improved their ability to respect the other people's opinion, and fostered a sense of great responsibility. Finally, the grouped discussion has improved the students' ability to cooperate with others in a same group or with other groups.

The grouped discussion also can educate the students to understand and to have a willingness to implement the democratic values in society: the public of their class, the college community, the community in which the students live, to the wider community of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesian. Their understanding and application of democratic values as parts of the citizens will be able to strengthen the enforcement of Indonesian state life, hinged at the democracy as stipulated in Article 1, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution or *Undang-Undang Dasar 1945* (Budiardjo, 1977; Daroeso, 1986; and Taniredja, Harmianto & Priyanto, 2010).

The students who have mastered thoroughly were given a remedial teaching and teachers also interviewed them. Based on interviews, it was concluded that both students had a low motivation to attend the course/the learning of CE, especially in the democratic values. This was proved from the facts that they were not actively involved in the discussion. They, evenmore, preferred chatting with other friends to listening to the explanation of the course material given by the lecturer and to the on-going discussions.

For them, writing paper was only for meeting the teacher's instruction; they did not

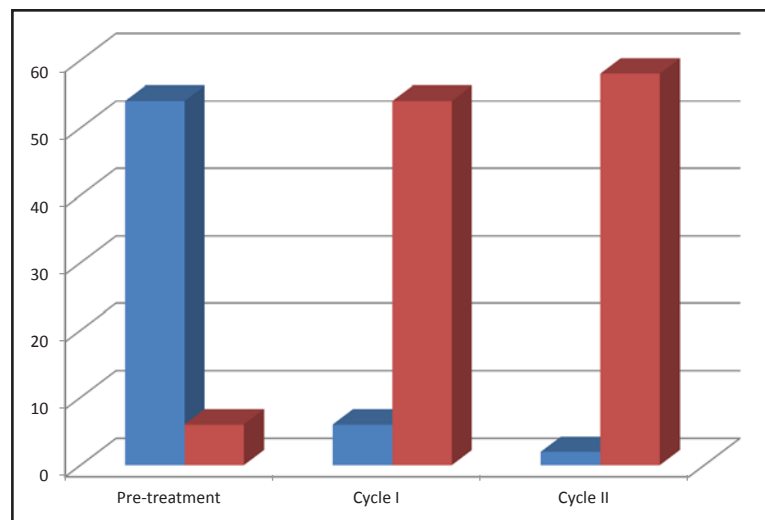


Diagram 2:
Diagram of Students' Learning Mastery in Three Stages

put their best efforts to it. They were found out to frequently leave their classes. They did not like to read references, even the books were available (interview with the students, 24/4/2013). In fact, one of the students argued as follows:

[...] the material of CE (Civic Education) is always the same from the past to the present; and I did not have any willingness to read literature books of new civics which have been modified to accord to the development demands in the reform and the globalization eras (interview with student A, 30/4/2013).

Seen from their learning achievement, both students had not mastered the civic knowledge, the civic disposition, and the civic skill. This was seen from their understanding on the material; they did not master the topics so well in presenting their paper. They could not explain the terms in their paper, and they also failed in three tests given. From their civic

disposition, both had not showed democratic attitudes, i.e. they did not respect others and even ignored them by having a chat with others during the discussion process, they did not accept the differences of opinion, and they were not responsible in doing their academic tasks. From their civic skill, both students were not skillful in finding the actual social problem in the society and could not give a good alternative solution (Basrie *et al.*, 2000; Dirjendikti Depdiknas RI, 2000; and Azizy *et al.*, 2002).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion in the previous sections, it can be drawn the conclusion as follows:

The grouped-discussion method can increase the students' democratic values among the fourth-semester students at the Study Program of Indonesia and Local Languages Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training UMP (Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto) in Central Java, Indonesia. This is proved from a significant increase (86%) of the students who achieved the required score of standard learning mastery.

The grouped-discussion method can improve the students' civic disposition reflecting the democratic values in their daily practices. They have implemented and practiced the freedom of giving opinion and the freedom of participation, and they have actively participated in discussion. They have respected others' opinion, the equality of individuals, and the rules of the discussion.

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Democracy in Indonesia: Between Hope and Reality
(Source: www.google.com, 15/9/2013)

The break of Reform waves in 1990's has brought a new hope of demoracy development and of realizing a civil society in Indonesia, though it left many unresolved social phatologies in the transition periods. Building a strong foundation of democracy and civil society, particularly in the transition times, should not only be fought; it shall be nurtured, grown through well-planned efforts targetted to all layers of the whole society.