

# **PERCEPTIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INNOVATION AMONG ENGLISH TEACHERS**

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## **Abstract**

This study was part of a larger study on teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) of English teachers in Ungaran Sub-districts. This study aimed to explain the perceptions and the implementation of CPD through innovation done by the respondents. This study employed qualitative case study. To gain the data, 21 teachers were involved in this study, 17 of them were certified teachers and later selected as the respondents. 7 teachers were later selected conveniently for the interview. The study showed that there was awareness of the teachers on the importance of making innovation in their work. However, after being interviewed, only few of them made innovation in their teaching and learning process.

Keyword: CPD, innovation, awareness

## **INTRODUCTION**

Educational reforms around the world nowadays have embraced CPD as a way to improve teachers' quality. By doing so, it is expected that students' learning outcome is also improving. Bailey et al. (1998) stated that successful CPD must be ongoing, sustained and self-directed. It is also suggested that when looking at CPD, one must examine the content of the experiences, the processes by which the CPD will occur, and the context in which it will take place (Ganser, 2000; Fielding and Schalock, 1985 in Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

One of the main reasons to pursue professional development is to be empowered. Empowerment is the process through which teachers become capable of engaging in, sharing

control and influencing events and institutions that affect teachers' lives. Teachers also need to add their knowledge base and acquire new skills by participating in PD activities (Murray, 2010).

Most people agree that the professionalization of teachers is prerequisite to the successful improvement of the quality of education (Holmstrom Group, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 1999 as cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003). CPD is needed to improve the quality of the teachers.

Teacher CPD through nation-wide teacher certification is a large-scaled program in Indonesia educational reform, if not the largest. This program is implemented under the legal umbrella of the Law on Teachers and Lecturers, number 14, 2005, now known as the Teacher Law. Indonesian government take this step seriously, reflected from the budget allocated for this. Fahmi et.al (2011) explained in 2006 Indonesia started implementing a nation-wide program of teacher certification with the aim to certify as many as 2.3 million teachers by 2015 with the budgetary cost of as much as US\$5,600 million.

The rationale of the Teacher Law is to establish a good quality national teaching force, proficient in the four key competency domains, namely pedagogical, professional, personal and social (Jalal,et.al.,2009). Teachers proficient in those four competency domains are expected to help students to improve their performance, which is commonly referred to their achievement (i.e. score). This is the ultimate goal of teacher professionalism in Indonesia.

Studies in different countries find that qualified teachers are a major determinant of student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000 cited in Fahmi et.al 2011). Teacher plays a very important role in the success, or the failure, of education. Fahmi et. al (2011) also stated that the ability of education and training systems to respond to growing expectation from the society for a better education for their people depends on whether teachers have the ability to deliver the educational content in ways that meet this growing expectation.

As the main practitioners, teachers need to receive better income. According to World Education Indicators, teachers in Indonesia are significantly underpaid compared to

their international counterparts (Jalal et.al. 2009). By giving better incentive to the teachers, it is expected that they will work professionally to support quality education in Indonesia. Villegas-Reimers (2003) stated that aside from the individual satisfaction or financial gain that the teachers may obtain as a result of participating in professional-development opportunities, the process of CPD has a significant positive impact on teachers' beliefs and practices, students' learning, and on the implementation of educational reforms.

This idea of providing better incentive somewhat does not directly fit in the reality of Indonesian education. Fahmi et.al (2011) reported that the certification, as formally stated in the law that governs it, has the objective to increase the quality of education. Fahmi et. al (2001) further explained one elemental part of the program is improving the remuneration of certified teachers as an incentive. However, it may confirm some concerns that the certification's objective is not oriented to teacher's performance, but more to their living standard, as reflected by their student's achievement that does not make any progress.

On one hand, teacher certification program in Indonesia, though not specifically aimed to improve only English teachers' quality, should somehow be considered as a good opportunity. The program has built awareness of quality education in Indonesia. In the past, prior to certification program, such awareness may have existed. However, I believe it was not nationally-scaled one. This awareness of good quality in education is supposed to be preserved and developed.

On the other hand, although not stated formally, the teachers' certification program in Indonesia is commonly known for teacher CPD itself. This common view somehow can mislead to the understanding that there is only one possible way to define CPD – through teachers' certification program. There will also possible assumption that professional teacher is only those who has gained teaching certificate.

After gaining teacher certificate, English teachers in Indonesia should keep continuing their professional development. Gaining a certificate does not mean that an English teacher has graduated from any obligation of self-development. As a matter of fact,

it is the starting point of his/her professional life. A professional should maintain their professionalism by actively taking action in the process of CPD.

It is important, therefore, to see the concept of English teachers' CPD after they finish the certification process. CPD is any attempt that an English teacher takes both individually and collaboratively with other English teachers to improve their quality.

## **METHOD**

This study employed qualitative case study method by first using questionnaire to collect the data, continued with in-depth interview to gain richer data and observation of the documents of CPD participation of the teachers.

The subjects of the study were 21 teachers attending the MGMP meeting. All of them responded to the questionnaire. As this study only involved those who had gained teachers' certificate, only 13 teachers were finally selected for the study. 7 (Seven) teachers were later selected conveniently to be interviewed.

The object of the study is the teachers' perceptions on CPD and the implementation of its scheme reflected in the opinion the teacher expressed, written and spoken.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Closed-ended question was first given to the respondents of this study. They had to respond to the question whether they make innovation or not. The data showed that 69.2% of the respondents stated that they made innovation for their teaching. And 30.8 % of them did not. It means that teacher made innovation to support their teaching and learning process. The innovation that they made was in the form of learning media for the students from the simple to the complex ones.

Innovation in the form of creating learning media was said to be beneficial both for the students and the teachers. It helped teachers develop their skills and abilities. Learning media also helped students to learn. The following were the statements from the respondents showing the benefit of the teaching media:

- R#3 : Helping teachers to develop.
- R#11 : It can help teachers to develop themselves.
- R#6 : Teaching and learning process will be more interesting and will not be boring for students.
- R#7 : Very good to develop teachers and students' ability. It makes learning more effective and interesting.
- R#12 : It makes students happy and interested in learning.

The data from the interview, however, showed different result. Teachers were aware of the importance of the innovation by creating the learning media. Although they stated that they made them, they admit that they only made some simple ones. The other thing is that they did not file the document so that most of them could not provide their work when the researcher required them.

R#1 stated that creating teaching media should be legalized. It meant that if she wanted to get credit score for her career, registering teaching media could be one of the ways to achieve it. The process to legalize, though, was not easy. The following were her answer from the interview:

- R#1 : When teaching I have made it.. just some simple one, Sir. Just because now it is a requirement we have to make it and legalize it. There is regulation, right. So, we have not done the regulation yet. I mean, we have to make a statement letter and everything. This year we are making some deal if there are teachers that can make it, then we see the regulation so it can be legalized and scored. So, so far we just make it. After that.. that's all. As there is some sort of thing, we should have written evidences and they have to be kept in the library and they should be approved by the principal. So, for the administration we try to make it in order to be able

to become.. “oh this teacher can make teaching media.” Something like that.

Due to the above reason, therefore, she only made some simple ones for her students and decided to use them just temporarily when she needed to use it. As she stated:

R#1 : So far I well...because English, sir, I usually make from paper cutout. It is just vocabulary. Just like when there is a word. Yes right. But yeah.. very simple, Sir. I adjust it with the condition in which I am teaching.

Just like the above respondent, R#2 also found it not easy to make her teaching media got evaluated and scored by the authority. Despite the difficulties, she attempted to make learning media for her students. When the researcher required her to display her work, she somehow successfully did it. The learning media that she made was used to help her students learn word forms and words function. It was called ‘Bona Jeta’ or Color Coded Word Balls. The photograph of the learning media could be seen in the appendix 6. The following was her explanation:

R#2 : For innovation I have not documented it very well. I have not documented it very well. Innovation is just like using ‘mind map’ to make students be able to make better outline when writing. I have made the research on it and it worked. So, the students will not get blocked in the middle of the writing process, running out of ideas. ....Then about innovation in the form of an object, I don’t remember, well how can I forget. It’s because I did not document it and I have tried it. Oh yeah, it’s Bona Jeta (*Bola Warna Jenis kata/Color-coded Balls of Word Forms*). It is an instrument like propeller.. ehm a drawing... shuffling the ball. The media is there so you can take picture of it. Draw them. then the balls will get in the holes, the colored coded balls. The yellow ones are for subjects, this is for pre... verbs and whatever. The students have to take notes the balls that got in the hole then they identify which text, which words belong to what kind of word. They can exchange words with their friends. From the kind of the words, they can identify that the position of the word should

be in the beginning of a sentence. It uses rainbow color, red, yellow, green. So, red is supposed to be at the front. It means it is a subject. They will identify it that way. Subjects, verbs, adjectives and so on.

Simple flashcard and board games were chosen by R#4 as learning media to motivate her students. The media motivated her students to learn. She somehow admitted that she did not document the media. Therefore, she could not provide the learning media to the researcher.

R#4 : Oh, I have not done something like that. But I make learning media. To help learning. Can be in the form of flashcard, something like 'snake and ladder'..what do you call it, Sir? Yes. Board game, yes. Then I make charts.. which are.. which are... simple. Which are less costly (laughter). Some kind of game, sir. Yes. Students here have different abilities compared to state schools' students. They are 'leftovers'. So they need to learn by playing. Yes. It helps them to learn. Yes. PowerPoint is err..actually it's easy for the teacher when teaching using it. Anything is already available. Somehow, the students are less.. less... (active)

In the case of R#5, she used to make learning media for her students. However, recently she mostly used PowerPoint as the learning media. When required to show her work by the researcher, R#4 somehow failed to do so. She admitted that she just used available worksheets in the process of teaching and learning. Here was her statement:

R#5 : I have. I have it. But now it is not so often. Sometimes I use LKS (worksheets). Also, there are only a few LCD in this school. We need to share them with other teachers. I made PowerPoint. Then I sometimes I give students songs and I give the tape scripts. I play them in PowerPoint.

With her students, R#9 created learning media. She told the researcher that students needed to be involved in the process of creating the media. She made short animation to help her students learn narrative text. Just like the other respondents, R#9 did not register her

works to the authority. Instead, the learning media were used personally by her and her students. As a matter of fact, she used to get certain fund from the government for her work creating learning media. The screenshot of her works could be seen in the appendix. The following was her response:

R#9 : For learning media I personally have err.. tried to make it err... I have been willing on it but again I have limited abilities to do it. But I have made some.

The availability of the internet in her school were said to be helpful by R#11. She preferred to just randomly browse the internet to get available learning media. Then she just used it for teaching. The following was her argument:

R#11 : Oh yes, sir. But sometimes we see it in the internet. “Oh, this is the learning media. Oh, this is a good one”. So as we can be online, we use the Wi-Fi facility it is good. It is good for teaching. So we look for that one. We see which one is suitable for teaching this. With Wi-Fi here, it is nice. Yes.

The same practice was also done by R#13. Instead of creating her own learning media, she made use the availability of the internet. The difference was instead of looking for the available learning media on her own, she involved her students. She asked her students to browse pictures or other things from the internet as she believed her students were better at doing. The following was her answer:

R#13 : Err.. In fact I encourage the students to be more creative by asking them to make it. For example, there were students who were very active searching for pictures. For browsing and other things students now are fifty-fifty, right? There are some who know it well, and some who just start to know it. They browsed good pictures and printed them and added cardboard as puppets. I just ask them to do it. I admit I am not a creative person (laughter).

The data revealed that making innovation as one of the main activities of CPD was perceived positively by the respondents. It could be seen from the respondents' response showing the benefits of creating learning media for students. Most of the respondents, however, after being interviewed, did not produce any learning media to support students' learning. Some of them just depended heavily on the available resources (i.e. from the internet) instead of creating their own learning media. The regulation of the CPD scheme was not seen as motivation but as an obstacle. It could be seen from the fact that the respondents did not create learning media as it was not easy to register their works and later got credit score as the reward. This was the reason that made the respondents decided to just make simple learning media that mostly were undocumented.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concluded that the awareness of English teacher on the importance of making innovation in their work is quite high. However, in reality, the implementation should be again reconsidered. This condition is somehow an opportunity for the development of the teacher. The awareness can be a good start for the teacher to develop themselves, especially in making innovation in teaching and learning processes.

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