Appendix E: Transcribed Verbatim of Exemplary Teacher Interview (ETI)

Exemplary Research Participant: V6
Date: 17-3-2014
Time: 11.30am – 12.15pm
Venue: Prokidz Centre’s Room

R: The first thing I noticed is when you are meeting students at the door and Hi-5 with them. I know this is your usual practice? Why is that so?

V6: Many children are not good with hand shaking with confidence, looking at you with confident eye contact or even greet others. Many started off looking down on the floor, keep their hands in the pocket and speak softly on the first few lessons

R: What did you do?

V6: It was easily overcome with some coaching. The relationship and interaction with students can be improved. I always tell my students there are three minimums in a good greeting. Number one is eye contact. Secondly is a smile and thirdly is a hi-5.

R: What’s the reason of doing this?

V6: Well…. It is the best time to set the energy level right.

R: Oh, what do you mean by energy level?

V6: It is really really really important to show enthusiasm and high power level through all kind of presentation. Both verbal and action...I believe students can feel your power and energy level. They will be like you too!

R: Why do you think energy is important?

V6: Learning needs energy, learning needs vibration. With the students full of energy they can engage more actively.

R: Great. So, this could improve relationship with the students as you mentioned.

V6: Yes, indeed. They feel your existence, the personality you have to be charming and energetic. I can see the expression of cheerful and energetic in their faces and they are really looking forward to the activities. But I think, trust is very important also.

R: What do you mean trust?
V6: You see, students nowadays are very smart. Smart as in they respect you when you really know your stuff.... Hmm... I remember first I started teaching here constantly looking at the lesson plan and the lesson flow and procedure as I wasn’t really clear. The students had that look like doubting. I assumed their mind was like ‘are you sure you know? Should I believe her?’

R: Then, what happened?

V6: Eventually, they did not really respect and that’s when the classroom management started to go chaos.

R: Chaos as in?

V6: They ran here and there and even you asked them to keep quiet, no power. Besides, they wouldn’t share much with you. Trust is so important to begin building a relationship with students and gradually nurturing them.

R: Oh. So, I assumed you had a different experience when you got to know your lesson plan and classroom flow well.

V6: Indeed!

R: Hahaha...

V6: Really different ..,

R: How different?

V6: I think after around four months, I was used to it and the students treated me differently. It was the total different story. How I wish, I was really prepared to understand the lesson plan and be the expert of knowing what to do next at the very beginning.

R: Yeah, it is at your fingers’ tip now. About relationship, is there anymore factors that lead to better relationship?

V6: I think it is very important to have a caring and supporting learning environment in the classroom.

R: Why is that so?

V6: You see... Not only environment, I must have good interpersonal relationship with the students. This sounds difficult with different students, but it can be done.
R: Any example of difficult student and yet you can have good relationship with him/her?

V6: Like EL, the hyperactive child. Though I am very strict on him in terms of values, he still hugs me at the end of every class. What’s more, he likes to give me a sudden surprise of ‘hug’ to show his affection as he knows I care for him... Oh yes... the supportive relationship is very important.

R: How do you build that?

V6: The supportive relationship is very important. Example, it is essential to allow students to know each other, so to work through cooperation live to achieve goals together.

R: Great. You mentioned just now that the child knew you cared for him. How do you normally care your students?

V6: As a teacher, it is so important to be observant. I constantly checking on my students, identifying what individual students need and also providing high level of support to them who they feel need help the most. Same goes to the boy...

R: You mean EL?

V6: Yeah... He was happy when I positioned him as the leader of the class. Guess what? He really likes it so much...

R: What does he help you to do?

V6: Well, to ensure the rules of the class were well followed. Hence, he needs to be the role model of the class to exemplify the values that I set for the class. I remember he told me once that, ‘I am very happy as you are the first teacher allowing me to be a leader.’ Sometimes, he came to me and apologize, ‘Sorry teacher. I can’t control myself. I didn’t eat medicine just now.’ He is under a hyperactive medication.

R: Poor thing.

V6: Sometimes, it is just about a different approach to care for student… To help them to fulfill their needs and guide them to improve. Some of my students are very passive and introvert. I have to set rule by nailing down no one should ridicule anyone and should respect each other. At least, students are not afraid to be laughed and put down by other students, creating this safe environment. With such, they are safe and supporting each other in such environment to learn.
R: What if the students still think they are not good and not able to instill certain value or perform something?

V6: I will convey putting effort to grow rather than depending on talent or luck.

R: What do you mean?

V6: well…we should focus on the learning process instead of only result. We can improve by learning from mistake instead of depending on innate talent’

R: Ok. Growth mindset?

V6: You see fixed mindset means you believe that your capabilities is fixed on the day you were born. Individuals believe that they can overcome obstacles and improve as long as they put in more effort to challenge

R: What can we do as teachers?

V6: Actually, it is really important we as teachers to communicate this to our students. I think it is very important!!!. Because if we as teachers communicate that result is due to innate talent instead of effort and label students in accordance in such a way, it is ending up producing labels to which some students are good or smart and some are stupid or bad.

R: How do u do that?

V6: I always create a platform for students to have the feeling of improvement. To me, every student needs to have the feeling of advancing, moving forward even it is minute.

R: Oh... right. I could observe many students get to work right away when assignment is given or after entering the room. They do accept challenges well.

V6: Oh yeah... I am proud of them too. Of course they are also students who have yet to possess that sort thinking or spirit.

R: Then what do you do?

V6: I always encourage students by saying, “you can do it”, ‘you are improving’, ‘yes, you can’ … I will try to encourage by convincing them they could master it with effort and patience. I will convey that student success is the result hard work rather than of natural ability.
R: Great!!! I could see that the students were very focus when you were telling them story. What do you think it catches their attention so well?

V6: As teacher, I think being a good story teller is important. In my first year of teaching, I understand that children are attuned to story. Tell story and they will listen to you. Guess what? They will tune out a lecture. Hahahaha...

R: Hahaha... lecture that’s when many of my classmates dozed off to sleep.

V6: Yeah... There’s nothing like a good story to get your point across. Children like to view body actions and feel the emotions. To me, a good teacher is a good actor, someone who can act different emotions spontaneously such as angry, sad, happy, excited, etc. I also like to use props, music and other materials to create the feeling of the environment. You know...It is awesome when you can see the students’ emotions are controlled by your words, actions and expression. That’s fun!!! It is funny to see their reactions at times..

R: Yeah, I can see that in your class.

V6: Oh yes.... also vary according to the character and emotions with audible voice volume. I can speak like a monster, girl, old man or any others depicting the character. I remember once, I spoke softly and suddenly shrieked to depict a sudden happening of the story. The students shrieked together with me. That’s the power of intonation!

R: haha… Is there any other way that you catch students’ attention?

V6: I like to establish signals like raising my hands or off the lights to start a new activity, transit to another section and etc.

R: Oh.. is this part of your classroom management style?

V6: Sort of. I make sure they are accountable to it as well. to me, the best transition from one activity to another is when students assume self-responsibility to ensure efficiency of time used They need to make sure the flow is smooth instead of me directing and guiding

R: That's why you need them to have cooperation.

V6: Yes. I like to count down to signal students returning to their seats, start a new activity, transit to another session...I cannot bear time is lost due to classroom routines and procedures …The transition time needs to be reduced.

R: How do you reduce then?
V6: Students are efficient to handle the group independently without much prompting or arrangement by me. The lessons involve many small group, big group and moving around. I make sure they are accountable to it as well. I trained students through cooperative learning in managing instructional groups. It saves lots of my time as I don’t need to group them.

R: Ok. What else?

V6: Let me think…oh yes… managing the supplied materials is also very important, for example distributing pencils, stationeries or any other props. Students are taught to implement routines for distribution and collection of items. It saves time… they are independent.

R: Thank you. I saw one of your students ask you for permission to redo a piece of work. Do your students often request that?

V6: Not often, but sometimes students do.

R: What’s the reason?

V6: Since she now sees how it could be strengthened, she is motivated to redo for better quality. When students believe their capabilities, they will devote their time, effort and energy to produce greater work and thus take pride of their accomplishments. Real motivation comes from within. It is from the heart. It is the fire from within, it doesn’t need anyone to ignite for them. That’s why I always tell my students the culture of excellence is important.

R: What do you mean by culture of excellence?

V6: I like to nurture students to have high expectations on themselves by giving high-quality work and I do recognize their effort and persistence for completing it.

R: Any example?

V6: I set high expectations for all students too. I try my best to create the classroom as a place where both teacher and students appreciate the value learning and hard work. This will help the students to commit to produce quality work through many practices.

R: Why is this important?

V6: This is very important to have such culture that should require hard work and be persistent to produce quality work. Students have high expectation for themselves as they
strive for self-satisfaction after the work completion. They feel pride of their work.

R: How do the students know what your expectation is?

V6: I always communicate the rubric and ensure high quality performance is met. It is important to allow students to be aware of the criteria. With the criteria and rubric, students have clear goals in mind and able to monitor themselves and advanced in meeting those criteria.

R: Advance as in?

V6: Hence, they are definitely advancing from one point to another. The student accepts it without complaint. Of course, it is important also to give appropriate and timely feedback so that they students know what to improve.

R: Ok. You constantly appraise students for doing great and provide feedback. Why do you think it is important?

V6: It is important to give constructive feedback so that students know what to improve. The best is to give feedback right after the task.

R: How do you give your feedback?

V6: I want the students to use the feedback to improve. Hence, it has to be on the spot. Students who are good learners will constantly wondering how they have been doing. Are they good? Are they not good? Personally, I think constructive feedback is very powerful. Giving reasons and evidences, students tend to accept openly provided the relationship and trust is there. Constructive feedback must be given on time with concrete reasoning and elaboration, only then they know what to improve instead of ambiguous words like well done! You are good! It serves no room for improvement.

R: I do realize you appraise a lot. Do you think is important?

V6: To me, yes it is. I always appraise my students for their good deeds, effort and behavior. It is considered as a feedback for them, to motivate them. Importantly, it has to be explained with reasons. Students need to know the reason of me appraising them in order to keep that motivation going to do better.

R: Do they receive you feedback openly?

V6: Yes. Actually. Trust enable students to learn from mistake and repeated failures without giving up because they have confidence in teacher.
R: Oh.. confidence..

V6: They take feedback seriously and always thirst to have them for improvement continuously with an open heart

R: Thank you. How do you ensure that students know the importance of the learning?

V6: I will ask questions. It is for me to understand their level of understanding in relation to the value they are learning for the day.

R: How do you help them to realize the skills are important?

V6: When I convey the learning objective with fun and excitement they will listen and remember. I need to create a hook to hook their attention. I need to get their attention first. I like to create the excitement and importance of the learning that leads all students to be enthusiastic about it.

R: After that?

V6: After that, I do connection. I truly believe that these children are able to relate well and apply if the examples give are well connected to their daily life. I also like to connect with student’s daily life experience. They could build the skills and values in them after summarizing their learning of the day. Of course, whether will they actually take action in real life, that’s another dimension?

R: Ok. I hear you appraising students often in class. Is this your typical practice in class?

V6: Oh yes. To me... Words have power, both good and bad. However, we are just not aware of what we say. Words can be poisonous or nourishing. Good for health or bad for health. The words use will imprint in their mind and make them label themselves and this could shape who they are. If we poison them with words like ‘lazy’, ‘stupid’, ‘useless’, they will label themselves as that.

R: Noted. I observed your students say “Shhh” to classmates who were talking while you or another student was speaking.

V6: Oh.. yes. I am proud of them. They take the role to monitor their behaviour and also others. As long as those much senior students realize someone in the class violate the set rules, they will take actions. That’s why most of the time I don’t need to discipline the students. I realize that … They do the so called job for me…hahaha

R: Does it work all the time?
V6: Those who are already embracing the behaviour, they will feel good being empowered to be able to remind or help their peers. As to the less behaved ones, they will feel much less pressure than if I, or another teacher tries to instil values in them.

R: Will the students dislike it?

V6: As time goes by, the students actually thanked me and appreciate for focusing much on manners and instilling values. They do wish that all teachers can focus on this to help more people to be better adult.

R: I see. What about misbehave student? How do you handle.

V6: Teachers need to be tough… we need to hold them accountable, and they need to know we will. Teachers need to be tough. People always thing that teachers are patient, soft and nice. It is not a job for sissy. It is important to be tough as teacher is a demanding profession especially in character education. There are times that I have to be tough on kids. Not mean, but tough. We need to hold them accountable, and they need to know we will.

R: Why do you do that?

V6: If a student in my class says something rude and mean, and I ignore it, I have taught students two things. Oh.. is ok to be like that… is alright for other students to behave that way too.. It is essential for me to uphold the values and deal with misbehaviour students…

R: Haha.. like how you gave a hard look on them and the knew they supposed to keep quiet.

V6: Yaya. Sometimes, I give student a ‘stern look’, immediately student stops talking to his friend. It was laid clearly on the first day of class, even then there’s still times when they need some sort of reinforcement. They know there are certain things that are expected and much of it comes just from respecting each other and instilling the value. I like to talk to them in group or personally once in while serving as a reminder about those values set

R: Oh yes, Oh yes. I knew you have a record book. Do you think it is an important practice?

V6: It is very important. We need to keep track of student completion of assignments, including not only whether the assignments were actually completed but also students’ success in completing them. I record formal assessments electronically. I also record about student’s assignment in the record book
R: Ok. When do you normally record?

V6: We need to update the record of student’s assignment completion. Also, must be updated right after the class to ensure a student’s progress and performance is still vividly in mind. By citing examples, I can periodically monitor and adjust my lesson plan to suit and build their character in accordance. Not only for students, I, myself have a journal keeping track of my teaching practice as well.

R: That’s good. You do it for?

V6: I always reflect my teaching practice after the class to improve. I need to make a deliberate and accurate assessment of my lesson so as I know what kind of changes or amendments I need to make for future.

R: Why do you think reflection is important?

V6: Reflecting gives light of impact of me to build children’s character. I can determine what amendments and improvements in my future I need make in my future lessons.

R: Great…. this interview helps me a lot. Thank you so much for your time and insight. Truly appreciate it. If there is any further question or doubt, can I meet you again?

V6: Yes, of course. I hope it helps.

R: Thank you yeah. I will transcribe this audio tape interview and show it to you next day.

V6: Sure. Thank you.