Caring Teacher in Developing Empathy in Moral Education
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ABSTRACT
In this paper, a case study of an experienced teacher is highlighted illuminating her understanding as a caring agent in the classroom, her caring ways to enhance teacher-student relationships and how she incorporated empathy as a basis of caring in her moral lessons. Methods such as non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, teacher’s journal and document analysis were adopted in over eight months of this study. The findings highlighted teacher modelling, engaging students and pedagogical content knowledge as central themes in teacher exhibiting care to students. In displaying caring, it also accentuates the approaches the teacher embarked in developing empathy among the culturally diverse students in the classroom.

Keywords: Caring, Empathy, Teacher-student relationships

INTRODUCTION
Do teachers educate students to excel academically or do they educate them on values? This question has put many teachers in a dilemma as in recent times, curriculum standardization, high-stakes testing and emphasis on economically demanding subjects like mathematics and science (Zhao, 2010) has sidelined values needed to balance out the material world. In this era of globalization, challenges to education are on the rise and teachers face tough situations. While it is the responsibility of teachers to cultivate global competence among students (Wang et al., 2011), it is also necessary for teachers to instill values in the students. Zhao (2010) affirms that in cultivating global competence among students, teachers should also model caring behaviours in their students. Not only that, he asserts that teachers should guide students or make students aware of the existing global problems such as human conflicts from multiple perspectives. Kohn (1998) emphasises that the development of perspective taking is necessary for students to imagine others how they think or feel. As Goleman (1995) puts it, as one takes in the perspectives of others, not only the cognitive component is involved, the affective component is also taken into account. One needs to have emotional literacy in order to recognise, apprehend and attend to the concerns of others. Emotional literacy can be nurtured and Sharp (2001) believes that emotional learning matters most as it allows students to strive for the best and to contribute greatly to society.

Empathy is recognised as one of the elements of emotional literacy. In the Malaysian Moral Education Syllabus, emotional literacy comes under the affective component domain. Cognitive, affective and behavioural are the known three domains in Moral Education Syllabus and are taught to the non-Muslim students through the Moral Education lessons. These three domains are set to develop a child holistically as stipulated in the Malaysia’s National Philosophy of Education that forms the basis for the Ministry of Education’s emphasis to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable, skilful and able to exhibit exemplary moral attributes (Ministry of Education, 2003). Moral cognitive or moral reasoning has taken centre stage all this while (Myyry et al., 2010) and it is timely to look into moral affective. Empathy is considered under moral affective as it is derived as the ability to understand the perspectives of others and to feel the feelings of others (Goleman, 1995; Lyn, 2005) although cognitive processes is involved in it (Eisenberg, 2000). According to Damon (2010), a child's moral sense that includes empathy, requires nurturing if he or she is to develop into a mature, responsible and caring adult. Although parents play an important role in developing