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Teacher professional Development Management Toward English Language Teaching Quality in Vocational Hinger Education

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Abstract

The research was aimed at explaining the management of Teacher Professional Development toward English Language Teaching quality in vocational higher education. The research was case study in which the data was obtained through observation, interview, and documentation studies. The results showed that the English teachers had opportunities as well as encountered challenges dealing with TPD management in terms of ELT quality in the context of vocational higher education. It was felt that the findings of this research would assist the institutions and policy makers to take more actions and move forward to achieve qualified English Language Teaching in vocational higher educations.

Keywords: *Teacher Professional Development, English Language Teaching, Vocational Higher Education*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers actually cannot teach their students without learning themselves. In the era of industrial revolution 4.0 in which knowledge and technology explode in rapid speed, education that people have considered sophisticated will become left behind in a very short span of time. Teachers are demanded to stay up dated and be ready to encounter new knowledge modes since teaching involves a complex process to undertake. Teaching needs a wide range of knowledge about subject taught, medias, methods, procedures, techniques, and evaluation. Besides, teachers have to set out the instructional activities in the most effective ways. The crux is teachers need to re-educate, re-learn, and be open-minded to promote their professionalism.

Teachers serves education, which is the crucial thing in human kind. Teachers possess their knowledge through long journey of study in teacher

training and education program which are challenging and not easy at all. A weak training and program of teacher study cannot bring about this goal. Once teachers were considered as knowledge owners and merely transferring content of curriculum to passive students. However, nowadays new experiences are implemented in the classroom, such as critical thinking skills, project-based learning, discovery learning approaches, and many more.

The quality of education (Khoiroh, 2020) is a direct result and consequences of the quality of teachers and teacher education system which much depends on the professional development opportunities to the teachers. The development and changes through the recent years need a fresh look at the teacher professional development.

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is considered as an important approach for the improvement of education quality (Coe et al., 2014). Previous studies showed that TPD should focus on developing subject matter knowledge as well as pedagogical content knowledge, interactive discussion, inquiry-based activities, span more time allotment, and collaborative teaching (Desimone, 2009). Teachers can also learn with their colleagues, such as peer coaching and communities of practices (Borko, 2000 and Meirink, 2012).

Moreover, Teacher Professional Development is also considered as a type of continuing education attempt for educators to improve their skill then later is a way to boost student outcomes. Teacher learning can take place in either formal or informal settings. Formal setting may include courses, seminars, Training on Teachers program in team teaching, formal qualification programs, observation visits, reading professional literature, workshop, and conferences. Meanwhile, the informal opportunities include peer learning and independent research or investigation. TPD may occur in a number of different levels, i.e. district-wide, among lecturers in colleges, or on a classroom through collaborative teaching, as well as individual basis.

Unlike regular tertiary higher education, vocational higher education copes programmes with very distinct design features and utility, in which its graduates are ready to work right away. Thus, the students must have been provided by sufficient knowledge and skills during their period of study through meaningful teaching and learning as well as practicing the theories they have learned.

In vocational higher education, English is taught as general basic subject. It is taught to the students mostly in the early semesters and that of in limited credits. English, nevertheless, plays important roles and has big

impact for graduates when they apply jobs, do their job, even apply scholarship to continue their study. By considering this condition, the English lecturers must upgrade their knowledge and skills adjusted with the most recent ones. They have to manage activities to improve their ability and competence.

Goals of TPD activities is to fulfil student needs to achieve certain accomplishments. Thus, TPD management plays a crucial role since it affects the student learning. TPD management will influence education quality at all levels, including in vocational higher education. Hence, this study is aimed at comprehensively explaining the management of Teacher Professional Development Management toward English Language Teaching quality in vocational higher school.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative approach through a case study model on comprehensively explaining the TPD management in term of ELT quality in vocational higher education. A case study was implemented since it kept the research focused and manageable whenever the researcher did not have time or resources to do large-scale one. The idea behind the case study is that to obtain a clear picture of a problem one must examine the real-life situation from various angles and perspectives using multiple methods of data collection. A case study is an exploration of a bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection. An investigation into a real-life, contemporary case that falls within the parameters and limits established by the researcher.

The data were collected through observation, interviews with English lecturers, and documentation studies. The interviews were conducted both directly and indirectly. The observation might include English lecturer, instructional activities during classroom, college environment, and college facilities. Documentation study activities were carried out by searching and collecting supporting research documents, like curriculum, regulations, lecturer portfolios, and photograph documentation. Furthermore, round table discussion was also held to complete the data. This study involved the head of study program, English lecturers, and students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of TPD in Vocational Higher Education

Based on the observation and interview, it was revealed that the

English lecturers develop their professionalism dealing with teaching skills through joining seminars, workshops, in house trainings, formal discussion, colloquium, and other scientific meetings held by their institutions or others that were done both online and face-to-face. Besides, they also conducted action research to improve their teaching quality. TPD is an advanced training addressing the need for professional knowledge and pedagogic skills in the classroom. In term of this context, TPD refers to any particular training and program that assist lecturers enrich and enhance their professional knowledge to meet students' needs based on their expertise. The activities and programs can improve individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as lecturers (UNESCO, 2021). Those involve a continuous process of reflection (reflective teaching), learning and action to further a teachers' knowledge and skills, leading to advanced teaching practices that positively impact on students' learning (Ellams, 2018).

The activities of TPD could enhance lecturers and their actions by adopting a holistic approach to their development as professional practitioners. Teaching practices may consist of a wide range of areas that can be reached through professional development activities, such as Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK) (Mishra and Koehler, 2006). Lecturers engaged in professional development activities at the macro level (collaborative teaching with lecturers across a range of contexts) and micro level (individual) (UCLES, 2021)

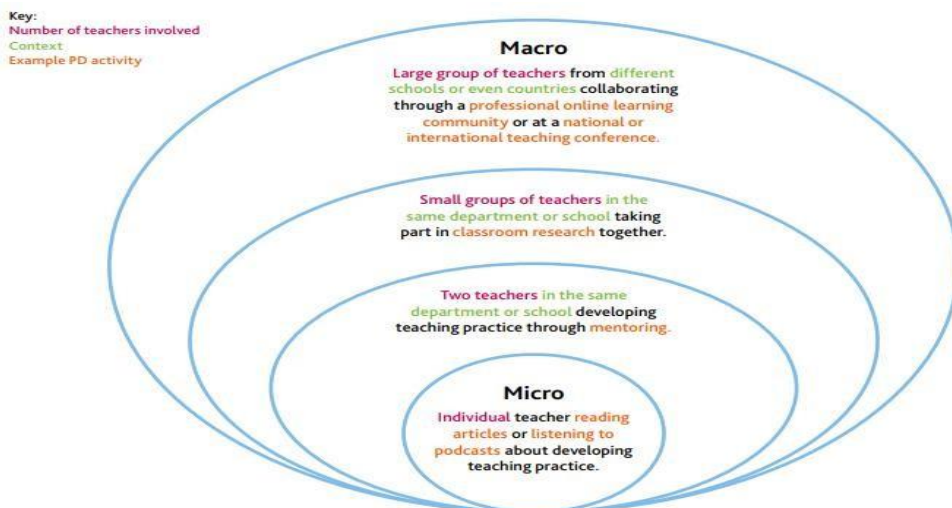


Figure 1: Micro to Macro Scale Engagement with Professional Development Activities

TPD deals with number of lecturers involved, context, and examples of activities. TPD relates to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) meaning that teachers should always develop their teaching practices and expertise. It is highly important that TPD needs continuous process of acquiring new knowledge, skills, and experiences that enhance an individual's professional abilities and contribute to their career growth (Ping at al., 2018 & Tuli, 2017). In addition, professional development emphasizes on the ongoing process of learning, skill enhancement, and personal growth throughout and individual's career (Abakah, 2023). On the other hand, teacher education emphasizes on how educational experiences leads to learning, advancing a teacher's knowledge, skills and characteristics. One of aspects in teacher education is teacher training that often enhances roles and specific skills like understanding curriculum and syllabus.

In vocational higher education, the English is taught as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which is based on students' needs of expertise, such as English for nurse, aviation, hotel staff, hospital staff, tourism, and so forth. In this extend, the lecturers must have 'extra' knowledge, skill, and ability to meet students' particular needs. A professional community or network will enable teachers share idea and experiences, as well as provide mutual support to encourage motivation, to review, to develop their practice in term to a specific skill so teachers can have meaningful feedback from other (Coe at al., 2020).

Another important activity carried by lecturers to promote their teaching quality was by doing classroom action research to find out problems encounter during their teaching and solve the problems 'here and now' (Rosenshine, 2010). Lecturers and their classroom actions play a large role in explaining variation in learner achievement (Creemers and Kyriakides, 2013). Therefore, effective professional development activities can positively impact lecturers' practice and substantially improve learner outcomes. Every lecturer needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better. Their expertise can also be developed through formative feedback within a professional learning environment (Coe et al., 2020).

Teachers' Perspective of their Professional Development

All participant strongly agreed that professional development is important for lecturers. Through the activities in the programs, English lecturers, particularly that of in vocational higher education, will broaden their knowledge and enhance specific skills to provide their students' need. For

instance, English lecturers in nurse study program joined a ten-hour online training for lecturers on teaching English for Nurses. Besides, there were also lecturers attended online training for medical terms that focussed on pronunciation and meaning based on the word construction. Those activities were beneficial for them to sharpen their skills and ability beyond general English.

In addition, joining webinar or workshop related to teaching methodology would ease lecturers to adapt with current paradigm of English language teaching. The lecturers will have deep pedagogical skills and adapt 21st century learning methods, such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), Project-Based Learning (PjBL), and so forth though authentic learning and creative teachers.

Moreover, in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI), lecturers are demanded to stay up dated and be familiar with the applications to support and promote their meaningful teaching and learning. Lecturers must promote digital literacy in their teaching. It involves communicating, informing, collaborating, networking, and re- designing course outline and materials (Pegrum et al., 2022). The omnipresent technology integrates English language teaching, then it will change the teaching practices that will meet students' needs. This finding is in line with the result of interviews conducted to the students. They felt that the current applications of AI influenced much their learning. The lecturers frequently used some applications to promote their teaching. For instance, the lecturers and students used Chat GPT in writing class to generate ideas. They also used Busuu application to expand students' vocabulary, and so on. It motivated students a lot in their learning.

Becoming a member of professional bodies gave positive impacts to lecturers. This body provided rooms for lecturers to share knowledge and ideas related to area of expertise. It gives opportunities to improve teacher quality through various activities (British Council, 2024). This is becoming a part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) considered as lifelong learning and education which is necessary to sustain teacher quality which really matters toward the quality of ELT.

Challenges in Gaining Teacher Professional Development

Based on the interviews, the participants encountered similar issues in gaining their professional developments. Time allotment was becoming a big problem somehow. It was no problems at all if the activities were conducted online and that of not in office hour. Conversely, they would

hesitate to join if the activities were conducted offline since they have to reschedule their classes. Whereas, they had other additional duties from their college in spite of teaching, such as becoming a committee for certain events.

As English lecturers in vocational higher education, they lacked trainings or other activities for specific area of expertise (ESP), like English for Nurse, English for Hospital Staff, English for Hotel Staff, and so forth. Most programs conducted so far merely embraced the general issues of ELT like teaching methodology and paradigm shift in ELT. This will influence teachers' specific skills and ability to meet vocational students' need.

CONCLUSION

The English lecturers in vocational higher education has opportunity to gain their professional development through various activities and by joining certain professional bodies that can facilitate them in improving their teaching quality based on current paradigm to promote their meaningful learning. The activities can be done online and offline through formal or informal activities. On the other hand, there are some issues encountered by the lecturers. The time allotment and lack of specific programs for ESP. It was felt that the institutions and policy makers should take more actions and move forward to achieve qualified English Language Teaching in vocational higher education. More programs related to English for Specific Purposes should be held more frequent as a forum to English lecturers to discuss all about their expertise from planning until evaluating their teaching to improve English Language Teaching quality in vocational higher education.

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