CAKRAWALA PENDIDIKAN
Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan
Mei 2011, Th. XXX, Edisi Khusus Dies Natalis UNY

Berdasarkan SK Dirjen Dikti Nomor: 110/Dikti/Kep/2009,
tanggal 5 Desember 2009 tentang Hasil Akreditasi Jurnal Ilmiah
Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, Cakrawala Pendidikan
dinyatakan terakreditasi sebagai Jurnal Ilmiah Nasional
sampai dengan Desember 2012

PENERBIT
IKATAN SARJANA PENDIDIKAN INDONESIA DIY
BEKERJA SAMA DENGAN
LPM UNIVERSITAS NEGERI YOGYAKARTA
CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR THE EFL STUDENT-TEACHERS

Sugirin
FBS Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (e-mail: sugirin@uny.ac.id; HP: 08122781479)


Kata Kunci: pendidikan karakter, mahasiswa calon guru, nilai, keteladanan

INTRODUCTION

In line with the Indonesian government’s program to implement character education from 2010 to 2025 (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2010), at least twenty five higher education institutions, including Yogyakarta State University (YSU), have published their best practices in implementing character education. Meanwhile, individual teachers/lecturers and education institutions have, in their respective modes of deliveries, informally implemented character education. Formally, as Buchori (2007) notes, character education has been formulated as religious education and civic education whose main program is merely introduction to values cognitively or, at the most, affectively. True character education should expose students to the introduction of values cognitively, the internalization of the values affectively, and ultimately the application of the values in real life. As Lickona (1991, in Nucci & Narvaes, 2008: 93) claims, without the direct involvement of cognition, affection, and real actions, character education will not be effective. This paper aims to provide a model of shaping the EFL student-teachers’ character through its integration in the curriculum and through the overall lecturer-student communication inside as well as outside the classroom, so that the nurtured character can be seen live
and actualized in day-to-day campus living practice.

WHY CHARACTER EDUCATION?

Buchori (2007) claims that the destruction of the nation at present is due to the degradation of the people’s national integrity. Corruptions, violence, law infringements, intolerance, uncontrollable freedom, dishonesty, and many other destructive traits all emerge from the instability and corrosion of the national character. Unless proper measures are taken, the current condition will develop into chaos. Therefore, character education is a big issue that must be dealt with accordingly.

In the international level, especially in the USA, similar phenomena are mushrooming. Character Training Enterprises - CTE (2011) releases the report that escalating crime, drug and alcohol abuse, workplace violence, gang activity, vandalism, school dropouts, deteriorating work ethics, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, racial tensions, and so forth, all spring out of the lack, or misapplication, of good character qualities. It appeals that if we are to find lasting solutions to the problems we must teach good character to our children, as children of good character will sustain the good life of the community. This is in line with Adams’ assertion (2003:49) that the more good people there are in a community, the better life generally in the community is apt to be, because the ideal character of the individuals will accumulate to shape the character of the communities, and ultimately shape the character of the nation (Pemerintah RI, 2010:22). Therefore, Adams (2003:49) calls character education the gate to good moral development.

The suggestions above confirm the claim Nucci and Narvaez (2008:1) make about widespread agreement that schools should contribute to students’ moral development and character formation. Lickona (1991:20) asserts that the school’s role as moral educator becomes even more vital at a time when millions of children get little moral teaching from their parents and when the influences of religious institutions are also absent from children’s lives. As Suyanto (2009) notes, research results from countries such as the USA, Japan, China, and Korea, which have already implemented character education systematically, show positive impacts on the academic achievement of the students.

For the EFL student-teachers, who will be future teachers of English, character education is paramount. Not only do they need to develop their own character to meet the standard personal competence as teachers, but they will also be models for their students in their future profession. However, in practice, unfavorable attitudes and behaviors still happen to some student-teachers. For example, in almost every mid-semester or semester examination, there are still a number of students who try to find an chance to ask for help from their classmates. They realize the importance of honesty but they are not strong enough to confront the temptation to be dishonest. When asked whether they participate in the local community’s activities, most of the students staying in boarding houses around the campus say “No”. They do not feel the need to be in-

Cakrawala Pendidikan, Mei 2011, Th. XXX, Edisi Khusus Dies Natalis UNY
volved in activities such as neighborhood watch, working bees, attending funerals, etc., which are actually effective means for nurturing personal and social competences – personality traits they must possess for their future profession as teachers, as they will become models for their future students.

In this regard, Nucci and Narvaez (2008:115) claim that if we are to make virtuous characters of the young, the guardians and teachers of youth need themselves to be models of such good character. Similarly, Lathrop and Foss (2005:10) point out that the biggest single factor in escalating academic dishonesty is the failure of parents and teachers to diligently teach, enforce, advocate and model personal integrity. It is the adults, not the kids, who have the greatest responsibility to create an ethical culture that nurtures the virtues of honor, honesty and fairness.

HAVE PARENTS AND EDUCATORS BEEN REALISTIC?

Lathrop and Foss’s (2005: 10) appeal to parents and educators to contemplate is justified because parents and teachers are often unfair in their expectation from the children. Hanson (Davis, Drinan & Gallant, 2009:8) criticizes the parents for being unrealistic towards their children’s achievement by saying:

“Some children and their parents have convinced themselves that they have to be superstars and go to Harvard, Stanford, or Brown to have a worthwhile life. This attitude leads to cheating by the most qualified, not the least qualified, students in some schools.”

This cheating practice is real. Lickona (1991:14) presents evidence from one national survey of more than 6,000 (US) college freshmen and sophomores that 76 percent admitted to cheating in high school. Even more disturbing is students’ acceptance of such behavior as normal, even necessary, behavior.

Hanson’s criticism about parents’ attitude suits not only the unfairness of the parents in the USA or the UK, but also that of most parents in Indonesia. When Indonesian parents ask their children what they want to be in the future, regardless of their background, the answer will generally be “a doctor.” Almost none will say “a farmer.” To be a doctor or an engineer is what the parents whisper in their ears when such a question is raised. In senior high school, when the teachers ask where their students plan to continue their study, they will most probably name the favorite university in their city or that in a bigger city. Whether or not children and parents realize this kind of attitude, such a high standard they set may have a consequence on their efforts to prove that they are not only dreaming. Some of the potential students will do their best to make their dreams come true in every responsible way, but those with a lack of confidence, due to real or unreal gap between the dreams and the potentials, may end up with cheating in the examinations. In the last few years, cases of cheating have been reported in the national final examination for high school students or in the university admission examination. Hanson (Davis, Drinan & Gallant, 2009:8) suggests that the cases of cheating in an examination happen
because of contracted behavior, external recognition, and rewards for behavior (in the form of grades). If the standard of success is grade, not the student’s developed potentials to be a whole person, then cheating will be continually recurring in the national final examination or in the university admission examination.

This is a true warning for parents, teachers and school children to understand the importance of being realistic and being grateful for what they have been blessed with. The form of gratefulness is by doing the best in an honest and sincere manner, in all the efforts made, and leaving the rest to God’s discretion.

WHAT IS CHARACTER?

For non-Indonesians, character may mean something including or excluding moral, spiritual or religious aspects of life. For Arthur (2008:91), for example, character refers to the individual person as a whole, including an ability to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right. In CTE’s circle (CTE, 2011:1), character is not just what people try to display for others to see, it is who they are even when no one is watching. Good character is doing the right thing because it is right to do what is right. For Koelhoffer (2009:105-6), “Having character means knowing when you should tell the whole truth and when you should keep some things to yourself.” For Berkovitz (Damon, 2002:69), character is an individual’s set of psychological characteristics that affect that person’s ability and inclination to function morally. Simply put, character is comprised of those characteristics or traits that lead to a person to do the right thing or not to do the right thing.

Unlike the character education in the USA which uses moral reasoning and value clarification as the basic strategies, the Indonesian character education believe in the existence of “absolute moral” coming from religions in the world, known as the “golden rule” such as being respectable, honest, modest, helpful, and responsible (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2010:7). Furthermore, for the Indonesian people, who have Pancasila as the way of life and Believe in the One and Only God, however, the term character always refers to the Indonesian character, which cannot be separated from the religious belief, the belief in the One and Only God. It is clear that, when talking about character, the disciples of each religion in Indonesia will always refer to the characters of the prophet or its religious leader. As long as ideal characters are concerned, the Moslems, for example, will always refer to the akhlaqul karimah, the morals of Prophet Muhammad, the Christians to those of Christ, the Buddhists to those of Budha, etc. This can be understood because while affective education is likely to apply to education all over the world, regardless of differences in races or nationalities, some elements of character education are culturally bound to specific localities, races, or nations (Sugirin, 2010:268).

Article 3, Chapter II of the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on the National Education System spells out clearly that the National
Education functions, among others, to develop learners’ potentials in order that they become pious persons who are faithful to the One and Only God, who possess morally noble character, who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, autonomous, and become democratic and responsible citizens. The term “morally noble character” or *akhlaqul karimah* (the morals, the traits, of the Prophet), other than being related to the quality of being healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, autonomous, democratic and responsible, also pertains to good universal qualities such as honesty, tolerance, patience, forgiveness, generosity, justice, sincerity, humbleness, hospitality, self-control, punctuality, truthfulness, thriftiness, and other recognized good human qualities.

**WHAT IS CHARACTER EDUCATION?**

While Arthur (in Nucci & Narvaez, 2008: 91) defines character education as the formation and transformation of a person as a whole, which include education in school, families, and through the individual’s participation in society’s social networks, Bennett (Ficarrota, 2001:271) views it as the human right education when he asserts that “The education of character is finally a matter of human being to human being, the existential decision, the decision about who you are and what matters in your life, no one can take from you. That’s the decision that you, and you alone, make.”

While the definitions presented above may be used as a reference, which may enrich education perspectives, character education for the Indonesian people must stem from Article 3, Chapter II of the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 on the National Education System. The article says that the National Education functions to develop the capacity and to shape the character and civilization of dignified nation for intellectually enhancing its life, which aims at developing learners’ potentials in order that they become pious persons who are faithful to the One and Only God, who possess morally noble character, who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, autonomous, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

In the Indonesian conception, character education has a higher status than moral education as it does not merely teach which is right and which is wrong. Character education forms a habit of practicing what is right so that learners understand what is right or wrong (cognition), possess an ability to feel and internalize good values (affection), and have the habit of practicing good values (behavior). Only through putting good values into practice can morally noble character be achieved (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2010: 10).

As far as character education is concerned, the word character always refers to good character, one which does good to whoever wants to live a good life. It is the commitment to live a good life that should be nurtured in character education through putting good values into practice. In Ratna Megawangi’s words (2010:30), character education is making a habit of practicing noble values.
To meet the purpose of this paper, the values proposed to be included in the education for the EFL student-teachers are those directly related to the development of two of the basic teacher's competences: personal competence and social competence. The insertion of the values in the instruction as well as in the communication between the lecturers and the student-teachers outside the classroom is presented in the following section.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT CHARACTER EDUCATION

At YSU, in line with its vision, to prepare graduates who are conscientious, autonomous, and knowledgeable, character education is implemented systematically through the three functions of higher education: education, research, and community service. To be more specific, Zuchdi, et al. (2010: v) points out YSU's commitment to implement character education through its integration in the curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular programs, as well as in the overall day-to-day practice for shaping the university culture.

In this regard, Buchori (2007) points out that true character education should expose students to the introduction of values cognitively, internalization of values affectively, and ultimately the application of values in real life. In Boyer's words (in Colby et al., 2003:6) character education should move students from competence to commitment. This means that values must be practiced, and the best way to practice values is through modeling (Kisbiyah, 2010:11; Dimerman, 2009:51). In Yero's (2010) words, character education programs will be successful if the individual teachers live the lessons they teach—they walk their talk.

Consequently, the implementation of character education requires the modes which will enable the students to understand, to feel, and to act upon the character to be nurtured. In line with the views expressed earlier and in this section, character education requires the processes of both internalization and actualization. Rather than conducting it as a separate program in an indoctrination-like model, the implementation of character education should be integrated into relevant content subject instruction as well as in the interaction between lecturers and students outside the classroom. This integration will be elaborated in the next section.

INTEGRATING CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE EFL EDUCATION

In order to accommodate the processes of internalization and actualization of the development of two of the four basic teacher's competences, personal competence and social competence, the lecturer can apply two different modes in their EFL education: explicit mode and implicit mode. The elaboration of the two modes is presented in the following sub-sections.

Integrating Character Education through Explicit Mode

In the Explicit Mode, the lecturer should have planned in the actual or hidden syllabus what aspects of personal competence and/or social competence s/he expects to nurture through the instruction. S/he is the one who
knows well about which part of the topic suits the inclusion of a certain aspect of personal or social competence and the correct timing for this aspect to be brought to surface. The aspects to be nurtured can be presented as a brief lecture or as a moral value the student-teachers are expected to learn from a topic through the presentation of a selected text.

**Brief Lecturing on a Certain Virtue or Vice**

Considering its relevance to the topic under discussion, the lecturer can give a brief talk on a certain virtue the student-teachers should practice or a vice they should avoid (at the beginning of the class or any point of time during the class where condition allows). The purpose is to raise awareness on the virtue or vice concerned. For example on the first day of the TESL Methodology class, the lecturer can raise the issue of teachers' basic competencies: professional, pedagogical, personal, and social competencies. When it comes to elaborating personal competence, the lecturer, for example, can touch upon “honesty,” an aspect of personal competence every teacher and academician must possess. The lecturer can tell the student-teachers that one of their future duties is to “guarantee” that their students are, or are developing into, honest persons. Honest persons do not cheat in an examination. This is the value to which everyone should adhere and respect as an agreement between the lecturer and the students. Student-teachers should feel guilty cheating as later they will have to tell their students not to cheat. If a student shows a sign of making an attempt to cheat in an examination, the lecturer can just remind her/him that s/he will be a teacher in the next few years. In a normal situation, this lecturer’s reminder should be more than enough to meet the purpose. However, if the attempt to cheat persists, the lecturer should be more explicit in reminding the student concerned.

**Using Written or Recorded Material under the Theme of a Virtue or a Vice**

The handiest subject for integrating such material would be Reading Comprehension. Brief comic passages may suit the purpose for stimulating discussions in the lower semester classes, while the higher semester classes may need serious topics such as those related to tolerance, ethos, discipline, patriotism, sacrifice, self-control, autonomy, respect, friendship, honesty, frugality, empathy, fairness, justice, etc. The following passage, which makes an appeal for kindness, generosity, rationality, and religiousness through the exposure to greediness, stinginess, irrationality, and irreligiousness may be worth inclusion (as an intermezzo) in Reading I.

**Text 1:**

Stingy Old Man

A stingy old man who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness was determined to prove wrong the old saying, "You can't take it with you."

After much thought and consideration, the old ambulance chaser finally figured out how to take at least some of his money with him when he died.

He instructed his wife to go to the bank and withdraw enough money to fill two...
pillowcases. He then directed her to take the bags of money to the attic and leave them directly above his bed.

His plan was that when he passed away, he would reach out and grab the bags on his way to heaven. Several weeks after the funeral, the deceased man's wife, up in the attic cleaning came upon the two forgotten pillowcases stuffed with cash.

"Oh, that old fool," she exclaimed. "I knew he should have told me to put the money in the basement."

(Adapted from Edigg.com. 2008)

Another passage, which exposes the readers to a conflict of interpretation between honesty and dishonesty, sincerity and insincerity, humbleness and showing off, respectability and disrespectability, which may actually appeal for honesty, sincerity, humbleness, and respectability, may serve as an alternative.

Text 2:

The "Strange" Tombstone

A lawyer, named Thomas Strange, was shopping for a tombstone. After he had made his selection, the stonemason asked him what inscription he would like on it.

"Here lies Thomas Strange, an honest man and a lawyer," responded the lawyer.

"Sorry, but I can't do that," replied the stonemason. "In this state, it's against the law to bury two people in the same grave, and the authorities would be confused. However, I could put 'Here lies an honest lawyer.'"

"But that won't let people know who it is," protested the lawyer.

"Sure they will," replied the stonemason. "Everyone who reads it will think, 'That's Strange!'"

(Adopted from Larson, A. 1998-2010.)

In the teaching-learning process, after activating the students' background knowledge in the pre-reading activity, with the necessary help given in language and structure of the text, the students can form small groups and work on the comprehension of the text within fifteen to twenty minutes. They are told to identify the main idea, the twist, and the moral value(s) of the text. Meanwhile the lecturer walks around the class and listens to the discussion and help with prompts, whenever the groups require, in their effort to reveal the mystery surrounding the story. Each group then reports to the class followed by the class discussion. The lecturer invites feedback from the groups and the class for clarification and confirmation of their understanding. Further discussion can be conducted on the values they have learned from the text and relate them to their day-to-day living at home, at the campus, and in the community.

In regard to the first text above, the students may be able to spot the moral values easily with very little ambiguity, if any. The traits introduced center around stinginess, greediness, irrationality, and irreligion. It is beyond the common sense for anyone to think of taking money or any of her/his personal belongings to the world hereafter. Through this humor the author means to remind the readers to have more attention to the development of the opposite traits such as generosity, kindness, rationality, and religiousness.

The second text, on the other hand, is a tricky joke with the author's clever choice of words used in the text. The
use of the words "lies" in contrast with "honest" coupled with the double meanings of the word "strange" is very effective in creating multi-interpretation, confusion, cross-cultural misunderstanding, and even a satiric attack against the lawyer's practice. While the lawyer was disappointed with the stonemason's suggestion to omit the name "Thomas Strange", the author seems to condition everyone reading the inscription to consider it "strange" to find a lawyer who is "honest" and an honest man who "lies." While buying a tombstone for oneself is strange in the Indonesian culture, labeling oneself "honest" is also a disrespectful image building campaign. However, this may also be one of the types of campaign practiced in the Indonesian politics. This brief text may trigger a captivating discussion as there are many good and bad values readers can infer from it. The student-teachers should be able to critically infer what values they are expected to internalize and practice in the day-to-day campus life and the life of the Indonesian community in general.

In the higher semester classes, where students are required to write academic papers, "academic honesty" should be explored and practiced. In academic writing or research proposal/report writing, ethics on using parts of another writer's work should be explained in details, illustrated explicitly, and practiced sufficiently. How to quote an author's work already cited by another author, for example, needs explicit explanation during the presentation on writing quotations and references. If a violation of the rule is due to carelessness or a lack of understanding, the lecturer may review the presentation. However, if the violation is done intentionally, emphasis should be placed on its consequence. For example, a student writing a research proposal was once found to quote an author's work as if she had really read the work herself. When asked why she had not written the page number of the resource quoted, she admitted that she obtained the quoted piece from an author she did not mention. She used secondary datum but presented it as if it had been primary.

In the explicit mode, the lecturer should make it clear that this kind of behavior is a form of infringement against academic honesty, infringement against copyright, which may lead to court prosecution. An honest writer gives proper recognition to all the authors of the works cited, be they the primary or the secondary resources of the information quoted. The nurturance of academic honesty can be further developed in thesis supervision as well as in service learning. However, this will be dealt with in the next section, integrating character education in the implicit mode.

**Integrating Character Education Using Implicit Mode**

In the implicit mode, a lecturer can make use of any possible means to insert aspects of character education in the instruction (serving as hidden syllabus) as well as in other academic communications with the student-teachers. As a matter of fact, almost on any occasion, from the very beginning of the first semester, a lecturer can include
character education in his/her communication with the students. In this mode, the role of a lecturer is paramount. S/he can be an academic advisor, a thesis supervisor, a parent, a friend, a facilitator, a motivator, etc., depending on the condition of the student's need or the desired aspect of character to be nurtured. The most important thing is that the lecturer must play the role of a model. Modeling or exemplification is one successful way of implementing character education (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008:114), in which students can be exposed directly to whatever conditions or activities where they perform tasks as well as activities enabling them to acquire aspects of character unconsciously. This is in line with the Ministry of National Education's policy (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2010:8) which emphasizes the importance of "modeling" and "consistent habit formation" in creating conducive environment to facilitate character building.

Character education modeling can be as simple as how a lecturer handles the problem related to a student's late arrival for a class. Despite the fixed timetable for any class at YSU, an informal observation at the beginning of the class hour shows that lecturers do not always start a class at the beginning of the class hour. An undocumented interview with the students also reveals that the lecturers have varied consensuses with the students. Some lecturers tolerate five to ten minutes late for a class, while others may still let the students who are more than ten minutes late join the class. Variation in the lecturers' policy can be easily understood if it is coupled with an explanation to provide a transparent rationale. What is more important is the consistency of each lecturer in the implementation of the consensus. Students do not respect any pretense such as pseudo-discipline. A lecturer may demand the students to come on time if s/he her-/him-self always comes on time. A lecturer may demand the student to listen to her/his presentation if it is well-prepared, interesting and relevant to the students' need. Every effort is, therefore, needed to fill the class time with the combination of both what the lecturer thinks the students need and what they actually need. This is the importance of providing a syllabus and a contract between the students and the lecturer at the beginning of every semester about their respective rights and obligations in joining the class. The adherence to this contract is the implementation of implicit modeling in the value of "fairness."

Another example of implicit modeling can be taken by a thesis supervisor in nurturing the academic honesty without explicitly mentioning words such as honesty, plagiarism, etc. If a student has quoted an author's work without mentioning the page number in the reference, for example, there may be some reason for it. The first possibility is that the work has been quoted from a blog which does not provide any page number. The second possibility is that the student does not understand the rule to include the page number of the original work cited. The third possibility is that the student has cited an author's quoted work without giving due recognition to the author quoting the original work. If
the first or the second possibility is the reason, it will be a purely academic matter. However, if the third possibility is the reason, the supervisor will have to deal with academic honesty. On such an occasion, the supervisor can ask the student to complete the quotation with the page number. If the student is unable to provide it, s/he will tell the truth, the reason for not providing it. Whatever the reason is, the supervisor needs to give an example or a correct model of writing the quotation without making the student feel embarrassed. If necessary the supervisor can give a copy of a complete example of writing quotations and different types of referencing to which the student can always refer so that s/he will not repeat the same errors. Then the supervisor can monitor whether the student follows the correct model consistently and, then, shows appreciation to the student’s progress in understanding and actualizing the suggested model. The supervisor does not need to utter words such as rules, infringement, plagiarism, etc., which may hurt the student’s feeling, but the correct model given will, step by step, solve the student’s problem which may be rooted in academic dishonesty. The care not to hurt the student’s feeling also nurtures the trait of “respect.” The student realizes that the supervisor respects her/his self-esteem which, in turn, nurtures the student’s respect on the supervisor. Implicitly, this supervisor-student interaction has simultaneously nurtured “academic honesty” and “mutual respect” (personal and social competences), not only for the rest of her/his thesis writing process, but also for her/his further character development throughout her/his life.

Another rich resource for nurturing character traits is a project in service learning or a community service program. For example, at one of the stages in the TEFL Program Development class (in 2009) was that the students were required to try out the group program in the community setting. One of the student groups tried out the program at an orphanage in the eastern part of Yogyakarta. The students were required to teach eight sessions. While the other groups had completed the try out and started consultation for the report writing, the students working at the orphanage were still teaching as the orphans begged for the extension of the program. These students continued working with the orphans despite the eight-session requirement demanded by the lecture. When asked why they had not completed the try out, they said they did not have the nerve to leave the orphans while they really wanted to learn more English.

This is an evidence of genuine “empathy” arising out of direct contact with the community in need. These students did not have the nerve to leave and let the participants’ crave for learning ignored. This empathy did not come up suddenly without any prologue. The students’ intensity in communication with, and seriousness to help, the participants seem to have a deep effect on the growth of their empathy. The lecturer personally visited the orphanage and witnessed how the students tried their best to help the orphans learn despite their varied ages and levels of
the English mastery. Two of the students were even willing to continue teaching them a few extra weeks after the semester was over, after the lecturer had given the grades upon the completion of the class. These two students were exceptional; they did not work for the grades but to satisfy their “empathy”, a trait developed through a direct contact with the community in need.

With the presence of foreign students at YSU, the lecturers of the English Department can ask the English Education students to invite the foreign students to get direct experience in the community’s activity such as attending a funeral, joining working bee, participating in neighborhood watch, etc. Foreign students are usually interested in such a culture- or religion-embedded event. While the foreign students may enjoy getting involved in the event, the main purpose is to educate the Indonesian students themselves. The students who have never or rarely attended a funeral will be encouraged or forced to do so, as they need to know what happens in the ceremony. Without having the direct experience, they will not be able to tell the foreign students about how a ceremony is conducted and what each event means or symbolizes. Through this kind of modeling activity, the lecturers do not have to tell the students what they are expected to learn, but, step by step, they will be developing at least two traits: empathy (social competence) and religious devotion (personal competence).

CONCLUSION

The Indonesian government’s plan to implement character education must have been based on the awareness of character decline of the nation. The young generation has been exposed to the scenes of frustration, violence, corruption, and all kinds of law infringement that threaten the shaping of their character. Meanwhile parents and teachers are often unrealistic in their expectation towards their children’s achievement. The gap between the parents’ expectation and the students’ potentials may cause frustration and unhealthy compensation on the part of the students, such as cheating in the examination. This unhealthy practice may still be retained by some students upon their admission to the university. This can be a serious problem for EFL student-teachers, who are preparing themselves to be teachers of English as a foreign language. These student-teachers of English are also confronted with ambivalent tasks. On the one hand, they have to develop their understanding of the foreign culture which may interfere with the development of the Indonesian character; on the other hand, they have to maintain and nurture the character they have not fully established. Without any systematic program, the student-teachers may graduate with good grades but may leave the university with underdeveloped basic teacher’s competences, especially personal and social competences, personality traits of paramount importance for prospective teachers.

As these traits do not stand as subject content to be taught with scheduled time allocation, the best way to develop
them is through inclusion in all the subject content classes and in the interaction processes between the student-teachers and the lecturers. It is not enough for the student-teachers to understand good personality traits, but they have to internalize them affectively, so that they can apply the traits in real life. As some experts have suggested, the most effective way of developing character is through modeling so that student-teachers can see it practiced, not merely preached – walked, not merely talked. This way, if conducted systematically by all the lecturers and staff directly serving the students, there is a chance that most of the graduates will leave the campus with developed ideal character.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my appreciation to the Editorial Board of Cakrawala Pendidikan, especially Prof. Dr. Burhan Nurgiantoro, for the encouragement to send the draft and to the Editors for the invaluable suggested improvement. My thanks also go to Editorial Staff for their prompt service so that this article can be published in the present edition.

LIST OF REFERENCES


Dimerman, S. 2009. Character Is the Key: How to Unlock the Best in Our Children and Ourselves. Ontario: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.


Koellhoffer, Tara Tomczyk. 2009. Character Education: Being Fair and


