Teacher Professional Development in Southeast Asia: Perspectives from Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam

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INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUME

ALATPD Teams from Australia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam

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Our volume tells the story of the hard work and passion of a group of educators from teacher education institutions in Australia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam who planned and implemented a series of teacher professional development projects aimed at changing teacher practice and impacting on student learning outcomes in school classrooms.

In 2009 the two teacher educators from the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney contacted colleagues in teacher education faculties in the State University of Jakarta (Indonesia), the National University of Laos, Suratthani Rajabhat University and Can Tho University to assess their interest in being a part of a cross-national group which would focus on issues in continuing teacher professional development in the following year.

The group received Australian Government funding from the Australian Leadership Award Fellowship (ALAF) scheme, and sixteen educators – two teacher educators and two classroom teachers from each of the four countries – travelled to the University of Sydney in November 2010 to participate in workshops on "models" of in-service teacher education suitable for each of the four contexts.

The first two phases of the project have operated with the title, "Re-forming Teacher Professional Development Programs in Southeast Asia". In November 2010, the first meeting of the group of 18 comprised a two-week intensive capacity building program, at the University of Sydney for senior academics and leading school teachers from universities and schools in Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. The program's goal was to improve the quality of school education in Southeast Asia through the development of sustainable and region-specific models of continuing teacher professional development.

While at the University of Sydney in November 2010, the whole team met and conducted discussions on education practitioners' current practices, issues, needs and best-practice professional development programs for teachers applicable to local contexts. While in Sydney the group of 18 made site visits and observations of practice and developed action plans and follow-up activities.

Project participants met at the School of Education, Can Tho University in Vietnam in June 2011 to review progress and plan future steps in the project. At that meeting it was decided that the group would meet again at the Faculty of Education at Suratthani Rajabhat University in Thailand in December 2011, at which time a monograph recording the project's development and successes would be launched. It was also decided that in 2012 further project meetings would be held in Vientiane, Laos, and Jakarta, Indonesia.

In 2000 UNICEF and the World Education Forum stated that in order to keep children in school and ensure meaningful learning outcomes, efforts to expand school enrolment rates must be accompanied by initiatives to improve the quality of education, in particular, through professional development programs for teachers. The "Re-Forming Teacher Professional Development" project was conceptualised on the basis of this statement

The Governments of Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam have made considerable progress in increasing school enrolment rates since 2000, and while these Governments recognise the need to improve the quality of education, there have been very few efforts to enhance the skills and knowledge of practicing teachers. A study in Vietnam found that 76% of upper secondary school teachers required retraining both in terms of their subject and/or pedagogical knowledge and skills (Pham, 2004). This issue is common in Indonesia, Laos and Thailand. According to the World Bank, irrelevant curriculum and under-qualified teachers in these countries has resulted in low internal efficiency within schools leading to high repetition and dropout rates.

Continuing teacher professional development is particularly important in rural areas where learning outcomes and overall development is lower than urban areas. In its current *Development Strategy*, the Vietnam Ministry of Education identified low quality teaching as a weakness in its education system that needed to be addressed through the re-training of teachers. Similarly, the Thai Government listed professional development for teachers as priority in its education reforms. Indonesian and Laotian governments have recently embarked on a large scale education system reforms with an emphasis on quality of teaching in schools and universities.

All governments in the selected countries have identified the crucial leadership role local universities can play in addressing the teaching quality issues in schools, and the importance of integrating higher education institutions and school. Professional development programs for teachers are especially pertinent given that most governments in Southeast Asia are currently reforming their education systems by mainstreaming student-focused teaching and learning, which has been proven to produce more effective learning outcomes. In order to mainstream student-focused teaching and learning

throughout schools in Southeast Asia, there is a crucial need to update the skills and knowledge of classroom teachers.

The project's goals confirm the teams' commitment to contributing to economic growth and rural development, by enhancing the scope and quality of professional development programs for teachers. The dual purpose of the program in the short and long term is to build capacity within key education institutions – universities and schools – to develop, deliver and implement effective professional development programs for primary and secondary school teachers in the region, whilst also providing direct professional development opportunities for teachers and university education practitioners.

The program has equipped leading education practitioners and senior teachers from four Southeast Asian countries with the knowledge and skills needed to introduce, develop and maintain professional development programs for classroom teachers in their home institutions and communities and to develop sustainable models of continuing professional development in line with country priorities and requirements which are applicable to the local context. The program directly supports AusAID Education strategies for Laos, Indonesia and Vietnam, while directly contributing to regional cooperation in Southeast Asia and highlighting a productive role that Australia can play in this process.

The team members from each country have had the opportunity to gain knowledge of current international best-practice in professional development for teachers while being able to make an assessment of the applicability of these practices in local contexts and the modifications required to implement international best-practices in the context of Laos, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. The team members have proved they can promote and implement effective professional development programs in their home institutions and pass on knowledge to their colleagues. Further, the program has positioned team members as agents of change with improved leadership and management capacity in their home institutions.

The team members have learned new skills for using student-centred teaching and learning both in teacher professional development programs and in school classrooms. A related outcome has been that partner countries have been able to contribute to mainstream student-centred pedagogies in local schools, thereby improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning outcomes. The team members have deepened their understanding of, and developed strategies for managing specific education issues in the Southeast Asian context, including rural underdevelopment, ethnic minorities and gender inequality. The team members who are teaching staff from primary and secondary schools have the opportunity to improve the quality of their teaching through

the direct professional development activities and site visits. All project participants have been able to make positive contributions to the capabilities of their colleagues who have joined them in various professional development activities.

One further key positive outcome of the project has been that linkages have been strengthened between key higher education institutions and schools in different countries in Southeast Asia and Australia.

During the November 2010 workshop in Sydney, teams developed a three month plan of action to start promoting and implementing professional development programs for teachers in their home institutions and other organisations, and identify long term (1-2 year) goals. This ensured that all team members had the opportunity to use the knowledge and skills gained after returning to their home countries and that all activity outcomes were sustained in the short and long term. The team members further developed their leadership skills by taking on responsibility, ownership and leading roles in design and implementation of professional development programs for in-service teachers in their regions and communities.

All teacher educators selected for the proposed program were already acknowledged as leaders in their professions and communities. The process of selection was driven by the counterpart organisations. First, the University of Sydney provisionally invited leading academics and in-service teacher training professionals of education faculties in Can Tho University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, the National University of Laos and State University of Jakarta to be involved in the program. Secondly, those teacher educators identified the staff in their faculties with established track-records in development and delivery of in-service teacher training and extensive links with the local schools. Thirdly, the university teacher educators in each country identified leading local school teachers who had demonstrated a deep understanding of teachers professional development needs and have experience, expertise, leadership and management skills to contribute to development and dissemination of sustainable professional development programs in their regions and communities. In addition to professional achievements, those finally chosen had demonstrated the ability to successfully manage change, and promote gender and ethnic equality in their practices.

The program has taken a regional approach to this issue by working with selected countries to build capacity within key educational institutions – universities and schools – to develop, deliver and implement effective professional development programs for primary and secondary school teachers. The regional nature of the program is crucial in achieving its sustainability and empowerment goals, as it has brought together education leaders and practitioners from the Southeast Asian countries of different levels of socio-economic development and varied degrees of maturity of their education systems. The

project works specifically with educational institutions that are responsible for provision of teacher education (university partners) and implementing its outcomes (school partners) in their respective communities in Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand and Laos.

The partners selected – Can Tho University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, National University of Laos and The State University of Jakarta – are best suited to participate given the synergies which exist between each organisation. All partners based in Southeast Asia are leading educational institutions in provincial and metropolitan areas that share common experiences in regard to their roles in delivering teacher professional development programs. The partner institutions selected have the greatest capacity to work collaboratively at a regional level to develop models for teacher professional development which can be applied to other locales of their own country, and more broadly to other nation states in Southeast Asia. There is also a great demand from the institutions in the selected countries to cooperate and establish a platform for communication and knowledge exchange on a regional level.

The November 2010 program was designed so that the first week focused on topics of schooling, teacher education, and continuing professional development in the Southeast Asia and Australia to identify gaps, issues and barriers in order to plan models that would be implemented in the participating countries in the months after the program. The second week was designed to provide input and plan activities and resources that could be used to address the issues and to complete the development of a range of appropriate models of continuing professional development in Laos, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

The project would not be as productive if the relationships and partnerships had not been so strong. The program built on existing long-term partnerships between the two academic staff in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney and the counterpart institutions. The University of Sydney has on-going collaborative agreements with all four institutions and the joint capacity building activities are at the core of these agreements and will continue after the completion of the program.

The program sustainability will be achieved through the design of the program and its components, the development of the professional development models to be used in the counterpart institutions after completion of the program, continuing collaboration, communication and exchange between the participants' organisations and University of Sydney program leaders as a part of long-term cooperative agreements, and a range of follow-up activities.

During the November 2010 workshops, it became clear that although the group of universities was aligned under the notion of "Southeast Asia", the needs of the four

contexts were very different. In-service teacher professional development was crucial in each country, yet with different government and policy priorities, in-service teacher development would need to be focused on different themes, and also be implemented in different models.

The chapters that follow this introduction are the products of the scholarly activity undertaken by team members in each country surrounding the themes of the project. The chapters include research findings as well as overview papers of the current state and nature of teacher education in the respective countries.

The chapters are evidence of the productivity of this group, and exemplify the agreement between team members that this scholarly cross-national activity deserves to be captured in an edited publication.

Acknowledgement is made of the support and encouragement of the Presidents and Deans of each of the universities involved in this project. In addition, all project teams recognize the great contribution that the Australian Government has made to the success of this project through the Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships program, which provided funds for the project to commence.

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CAPACITY BUILDING IN SCHOOLS THROUGH CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Kevin Laws

Nations invest considerable resources into the establishment and operation of schools to educate the young people of the country. Education is seen as an essential component of developing the social and human capital of the nation through developing the capacities of potential members of the workforce who will contribute positively to the future workforce.

Student learning is strongly influenced by what and how teachers teach. Teaching young people is a complex activity which is influenced by teachers' knowledge and beliefs about the subject they teach and, given the constraints of the curriculum, about what is important to teach the students in their classes about that subject. Teaching is also influenced by the ways in which teachers think about how their students learn and how effectively they manage the classroom and the learning activities they design for their students (Timperley, 2008). Building the individual and collective capacity of teachers is critical in increasing the capacity of educational organisations in order to promote student learning. As Stoll et al. state:

> Capacity is a complex blend of motivation, skill, positive learning, organisational conditions and culture, and infrastructure of support ... it provides the power to get involved in and sustain learning over time. Developing professional learning communities (PLCs) appears to hold considerable promise for capacity building for sustainable improvement (2006, p. 221.)

The concept of a 'professional learning community' developed from a variety of sources over a considerable period of time, but it was not until the late 1990s that the term became widely used (Hord, 1997; Hord, 2009; Stoll et al., 2006). At the same time as this concept was developing so were the concepts of 'learning organisations' (Senge, 1990) and 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998a). The shared elements of each of these concepts can be found in the way in which each is defined. Hord (2009, p. 41) states that a professional learning community is defined by 'what the words state': professionals, 'who are responsible and accountable'; learning, which is 'the activity in which professionals engage to enhance their knowledge and skills'; and community, in which 'individuals come together in order to interact in meaningful activities to learn deeply ... about an identified topic'. A learning organisation, according to Kofman and Senge (1995, p. 32), must be grounded in three foundations; 'a culture based on

transcendent human values of love, wonder, humility and compassion; a set of practices for generative conversation and coordinated action; and a capacity to see and work with the flow of life as a system'. Wenger (1998b, p.1) states that "a community of practice defines itself along three dimensions"; it is a "joint enterprise as understood and continually renegotiated by its members"; the members are bound together into a social entity through "mutual engagement"; and the purpose is to develop capacities which are produced through a "shared repertoire of communal resources that members have developed over time". Whether we call it a professional learning community (PLC), a learning organisation or a community of practice all support the learning of professional knowledge through individual and collaborative learning by providing opportunities to talk about:

- subject matter
- students and learning, and
- teaching (Wilson & Berne, 1999)

The Re-forming Teacher Professional Development Programs in Southeast Asia project was initially conceived to improve the quality of students' learning in Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam through the support of colleagues in Australia. At the same time it was intended to provide a framework for the sharing of ideas among participants and to develop models of teacher professional development applicable to the Southeast Asian context. In achieving these objectives the capacities of those directly involved in the project would be enhanced through collegiality and meaningful learning which, in turn, would support other colleagues who became involved in country specific activities to develop their own capacities. Through the project a series of nested PLCs (one for each country network) would be created within the framework of a regional PLC.

A number of specific behaviours and practices can be associated with an effective teacher. Such a teacher encourages and supports students to be engaged in active learning and creates intellectually ambitious tasks through the use of a variety of teaching strategies. The approaches to teaching utilised are adapted to the needs of the students in the class, who are supported by the way in which the teacher builds upon the students' prior knowledge and experiences. In engaging the students in learning the effective teacher provides them with clear expectations, constant feedback and opportunities to revise what they have learned. The effective teacher ensures that the desired learning outcomes are supported by learning and assessment activities. All of these are undertaken in a classroom in which collaborative activities are encouraged and in which students have a sense of belonging.

In this chapter emphasis is given to the importance of continuing teacher professional development to meet new and increasing demands placed upon those who

are considered to have a major impact upon what and how students learn. An argument will be made to acknowledge that teachers not only need training to develop new knowledge and skills, but teacher also need to learn to be able to meet the changing context of schooling, the changing nature of their students, and the changing society and its needs for new knowledge, skills and capabilities. It will also be argued that the development of professional learning communities in and between schools, and collaborative and collegial links between schools, teachers and university faculties of education can foster, support and extend learning at both individual and organisational levels.

What is effective teacher professional development?

Ingvarson (1998) makes a distinction between the "traditional system of professional development" (often identified as 'in-service training') where employers have control and governments establish the goals, and "the standard-based system" where professional bodies have greater input into deciding goals and implementing the professional development models. In the former system the models used are most often short-term courses and workshops which are not necessarily related to practical issues. Under the later system there are more opportunities to meet the real needs of teachers in practical ways. Neither system is ideal, yet they remain both important. If professional learning communities can be established at the individual school level or in clusters of schools, supported by teacher education professionals much more is likely to be achieved.

If teachers can offer each other intellectual, social and emotional support, and if the focus of teacher talk is aimed at improving student learning and developing deeper understandings of knowledge about teaching, a school is well on the way to becoming a professional learning community. The encouragement and support of site-based professional learning activities can address the challenges of the specific context within which teachers are working (Corcoran, 1995). Fullan (1987) argued that teacher development needs to be redefined as a process of learning within a safe and supportive school culture, rather than considered to consist of the training in limited and specific skills.

In *Improving Learning: What can we learn about the world?* Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) identified professional learning activities for teachers that had a positive impact upon teaching practice. Among these were opportunities that focused on learning specific content, that were organised around real problems of practice, and that were connected to teachers' work with children. These opportunities needed to be integrated into school and classroom planning in relation to curriculum, teaching and assessment. Such opportunities should be linked to the analysis of teaching and student learning and should be supported by coaching, modelling, observation and feedback. Most importantly

professional learning opportunities need to be intensive, sustained and continuous over time. One-off approaches to teacher professional development had very little impact upon teachers' classroom practice.

In the previous paragraph the emphasis is upon professional learning activities directly related to improved student learning. Little (1992) indicated professional development programs for teachers should promote teachers' growth in knowledge skills and judgement while assisting them to make a positive contribution to a professional community. In the same year Leithwood (1992) advocated that professional development programs should focus upon teachers' survival skills, competence in basic teaching skills, developing instructional flexibility and expertise, contributing to the professional growth of colleagues and exercising leadership and participating in decision-making at different levels. Some of these emphases indicate a training approach to professional development while others assume a sophisticated level of organisational development exists in order for what is learned to be applied in the practice of teaching and built upon in the future.

Approaches to professional development and capacity building

Recent documents (e.g. Kaplan, 2000, Pearson, 2011) have focused upon the need to shift the focus of practices for capacity building. Kaplan raised the question of whether it is necessary to adopt a new, radically different, approach to capacity building because current approaches are inadequate. He considers that the traditional approaches adopted in training courses where the focus is upon individual skills, abilities and competencies are inadequate because, unless organisational capacity has been developed sufficiently to make use of the new skills the skills will not 'adhere'.

> The organisation that does not know where it is going and why, that has a poorly developed sense of responsibility for itself, and that is inadequately structured, cannot make use of training courses and skills acquisition (Kaplan, 2001, p. 519).

Kaplan criticises the fact that most capacity building interventions focus on the lower end of the 'skills-learning' continuum. He admits that such efforts may be preceded by 'needs assessments' or 'audits', but indicates that these tend to concentrate upon the "visible, more tangible, elements which have little impact if the top elements of the hierarchy are undeveloped" (p. 520).

He argues that it is necessary to 'read' the development phase at which an organisation is at and then to devise a response which may be appropriate to the organisation at that particular time. He further states that:

> the ability to read a developmental situation requires a background theory ... (and) an understanding of development, the ability to observe closely without judgement, sensitivity, empathy, an ability to penetrate the essence of a situation (p. 523).

These aspects played a significant role in the Re-forming Teacher Professional Development Programs in Southeast Asia project.

Management by objectives approach

The concept of management by objectives was given prominence by Drucker (1954). It is an administrative process used by managers that defines goals in terms of expected outcomes. The process involves diagnosing and accomplishing specific purposes within a specified time-frame while measuring the results, usually in a quantitative manner. The process has been criticised by its frequent failure to allow participants at all levels to be involved in objective-setting and the ways in which the objectives will be measure. This approach can be linked with 'in-service training' the focus of which is often determined by educational authorities at levels higher than the individual school.

In a project which has a goal of developing the capacity of the participants, it is not the participants who work with the 'experts' to diagnose the issues and then plan to implement a program which will achieve the objectives. The participants are perceived to be 'recipients' of the program. It is the 'experts' who determine what is needed, what is appropriate to a particular context, the way in which the project will be implemented and the way in which the achievement of the objectives is measured in order to determine the success or otherwise of the project. At its worst, this approach to capacity building assumes that the 'experts' know what is good for the 'recipients'.

Results based management approach

In 2006 the Asian Development Bank adopted an approach to capacity development it termed 'results management'. The approach has also been called 'results based management' (Pearson, 2011) and has been acknowledged by the OECD as an appropriate way of conducting training programs or projects. Results management is 'a set of tools for strategic planning, monitoring and evaluating performance, reporting, and organisational improvement and learning' (ADB, 2006, p. 7). It focuses upon results and accountability and requires "the specification of goals and objectives as a precondition to planning and being able to assess the effectiveness, outcomes, and impact of inputs and activities" (Pearson, 2011, p. 13). Such an approach is deemed to be more suitable for the transfer of technical skills through training than it is for learning. The approach does differ from a management by objectives approach in that there is greater involvement of

the 'recipients' in the decision making process about what skills are required to address any particular issue which has been identified. How that issue is addressed is mainly seen as a technical issue to be addressed by the 'experts'. In other words the extent to which the context and enabling environment is assessed is still largely in the hands of the providers of the training.

This and the previous section raise the question of what is the difference between 'training' and 'learning'? Training is usually thought of as being provided in the form of instruction provided by experts (teachers, or trainers) using methods based upon a development paradigm which "holds that developed countries have knowledge and skills that developing countries need, and that training is the best way to transfer them" (Pearson, 2011, p. 15).

If we consider Foley's (2001) definition of learning in the context of adult education the way in which learning might take place changes. Foley states that learning:

> enables people to make sense of and act on their environment, and to come to understand themselves as knowledge-creating, acting beings. ... a capacity to analyse situations contextually and act on them strategically, and an ability to examine and act on their own values and goals (cited in Pearson, 2011, p. 15).

Complexity/emergence approach

The world is becoming more complex. Changes are taking place with greater rapidity. It is no longer appropriate consider capacity building in a linear manner, such as illustrated below:

PERCEIVED NEED ⟹ TRAINING OF INDIVIDUALS ⟹ SOLUTION

Determined by?   By experts   Need satisfied
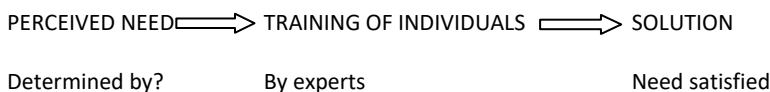
Important questions arise such as: Who determined that a need existed? Was this need a high priority of those who were perceived as having that need? Why was a certain type of training considered an appropriate method of providing the solution?

Pearson argues that "learning is not something external actors can do for, or to, individuals, organisations or systems: ultimately the outsider's role can only be to support the emergence of learning" (p. 15). Given the complex nature of many of the projects which aim to increase the capacity development of organisations and individuals who

work within them it can be found that training in itself cannot be the only way in which learning is supported.

Key ideas and concepts of complexity science, which developed as a way of describing and understanding the dynamics and processes of change in the physical and biological sciences, are now being applied to assisting in the understanding of social, economic and political phenomena (Ramalingham & Jones, 2008, p.1). As a situation increases in complexity it is these complexity ideas and concepts which provide possibilities for learning that can be met by learning beyond training. However, they do not provide for the capacity needs which are beyond the scope of all external support and interventions. The following diagram illustrates the situation. It can be noted that some capacity needs can be directly met through training activities, but there are some 'learnings' that are beyond the scope of training. Some of these can be met by a range of learning activities that will support long-term learning that will be sustainable over time and lead to change and the achievement of goals beyond those that could be met by training. The diagram also warns that there are some capacity needs that are beyond the scope of any external support and interventions, but which are important none-the-less. With an emphasis on long-term perspectives, supported by long-term relationships and collaboration, the importance of capacity building which will continue to be developed through the efforts of the immediate stakeholders becomes essential. It is for this reason, as well as others, that learning rather than training becomes essential.
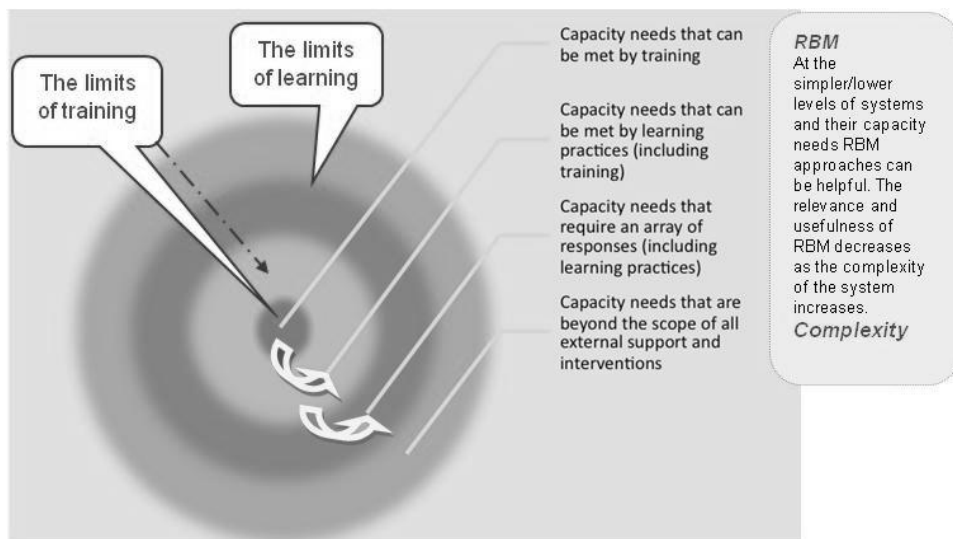
(Pearson, 2011, p. 17)

The approach to learning

We adopted an approach to learning in the workshops based upon Etienne Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning. Wenger stated his assumptions about learning, knowledge, knowers and knowing through the following four assumptions which illustrate the importance as social participation:

1. We are all social beings and this is a central aspect of learning.
2. Knowledge is a matter of competence with respect to aspects of living and being that are important to us.
3. Knowing is the pursuit of those aspects of living and being that are important to us.
4. Our ability to experience the world and engage with it meaningfully is what learning produces. (Adapted from Wenger, 1998, p. 4)

Wenger identifies four components of his approach to learning as social participation: learning as experience (meaning), learning as becoming (identity), learning as belonging (community), and learning as doing (practice). Each of these components formed part of the approach adopted to facilitate the learning of the participants (adaptive agents) involved in developing the project. The discussions, based upon important aspects and understandings regarding teacher professional development and stimulated through shared readings and experiences, which formed part of everyday

activities during the two workshops meetings held up to this time (September, 2011) contributed to increasing the ability of participants, individually and collectively, to make the world of professional development more meaningful. These discussions and shared experiences and reflection led to changes in who we are and strengthened our personal and collective identities. This in turn helped produce a sense of belonging to a community seeking answers and solutions to an issue of great importance, which led to ways of sharing frameworks, perspectives and contexts as a regional community of practice developed. It was considered that such an approach would provide a setting and develop the working relationships which would facilitate constructivist learning. When each of the groups returned to their countries similar practices were utilised to develop and expand the membership of the group as group members worked with colleagues to create professional learning communities within schools and across the sub-regions.

Designing professional development for teachers for capacity development

In the project *Re-forming teacher professional development programs in Southeast Asia* a complexity approach to capacity development was utilised. While Ramalingam and Jones (2008) identified ten key concepts of complexity science, the analysis and explanation of how complexity ideas contributed to the project will only draw on some of them:

- **Interconnectivity** and **interdependence** among individuals (in this case 18 people from Australia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam).
- Change is shaped by **feedback processes** (through the use of various communication media, but especially when face-to-face interaction occurred at planned six-monthly workshops.
- Behaviour in complex systems (in this case the regional and nested professional learning communities) **emerges**, often unpredictably, from the interaction of the parts.
- Relations among the various dimensions are frequently **nonlinear**.
- **Adaptive agents** react to the system and to each other.
- The interaction of adaptive agents can lead to the emergence of **self-organisation.**

In the current case the system was the project and the adaptive agents were the eighteen people who comprised the membership of the initial workshop group which came to Sydney in late 2010. Each country group (2 from Australia, 4 from Vietnam, 4 from Laos, 4 from Thailand and 4 from Indonesia) formed five sub-systems, or in the language used earlier in this chapter a regional level professional learning community and a number of nested professional learning communities. Feedback was provided by other

adaptive agents at the time of the workshop and during the intervening period (in sub-system groups and through a website and email contact) before the group reconvened in Vietnam in June 2011. Feedback will continue and be sustained by planned future whole system meetings, scheduled at six monthly intervals, in Thailand (in December 2011), and in Laos and Indonesia (in 2012). The decisions of each of the subgroups of adaptive agents was nonlinear and decisions about what the next steps in their participation would be emerged from discussions and feedback which led to self-organisation at both the sub-system level and the whole system level.

Through a process of negotiation among the sub-system groups it was agreed that the long-term goal of the project would be to improve the quality of primary and secondary school education in Southeast Asia and this would be addressed in the first instance through the development of sustainable and region-specific models of in-service teacher professional development. Fortunately, funding for the project was obtained from the Australian Government, through an Australian Leadership Awards Fellowship (ALAF) grant and from an International Project Development Fund (IPDF) grant from the University of Sydney. Since the time of the initial workshop each sub-system group has self-funded its participation.

This brief description does not attempt to indicate how teacher learning which is taking place within the boundaries of the project is nested within systems of systems, which include individual teachers, groups of teachers, schools, school systems, regions and nations. All of these systems associated with teacher learning through professional development are interdependent. As a means of making use of the benefits of understanding interdependencies local issues, problems, procedures, requirements and developments were made explicit to all project participants so that a knowledge base was developed which identified and acknowledged the similarities and differences in the context of schooling and teacher professional development across the participating countries. This was achieved through shared readings, individual and group presentations, and discussions among participants. When it came to developing specific models of teacher professional development each country group worked independently at first and then shared the results of their deliberations with others. This approach of conceptualising teacher professional development as a complex system recognised that this involves "many processes, mechanisms, actions and elements and that it is difficult to specify exact outcomes in every instance" (Opfer & Pedder, 2011, p. 379). In other words, outcomes emerged from the interactions and the interdependencies developed among all participants through the relationships which developed.

In the chapters that follow it is possible to identify how the principles and processes implemented in the initial workshop have been adopted and modified to suit the context of each of the participating country sub-groups. In the instance of Vietnam it is possible

to identify how an approach to coaching, advocated by visiting experts from Europe, has been modified and applied to raising the cognitive level of oral questioning by English language teachers in primary and secondary school classrooms. Indonesian participants were faced with a requirement for teachers to undertake action research in their classrooms. The chapters written by Indonesian colleagues indicate how action research processes were utilised to improve and motivate students in their English language learning. In Laos the issue of providing professional development for teachers with very limited initial teacher preparation has been confronted and strategies developed to provide assistance and support. The case studies from Thailand indicate the necessity to negotiate with local authorities and teachers in determining the priorities for continuing teacher professional development, and the need to provide support and a platform for the encouragement of the sharing of ideas which supports effective learning and teaching in local schools.

The project as a whole illustrates how sub-groups, while embodying aspects of interconnectivity and interdependence, were able to become self-organising and develop strategies and approaches which emerged to address the specific contexts faced. Their successes were accomplished through adopting non-linear approaches to change and to the issues of continuing teacher professional development in their regions. The fact that each sub-group has offered to host workshops in Thailand (December, 2011), and Laos and Indonesia (2012) supports the argument that an on-going and sustainable approach has become part of the culture of professional learning among all participants.

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'NEW LEARNING' FOR TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Lesley Harbon

Introduction

This chapter aims to situate the *Re-forming teacher professional development programs in Southeast Asia* project within the scholarly literature which posits that it is a 'New Learning' that should underpin goals of curriculum and pedagogy. It also aims to outline the journey and the role of the assembled teams of teachers and teacher educators from the four Southeast Asian nations in working through issues in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating teacher professional development activities that aimed at teachers, in each of those countries who were, in turn, hoping to enhance school classroom practice. It lays out the logic in our choice to label the project as Southeast Asian, as if there is a one-size-fits-all set of understandings about curriculum, pedagogy, teaching and learning in the ten/eleven[1] countries in the region. Finally it sets out how the teams have implemented the various aspects of their plans for teacher professional development and how 'new learning' may be embedded within those plans. Having met and networked with individuals from the four Southeast Asian countries, the Australian team members believed it would be suitable to provide an opportunity for the different countries to examine their teacher professional learning model, and to share in the journey of how directions for teacher professional learning might develop into the future.

Re-forming ideas: Phase 1

The ways that teacher education institutions build capacity of teachers through teacher professional development activities differs throughout the world. In some countries on the one hand, the conceptualization of a teaching career as a life-long process is represented in a continuum: that is, from the pre-service period, through the beginning teacher period, into the period of accomplishment and expertise, culminating in leadership at the peak of a teacher's career. A teaching career period can last anywhere between one to 50 years or more. Teachers' careers can be enhanced if there is planning, funding and attention to benefit the professional learning needs of teachers. On the

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[1] ASEAN (see www.asean.org) lists 10 member countries of this Southeast Asian organisation; SEAMEO (see www.seameo.org) lists 11 member countries.

other hand, for various contextual reasons, some countries offer teachers very little teacher professional development support.

In most countries, however, building teacher capacity through teacher professional development is of utmost importance, and because of the increased focus on teacher quality. For example the work undertaken by the *National Council on Teacher Quality* in the United States of America (see www.nctq.org), or by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) for *Quality Teaching* (see www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/QualityTeaching/Pages/Qualityteaching.aspx), the work on teaching standards by, for example, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in Australia (see www.aitsl.edu.au) and teacher certification/registration, teacher professional development is one aspect of a teacher's professionalism that requires funding and attention.

The collaborating educators whose words are captured in this volume conducted discussions, as described by Laws (2011, this volume), in a "community of practice", both face-to-face and virtually, over a period of two years, brought together by their passion for, and involvement in, building capacity of teachers through teacher professional development activities in four Southeast Asian countries. The team members have been willing participants in a project focused on developing models of teacher professional development for their own contexts, are also committed deeply to learning from similar contexts, and demonstrate a willingness to take risks and trial new ideas.

Phase 1 culminated in Sydney in November 2010. After a series of planning meetings via email, two teachers and two teacher educators from each of Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, met the two teacher educators from Sydney and worked together for a two week period to explore key issues for teacher capacity building in their own contexts, to share ideas for proposed projects, and to plan the details of what might occur upon their return home.

The model of professional learning, as described by Laws (2011, this volume), encouraged ground-up responses from team members. During the two weeks of workshops in Sydney in November 2010, the Australian team members provided scholarly stimulus reference material for consideration by the teams. That reading material was clearly influenced by contemporary understandings of curriculum and pedagogy (eg. Kalantzis & Cope, 2008). An overview of – for some teams – the kinds of new understandings of learning, teaching, curriculum and pedagogy are outlined below.

New Learning

When this project was conceptualised and designed it was the end of the first decade of the new millennium. The ideas of the New London Group (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Gee et al., 1996) which emerged in the mid-1990s had been variously embedded in many countries' education plans. Much focus was placed on how teachers would balance their classroom design with 'situated practice', 'overt instruction', 'critical framing' and 'transformed practice'.

When conceptualising the Re-forming project two years ago, the Australian team members knew that understandings about curriculum and pedagogy had been integrated in the quality assurance processes of many of Australia's state and territory syllabuses. In Australia, there was much professional development activity designed around new understandings of curriculum and pedagogy. For the other teams from the four Southeast Asian nations, except for possibly one or two team members in each country, the situation was quite the reverse. In the main, team members reported a disempowered teaching force, sadly under-prepared, under-qualified and under-resourced, which perpetuated the traditional didactic linear pedagogy. The teacher educators were at various stages themselves about their understandings of this 'new learning'.

According to Kalantzis and Cope (2008), 'New Learning' intends to move education providers and the school teachers and learners, away from the 'mimesis' approach to pedagogy and curriculum, characterised by an education where "mimesis is imitation or copying, or learning by absorbing facts, theories, bodies of knowledge and literatures that have been presented to learners in a formal educational setting" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008, p. 191). Kalantzis, Cope and other scholars maintain there is a limited amount of deep learning possible through the mimesis approach, and it is beneficial if both "synthesis" and "reflexive" approaches are also offered by teachers in the delivery of curriculum. Involved in a synthesis approach is a process where learners "figure out rules or discover facts through observation and experimentation", and in the reflexive approach, "learners moving between different ways of knowing... connecting learning with their own experiences and identities, and applying their learning by doing things in the world which impact on that world" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008, p. 191). Scholars would agree that synthesis and reflexive approaches can build on and extend the mimesis approach to positively impact student learning, because "a reflexive approach involves backwards and forwards dialogue, a process of co-design of knowledge that draws on a range of resources and uses a broad repertoire of knowledge processes" (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008, p. 192).

Kalantzis and Cope (2008) advocate a reflexive pedagogy that will engage learners in:

- activities that position the learner as the knowledge creator
- activities that are meaningful for being realistic and complex
- activities that challenge the learner to develop more and more sophisticated and deeply perceptive conceptual schemas
- activities by which teachers and learners make explicit their thinking or knowledge processes
- activities that deploy a variety of knowledge media, representing knowledge in many ways
- activities that encourage dialogue and group collaboration
- a broad range of task options to cater for the diversity of learners
- a learning environment that gives learners continuous feedback
- activities that represent a mix of knowledge processes   (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008, pp. 202-204)

Teacher educators and teacher teams met such notions implicitly through the stimulus materials provided by the Australian team members for the professional learning sessions during the November 2010 workshops.

The teams planned that teacher professional development activities would take place in the subsequent 3-4 months. There was cross-country dialogue and comment willingly provided and received. Each team was charged with the task of planning a teacher professional development activity, and which subsequently was found to challenge them at all levels (in regards to timing, permissions, funding, focus), and which would impact on their own engagement with the approaches advocated in the pedagogies of 'New Learning.'

Exploring possibilities back home: Phase 2

The teams travelled home from their two-week program in Sydney and variously planned, designed and implemented their projects. Indonesia focused on English language teachers and training those teachers in action research processes to enhance student learning outcomes. Laos also worked with English teachers (11+3), and taught them a specific new methodology for the classroom. Thailand took the Ministry of Education's teacher standards and worked with skilled, highly skilled, expert and highly expert teacher groups to deconstruct their understandings of those levels. Vietnam worked with two groups of teachers – an elementary school group and a secondary school group – and focused on coaching strategies to improve teachers' evaluative questioning techniques.

The main thread of this chapter will momentarily divert its focus on an important side-discussion about the question of a one-size-fits-all notion of Southeast Asia. A discussion of this issue now will then later relate to comments made in subsequent sections of this chapter where different projects in different countries took the turns they did due to country-specific considerations.

Situating the team's learning: de-bunking the notion of a homogeneous Southeast Asia

It is generally agreed that one of the key impacting factors on teacher professional development which could impact on teacher learning is the 'context', acknowledging that the various "settings for teachers' learning give rise to different kinds of knowing" (Moon, Butcher & Bird, 2000, p. 15). It was thus important for the two Australian teacher educators to place the focus of teacher professional learning firmly in the country contexts. Subsequent issues arising are that the two Australian team members met a dilemma about the labelling of the project. That is, the fact that for grant funding application purposes, the notion of a Southeast Asia as though it were some kind of cohesive idea, was most suitable. But in reality, the team members were convinced they would find that the reality of working with the country teams would reveal that geography alone was the only point of similarity between the four countries.

The programs for the work we wished to achieve in our *Re-forming teacher professional development in Southeast Asia* project included the educational contexts of each country: Australia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. We were clearly situating our focus on Southeast Asia. However we knew to heed the long-held opinion that we should question the term Southeast Asia from the start.

We knew that for a long time, more than fifty years, debate had raged about whether a concept – Southeast Asia – should exist. In 1954, Pfeffer (1954, p. 311) had commented:

> How quickly and unfortunately the two words "Southeast Asia" have become common currency in American political discourse! I say unfortunately because I do not believe there is such a thing as Southeast Asia except for cartographic purposes. There are several small countries, either colonies or former colonies situated in that area but they do not constitute an entity. So, too, the words "Southeast Asia" have become common currency in controversy over diplomatic and military strategy, and again I say unfortunately, because I do not think there is in the area a basis for any such strategy that can be at all effective.

Pffeffer continued (pp. 311 - 312)

> What is it that we call Southeast Asia? It is a region stretching from the eastern border of India to the Pacific shore of the continent and taking in the Philippines and the Indonesian archipelago. In it lie a number of countries … What can be said of them? Do they constitute, except geographically, a region, comparable, say, to Western Europe or Latin America? … It must be asked at the outset what point of unity or homogeneity there is in the region. Clearly there is little… There is no common language. There is no single religion to bind them. Their cultural roots and development have been uneven and diverse… In short… it is a place on the globe where certain groups of people, holding little in common, live contiguous to one another.

If we believe, that, as according to Beerkens (2004, p. 29), "a region refers to a spatial entity that shares specific characteristics [and] regionalisation… refers to the integration of nations … usually around a specific theme or interests", then it is understandable that the notion of Southeast Asia grew as it did. Beerkens continues, (2004, p. 30) "In the past decades, governments and non-national agents have been involved in deliberate processes of regionalisation, frequently based on the historical common characteristics."

ASEAN, for example, was established in 1967, with member states Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. SEAMEO, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, was set up to promote regional cooperation in education, science and culture in the region, and covers the similar group of member countries to ASEASN, including also Timor Leste in its members (SEAMEO, 2011).

It is under the watchful eye of such organisations that the ten/eleven Southeast Asian countries have been able to benefit as regards education. For example, ASEAN nations have agreed to pursue common goals in human development as is summarised in the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community Blueprint from 2009 (ASEAN, 2009, p. 2):

> ASEAN will enhance the well-being and livelihood of the peoples of ASEAN by providing them with equitable access to human development opportunities by promoting and investing in education and life-long learning, human resource training and capacity building, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, promote the use of English language, ICT and applied science and technology in socio-economic development activities.

Particularly in regard to teacher training, the Blueprint says (2009, p. 2) ASEAN will "improve the quality and adaptability of education… including training for teaching staff".

ASEAN documents such as the *Masterplan on ASEAN Connectivity* even talk about benchmarking across the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN, 2011, p. 25). The ASEAN nations have all signed to aspire to "strengthening the ASEAN identity through education, building ASEAN human resources in the field of education, and strengthening the ASEAN University Network AUN." (ASEAN, 2011, p. 27).

These nations, we must conclude, are rightly grouped together regionally due to the advances and planning undertaken through regional groups such as ASEAN or SEAMEO. However one notion that the Australian team have been particularly aware of during the whole period of the project, is whether this New Learning, contextualised to be operational throughout the four countries of Southeast Asia, has been too ambitious? Should we have adopted Pfeffer's (1954, p. 312) pessimism, as he stated, "What, then, can one say of the prospect of organizing Southeast Asia? If we are thinking of a functioning organism for effective action, plainly the outlook is not promising." In the end, the decision to continue to use the term 'Southeast Asia' has not detracted from the project achieving its aims.

The practical needs of applying for seed funds from the Australian government's Australian Leadership Award Fellowships (ALAF) scheme proved to be the deciding factor in how we would frame this project under the banner of being a Southeast Asian project, as if there was homogeneity in the four countries chosen. The grant funding application succeeded, and the project planning began in earnest.

Planning for engaging with notions of New Learning: Discoveries in Phase 2

Teams returned home for Phase 2, and duly planned, designed and implemented their teacher professional development projects. The teams' comments on their activities are variously reported elsewhere in this volume. However, the Australian team members have been aware that from the time they began conceptualising their teacher professional development activity while in Sydney, the teams could be seen to be planning in relation to concepts within the 'New Learning' paradigm: particularly (i) realistic learning; (ii) explicit teaching (iii) planning for dialogue, and (iv) planning for feedback (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008, pp. 202-204). Commenting from an outsider's perspective, that is, the perspective of the Australian team member observing developments in the team's planning, it is easy to see the teams' considerations of 'New Learning'.

Planning for New Learning based on designing activities that are realistic: Thailand

It is very tempting, within a workshop structure, to be so enthused by the possibilities of what teacher professional development activities might be planned, that all thoughts of reality are lost. The Thai team must be commended for their ability to remain 'grounded' and 'realistic' while planning to work with teachers in professional development activities upon their return home. Not swayed by other teams' plans to gather all layers of stakeholders in the education process together to workshop the issue of teacher standards, the Thai team outlined how it would not be possible to have senior education leaders participating alongside younger classroom teachers to deliberate and plan. The Thai cultural context, they reported, would require the team to work separately with each different group, being mindful and realistic about who, in Thai society, is expected to interact with whom. Unlike the situation for Indonesia and Vietnam, for example, the Thai team would need to be realistic, and plan to approach different groups separately. In the end, the teacher workshops allowed constructive discussions to take place focusing on the themes of cooperative, constructivist, reflective teaching for a learner-centred curriculum and for students' critical thinking outcomes. In essence, the key pedagogical aspects characteristic of 'New Learning'

Making learning explicit: Laos

The team from Laos worked on their plan for teacher professional development activities, making their message explicit through the symbols of the 'five-pointed star' and the 'soul engineer'. The focus of the professional development activity was the work they planned to do with the capacity building of teachers of 11+3[2]. The team planned to introduce to these teachers a new English language teaching methodology. By linking the new concepts explicitly to the image of the "5 pointed star", an image known across Asia in areas of traditional medicine, acupuncture, Feng shui and Taoism, and one with which everyone is familiar – perhaps even relating to the basic elements of earth, wind, fire, wood, metal, water – the team could promote the five key points of the methodology explicitly through the image: that is, (i) activity-based learning (ii) group learning (iii) teaching aids (iv) questioning, and (v) application to daily life. The image of the 'soul engineer' explicitly indicates the essential nature of the teacher who, according to the team, would be actively constructing the souls of the children in their classrooms. The team's ability to prepare for this explicit delivery of the key aspects of the professional development activity meant that they in turn were implementing 'New Learning'.

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[2] In Lao PDR, the teachers of 11+3 are the teachers of junior secondary level.

Planning for dialogue: Vietnam

In planning their work with two groups of teachers, the team from Vietnam ensured that cooperating teachers in their projects were continually engaged in dialogue, and in turn, encouraged to create opportunities for dialogue in their own school classrooms. By utilising a coaching approach as the stimulus strategy to engage teachers with their questioning techniques, the notion of a back-and-forth dialogue was embedded, and the questioning techniques between coaches and teachers and between teachers and their school students eventuated in the occurring dialogue. New Learning was clearly being implanted in the suggested pedagogy.

Planning for continued feedback (in line with principles of action research): Indonesia

The team from Indonesia planned to focus on the work that a larger group was focusing on in the area of English language teacher training. The team planned that a model of Collaborative Action Research (CAR) would underpin the work they would do with teachers, and a website and conference were set up to assist in information dissemination, organisation, and a timeline. The Australian academics noticed that principles of 'New Learning' were essentially embedded within the action research frame: that is, continued feedback to participants was a factor evident in all processes. The CAR methodology was allowing the team to demonstrate their familiarity with principles of New Learning, fostering teacher professional learning.

In sum, in reacting this way to the task at hand, the four teams have showed they have engaged with 'New Learning' (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008) themselves, in preparation for working in turn with teams of teachers in teacher professional development activities and workshops.

The Phase 3 milestone: reconvening in Vietnam

The four teams plus the Australian academics met face-to-face again in Vietnam to undertake Phase 3 of the project, which by this time was self-funded. The self-funding aspect of the project indicated that the five countries were committed enough to the success of the project that they allocated funds to allow team members' continued participation.

The June 2011 meeting of the teams in Can Tho, Vietnam, comprised a series of update reports, sharing sessions, and opportunities for country teams, and cross-national teams to participate in further planning. The essence of 'New Learning', we believe, is

evident within the planning strategies and knowledge bases of the teams from each country as they planned and implemented their teacher professional development activities. The teams appear to have ensured that the "synthesis" and "reflexivity", characteristic of New Learning approaches, were at the heart of what the teams planned would occur in their home context for teachers. The teams can be seen to have ensured that teachers in the workshops figured out rules and discovered facts through observation and experimentation, moving between different ways of knowing, connecting learning with their own experiences and identities, and applying their learning (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008, p. 191), just as it would be hoped that this would be evident in subsequent curriculum and pedagogy in those teachers' classrooms.

Achieving their aims

This project can be seen to have assisted the members of the four country teams to achieve one of the goals mentioned in the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community Blueprint (2009, p. 21), that is, the "establishment of linkages among ASEAN cities and townships". No doubt the teams would stand proud to consider that they had achieved that, and their official evaluations of the project were testimony to how enriching it had been to share and compare with other teams. The ground-up approach involving synthesis and reflexivity has seemingly empowered the teams, to the extent that they now are pursuing their own models for specific purposes.

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ENHANCING CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CLASSROOM RESEARCH & PUBLICATION PROJECTS: AN ALTERNATIVE COLLABORATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND TEACHER WORKING GROUPS IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

Ilza Mayuni

This paper presents ideas on how to develop a partnership program between a Teacher Education Institution and a teacher working group to promote classroom research and the publication tradition in the Indonesian school context. Inspired by the University of Sydney initiated workshop on reforming in-service teacher professional development in Southeast Asia in 2010, the project has been piloted in 2011 involving English teachers of high schools in the Jakarta area. The main concern of the program is optimizing teacher potential and commitment to conduct and publish classroom research as a part of their continuous professional development to achieve higher levels of engagement with their profession.

Background

Teachers in Indonesia face challenges as well as opportunities in their professional growth. As released by the Ministry of National Education (MONE), 65% of the 2.7 million teachers do not have academic qualifications and a large number are shown to be of relatively low quality (Jalal, 2009). To improve teacher quality and welfare, the government launched the *Law on Teachers and Lecturers, Number 14, 2005*, which aims for a brighter future for teachers. A number of policies were then developed in terms of qualifications, certification, competencies, teaching standards, and continuous professional development (CPD) to ensure the implementation of the law. The policies also include quality improvement of pre-service and in-service education programs of teacher education institutions (TEI) and teacher working group (TWG) empowerment.

As mandated in the *Law on Teachers and Lecturers*, every teacher (government and non-government) should be certified and meet competency and qualification standards. The Directorate of Teacher Profession of MONE targeted to complete teacher certification by 2015 for almost three million teachers. However, the latest data show that only 25.5 % of 2,925,675 teachers have been certified in the last four years (Board of Teacher and

Education Personnel, 2011). It implies that in the remaining years all teachers may not undergo and succeed in the certification process.

Another challenge is in the issue of low level of teacher awareness in optimizing their professional development. Teachers are not only responsible for overcoming classroom problems, as they are to be creative in managing a big class with 40 to 50 students or teaching in rural areas with a lack of learning resources, but also are responsible for strengthening their capacity to improve their teaching quality as well as to reach the highest level of their profession.

Only 4.6% of teachers reach senior functional level or *Madya* (Jalal, et.al., 2009). It can be assumed that the number of teachers who reach master teacher level (*Utama)* is even smaller. One of the emerging problems is teachers' lack of time and ability to do research and publication. In fact, these are parts of the minimum requirements for teacher performance appraisal and promotion. Although many training programs and incentives are improved and the number of teachers involved increases, only a small number can make use of the opportunities to do, and report, the research. Many teachers tend to be passive recipients rather than initiators for their own professional growth and enjoy the increasing remuneration.

Need to Empower Teacher Working Group

As mandated by the Teacher Law, CPD is an important part of teachers' careers that can be obtained through various professional activities such as training programs, conferences, workshops, research, and publication. Richard-Amato (2010, p. 437) states,

> Professional development needs to occur throughout teachers' career if they
> are to continue to grow and attain ultimate satisfaction in their chosen fields.

A longitudinal study on 10 CPD programs in Australia involving teachers of 42 elementary schools and 28 high schools also shows that effective CPD programs significantly improve teacher quality and in turn student learning achievement (Meiers & Ingvarson, 2005). This finding would be beneficial to consider in designing an effective CPD program in Indonesia either initiated by schools, the MONE, or by teachers themselves. As the number of teachers who need to join CPD activities is bigger than that of getting the opportunities, a valuable alternative to improve teacher quality is by promoting their active involvement in teacher working groups (TWGs).

Many terms are used to refer to TWGs. McLaughlin and Talbert (in Hawley, 2007), for example, use the term 'teacher learning community', whereas, Richards and Farrell

(2005) use 'support group' to refer to a self-help forum of teacher joint efforts to support each other and generate new knowledge of practice. In Indonesia, TWG is called '*Kelompok Kerja Guru*' (KKG) for elementary school level and '*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran*' (MGMP) for high school level.

Teacher working groups in Indonesia have been established for 30 years, and more recently consist of approximately 20,000 KKG and 15,000 MGMP. They are considered the biggest teacher networks in the world (Jalal, 2009). The working group is designed by and for teachers in one subject matter area across schools in district and sub-district levels, particularly in finding practical solutions to teacher problems in the classroom in local contexts. The TWG program basically obtains financial support from MONE, at provincial and district levels, or from school grants.

Considering a large number of teachers who have not undergone the certification and qualification process or training program, there is a need for teachers to get involved and empower themselves in TWG activities as they are designed on the basis of the teacher needs.

A study by the World Bank in 2007 revealed that teachers consider TWG beneficial to help them improve their knowledge, skills, competencies, and professionalism as well as solve their classroom problems (Jalal, 2009). Despite the positive impact, from our TEI team experiences working with TWG across provinces, only a few teachers actively participate in the activities and make use of the program for their research and publication. The focus of TWG activities is more on the day to day activities of teachers, such as teaching methodology, material development, and rarely on action research.

If TWGs do conduct workshops on classroom research, only a small number of participants end up with complete proposals and less than 20% conduct the research. The number of teachers who write reports in journals is even smaller. From the teacher point of view, the major problems relate to their lack of time and skills in writing and research. From the TWG point of view, there has not been a well-managed constant program to ensure the improvement of teacher skills in classroom research as well as their productivity in publication. Yet, the TWG activities need to be reviewed for their effectiveness in promoting teacher CPD.

One of the alternative ways to optimize teacher CPD is by establishing effective TEI-TWG collaboration in teacher research and publication projects. It is unquestionable that TEI plays an important role in improving teacher quality not only through pre-service or in-service programs but also through its active involvement in optimizing TWG programs. As a part of TEI's responsibility in community development, the institution should furthermore concern itself with finding out effective solutions to TWG

problems, especially focusing on how to promote classroom based research and publication within the teacher learning community. The expertise of teacher educators can help teachers familiarize and become productive working in the area they lack, that is, classroom research and writing research report projects.

At the same time, teachers are responsible for their CPD and therefore should initiate collegial academic activities and make use of the presence of teacher educators to help them develop their research skills as well as publish their work. As the nature of TWGs is 'from, by, and for teachers' and the membership is based on one subject matter across schools in a district or sub-district, the organizing committee needs to build such a strong team and seek academic support from teacher educators not only in designing and implementing but also in monitoring and evaluating such projects. This aim can only be achieved through a well-designed TEI-TWG partnership in research and publication project.

Some principles need considering in designing an effective TEI-TWG project. As Meiers (2009) suggests, the goal and the substance of the program should meet the teacher and student needs in optimizing their learning potential and improving their skills. The program should also provide ample opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice, strengthen their CPD and develop long-term collaboration among teachers and with teacher educators. Likewise, the program should provide continuous support from experts and related parties (including schools, MONE offices in districts and sub-districts and the community). More importantly, the impact of the program should be significant and positive to school quality improvement and to teacher productivity in research and publication.

The Project Plan

As a follow-up of the workshop of the University of Sydney Initiative of *Re-forming Teacher Professional Development Programs in Southeast Asia* in October 2010, the State University of Jakarta has initiated and piloted a TEI-TWG partnership program in Jakarta Capital City. The program was conducted in two semesters of 2011 focusing on classroom research and publication for English TWG in high schools (for further details see Sulastini – this volume). Learning from this experience and seeking a wider impact, a similar project has been designed for the academic year of 2012 involving four TEIs and an English TWG of four provinces representing several regions in Indonesia (Sumatra, Java, Bali, and Sulawesi).

This one year CPD program consists of a series of integrated, meaningful, challenging, and fun workshops, focusing on Classroom Action Research methodology, ICT in English learning, research proposal writing, research reports, journal article

writing, and seminars and exhibitions of teacher work and achievement. As "one of the most powerful and effective forms of teacher-development activity" (Richards & Farrell, 2005), workshops are considered a good way to learn from each other, strengthen collaboration, and provide input from experts. The workshop is designed by practicing teachers who have initiated quality management and is designed to empower teachers as organizers as well as active participants in every single activity. Every workshop is followed up by sharing ideas and best practices through a teacher/teacher educator blog. In order to monitor the participants' progress, the teacher educators make use of teacher portfolio, blog, and written documents.

The three workshops on research methodology, ICT, and proposal writing, are conducted on the basis of teacher active involvement in critically identifying problems and finding out applicable solutions for their own classroom. Provided with a manual, the first workshop starts with team building and mobilizing commitment to ensure participants complete the whole set of activities and continues with an in-depth reflection on teacher roles to get a 'feeling' for doing research. As Larrivee (2009) states, reflection is very important to create deeper understanding and insight to improve teaching practice throughout teachers' careers.

In proposal writing and research activities, teacher educators need to strengthen participants' commitment to the new paradigm of their profession: teachers are not only responsible for teaching but also for classroom research and publication to improve their performance as well to solve their classroom problems. Thus, they have to let go of a traditional belief that the main role of the teacher is to teach and therefore they do not need to do research. As Johnson (2008, p. 44) argues, teacher research is considered is to be "the most efficient and effective way to address the professional development of teachers". Likewise, Mertler (2009) and Richard-Amato (2010) find it critical in helping better practices and empowering teachers to decide what is best for their classroom.

The following workshops are conducted to help teachers write up their research reports which fulfill academic writing requirements and conventions and to communicate the research results. Mertler (2009) suggests that teachers report their action research projects as they tend to "further empower teachers to improve their practice, and can provide a great sense of accomplishment." In addition, the research report should be presented in a seminar or conference in order to share as well as to get feedback from colleagues.

Closing Remark

In order to investigate the effectiveness of the project, a research and development project (R & D) needs to be carried out simultaneously. A wide variety of data resources

can be used to obtain information on the role of TEI and TWG in promoting English teacher CPD and to answer questions on developing a collaborative learning community. These include teachers' and teacher educators' responses on questionnaires, interviews, teacher portfolio, and focus group discussion, and working group observation and videotapes. For a long-term plan, if the research finds it effective, the project can be elaborated for wider TWG participants of other subject matters in collaboration with provincial offices of MONE and TEIs across the country.

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THE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MGM BING DKI JAKARTA PROJECT: TOWARDS A MODEL OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR DKI JAKARTA EFL SCHOOL TEACHERS

Sri Sulastini

Introduction

In the last decade, the Indonesian government has attempted educational reforms for better quality and welfare of teachers in order to have a positive impact on education quality improvement. Policy on teacher qualifications and certification, in particular, has encouraged teachers to enhance their teaching quality, either through further education or training. The new policy has significantly increased the allocation of Professional Development (PD) support for teachers in the form of scholarships for training and education. However, there is a huge population of teachers - 2,607,311 teachers (PSDMP, 2011) - to cater and relatively limited PD support provided by the government. For 2011, for example, data shows a figure of 656 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) school-teachers that the State University of Jakarta had to provide with training for certification purposes (PSDMP, 2011). This figure is only for 2011 and the training program is scheduled to run until 2014. This makes it almost impossible for Indonesia to meet its needs for a sufficient number of quality teachers in a short time. Meanwhile, rapid global development keeps on supplying new knowledge and skills that teachers are expected to learn well so they can impart them onto their students. This situation only means greater demand for teachers to perform self-initiated PD practices.

The PD Project outlined in this paper has been designed and implemented as a response of the English Language Education-Study Program of State University of Jakarta (ELE-SP) to the needs of its target audience: the EFL School-teachers in DKI Jakarta Province. ELE-SP at the State University of Jakarta is the only public institution of its kind in the province and the Indonesian system assigns the role of leader in supporting the local government's efforts for quality improvement of teachers. As such, ELE-SP is responsible for providing both pre- and in-service teacher education. In addition to preparing novice teachers, it is also in charge of updating professional knowledge and skills of practicing teachers.

In the last ten years, with the increase in government attention on teachers' quality, followed by the implementation of a Teacher Certification policy that leads to better welfare for teachers, ELE-SP observes a significant increase in practicing teachers seeking

professional updates in the form of education and training that leads teachers to formal acknowledgement in the form of degrees or certification. Meanwhile, informal ways of obtaining professional updates can be observed as increasing in frequency. This takes the form of collegial sharing through networking, professional association or teacher working groups. The increasingly easy access to the internet provides other alternative means of obtaining professional updates.

Since education and training requires participants to allocate some special time, funding and energy, not many teachers are able to take part in such programs. Funding is one problem for many teachers. Time and energy poses other problems. The teacher certification policy, indeed, allows teachers to enjoy better income that they have to pay with twenty hours of weekly teaching. This load of work and the distance between school and education/training venue definitely need extra and careful consideration.

Teacher Professional Development Programs: A Review of the Literature

It is widely acknowledged in the literature that teacher quality is one of the important factors determining education quality in schools. In fact, it is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement.

> What goes on in the classroom, and the impact of the teacher and teaching, has been identified in numerous studies as the crucial variable for improving learning outcomes. The way teachers teach is of critical concern in any reform designed to improve quality (UNESCO, 2004 in Leu and Price-Rom, 2006).

However, teacher quality remains one major problem in many developing countries including Indonesia. Today, teachers are facing greater challenges in the classroom. According to Leu and Price-Rom (2006, p.11), this is due to the fact that:

> the global knowledge base is continually expanding and changing the nature of classroom instruction such that there is an ever-increasing demand to move beyond rote learning and teacher-directed instruction to more active, student-centered approaches to learning.

Consequently, there is a need for teachers to be engaged in continuous learning to update their professional knowledge and skills.

Actions for improved quality of pre-service and in-service teacher education have been taken in many countries. Yet, findings of studies suggest that this will not answer

the problems satisfactorily. One reason for this is the nature of education and training that is more focused on mastery of teaching knowledge and skills (Crandall, 2000). Leu and Price-Rom (2006, p.11) state that the research literature signifies a strong link between teacher professional development and quality and

> reforms leading to improved quality in pre-service and in-service teacher education cannot succeed unless they are backed by on-going professional development and continuous teacher learning at the school level.

Furthermore, Meiers and Ingvarson (2005) suggest that effective teacher PD does have effect on the quality of teachers and, in turn, on student learning achievements.

According to Glatthorn, "Teacher professional development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 41 in Villegas-Reimers, 2003). It is "a life-long process of growth which may involve collaborative and/or autonomous learning" that leads teachers to actively reflect on their practices (Crandall, 2000, p.36). Professional development provides teachers with a more complete learning experience as it "includes formal experiences (such as attending workshops and professional meetings, mentoring, etc.) and informal experiences (such as reading professional publications, watching television documentaries related to an academic discipline. etc.)" (Ganser, 2000 in Villegas-Reimers, 2003). One important distinction from education and training is that professional development leads teachers to go beyond mastery of knowledge and skills, to the implementation of the knowledge and skills in the actual context; i.e. the immediate teaching environment of teachers.

To be effective, however, teacher professional development programs need to be based on certain principles. Meiers and Beavis (2005) identify nine basic principles for effective teacher professional development:

1. The content of professional development (PD) focuses on what students are to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning the material.
2. Professional development should be based on analyses of the differences between actual student performance and goals and standards for student learning.
3. Professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved.
4. Professional development should be primarily school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching.

5. Professional development should be organized around collaborative problem solving.
6. Professional development should be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning—including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives.
7. Professional development should incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on learning outcomes for students and the instruction and other processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through professional development.
8. Professional development should provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned.
9. Professional development should be connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning.

In short, the above principles suggest the importance of relevance of a teacher professional development program to the actual needs of its target audience. To achieve this, ELE-SP State University of Jakarta had conducted a small survey on the learning needs of DKI Jakarta EFL school-teachers. Findings of the study were then used as the basis in planning the Teacher Professional Development MGMP BING DKI Jakarta project.

The Teacher Professional Development MGMP BING DKI Jakarta Project

In November 2010, two ELE-SP State University of Jakarta teaching staff flew to Sydney to participate in the Workshop on "*Reforming Teacher Professional Development Programs (RTPD) in Southeast Asia*" held by the Faculty of Education & Social Work, University of Sydney with support of the Australian Government's Australian Leadership Awards Fellowships. They took with them two EFL teachers from ELE-SP at State University of Jakarta's partner schools.

The workshop had led the Indonesian team to identify specific issues related to Professional Development of Jakarta school teachers and design a specific project plan to address the identified issue. It was a blessing that issues discussed in the workshop had led the Indonesian team to gain better insights into challenges they had been facing back home and inspired them to consider suitable strategies to respond to those challenges. They returned to Indonesia in mid November with a project plan that aimed at promoting a continuous PD program for school-teachers in Jakarta. The project was intended to be piloted with EFL school-teachers before implementing it with teachers across school subjects.

On returning home, the team devised a complete proposal of the project, entitled "*TPD MGMP BING DKI Jakarta*" and stands for *Teacher Professional Development Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris DKI Jakarta* (Teacher Professional Development of DKI Jakarta English Subject Teacher Working Group). The proposal was then submitted to the Jakarta Office of Education for funding support. Considering the great contribution offered by the project, it received great appreciation from the Head of Jakarta Office of Education. Yet, funding for 2011 projects had been announced. Thus, the proposal was recommended to be submitted for the 2012 funding. Confident with the value of the project, ELE-SP State University of Jakarta decided to proceed with implementation of the project in 2011. Due to limited funding availability, it was decided to scale down the scope of the project. Instead of involving EFL teachers from all parts of Jakarta, ranging from SMP, SMA and SMK, the project was available only to SMA school-teachers in East and South Jakarta.

The project was designed under one major goal; i.e. to build a network of teachers that will engage in a learning community of professionals in which sharing and caring among members of the community will support their continuous professional development. Activities of the community members, in early stages, will be directed towards overcoming shared problems in their daily teaching. Outcomes of the network are expected to be enhanced effectiveness of participants' teaching that will result in better student learning achievement and, eventually, better quality of educational programs offered in schools.

For successful achievement of this goal, there is a need for programs or activities that can involve the needs of participants to communicate and assist them to interact with each other as professionals. For this first phase of the program, it was decided that participants would be engaged in conducting collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR). Groups of "teacher-researchers" were formed based on shared teaching problems. A teacher educator was then assigned to each group as a facilitator who would provide the group and individual members with professional assistance to help them complete their respective CAR project. With a view to promoting ICT literacy development of participants, the Jakarta Teacher Blog site (http://jakartateacherblog.org/) was established to facilitate communication and interaction related to the program as well as general communication among members of the learning community.

In addition, support from relevant stakeholders is also a necessity to ensure relevance of project outcomes to the actual needs of teachers, students and schools for education quality improvement. Therefore, in addition to teachers, the project also attempts to encourage the active participation of the stakeholders of EFL education in schools. These include school administrators (school principals), the Jakarta Office of

Education, Teacher Education Institutions with involvement of their teacher educators, teacher working groups and teacher associations, as well as other institutions external to schools such as the US Regional Language Office (RELO), book publishers, and EFL educational program providers.

Phase one of the project was scheduled to run from February to June 2011. Thirty-two SMA teachers and eight SMP teachers voluntarily signed up for the program with support from their respective school principal. Four workshops were scheduled to assist participants in planning, implementing and reporting on their respective CAR project. Topics of the workshops were "*CAR: Writing up of the Proposal and Implementing the Plan,*" "*Using BLOG to Facilitate Professional Development of SMP and SMA EFL-Teachers,*" "*CAR: Writing up the Report,*" and "*Reporting Research: Writing Up a journal Article.*"

It is important to note that workshop conveners and CAR Project facilitators came from different institutions; representing support for the project from the stakeholders of EFL education in Indonesia. They were from Universitas Negeri Padang, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, State University of Jakarta, RELO (US Regional Language Office) Jakarta, TEFLIN (Teacher of English as A Foreign Language in Indonesia, a leading TEFL professional association) and RAAIN (RELC Alumni Association of Indonesia). Throughout the project, the Jakarta EFL Teacher Working Group board members assisted ELE-SP State University of Jakarta in the management and organizing of programs.

In June 2011, the Jakarta English Teacher Expo (JETE) was organized with Jakarta EFL teachers as the main target audience. There was a seminar in which participants presented findings of their CAR projects and their learning experiences in the project, workshops on EFL teaching, and teacher competitions. Furthermore, this event was also intended to serve several other objectives. First, it would be a 'show case' of the project that will inform the Jakarta teacher community members of the project and all programs they can benefit from. Secondly, the event will provide the Jakarta teachers in general with a 'place' to demonstrate what they have been doing as a teaching professional. Thirdly, it was expected to motivate all teachers to join in the learning community, participating in the network, and in the long run, create a desire in teachers to share with other teachers as professionals. In short, this event was planned to be an annual event and a 'professional gathering' of the Jakarta Teacher community where members can show, share and update their professional knowledge and skills among their colleagues.

At the end of Phase one, more than 50% of participants submitted their completed CAR projects. The ten best projects were selected to be presented in the JETE 2011 seminar and five of them were given the opportunity to present their work in the 58th TEFLIN International Seminar in November 2011. To many school teachers, presenting

papers in a seminar - especially one held by an acknowledged university such as the State University of Jakarta or an international seminar like the TEFLIN Seminar - is a valuable opportunity that is not easy to obtain. This will be one compulsory item they need to have in their professional portfolio when they apply for a career promotion. Indeed, this adds relevance of the Teacher Professional Development MGMP BING DKI Jakarta project to the needs of its target participants. Following JETE 2011, requests for involvement in Phase Two of the project began to flow in from MGMP members.

It must be acknowledged that the project was not a complete success. Many blank spots have been identified that call for follow-up actions. Yet, it can be considered as successful in encouraging the teachers to join, which is one step forward towards achieving its main goal. The summary of the project suggests the need for better planning and timing of events, a better promotional campaign of the project, as well as better coordination with partner institutions. As a matter of fact, ELE-SP State University of Jakarta experienced a lot of learning from this project that gave better insight into the real situations and conditions faced by teachers in their immediate working environment and a list of actions to take in the future for better effectiveness of its function as a TEP.

Methodology

The TPD MGMP BING DKI Jakarta project has been developed to be a set of educational strategies to improve teaching & learning quality through a Teachers Working Group. Its development was based on the results of a Needs Assessment study of DKI Jakarta EFL school-teachers conducted by ELE-SP in early 2010. Findings of the study suggest three highly important areas of PD needs perceived by the teacher-respondents: (1) development of reflective and investigative skills, ICT literacy, and (3) improvement of teachers' English language and teaching competence. As it was intended to be a model of a TPD program to be implemented in DKI Jakarta province, careful study of relevant policy documents was also carried out and officials of the Jakarta Office of Education were consulted.

Multiple data sources have been used to measure the effectiveness of the project. They include quantitative and qualitative data. Obtained data was processed, analyzed and interpreted with reference to the intended objectives of the project and its sub- programs and activities.

Teachers' CAR Projects

To a great number of teachers in Indonesia, 'Research' is somewhat 'frightening'. It is a word that is commonly associated with university professors and faculty members,

not a part of the school-teacher's world. Considering the importance for school teachers to also be fluent in research, particularly in the area of classroom teaching and learning, since the last ten years, the Indonesian ministry of education has encouraged school teachers to carry out research on their own teaching. In addition to a significant increase in research grants offered to school teachers, research experience is set to be one compulsory item in the teachers' portfolio document required in proposing for a career promotion.

The ELE-SP State University of Jakarta perceives this as a call for assisting teachers in developing and nurturing research skills in teachers. With the Teacher Professional Development MGMP BING DKI Jakarta project as the vehicle, ELE-SP makes efforts to help teachers see classroom research as one simple yet stimulating set of activities. It is too valuable to ignore as it offers teachers rich and valuable information about their own teaching and their student learning that shall bring them better insights into and more successful achievement in their professional work.

Sunarsih and Shelma Shakira are two participants of the Teacher Professional Development MGMP BING DKI Jakarta project who successfully completed their CAR project. Sunarsih of SMAN 39 Cijantung, Jakarta Timur focused on finding a solution to ease her unhappiness with her students' performance in reading classes. The project led her to explore the use of news items in reading lessons and learn how to create more interesting reading materials and activities with them. She reported that, in addition to success in promoting students' interest and better achievement in learning, the project had also stimulated greater interest in conducting CAR and allowed her more satisfaction with her teaching. She explained further that she had planned another CAR project that focused on the use of news items to promote student learning in speaking class.

In another case, Shelma of SMP Labschool Kebayoran Baru, South Jakarta, did her CAR project on her search for a way to engage her students in meaningful writing activities. She preferred to explore the use of games to facilitate her needs in teaching writing to her adolescent students. Her study of the literature led her to explanations for her students' unsatisfactory performance in writing class. She also learned how games can be used to overcome existing shortcomings. She then planned writing lessons for her class, using suitable types of games to facilitate delivery of the content. Shelma reported not only more satisfactory learning achievement of her students but also their more responsive attitude towards the classroom learning activities.

In both cases, Sunarsih and Shelma kept a regular sharing of progress in their project with EFL teacher colleagues in their respective school and CAR research group that usually generate discussions on emerging issues. Special issues identified in individual

projects and the teacher discussions were then presented and discussed further in the regular conference with the respective Group Facilitator.

Conclusion

It is widely acknowledged in the literature that teacher quality is one of the important factors determining education quality in schools. In fact, it is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. However, teacher quality remains one major problem in many developing countries including Indonesia.

In response to the needs of DKI Jakarta EFL school-teachers for professional development program that can help them develop reflective and investigative skills, ICT literacy, and improved competence in English language and teaching, ELE-SP State University of Jakarta has planned and implemented the Teacher Professional Development MGMP BING DKI Jakarta project with reference to the nine basic principles for establishing effective professional development programs. In addition to meeting teachers PD needs, the project was intended to engage teachers in a network that also functions as a learning community of professionals to support the continuous professional development of its members.

Collaborative CAR activities formed the core program of the project. Forty EFL school-teachers had voluntarily signed up for the program. They were assigned into groups to conduct CAR projects based on problems shared by members. A facilitator was assigned to each group to provide participants with professional assistance to complete the CAR projects. To ensure successful completion of the CAR projects, a series of workshops was then scheduled aiming at filling in gaps in knowledge and skills required for conducting the research projects.

It can be seen that the project was not a complete success. Only about 50% of participants managed to complete their projects. However, successful participants stated that the project had forced them to learn new things and interact with their colleagues about issues and problems emerging during implementation of the CAR project. Furthermore, analysis of data suggests the needs for better planning and timing of events, better promotional campaign of the project, as well as better coordination with partner institutions. ELE-SP at the State University of Jakarta also experienced a lot of learning from this project that gave better insights into the real situations and conditions faced by teachers in their immediate working environment and a list of actions to take into the future for better effectiveness of its function as a TEP.

List of Terms:

PD - Professional Development
EFL - English as a Foreign Language
ELE-SP - English Language Education-Study Program
CAR - Classroom Action Research
MGMP - Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran
BING – Bahasa Inggris

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IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING NARRATIVE THROUGH WRITING GAMES FOR ACCELERATION FIRST YEAR IN SMP LABSCHOOL KEBAYORAN

Shelma Shakira Bhakti,S.Pd.

In 2007, I conducted some classroom action research examining acceleration students to find out how grammar games could reduce their tension in learning English grammar. I strongly believed that this would be possible as they were young learners who enjoyed games, however a surprising outcome showed that many of the students were afraid that games would distract them from learning. Acceleration students are considered to be gifted students with high academic achievement. They are selected through a particular recruitment program. The students are expected to accelerate in all academic subjects and obtain significantly better results than the other students.

However, classroom observation indicated that students were less interested in writing tasks. Students indicated that writing was not a skill but rather a means to help them pass the grade successfully. As a result, the style of their writing tends to involve grammar and vocabulary errors.

To solve the problem, the teacher has implemented Writing Games as a technique. Writing Games consists of games which focus on writing ability and in this case, the teacher chose two kinds of writing games; they are "Silly Story" and "What's Next?". "Silly Story" focuses on students' ability to write sentences and "What's Next?" focuses on students' ability to create paragraphs. This research consists of two cycles of action research implementation and each cycle involves planning, action, observation and reflection.

The Background

Writing is a means of communication to express and transfer ideas onto a blank sheet of paper or other media. As a communication device and act of communication, it suggests an interactive process where the writer and readers are placed through the text. As one of four skills that is taught to English as a Second Language (ESL) students, especially in junior high school in Indonesia, the objective of writing is stated in the latest curriculum called KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*). The curriculum states that English is not only to be studied as a spoken language to communicate, but also as a

written language. The ability of covering the both functions of English should be developed to be applied to the students' daily life as a life skill. Specifically in the syllabus, the objectives in relation to writing are stated to maintain the students' ability in writing different genres of texts, such as report, procedure, descriptive, and narrative, with clear, readable, and correct grammar and spelling. This research focuses on one particular syllabus, the English syllabus for 8th grade students, and especially focuses on writing narrative in semester 2. The objectives of writing as stated in the curriculum do not relate to students writing in order to achieve scores to pass the grade but rather focus upon developing that particular skill.

As the classroom teacher it appeared that in the acceleration class the students did writing just for pursuing a high score from the teacher. They are the gifted students and they wanted to pass their grade successfully higher than the other students. In fact, most students indicated that they felt that writing was such a tiresome and difficult activity, and it sometimes made them frustrated because they needed to concentrate in order to transfer their thoughts and ideas onto a blank sheet of paper. They found it challenging because they did not know what they had to write on the blank sheet. Since students had no experience in writing and had a lack of practice, they might feel writing was hard to do. This condition is further complicated because students were worried about the language focus, such as spelling or grammar, and showed concern that their language was not appropriate. They were hesitant to express their ideas. Consequently, students felt that writing was such a talent and that it was hard to learn.

In addition, most students found it difficult to do the intense and active thinking before writing. Moreover, students who had no experience, found it hard to express their thoughts in writing, as they had only limited ideas they could write about. Whereas as in reading, the students could be encouraged and be focused on what they want to 'say' rather than the form. When students started writing they were concerned about making mistakes. They were uncomfortable that their teacher would watch and monitor their writing and they did not have much time to reflect about their writing. The original technique which was used by the teacher merely focused on the writing activities found within the textbook.

Research Question, Objective of the Research and Significance

The research question to be investigated in the study addresses how writing games improve the acceleration of students' writing narrative achievement. The data collection also provides information about how students' behave while playing the games.

The objective of the research is to examine whether the use of writing games will improve acceleration students' writing narrative. The significance of the study is related to

the implementation of writing games theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the study is important to examine the existing theories about writing games which can improve students' achievement in writing narrative. Thus, practically the study is important for the teachers who are willing to use writing games for guidance and assistance in order to attract students' interest in writing narrative. Narrative is important within the curriculum and the teacher may find the writing games easy to conduct. Writing games are also useful for the students to be more motivated in writing and attracted to the activity without paying as much attention to the score as usual. Students may be more involved with writing and believe that writing is an interesting activity, especially writing narrative because it can arouse their imagination and creativity.

Prior Studies about Writing Narrative

Some studies have been conducted in relation to improving students' writing of narrative through different techniques. The following studies describe the improvement of students' narrative writing through computer game authoring, and drawing activities.

The first study involved children's narrative writing development through computer games authoring conducted by Robertson and Good (2010). The researchers held a workshop which was aimed to give the young people the opportunity to tell stories in the medium of computer games, and to develop narrative skills, such as character creation, plot planning and interactive dialogue.

The study was run based on a survey given to young people in the United Kingdom. It reported that 53% of eleven to fourteen year olds played computer games four times a week or more, and that 44% played for more than one hour at a time. That condition supported the "Teachers Evaluating Educational Multimedia" organisation to distribute a survey to parents to find out whether the children gained knowledge and improved their motivation for learning while playing computer games. The result of the survey showed that 85% parents thought that children learned something while playing computer games. The games could build their skill development, such as making decisions, developing strategies and problem solving.

After getting the results, the teachers were asked to select some computer games to be applied in the classroom and they were assigned to evaluate the learning outcomes from using computer games. However, the teachers reported that the students rarely gained knowledge while playing computer games. In some ways, computer games are effective to stimulate students' creativity in writing stories about popular game characters or scenarios. The teachers also reported that playing computer games developed the students' co-operation and collaborative skills directly and indirectly during the learning activity.

The second study examined drawing as a planning activity for narrative writing. The research was conducted by Coldwell and Moore with second and the third grade students (1991). They applied drawing activities in the classroom and examined the effect upon the quality of the students' narrative writing. The subjects were 42 students that were randomly assigned to two groups. The first group was the experiment group which used the drawing activity, and the second group was the control group which did not use the drawing activity. Both groups had weekly sessions consisting of a 15-minute discussion followed by either 45 minutes of drawing activities and 30 minutes producing a first writing draft, or simply producing the draft of writing without the drawing activity.

At the end, the students' writing drafts were analysed to determine the effect of drawing and discussion planning on narrative writing. The result concluded that drawing was a viable and effective form of practice for narrative writing for second and the third grade students, and it can be more successful than the traditional planning activity (Coldwell & Moore, 1991).

Writing Narrative

When we talk about writing narrative, it is referred to as writing stories (Jordan, 1988; Pillai, 2001). In writing narrative, it is considered as a reflection of the author told as a story. The author composes it by constructing the past event, or even the present events to be told and observed (Jordan, 1988). Stories provide entertainment, it has a purpose to entertain the reader, and it cam arouse emotions in the readers through its sequence of time or events (Nunan, 2003). Pavlenko (2002) indicates that the narrative construction has variables such as race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, and these variables can influence the readers' mind about what it is being told.

Not like other skills, writing needs students' creativity, imagination, and knowledge to arrange what their ideas in their minds will bear in written response. It is essentially a reflective activity that requires ample time to consider about a certain topic, to analyse and to classify any background knowledge. Writers need suitable language to arrange these ideas in the form of a coherent discourse. In order to do so, they have to link and develop information, ideas, or arguments in logical sequence (Chakraverty & Gautam, 1994).

When the teacher assigns the students to write a narrative or a story, she/he can lead them to imagine that telling a story is like telling their own personal experience, or what they experienced in the past, such as an interesting moment, unforgettable moment, or embarrassing moment, and they order the events chronologically (Heim & Edwards, 1986).

Writing Games

To make learning more enjoyable, games are a good way of raising students' motivation, because they contain goals, rules, and fun (Hadfield, 2000). Games can encourage and motivate students' interest while they are learning in a fun atmosphere, so that at the same time students can practice their language skills, such as reading, speaking, listening and writing (Ersoz, 2000). This is also supported by Kim (1995) that it is possible to learn a language as well as enjoy oneself at the same time.

Kim (1995) also states the advantages of using games in language learning, indicating that games provide students with practice of the four skills of the target language and they encourage the students to interact and communicate as well. Games are motivating and amusing and can be conducted as a welcome break from the common activity in the language class. Games also make students relax and have fun in the class so that games assist students to learn the language easily (Nguyen & Khuat, 2003). In addition, most games include friendly competition in order to maintain students' interest. It is more useful when the teacher is able to choose the appropriate games for the students and they can practice the language as well through the games (Ersoz, 2000). The indication of the usefulness of the games for students can be shown by the engaging of students in the games themselves, as indicated by Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (1984, p.1):

> Games also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information.

In addition to this, games tend to be leisure activities which can be associated with the practice of the language. In this context, students practice, learn, and use the language while they are engaged and participate in the games. Sorensen and Meyer (2001, p.561) state that:

> If games are generally seen as a framework for providing a meaningful context for language acquisition then games should be understood as significant models for the design of educational material for language teaching and learning.

In addition, the teachers must be convinced of the benefits when they decide to use the games to address students' problems in language learning, especially in writing, teachers must be clear with the words, materials, and the instructions.

Approaches to Action Research

Some approaches reveal the process of conducting action research. Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988) proposed the action research process model with four elements: plan, action, observation and reflection. Their spiral model of elements are followed in my action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

When doing the research, the researcher must focus on the process, whether the process is adequate or provide weaknesses to be rectified in further cycles until she/he is satisfied with the result. However, the cycle of the action research is flexible as long as it is focused on the changes of the research (McNiff, 1988). In my research, I held two cycles for the limitation of the study and the result that I got was sufficient for the aims of this project.

Two Cycles of the Research

First Cycle

Planning:

In the planning stage, I set a lesson plan which integrated writing and speaking skills and chose "Silly Story" as the game. The game focuses on students' ability to construct a simple sentence using the past tense. The sentences will be joined into a short story with an unpredictable ending.

Action:

In this stage, I brainstormed with students' about narratives that they had learned in the previous year. Most students thought of narrative as a legend or a bedtime story. After that, I stated that the students were going to play a game and all of them were excited to hear it. I divided the students into four groups with five students in each and assigned them to sit in a small circle. I gave each group a piece of paper and a simple sentence: *I want to share my story/experience,* and asked them to continue the sentence in their own words. One student had to write a sentence followed by the others but they were not allowed to discuss about their upcoming sentence. They were given 40 minutes to do it and I observed the progress of their writing. I pointed out some grammatical mistakes in their writing and some corrections. At the end, I asked the groups to present their stories in front of the rest of the class.

From the four groups, three created fascinating stories, and one group was less creative, although they also appeared less active and engaged during the story game. However, overall the students were delighted with the game and asked to do more writing games.

Reflection:

I assumed that the finding of the odd group appeared to be because they could not work well in a big group and they found it difficult to be creative and imaginative on their own. I also found some grammatical mistakes in their writing and it seemed that some of their writing systems merely translated from their mother language.

Second Cycle

Planning:

Based on the result of the first cycle, I set my narrative text entitled "The Howling Halloween" and a lesson plan which integrated speaking, listening and writing skills. I planned to change the way of grouping and apply a different game called "What's Next?". The game focuses on students' ability to construct a simple paragraph.

Action:

I wrote a word "Halloween" on the board and asked what the students' thought of when they saw this word. Most students related it with spooky movies, stories and ghosts but some also related it to a traditional event and pumpkins. I informed the students that they would play a game. All students were happy and curious about the game. I divided the students into ten groups with two students in each and asked them to continue my story with any ending they wanted.

When I read the story, all students were silent and focused on listening to it. Then when I stopped reading, the students were very busy beginning to discuss what the ending would be. They worked hard to make the best ending as I walked around the class to observe their writing. Students were given 45 minutes to write the ending to the story. At the end they were asked to present their stories and all students enjoyed hearing each other stories.

Reflection:

All of the students were involved in the game and they appeared to enjoy working in pairs. They appeared more confident to write and their writing was also more interesting in comparison to the first activity. The stories were enjoyable and imaginative and entertained the other students.

Post Cycle:

At the end of the research, I asked students to fill in a questionnaire to find out their perceptions of the games and assigned them to write a parody of a famous story with their own words and plot of the story. They did this in the class over two meetings. In the first meeting, students were gathered making a rough draft in order to decide what story they were going to write, and in the second meeting they started writing their own story based on their draft. They were free if they wanted to put some pictures into the story in order to support their story.

Findings

The data which would be analyzed were from qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data are from the teacher's interview and students' questionnaires, while the quantitative data comprises the students' scores from writing a narrative.

From 20 students in the class, the results of the questionnaire depicted that all students were interested in the games and agreed that the games assisted them to write. Moreover, discussing with friends helped them to create and use their imagination. However, one of the students stated that they had recognized the "What's Next?"game from when they were in elementary school but using a different story and rules, and one student also stated that they found they did not get something new, such as vocabulary or grammatical rules, through the games and thought that the games were only a means to support and motivate them in a fun atmosphere.

In addition the results of students' writing narratives showed that 32% of students got a score between 82-85, 21% of students had 90, 42% of students got 92-95, and 5% of students got 100. Compared with their achievement in the previous grade, it was 70% students had 82-85 and 30% students got 86-88, it can be concluded that writing games have increased their achievement on writing narrative by 56.7%.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Since the research ran across a period of three months starting from March until May 2011, it is concluded that acceleration students were interested in writing games and

became involved with the games well. The text which was used by the teacher was easy and simple so that the students could comprehend it and found it entertaining. The students themselves were interested to listen to other stories and they felt confident in writing.

However, during the research, especially in the first cycle, there was still one group that was less active during the "Silly Story" game because they could not discuss with each other and the group was quite big. The games did not trigger much improvement in achievement, only 56.7%, this may be related to the time of research and the background of the students.

Further research is suggested to be held over a longer period in order to increase the outcomes and obtain better results and the games are also suggested to be applied to different sample groups, for example regular students, to find out how writing games can improve the students' learning and how effective the games are to support and motivate them to write.

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TEACHERS' USE OF ENGLISH NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE NEWS TEXTS AIMED AT IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION OF TENTH GRADE STUDENTS AT SMAN 39 JAKARTA

Sunarsih

Abstract

The main purpose of the present study is to evaluate the perceived impact on students' reading comprehension after a change in teacher choice of English newspaper and magazine news texts. In this study comprehensible input is a critical concept for second-language development for students with and without learning difficulties, for students to be able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them. Before going to the concept of reading comprehension, it is important to define reading.

Many experts have defined "reading" in rather different words but with similar meaning, such as Smith (1982) who defines that reading is something that makes sense to the reader. Mackey (1997) suggests that reading is an active process because it involves an interaction between thought and language. It means that readers always activate their minds to get meaning and information while interacting with the written text. Furthermore, Dallman (1982) in Marantina (2006) states that reading is more than knowing what each letter of the alphabet stands for, reading involves more than recognition, that is without comprehension, no reading takes place, Therefore, if the readers can read the words but cannot understand what they read, they aren't really reading. In reading the readers are active and intentional in constructing meaning using the message in the print and their own background knowledge in various ways. Moreover, Ricardo Schultz (2007) stated:

> Comprehensible input means that students should be able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them. This does not mean, however, that teachers must use only words students understand. In fact, instruction can be incomprehensible even when students know all of the words. Students learn a new language best when they receive input that is just a bit more difficult than they can easily understand. In other words, students may understand most, but not all, words the teacher is using which replace the use of course book texts.

For reading to be comprehensible there must be use of consistent language, frequent use of visuals, provision of frequent opportunities for students to express their ideas. The focus should be primarily on accuracy of content. Teachers must constantly involve

students, ask many questions, and encourage students to express their ideas and thoughts in the new language. It is important to realize that comprehensible input is as much an ideal as it is an achievable reality. In teaching English-language learners with learning difficulties, we can attempt to reach this ideal level of support and challenge, but in the context of complex and fast-paced classroom interactions, it may not be achieved as much as we would like. Nonetheless, this is a critical principle as we develop an instructional program for each English-language learner.

This research was undertaken with the teacher of the tenth grade students at SMAN 39 Jakarta. This paper provides evidence from A Classroom Action Research Project as to whether the vocabulary of news texts fits within the curriculum, and whether the news texts can improve the students reading comprehension and their motivation to read.

Introduction

Nowadays, the role of English as an international language is becoming more significant in developing countries as a result of advanced technology and communication. This realization has led many countries, including Indonesia start to introduce English at the primary school level through to university. Thus it is very important for people to learn English.

The reason for teaching reading to students is not simply because it belongs to the basic language skills in English, but also because reading is closely related to skills that students will need to develop in other subjects. Most of the materials given by the teacher (in English or other subjects) are presented in written form, such as in handbooks, handouts, newspapers or magazines. It means that to understand the materials, the students must have the ability to comprehend the meaning of written text. Therefore reading skills are very important to be focused upon in English language lessons.

According to the researcher's observation, the year 10 students' reading skills – a class of 40 students –25 females and 15 males -- were below average. They had difficulties in understanding any text presented by the teacher. The texts which were taught in year 10 - the first grade of Senior High School - were descriptive texts, news items, and narratives.

The researcher is a teacher in SMAN 39 in charge of curriculum staff and teaches in year 12 - the third grade of Senior High School. Due to her involvement in the Project, the researcher was in a position where she could undertake action research. She chose to implement her research in a colleague's class, year 10 English. The researcher knows the year 10 curriculum and is a long term colleague of the year 10 teachers.

The researcher has anecdotal evidence that the news items chosen for year 10 are rarely taken directly from current newspapers and magazines, and are usually the edited news items found in course books.

Based on the researchers' early observations of the year 10 classroom, the researcher found that students had difficulties in comprehending news item texts in the course books. They had difficulties in understanding the characteristics of the text including the social function, generic structure, and language features. The generic structure includes finding detailed information and determining the parts of the text. The language features include vocabulary, finding references, and understanding the tenses.

The researcher's early observations of the year 10 class hinted that the students' difficulties in reading were caused by some factors that might stem from both the students and the teacher. Most of the students admitted that they often felt bored when they had to read a text, especially a long text about an uninteresting topic. In the class, many students were off-task. It was the researcher's hypothesis that when students read an extended text, they were not so interested both because the topic is uninteresting, and also because of the difficulty of the text. The researcher observed that students were reluctant to look up the difficult words from the dictionary. They just waited until the teacher explained it for them or asked them about the difficult words.

The researcher also observed there may be some difficulties arising from the pedagogy. The teacher's way of explaining the materials was clear but she was reliant on the textbook. The teacher taught conventionally by staying in class and doing the exercises on the handbook. She rarely used any other variety of techniques or media in teaching. The researcher was therefore of the opinion that the students did not find the English lesson motivating. All of these factors contributed to the students' low motivation for reading – thus also impacting on their lack of success in reading comprehension.

Research question, conceptual framework and related literature

Teaching reading is one of the key duties conducted by teachers of English and it is arguably the most difficult skill to be taught because study reading not only has been shaped by classroom experience but also has been influenced by theoretical debate. English is studied through four main skills: those are reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Reading and listening are called receptive skills, in which people need the ability to receive written or spoken language when they do it. While speaking and writing are called productive skills because when people do it, they need the ability to produce written or spoken language (Harmer, 2000).

Reading, which belongs to the receptive skill category, can be defined as a process whereby one derives meaning from a piece of writing. Reading can also be described as a mental or cognitive process which involves a reader in trying to follow and respond to a message from a writer, who is in a distant space and time (Davies, 1995). It means that a reading activity connects the reader and the writer although they are in different time and place; for example reading an ancient book, reading personal letter, reading a newspaper etc.

Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intention of constructing or deriving meaning also known as reading comprehension. It is the mastery of basic cognitive processes to the point where they become automatic so that attention is freed for the analysis of meaning (Harmer, 2007). Reading involves a variety of strategies to assist with decoding (to translate symbols into sounds or visual representations of speech) and comprehension. Readers may use morphemes, semantics, syntax or context clues to identify the meaning of unknown words, and integrate the words they have read into their existing framework of knowledge or schema (Brown, 2000).

A newspaper is generally published daily and gives the reader detailed information of all the events that are happening in the world. People read the newspaper to get information about what is happening in the world. By reading the newspaper you can find out about the economic rate around the world. People gain new ideas while reading the news paper. By reading newspapers students can also improve their language.

There are a number of advantages of reading a newspaper as a language learner. For instance, you can find out about newly developing terms in a language. You can also find information about other parts of the world. In addition, newspapers cover a wide range of subjects and therefore are likely have something for everyone. For example, newspapers cover topics such as sports, crosswords, news, comics, classifieds, etc.

The disadvantages of reading the newspaper could be that it is a waste of time to read the non-news articles, and that the reader must consider who wrote each article in order to interpret its meaning fully.

Different people have different opinions about reading newspapers. Some people would read the newspaper, because they find some interesting articles to read. Other people would not read, maybe they don't know how to read and they would just look at the pictures. Language teachers argue that reading can assist language learners to develop their speaking competence.

Advice for teachers for choosing the appropriate reading-rate includes reading flexibly, slowing when concepts of the texts are more complex and when the material is new, and increasing the speed when the material is familiar and involves simpler concepts.

The materials for reading can not only be found from newspapers or magazines but can also be found from a textbook or a course book. A course book is a book that is used by students and teachers as the basis of a course of study. Mostly the teachers like to choose the material of the reading text from it because it is usually ready to be used by the teacher at any time but it also has a weakness as the text from the text book or course books can be monotonous, difficult to be understood, involve uninteresting topics and not interesting to the students.

The Classroom Action Research

The main purpose of the present study was to find out whether the use of English newspaper and magazine news items as reading texts can motivate and improve the students reading comprehension in the tenth grade at SMAN 39 Jakarta. The researcher used two cycles of action research to examine the issue in the classroom.

Before the first cycle of the action research, during the reading activity the teacher adapted their role in order to try out the techniques of: clarifying problems, modeling strategies to the students, redirecting students to remain on task, and providing students with assistance. Based on those four roles, the researcher observed the general procedures of teaching reading comprehension through the news item texts from the newspaper and magazines. Several steps were followed, they are:

Before Reading:

Previewing:

     i.   Brainstorm- what we know already about the topic.
    ii.   Predict- what we think we will learn about the topic when we read the passage.

During the reading:

Clarifying the problem
     i.   Are there any parts of the text that are hard to understand?
    ii.   How can the problems be solved by using these strategies:

        •   Reread the sentences carefully and look for the key ideas to help you understanding the word.

- Getting the gist such as: what is the important idea, person, place, or thing

After reading:

i.   Ask questions: What question would show we understand the most important information and what are the answers to these questions?
ii. Review: What did we learn?

In the recently developed curriculum - School Based Curriculum- Reading is seen as an essentially active activity. Here, the readers' responsibility was not merely to transfer what the author had written into the reader's head but also asked the readers to interact with the text to create meaning and understanding. Besides learning about grammar and vocabulary, the students should able to use or implement the language to communicate, and be able to comprehend a reading text.

There are many problems that might influence the students' quality of reading, such as students' lack of vocabulary, lack of reading engagement, reading strategy, and the passage itself. However, the researcher assumes that one of the most important factors is the use of reading comprehension strategies especially in reading a news item text. To overcome the problem of students' low reading comprehension achievement, according to the researcher, one of the strategies is teaching reading strategies to the students using the newspaper or magazine to engage in a meaningful context and make sense of conceptual ideas of the text easily.

Cycle 1: Planning for an Innovation

In doing the first cycle of research and finding the results of the research, the researcher still wanted to work on future planning, so the researcher decided to continue the activity to examine the effect of using newspaper and magazine in news item texts to improve the students' speaking comprehension. In the next stage of research the researcher wants to examine the students speaking ability and how to help students to develop self confidence in speaking.

The planning of this program involves:

a. Students find a news item text from the newspaper or magazine.

b. Students perform the reading in the class as if he/she were a TV reporter who will read the news.

c. Students must wear the appropriate clothes, and make the appropriate greeting to the audience

d. The teacher takes note of the reading and speaking, especially in the intonation, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, also the fluency.

In the first cycle of the research the teacher explained the rules of the activity, giving the text of a news item taken from the newspaper, and gave the opportunity to the students to read. Some of the students had some difficulties in understanding the genre, the language features, and also the vocabulary because the explanation of the teacher was not very clear, and there were some new vocabularies which were not so familiar to them. The teacher then re-explained about the genre, the language features, and also the vocabulary clearly, then the teacher gave the students the exercises or questions based on the given text, and discussed them together. While the students were doing this activity the teacher analyzed the students one by one and gave the students a questionnaire in order to know about the problems the students were experiencing during the reading activity of news item text from the English newspaper and magazine.

Student responses to the questionnaire were as follows:

Question	Y	N
1. Do you plan to read English in your daily life?	20	20
2. Would you practice English reading outside the classroom?	25	15
3. Do you spend much time on each reading task for practice?	23	17
4. Do you always concentrate in reading English?	20	20
5. Is there any difficulties thing in reading English?	25	15
6. Is reading a news item from a Newspaper or Magazine difficult to understand?	15	25
7. Do you like to read news items from Newspapers or Magazines?	35	5
8. Do you feel happy, have fun, or enjoy when the teacher uses the Newspaper or Magazine in reading activities?	33	7
9. Do you think that reading news item texts from Newspapers or Magazines can motivate you in reading?	30	10
10. Do you like to have reading using Newspapers or Magazines to improve your reading comprehension?	35	5

In order to test the new reading activity a pre and post test were administered, providing the following results:

Mean scores of the Pretest and Post test in the experimental class:

	Mean	N	Standard deviation	Standard Error Mean
Pretest of the experimental class	61.68	40	9.79	1.61
Post test in the experimental class	73.38	40	8.17	1.34

Cycle 2:

Following the first cycle of research the teacher analyzed the problem and made a new program for the second cycle of action research. The teacher used the activity from the first cycle with the same procedure - by giving the rules of the activity to read the news item text but with a different topic taken from the English newspaper, and gave the opportunity to the students to read. The teacher explained the news item text through the categories:

- Text organisation ,
- Communicative purpose,
- Language features,
- Topic and main idea,
- Information from the text,
- Genre such as : Newsworthy event, Background event, Sources
- Language features such as the use of head line/the use of action verb, the use of saying verbs, the use of passive sentence.

Then the teacher gave the students some exercises and questions based on the given text and then discussed the answers with the students. In the second cycle the students did their activity more eagerly and seriously as long as the material of the news item text was interesting according to their preferences, and it had a good effect for the students to be curious to know more about the text. While the students were doing this activity the teacher analyzed the students one by one and gave the students a questionnaire in order to examine if there was an improvement in the students' reading comprehension and the students motivation to read, and also to examine the problems encountered by the students during the reading activity.

The data of Cycle I:

59% of the students didn't understand about the news item text
8% of the students understood the vocabulary of the news item text
10% of the students understood the language features of the news item text
23% of the students understood the genre of the news item text

The data of Cycle II:

67% of the students understood about the news item text
10% of the students didn't understand the vocabulary of the news item text
23% of the students understood the genre of the news item text

Reevaluating and Planning for the Future

After doing the Classroom Action Research about using English Newspaper and Magazine News Item texts to improve Reading Comprehension, the researcher plans to continue the research by using the same theme but in the different field that is in the Speaking area, in order to know the ability of the students speaking skill using the News Item Text using the Newspaper and Magazine in the tenth grade students at SMAN 39 Jakarta.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research and also from the data analysis, the writer can conclude that the use of English newspaper and magazine News Item text could improve the students reading comprehension, and motivate them to read, the writer suggested to other teachers to be creative in choosing the method of teaching reading and to be creative in finding the reading material not only from the English newspapers and magazines but also from other media such as the Internet in order to improve the reading comprehension of their students. As teachers we must be intelligent in choosing the method of teaching, be creative to use the techniques of teaching, and be selective to find the reading materials, in order to motivate the students.

Based on the conclusion above, some suggestions are put forward:

1. English teachers at Senior High Schools are recommended to use text from newspapers and magazines in teaching reading to increase student motivation and interest in reading activities.

2. In the future research should be conducted over a longer period to make the findings of the research more convincing.

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TEACHER EDUCATION IN LAOS AND THE CONTEXT OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Athith-Outhay Chatouphonexay, Saysamone Prasonexay, Mayouly Keophatsada, Phonesavanh Hongsomboun, Maiya Duangvilay & Bounchan Mittilat

Teacher Education in Laos: A Historical Overview

Lao society has been embedded in a heritage of indigenous cultures, colonialism, and socialist revolution and most recently a movement towards a free market economy. Education in general and teacher education in Laos in particular, has also experienced historical change which is intimately bound up with the changing cultural, social context and the economic environment. The history of teacher education in Laos has long been developed (Amarathithada, 2002).

Prior to the French protectorate in 1893, education was carried out in temples (Wat) by Buddhist monks who did the dual task of teaching religion and providing general education in reading, writing, arithmetic, handicrafts and traditional medicine. Teaching was conducted predominantly through the lecture and learn-by-heart method. When the French took power, the practice of this traditional education still continued and gradually proceeded to the new system. Clearly the French were intent on establishing the colonial educational system closely patterned on the metropolitan model. The aims of education were to serve the colonizer and the elite so that teachers were mostly brought from France. People who had primary education and wanted to be teachers were trained three to six months to teach in primary schools. The first teacher training school was established in 1950 under the supervision of the Secondary Education Department. It delivered a program of four years; the first graduates from this institution in 1954 were only five students. In 1953 there were four teachers who were sent to France for upgrading. It is obviously seen that the teacher training in the period of French protectorate was very limited in number (Amarathithada, 2002). In other words, according to Phonekeo (1996), although the Lao educational system was under French control, Laos has a long history of indigenous education which was provided by monks through temple schools.

The period of National Revolution (1955-1975) witnessed the division of the country into two territories which was governed by the Vientiane Government and the Neo Lao Haksat (Lao National Front). Although they were different in terms of politics, the teacher training was provided in both territories. The training of teachers for primary schools was delivered at École Normal (in Vientiane territory) and teacher training schools (in Neo Lao Haksat territory). Regarding the teacher training for secondary

schools, the program was conducted at the Institute of Pedagogy Dong Dok in Vientiane and the Viengxay Pedagogical Institute.

In 1975, the Lao People's Democratic Republic was proclaimed and the country moved towards a socialist regime. The government set the educational objectives to democratize education which created the rapid expansion of general education. The big demand for teachers resulted not only in the recruitment of unqualified teachers but also in a sudden and uneven expansion in teacher education. The two systems of teacher education were amalgamated into one. Programs of varying duration and with different educational requirements were introduced to meet the local requirements for teachers. The teacher training schools for pre-schools, physical instructors, vocational instructors, and arts were established. In 1977, the Institute of Pedagogy Dong Dok and Viengxay Pedagogical Institute were united to form a Pedagogical University of Vientiane which comprised nine departments: Mathematics-Physics, Biology-Chemistry, History-Geography, Psychology-Pedagogy, Literature-Linguistics, Political Science, English, French, and Russian. Since the promulgation of a Prime Ministerial Decree in 1995 on establishing National University of Laos (NUOL) by amalgamating 10 existing higher learning institutions under the supervision of different Ministries, the Institute has been transferred to form the Faculty of Education.

In 1997-1998 there was a rationalization of teacher training subsystems. The number of schools were thus reduced from 41 to 12; 4 pre-primary and primary teacher training schools; 4 teacher training colleges for both primary and lower secondary teachers; the faculty of Education, NUOL for upper secondary teachers; the vocational teacher training school; the Physical Education Teacher Training school; and the Artistic Education Teacher Training School. The restructure of teacher education took place in this period. The old teacher training programs for 5+3 and 8+3 were phased out and the 11+1 and 11+3 were instigated instead.

In relation to the teacher education systems in Laos, there are different levels which can be stated as follows:

- System 11+1 : For teaching in primary school level (Certificate)
- System 11+3 : For teaching in lower-secondary level (Diploma)
- System 11+4 : For teaching in upper-secondary level (Bachelor)

Due to the national education reform in 2010 which transformed the general education schooling year from 11 (5 years in primary, 3 years in lower-secondary and 3 years in upper-secondary) to 12 years (5 in primary, 3 in lower-secondary and 4 in upper-

secondary), the 11+1; 11+3; and 11+4 teacher education systems were replaced by the new ones which is 12+1; 12+3; and 12+4 respectively.

In sum, the history of teacher education in Lao PDR was complex and enduring. The expansion of teacher education did respond to the need for teachers in terms of quantity on the one hand, but it raised the question of quality of teachers and the share of meagre resources on the other which was a big challenge for the Ministry of Education of Lao P.D.R. to reform the teacher education system to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Amarathithada, 2002).

The Context of Teacher Professional Development

Over the past two decades, the MOE has reformed the teacher educational institutions (TEIs) with the purpose of bringing about qualitative and quantitative improvement in teacher education. Eight TEIs have implemented various sub-degree programs for pre-school, primary and lower-secondary teacher education. The Faculty of Education at the National University of Laos (FOE/NUOL) has offered tertiary education, including degree level programs for upper-secondary teacher education.

Regarding teacher professional development (TPD), it can be noted that most teachers do not have opportunities for in-service training. When they do have the chance to attend, there is no mechanism for keeping and certifying their training records. There is no credit point system used on in-service training programs that allows for the accumulation of credits point and their utilization as credits on additional award bearing programs (MOE, 2006).

In addition to this, newly graduated trainees from TEIs recruited to teach in schools face many challenges in the school environment especially during the first year. As a result, new teachers have to adapt themselves to the existing conditions of the school, understand the children's different learning styles and try to use various types of teaching techniques. Therefore, a mentoring system to assist new teachers is needed.

At the university level, the Faculty of Education has made great efforts to upgrade university lecturers from 3 universities (Souphanouvong University, NUOL and Champasak University) by conducting intensive in-service training in the field of pedagogy in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. The first group has been trained in Thalad, Vientiane province (10-15 October 2011). The second group will be trained starting from 01 to 21 November 2011 at NUOL, Vientiane Capital. The 12 modules for the training had been developed by international specialists and translated into Lao by Lao counterparts. They are:

Module 1: Social-Cultural Learning

Module 2: Human Diversity

Module 3: Learning Environment

Module 4: Planning

Module 5: Presentation and Facilitation

Module 6: Learner Development

Module 7: Professional Development

Module 8: Assessment

Module 9: Understanding Research

Module 10: Evaluation

Module 11: Professionalism

Module 12: Technology

From the beginning, training of trainers was conducted for 2 weeks in Vientiane province and then master trainers were selected from FOE/NUOL. This project will include teachers from Teachers' Training Colleges and university lecturers throughout the country and it will end in 2015. FOE/NUOL takes the leading role to implement the project.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAOS

Athith-Outhay Chatouphonexay, Saysamone Prasonexay, Mayouly Keophatsada, Phonesavanh Hongsomboun, Maiya Duangvilay & Bounchan Mittilat

Continuing Professional Development

The Ministry of Education has developed the Teacher Education Strategy 2006-2015 based on (1) the government socio-economic development, (2) the 20 year Education Strategic Vision 2001-2020, (3) the National Plan of Action for Education For All (NPA) 2003-2015 and (4) the current situation and required improvements to general education and teacher education in the future.

In relation to the TE strategy, MOE has identified 5 strategic areas namely,

- Strategy for improving policy analysis for improved management of the teacher education system
- Strategy for management of the teacher education system
- Strategy for improving teacher education methodology
- Strategy for providing an effective system of continuing professional development, and
- Strategy for ensuring sufficient number of teachers and improved salaries and incentives for teachers

In relation to continuing professional development, 5 measures are identified as follows:

- A Professional Development Network (PDN) will be established involving teacher educational institutions , provincial education services, district education bureaus, pedagogical advisors, academic teachers in school clusters and school-based professional development coordinators
- A teacher trainer and schoolteacher professional development plan will be developed in order to provide training to upgrade their knowledge and teaching skills
- A Charter of National Teacher Competencies will be developed to support continuous professional development at all levels of the education system
- A Training Needs Assessment will be conducted regularly to collect information on training needs for developing curricula for in-service and upgrading training. A professional development scheme should ensure that all educational entities have access to policies giving priority to women, ethnic groups and disadvantaged groups, and
- All types of officially certified in-service teacher training will be given and treated as upgrading. Teachers can accumulate their credits and transfer them for further upgrading (MOE , 2006).

The National University of Laos and Faculty of Education

National University of Laos

The National University of Laos (NUOL) was officially established by merging the existing Higher Education Institutes which were formerly under the supervision of several Ministries into one university under the Ministry of Education in accordance to the Decree Number 50/PM of the Prime Minister of the Lao PDR dated 9.6.1995. NUOL is a multi-campus structure, and its 8 campuses including Done Koy Campus (Sethathiraj Hospital) are scattered within a 30-Km radius of Vientiane Capital City. NUOL comprises of 11 faculties, a School of Foundation Studies, a Central Library, 6 centres and a main hospital.

Since its establishment, NUOL plays an important role, as indicated in its mission, in providing higher education in various areas required by the socio-economic development of Lao PDR; promoting and performing research in natural and social sciences; preserving and expanding the arts, culture and traditions of the multi-ethnic nation; and finally, providing academic services to the society. NUOL is the most dynamic university in the Lao PDR in terms of human resources development for the country, it is well known for its diversity of programs in the Bachelor Degree; in addition, some Master Degree Programs are currently conducted in various academic disciplines and it is preparing for its Doctoral Degree Programs in the near future.

Since the opening of its first academic year on the 5th November 1996, the number of students has been increasing dramatically from 8,053 including 2,170 females to more than 26,000 in the academic year 2005-2006. At present, NUOL is accepted as one of the main and most important public organisations in the Lao PDR, it currently employs a total number of 1,884 teaching and administrative staff including 862 females.

In order to accomplish its missions, the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is considered to be the key factor in gaining access to the outside world and promoting the effective development of other duties of the university. The application of computerization in the academic and administrative work of NUOL has seen an increased number of computers from its establishment of less than 100 to 1000 at the present time, 560 of which are currently linked up to the internet.

Those ICT facilities are widely and systematically used in the university's curricula, the teaching-learning activities and the training courses. They are able to assist teachers and students to have more opportunities to get access to modern technology which plays

important roles as a means of teaching-learning, conducting research and performing administrative work.

University Vision: The National University of Laos will be the Centre of Excellence for higher Education, Research and Cultural preservation towards strengthening capacity building and human resources development with intellectual vitality, potential knowledge and skills, good attitudes, loyalty, dignity, good health and mental civilization. Our graduates will be among the most sought after by the regional best employers and will become leaders in their communities and accomplished professionals in their chosen work.

University Mission: The mission of National University of Laos is to meet the development of Laos in a suitable, efficient and equitable manner. The mission comprises of the following general functions:

1. To create and provide training as part taken of the country's human resources development. The graduates are trained to become administrators, academicians, researchers equipped with high knowledge, skills and that of expertise and technological innovation, moral quality necessarily required and possessed as good citizens and human beings.

2. To conduct and promote researches, apart from providing higher education in the areas required, as in response to the country's social and economic development.

3. To disseminate research findings and provide technical and academic services to the society effectively.

4. To preserve and expand the arts, culture and traditions of our multi-ethnic nation, meanwhile recognizing the progressive world culture with consideration and consciousness.

Faculty of Education

The Faculty of Education (FOE) is one of the faculties within the National University of Laos, established in accordance with article 7, the decree of the Prime Minister on the National University of Laos No. 50/PM of November 1995. The FOE has launched its programs based on the existing resources of the former Department of Psychology-Education, at the Pedagogical University of Vientiane.

The Faculty of Education, National University of Laos, aims for their graduate educators to have Bachelor Degrees and beyond. The graduates shall have ethics, morale and vision, with high knowledge and the capacity to solve problems creatively, be able to

develop themselves professionally, conduct research, be able to adapt themselves to the changing working environment, and to possess awareness of preserving and developing Lao beautiful tradition, wisdom, art and culture of Lao plural-minority-ethnics.

Faculty Vision: Be of excellence in the teaching methodology, quality of teacher training and effectiveness in educational management from local up to international standards and in doing action research.

Faculty Mission:

- Produce highly qualified educators who are flexible and able to adapt themselves to the changing working environment.
- Develop the Faculty to be a leading national Teaching-Learning society with new approaches, and to be an action research centre.
- Preserve and develop beautiful Lao Art, Tradition, Wisdom, and Culture of Plural-Ethnics.
- Bring knowledge to the local community.

List of Terms:

FOE	:	Faculty of Education
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
Lao PDR	:	Lao People's Democratic Republic
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
NPA	:	National Plan of Action
NUOL	:	National University of Laos
TEI	:	Teacher Education Institution

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS IN SURATTHANI, THAILAND: MAINSTREAM EDUCATION IN THAILAND AND THE NEED FOR CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

The Thai Team

The way education was shaped

A brief overview of Thai educational development might help one understand the present situation of education in Thailand. This version of educational history does not include those of the minority groups and alternative education provision or practice. The history of Thai education, along with recorded history of Thai people, normally goes back to the 13th century. During the Sukhothai period (1238-1378), a type of formal education was provided for children in the royal quarters by 'the Royal Institution of Instruction (Rajabundit), and Buddhist monks taught other children. Literacy was meant mainly to learn Buddhist scripts. This basic structure/pattern was adopted throughout the Ayutthaya period (1350-1767). There were times in certain reigns when literature was highly promoted, especially for the people within the rulers circle. An important language text, *Jindamani*, was written during King Narai's reign (1656-1688). This book was popular and used until early 20th century. Occupational training, on the other hand, was done through an apprenticeship, and usually within the family.

An important change in Thai education happened when King Mongkut (1851-1865) of Ratanakosin (Bangkok) period tried to modernize education and introduced learning of the English language and of the western science. An English school was founded in the Royal court. This is interpreted as an attempt to intensify communication with the west and to avoid being colonized by the British and the French. His successor, King Piya (Rama 5, 1868-1910) strengthened the policy. Apart from reforming many systems of the country, he founded a school to train civil servants/administrators to serve the reforms, he also promoted universal education. Many of his children and children of high officials were sent to Europe for education. With the help of those scholars, the King was able to reform many systems of the country, including education. The arrival of Western missionaries and merchants in the mid 1800's added to change in education. Christian denominated schools were founded and for the first time printed books were available in the Thai language through the help of an American Baptist missionary who cast Thai typeface in 1841 (Thailand QA, 2011). Since King Mongkut's time, education in Thailand up until the Second World War had followed much from Europe, particularly from the British.

Another change in Thai education was resulted from an important attempt for a political change, the 1932 revolution. Absolute monarchy was forced to be constitutional, an important step towards democracy. There were plans and attempts to democratize the country and the education system was meant to play a big role. However, democratization has faced many obstacles, (Marshall, 2011). Nonetheless, this political change has had its impacts. The present popular movement against dictatorship or the coup d'état related government(s) has developed partly from that origin too.

After the Second World War, Thailand was heavily influenced by the United States. This was because with the help of the United States mainly, Thailand was able to avoid losing WWII. The US influence intensified when, under the United Nations umbrella, the US helped Thailand to plan its economic development and when Thailand joined the US in the Vietnam/American War. For more than two decades Thailand worked very closely with the US and was one of the US aid recipients who were under strong US influence. In fact, in every government department, whether military, police, or civilian, there were American advisors. High ranking officials and administrators were funded to visit the United States and be orientated to the American system(s). Many educators visited US departments of education, universities, and schools. Scholarships were given to Thai students by the Thai government and by the US government and foundations to study in US universities every year for 2-3 decades. The number of Thai students studying overseas in the United States surpassed any other country. Several aspects of American politics, culture, economics, and education had been followed closely by Thai upper class people at first before they had an impact on the whole society. Direct American influence seems to have softened, however, after the Vietnam-American war ended, in 1975.

Contemporary education in Thailand has been influenced strongly by western systems, especially by those of the British and the American systems. However, the impact apparently has been on the form rather than on the content and on the quantity rather than on the quality. Quality wise, Thailand has not significantly changed that much if education means searching or constructing knowledge and the truth, solving problem, being independent, being creative etc. This scenario can be generalized for most sectors of Thai education. There have been apparent attempts to raise the quality of education and there have been some successes. However, the majority of provisions have not met with the expected quality. This is due mainly to the country's culture and politics and other contextual factors.

Majority culture affecting education in Thailand

While the majority of the Thai people, over 90%, would call themselves Buddhists, their understanding of Buddhism and especially their practice might be an issue of debate.

Buddhism is essentially based on knowledge and on proof, on being free and independent. Buddha is considered to be one of the earlier leaders of constructivists (Thompson: 2009; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). Yet in reality in Thailand people are more often than not encouraged or led to depend more on faith and on sacred superstitious power. The law of cause and effect in a scientific way, which is central to Buddhist teaching, unfortunately is often ignored. Of course, there are different interpretations, such as that given by Steven Bright in his writing, *Buddhism and Education in Thailand*, that because of Buddhism, learning in Thailand is readily constructivist or mixed beliefs, but the mainstream practice can perhaps be even identified as emotional or feeling oriented (Bright, 2011). The establishment of Buddhist institutions in Thailand is unique. Thailand has adopted a very hierarchical class system working in harmony with the ruling feudalist system. This is essentially contradictory to the original state of the religion and, therefore, has become a system that does not generally lead to enlightenment. It has even prevented people from reaching such a goal. Thai people are encouraged in a very tricky way to blindly trust and depend on leaders who often do not necessarily gain their power or leadership through a merit-oriented means. A classic example is the popular slogan, "believe your leader your country will be safe," by one of the most influential nationalist prime ministers of Thailand, Field Marshall Piboonsongkram.

Political Influence on Thai Education

What affects the present system of Thai education the most is perhaps politics. On the one hand, Thailand is no exception, managed by business and industry owners, national and multinational. The system of education is, therefore, designed to serve capitalist economics. It has taken on the industry conveyer belt production line pattern and philosophy, as described by Sir Ken Robinson (2009). This phenomenon has shaped Thai formal education into a very specific paradigm. On the other hand, politics in Thailand, particularly after "1932 revolution," has been a long struggle essentially between the conservative elites and the progressive factions. The main characteristics of modern Thai politics could be briefly listed as follows – authority is patrimonial and absolute; political behaviour is affected by the interplay of royal, military, and bureaucratic power relations; the traditional political structure is hierarchical and segmented; the rigidity of the political structure persists in the face of rapid social change, which causes tension and eventual political instability (Chaloemtiarana, 2007). Professor Niti Eaosriwong (2011) commented in his article about the present government and its management of the flood that perhaps what the government is interested in achieving is being accepted by the traditional political power instead of trying to genuinely solve the problems the country is facing including the flood.

Education practice of the mainstream education provision until present has been falling under the influence of the above mentioned culture and politics. The focus on acquiring pieces of fact and information, mainly to reproduce in the examination at the end of the semester, is always greater than the actual practice or implementation of such knowledge. In some cases, facts and information are conservatively prepared or controlled by the authority. Learning by doing which can lead to deeper understanding and building of knowledge is generally limited in use. Because from the very early age when a child enters into schooling, most parents expect that he or she learns something from a book. He/she is expected to learn how to read and write. Writing in Thai schools usually means copying words at the beginning and reproducing later on, and not productive work as would be the case in other school cultures. Knowledge is often seen or perceived as some valuable facts or information that exists outside of the community. One has to take trouble to go and get it. Those who study overseas, particularly from the "developed countries" are generally much appreciated.   What has already existed within the community or within the country would not be given the same value.

There was a piece of poetry students had to memorize and recite and it translates as: "knowledge is like valuable goods that exist in a far-away land. It takes trouble to go and get it." This is opposite to the saying "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." In fact, the majority of pedagogy used in Thai schools involves teachers talking and students listening across the many years of formal education. Most of the learning is abstract in the sense that it is communicated through symbol and through words and not actual subject, situations and practices. Understanding and application of what is learned cannot be ensured. One cannot be certain at all if what is learned at school will correspond to what a student will do. Evaluation often does not reach that far.

Once knowledge is perceived as something that exists away from the student's immediate context, what is being learned or studied then can be irrelevant to the student's real life. Motivation to learn, if needed, has to be artificially created. Often many students have to do things that do not readily interest them.   Attending school in this situation can be difficult to suffer.

If school education is to contribute to the growth of a person to his full potential, the above issues would need to be genuinely addressed. Teacher education and professional development of teachers ought to take into consideration and manage the factors that are behind the drawbacks of present day learning.

Important dates in Thai education:

1898, the first Education Plan was launched. It was divided into 2 parts: the first concerned with education in the Bangkok area while the second with education in the provinces. The most significant feature of this Education Plan was that the educational organisation had covered all levels namely; pre-primary, primary, secondary and technical education up to higher education.

1901, the first government school for girls

1902, the National System of Education in Siam retained all the education levels of the 1898 Plan and reshaped them into 2 categories; namely, general education and professional or technical education.

1913, the first women's teacher training school was set up

1913, the School of Arts and Crafts (Poh Chang) was set up in Bangkok.

1916, higher education emerged in Thailand as Chulalongkorn University was founded with 4 faculties: Medicine, Law and Political Science, Engineering, and Literature and Science.

1921, the Compulsory Primary Education Act was proclaimed.

1932, heralded a period of historical change in Thailand as a constitutional monarchy system replaced the traditional system of absolute monarchy. The first National Education Scheme was thus devised whereby individual educational ability regardless of sex, social background or physical conditions would be formally recognized.

1960, compulsory education was extended to 7 years. In addition, special provisions were, for the first time, made for disabled children, who were originally exempted from compulsory education

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SURATTHANI RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

The Thai Team

Present situation of teacher education and professional development of teachers

In Thailand the teacher education system was developed soon after schooling was made universal. The Department of Teacher Training was established within the Ministry of Education. By the 1970s 36 teacher training colleges had been founded to provide teacher education throughout the country. By that time faculties of education within the public universities were already providing education for teachers too. Yet, the majority of teachers have always been educated by the teacher colleges.

Teacher colleges have been involved in the professional development of teachers from a very early date, originally with the cooperation of the National Teacher Council of Thailand. Apart from the two institutions, quality of teachers has been developed by other departments within the Ministry. These departments provide support in various forms, including workshops and training and seminars. They produce manuals and more recently open websites. There have always been education supervisors to help with academic and pedagogical matters.

Suratthani context

Suratthani Rajabhat University (SRU) has been developed from a teacher college which from its conception was responsible for the training of teachers and providing in-service teacher professional development in two upper southern provinces, Suratthani and Chumporn.

Soon after the teacher colleges extended their areas of discipline beyond teacher education, to serve the higher education needs of their local community, in 1995, their status was promoted and their name was changed to Rajabhat Institutes. The institutes gained more autonomy, and were allowed to grant higher degrees and to cover any fields of discipline. Nevertheless, teacher education and teacher professional development were still important and compulsory roles of all Rajabhat. All Rajabhat Institutes were further promoted to university status in 2004. The Faculty of Education began to increase its capacity, providing more educational services. These included teacher professional

development and development of teacher educators in terms of academic qualifications and promotion. In Suratthani, a doctoral program in education has been developed with the collaboration of the University of Sydney. Two cohorts of PhD students have enrolled in the program.

Development of Teacher Professional Development - Teacher Professional Development service provided by Suratthani Rajabhat University

The development of teacher professional development at Suratthani started 30 years ago for teachers who did not have a teaching qualification or required a higher qualification. At that time to gain a basic teaching certificate one must complete five units of studies or pass five examination papers. A higher certificate or secondary teaching certificate required four units or four papers. Both certificates required the education unit. The arrangement was available only for in-service teachers or administrators. This provision was organized by the Teacher Council of Thailand and was delivered mainly during the summer break. Suratthani Teacher College at that time provided teacher educators and all facilities. This was followed by part time associate degrees and bachelor degree education programs to serve in-service teachers. Masters courses have been developed and delivered for over a decade to help teachers and educational administrators with their graduate studies.

The Faculty of Education has organized professional development activities such as seminars, training, workshops, along with providing speakers/trainers for schools and local departments of education. Further studies for diplomas and degrees have also been very popular among in-service teachers and education administrators. At present their further studies have extended to graduate studies level, a diploma, a Master of Education, and two cohorts of PhD students in Education. The Faculty also started its cooperation with the international communities at first through the National Teacher Confederation of Thailand.

The Teacher and Human Resource Development Centre was established within the Faculty of Education in June 2009. There have been five cohorts of teachers and three cohorts of administrators who joined the institute activities to gain their promotions. Each cohort would attend a workshop, work on a development project at their school, and prepare a report to be assessed with the help of one or two advisors from the Faculty, or from experienced teachers or administrators from schools and departments. The provision has been quite successful and hence popular. There have already been two hundred participants to date. Within the past two years there have also been thirty-three groups of teachers and nineteen groups of administrators who attended classes and

workshops to fresh up their discipline. Two groups of high performers were coached to become master teachers.

Professional development projects that involved international cooperation were for example workshops in Thailand with the cooperation of the following institutions:

- State University of California at Fresno, on school management, for school principals, administrators from local department of education and SRU teacher educators
- State University of California at Northridge, on teaching mathematics, for math teachers and SRU teacher educators
- California State University, on clinical supervision, for school teachers and supervisors, and SRU teacher educators
- Fulbright Foundation, on cooperative learning, for school teachers and SRU and teacher educators
- University of Sydney,
    o on school management, for school teachers, local education administrators, and SRU teacher educators
    o on student-centred learning and critical thinking, for school teachers, and SRU teacher educators
    o learning organisation, for school teachers, principals, local education administrators, and SRU teacher educators, and
    o a doctoral program in education curriculum development workshop, for SRU and other southern Rajabhat Graduate Schools.

Workshops and school visits overseas:

- Institute of Education, Nanyang University, Singapore, a visit by the Suratthani and Chumporn school teachers and principals
- California State University at Fessno, a visit by school teachers, principals, local educational administrators and SRU teacher educators
- University of Sydney
    o a workshop on learning and teaching and research supervision, for education administrators, and SRU teacher educators
    o a lecture on Australian education and school visits, by local department of education directors
    o three workshops on school management and six school visits, by three groups of school teachers, principals, local education administrators and University of Sydney, a workshop and school visits by, school teachers, principals and local education administrators, and SRU teacher educators

- Auckland University Technology on teaching and learning, school management, and supervision given to teachers and educational administrators Development of Faculty's Teachers and Exchange Teachers/Students Project

- Attending at the University of Sydney on Teaching and Learning in Higher education and research supervision
- Attending at Auckland University Technology on Quality Assurance and Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Exchange Teachers/Students

- Exchange teacher on curriculum development with the National University of Laos
- Exchange teacher on educational technology and Japanese language with Yamaguchi University
- Exchange educational administrator with Tasmanian University
- Meeting between teachers-students from Faculty of Education and Yamaguchi University to share educational experience

Recent Development

A case study of Teacher Professional Development reform: joint effort between SRU Faculty of Education and local schools under the Project. In 2010 the Faculty of Education together with two selected local schools joined the Re-forming In-service Teacher Professional Development Programs in Southeast Asia Project, initiated by the University of Sydney, along with other Faculties of Education from three other universities and some selected schools within their network. This hopefully can begin our new era of teacher professional development.

Two teacher professional development projects for Nasarn Primary School and others

After a workshop at Sydney University, from which teachers from the member countries learned aspects of learning and teaching and of teacher professional development, members from Suratthani, Thailand, after the flood in March 2011, decided to change from the original plan of having a workshop on teacher professional development reform to organizing an actual teacher professional development activity.

This reforming teacher professional development project, for Thailand and Suratthani especially, will attempt to address the issues mentioned in this paper. Discussion of the issues and perhaps some other relevant aspects will lead other activities. Student-centred learning and building of knowledge by learners will be encouraged. The plan was to run an actual teacher professional development workshop according to the needs of the teachers of Nasarn Primary School, where one of the members attending the Sydney workshop, was head of academic affairs. The process involved an initial meeting

with school administrators and consulting with the teachers to know of their needs. Two aspects relating to teaching and learning improvement were suggested. One was classroom research and the other was using ICT. Some teachers including the principal of the school would like these professional development activities to enhance their promotion. This has also become a good motivation for such activities.

A Workshop on "Using Blogs for Knowledge Management and Learning Network Building"

A recent survey revealed that Nasarn School teachers needed a) to learn how to do research to improve teaching and learning and b) to learn to use ICT to build a learning network. School administrators saw that a workshop on such ICT applications could be organized within a short period of time and it could be put to use immediately i.e. at the beginning of the first semester of 2011, which meant from the second half of May. The school in cooperation with the Faculty of Education of SRU, therefore, ran a one-day workshop in March 2011, on the last day of the school year. The objectives of the workshop were that the teachers were able to use their blog and build their learning network and in the near future teach their students to do the same.

It was found that at the end of the workshop all 34 participants were able to use their blog and after two months 21 teachers had used their blog to build their learning network. To help the teachers to successfully and comfortably use any ICT programs, the school had already set up a "help desk and rescue team," consisting of three computer application teachers. As usual, the teachers would have access to help with their blogging from the team. To see whether any teacher was having any problem technically, Jiraphan would look for the answers from the ICT team and from the teachers themselves. She would find ways to give them support and encouragement.

We have noted that it is also common that some teachers are less enthusiastic or even discouraged to use such ICT programs. If there can be answers to why this is so, it would be an additional valuable outcome. Perhaps there are other different and better alternatives in some dimensions of the world of learning.

Because the ultimate aim of this ICT blogging is that the students use the program to enhance their learning, the kind of learning that is active and requires their contribution to the network's knowledge and shared ideas. There will be follow-up activities. For example, students will report what they have shared (both given and taken) with their peers, what have been the results of their learning. Perhaps some have experienced certain outcomes, better health, better feelings, better managed lifestyle in some respects, better relationship with friends, or ability in singing, in arts etc.

To encourage and support the activities, head teachers and other administrators and Pinit, the mastermind of the blogger project for Nasarn Primary, will share in the blogging of both teachers and students. Some teachers and some students will take part in the follow-up team tracking the development of the project, i.e. the ongoing use of sharing in the weblog.

We have also considered that perhaps an explicit evaluation of the situation and of the environment might be of help. This means a comprehensive database or portfolio of each teacher (which can be extended to cover every student if this does not already exist) be made available so that a systematic sharing of knowledge (knowledge management) can be made part of the school TPD activities and processes (Learning organisation, constructivism, cooperative/collaborative learning etc).

Classroom Research Project

From a needs assessment of Nasarn Primary School, classroom research skills were given high priority in this project. There were two main purposes. One was to help teaching and learning, another was that it could be a part of teacher promotion requirements. Instead of developing only Nasarn teachers, a teacher professional development project on classroom research was organized for teachers from other schools too, particularly for the teachers from the Faculty network. The project included a workshop, continuing classroom research processes with help from Faculty staff members, writing up reports and seminar presentations.

On July 18, 2011 a workshop on classroom research was organized for the teachers from the 52 schools where the Faculty had its education students doing practicum. The workshop included aspects of classroom research, sharing of experience, assigning advisors to teachers/researchers, both to those who had already started researching and needed an advisor/mentor and those who had not yet started but had been thinking of what they would do. The advisors/mentors were staff at the Faculty and volunteers from schools or basic education area offices who were experienced researchers. Up to the present day, some teacher/researchers have finished their work and some are still working on their projects. Among them some will present their work at the conference in December, 2011. There will be support in preparing for presentation by Faculty staff members, particularly, the advisor/mentor.

THE IMPACT OF COACHING ON IN-SERVICE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM IN DEVELOPING AND USING EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS IN VIETNAMESE SECONDARY EDUCATION

Lap Trinh, Chau Ngo, Kevin Laws

Abstract

This paper suggests that coaching can make a significant improvement to the professional development of in-service teachers in Vietnamese Secondary Education in the Mekong Delta. It describes a project, undertaken by Leading Coaches from the School of Education, Can Tho University, to offer a pragmatic support to teacher participants of the Teacher Professional Development Program. It explores the approach in the training and investigates the impact of coaching on teacher participants' professionalism and that of teachers' evaluative questions on student participants' learning outcomes. The authors offer some initial recommendations to highlight key issues for further discussion.

Introduction

Coaching for teacher professional development has been actively researched since the early 1980's (Joyce & Showers, 1996) and numerous authors have published articles about coaching programs that have been implemented in various school settings (e.g. Slater & Simmons, 2001). However, coaching in the context of Vietnamese culture is relatively new. In the Vietnamese culture it is strongly believed that if they ask the other for advice on certain things, it means that the other is superior to them. In the context of Vietnamese education, most high school teachers have a psychological barrier in that when they consult their colleagues about academic issues, they are often looked down upon and thought of as incompetent teachers. In most cases teachers keep their problems to themselves or look for answers in reference books, while others may refer to their friends in other schools or to their teachers for the solutions to their problems. The story may be even more complex for young teachers who have just begun their practice. They lack practical experience and sometimes do not know how to combine theoretical methods with real practice and cannot deal with problematic situations effectively.

In addition the pressure of classroom observation and evaluation, to some extent, discourages high school teachers. Classroom observation practice in high schools is used mainly to evaluate the teacher's teaching quality. It is not considered as a tool for teacher

professional development. Although there is a so-called coaching session, teachers just get 'coaching' after being observed and have no chance to discuss their lesson plans, negotiate with the observers or the education inspectors about their aims and objectives of the lesson plans or reach agreement on the most appropriate ways to deal with the lessons. During the so-called 'coaching' session, teachers 'should' be an 'attentive listener', 'agree' with all that the observers or the education inspectors suggest, although they may have little understanding about what is suggested for improvement, and accept the way that the observers or the education inspectors evaluate them.

It can be seen that in such a context, without help, teachers might lose their enthusiasm, ambition or confidence, which might result in difficulties for them in developing their professionalism. Building a coaching program to support teachers in their professional development, thus, is essential to retain teachers within their profession. However, the use of coaching as a teacher professional development strategy has not been paid due attention in Vietnam. It is also observed that there has not yet been any study on the addressed matter in the context of Vietnamese secondary education. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the impact of coaching on teachers' professionalism in developing and using evaluative questions and that of teachers' questions on students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability.

Review of the literature

Coaching

Coaching is linked with the 'growing of an individual' both professionally and personally. It is essentially related to specific areas of work performance and practice (Lord et al., 2008, p.iii). Coaching has been variously called mutual learning, peer support, and peer learning. Various models of coaching have been identified: one-to-one as opposed to group coaching, and peer-to-peer support as distinct to 'expert-novice' support. Numerous types of peer coaching are found in the literature: technical coaching, team coaching, collegial coaching, cognitive coaching and challenge coaching. Wong and Nicotera (2003) suggest that these types can be grouped into three general categories:

> Technical coaching and team coaching focus on incorporating new curriculum and instruction techniques into teachers' routines... Collegial coaching and cognitive coaching seek to improve existing teacher practices by refining techniques, developing collegiality, increasing professional dialogue, and assisting teachers to reflect on their teaching... Challenge coaching concentrates on identifying and treating a specific problem and can be used in a larger context than the classroom such as a school or grade level. (Wong and Nicotera, 2003, p.2

The beginnings of coaching in an educational setting: Coaching has long been associated with sporting teams. It has also been used widely within the business sector. In 1980 Showers and Joyce proposed peer coaching as an on-site dimension for school staff development. They did this because research on the impact of staff development focussing on teaching strategies and curriculum revealed that very few participants in such development implemented what they had learned during one-off workshop sessions (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p.12). The model of peer coaching they advocated has since been adapted and modified so that in 2011 it is quite different to the original model they proposed.

From the mid 1950s national movements in the United States focused on academic quality and social equality in an attempt to improve the outcomes of schooling (Flowers & Joyce, 1996). Before 1980 it was assumed that teachers could learn new teaching strategies, return to their schools and disseminate to their colleagues what they had learned. There was a lack of research on how teachers learned and how innovations in teaching could be adopted within a school. Despite the best of intentions, and often with the support of well-funded programs, many educational reforms failed to produce the anticipated improvements in teaching and learning (Sarason, 1971 & 1990). During the 1980s Joyce and a number of colleagues undertook a series of studies, based upon their reviews of the training literature as well as their work within schools, which led to their belief that coaching would produce expanded teaching repertories and more appropriate teaching models over time. They developed an approach which involved the following sequence of steps:

- theory presentation,
- modelling or presentation,
- practice,
- structured and open-ended feedback, and
- in-class assistance with transfer (Flowers & Joyce, 1996)

From their work Flowers and Joyce (1996) proposed four principles of peer coaching:

1. All teachers in a department must agree to be members of the peer coaching study team and agree to practice whatever the department has agreed to implement
2. All verbal feedback must be omitted as an element of the coaching component, and emphasis must be given to the collaborative planning and development of teaching strategies in pursuit of shared goals
3. When pairs of teachers observe each other, the one teaching is the 'coach', and the one observing is the 'coached'.
4. Coaching is much more than observations of teaching followed by conferencing. Teachers learn from each other when they work together to plan lessons, develop

resources, watch each other teach and reflect together about their impact on students' learning.
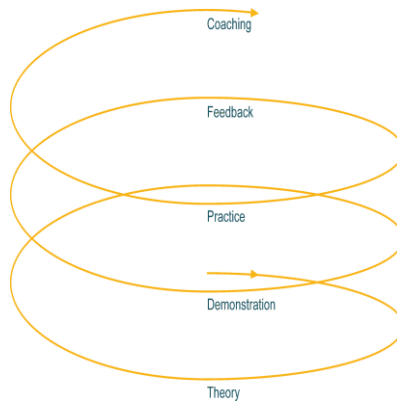

The GROW model of coaching

The GROW model, also designed in the 1980s by Alexander Graham, provides a different approach to coaching. The coach assists the coachee 'to unlock their own potential for understanding their desired outcomes and the goals that express those' (Connelley et al., 2003, p.9). This model involves four stages: Goal, Reality, Options and Wrap-up.

- In the **Goal** stage the area of desired achievement is defined and a specific goal for a particular coaching session is made explicit.
- The **Reality** stage examines the teacher's perception of the current situation and suggests other possible ways of perceiving the situation.
- The **Options** stage identifies the criteria for defining a 'good' solution to the situation, generates a range of alternatives and weighs up advantages and disadvantages associated with each option.
- The **Wrap-up** stage captures and consolidates the teacher's chosen option and determines criteria for measuring success and commitment.

These stages can be illustrated in the following diagram:
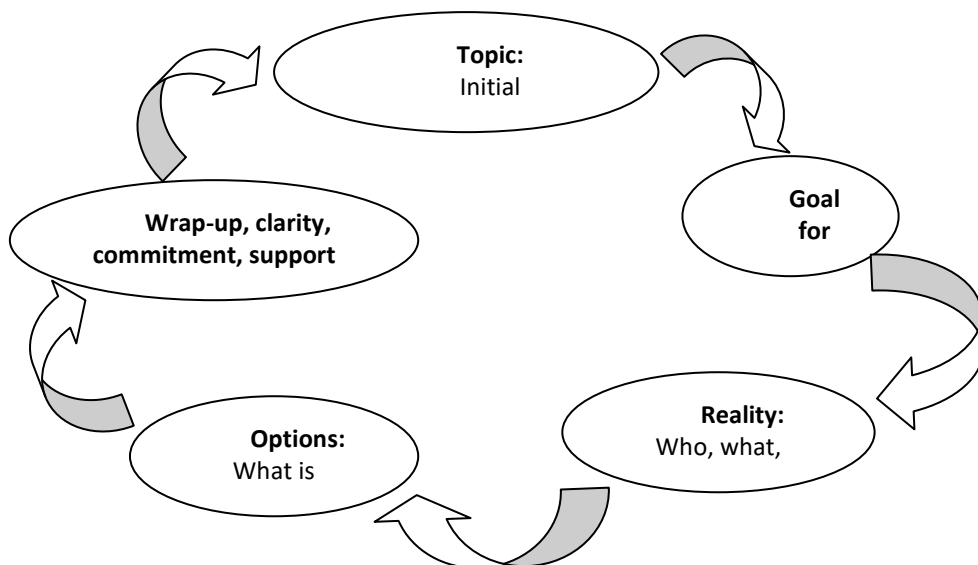
To fit the context of Vietnamese secondary education, the framework for coaching used in the professional development program in this study was adapted from the two models mentioned above. This model involves the following steps:

- Pre-coaching: the coach enrols teacher participants by conducting informal talks with each teacher before they experience professional learning. The purpose of enrolling teachers is to establish a close rapport, learn about teachers' interests as well as problems relating to their teaching practices and explain the purpose of the coaching program for teacher professional development.
- Planning: the coach meets the teachers to discuss how the new teaching practice (in this case developing and using evaluative questions in their teaching practices) can be implemented effectively. The teachers plan their lessons before getting "coaching". Then working collaboratively, both the coach and the coached teachers agree on the contents needed to be observed in the observation sheet.
- Coaching: the coach first listens to the coached teachers present their lesson plans and tell their difficulties and their solutions. Then, the coach asks the coached teachers a lot of questions to help them explore options to address their problems, shows them inappropriate points in their lessons plans and invites them to make decisions to deal with their issues through encouragement and empathy with them. Lastly, both the coach and the coached teachers agree on the most appropriate options to address the issues in the lesson plans.

- Classroom observation: the coached teachers teach the lessons in their classroom while the coach observes the lessons, taking notes on what has been agreed on the previous sessions.
- Reflection: the coach and the coached teachers meet to discuss the data collected during classroom observations. The coached teachers first reflect upon their teaching practices, making remarks on what they are pleased with and what they are not pleased about and how they might improve their practices in the future. Then the coach makes helpful comments on the teachers' strengths and provides feedback on some potential areas for further improvement.

This model is a cyclical process designed to help coached teachers enhance their understanding and use of a new teaching strategy (i.e., developing and using evaluative questions in classroom). These steps can be illustrated in the following diagram:
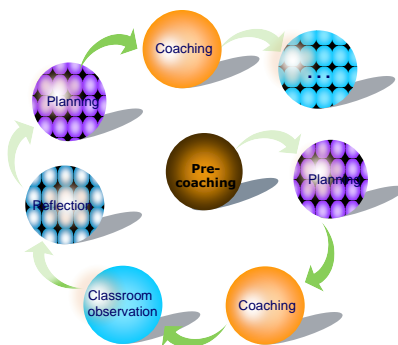
The impacts of coaching

In a major study of the research evidence from the United Kingdom on coaching for professionals Lord et al. (2008) identified the impacts of coaching on coaches and 'coachees', and upon the school culture as a whole and its culture.

For 'coachees' it was found that the following positive outcomes were associated with coaching:

- Greater development of reflectivity and thinking skills
- Increased psychological wellbeing and confidence
- Increased in problem-solving and creative behaviours
- New knowledge skills and practices were gained or improved

- 'Coachees' were more prepared to share their practices and contribute to the positive development of the school
- Positive impacts were made on professional and career development
- Communication skills and personal relationships were enhanced
- 'Coachees' gained confidence in managing their own learning (Lord et al. 2008, p.31-33)

Of great interest was the positive impact that the coaching process had on the coaches. They developed reflectivity and thinking skills, they gained in confidence, developed their creativity and problem-solving abilities, as well as being more prepared to contribute to the improvement of the whole school. They also gained knowledge and skills that contributed positively to their career development. In addition they gained greater insights into the knowledge, skills and practices they were coaching (Lord et al., 2008, p.33-34).

Coaching also had a positive impact upon the school learning culture, led to the development of more collaborative activities, and developed a culture of professionalism and recognition within the school (Lord et al., 2008, p.34-37).

Teacher questions

In the study which is discussed here teachers ('coachees') were coached to use higher order questions in their teaching of English.

The function of teacher questions

In classroom settings, teacher questions are defined as instructional cues or stimuli that convey to students the content elements to be learned and directions for what they are to do and how they are to do it (Cotton, 2003). Teacher questions, as a kind of input provided by a teacher (Hasan, 2006), form an integral part of classroom interaction (Ho, 2005) and the use of questions is one of the most important of all teaching techniques (Callahan & Clarke, 1988). Questioning is used during a class in order to elicit information, reinforce student understanding, control behaviour, attract students' attention, promote verbal responses, initiate the sharing of ideas, evaluate students' progress, stimulate thinking, check on teacher clarity, maintain classroom control, provide a review of content, emphasize key points, develop critical and creative thinking skills, provide feedback for learners, enliven classroom discussions, provide revision strategies, and so on (Allwright, 1988; Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Caram & Davis, 2005; Chaudron, 1998; Croom & Stair, 2005; Johnson, 1995; Kanchak & Eggen, 1989; Long, 1983; Long, 1986; Ma, 2008; Morgan & Saxton, 1991; Nunan & Lamb, 1996; Pica et al., 1996; Pica & Van Lier, 1988; Richards, 1996; Swain, 1985; Vogler, 2005; White & Lightbown, 1984).

Thus, it can be seen that teacher questions play a very important role in managing classroom routines. Good questioning is not only an excellent aid to teaching but also a major determinant of teaching and learning outcomes.

Classification of classroom questions

Questions can be classified in many ways. A review of classroom questioning studies reveals that the two questioning types that have received the most research attention are display and referential questions. Display questions are questions to which the teacher already knows the answers, while referential questions are questions to which the teacher does not know the answer in advance (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Some writers add to the previous definition by saying that display questions are questions which are used to check learners' knowledge and understanding, while referential questions genuinely seek new information (Lynch, 1996; and Cullen, 1998). Tsui (1995, p.28) points out that "display questions generate interactions that are typical to didactic discourse, whereas referential questions generate interactions typical of social communication".

Another kind of classification, which is similar to display and referential questions, is open and closed questions. "An open question carries with it no expectations on the part of the questioner concerning the responses of the person addressed" (Peacock, 1990, p.128), while "a closed question, on the other hand, presupposes a particular kind of response from the person addressed. Your answer is likely to be regarded as clearly right or clearly wrong and often teachers will persist in their questioning until they achieve the response they are seeking." (Peacock, 1990, p.129).

The third kind of classification which is also similar to display and referential questions, is convergent and divergent questions. "Convergent questions are those that require one correct answer. Convergent questions are useful for establishing facts or ascertaining answers to problems that have one correct answer, while divergent questions are just the opposite, in that many different answers are appropriate" (Jacobsen et al., 1999, pp.153-154).

The fourth kind of classification is developed by Benjamin Bloom (1956). He developed his taxonomy, in order to assist teachers in recognizing their various cognitive levels of question-asking. The system contains six levels, which are arranged in hierarchical form, moving from the lowest level of cognition to the highest level of cognition. The followings are the excerpts from different levels of questions in Bloom's Taxonomy.

Knowledge: This is the lowest level of questioning and requires students to recall information. Knowledge questions usually require students to identify information

in basically the same form it was presented. Words often used in knowledge questions include *know*, *who*, *define*, *what*, *name*, *where*, *list*, and *when*.

Comprehension: Simply stated, comprehension is the way in which ideas are organized into categories. Comprehension questions are those that ask students to take several bits of information and put them into a single category or grouping. These questions go beyond simple recall and require students to combine data together. Words often used in comprehension questions include *describe*, *use your own words*, *outline*, *explain*, *discuss*, and *compare*.

Application: At this level, teachers ask students to take information they already know and apply it to a new situation. In other words, they must use their knowledge to determine a correct response. Words often used in application questions include *apply*, *manipulate*, *put to use*, *employ*, *dramatize*, *demonstrate*, *interpret*, and *choose*.

Analysis: An analysis question is one that asks a student to break down something into its component parts. To analyse requires students to identify reasons, causes, or motives and reach conclusions or generalizations. Words often used in analysis questions include *analyse*, *why*, *take apart*, *diagram*, *draw conclusions*, *simplify*, *distinguish*, and *survey*.

Synthesis: Synthesis questions challenge students to engage in creative and original thinking. These questions invite students to produce original ideas and solve problems. There is always a variety of potential responses to synthesis questions. Words often used in synthesis questions include *compose*, *construct*, *design*, *revise*, *create*, *formulate*, *produce*, and *plan*.

Evaluation: Evaluation requires an individual to make a judgment about something. We are asked to judge the value of an idea, a candidate, a work of art, or a solution to a problem. When students are engaged in decision-making and problem-solving, they should be thinking at this level. Evaluation questions do not have single right answers. Words often used in evaluation questions include *judge*, *rate*, *assess*, *evaluate*, *What is the best …*, *value*, *criticise*, and *compare* (Bloom, 1956).

Although there are many kinds of questions, they are categorized into two levels of cognition: low-level-cognitive questions and high-level-cognitive questions. Low-level-cognitive questions are those which ask the student merely to recall verbatim or in his/her own words material previously read or taught by the teacher. Questions at this level are display, closed, convergent, knowledge, comprehension and application. High-level-cognitive questions are those which ask the students to mentally manipulate information previously learned to create an answer or to support an answer with logically reasoned evidence. Questions at this level are referential, open, divergent, analysis,

synthesis and evaluation. Such questions require students to use higher order thinking or reasoning skills. By using these skills, students not only remember factual knowledge but also use their knowledge to solve, analyse, synthesise and evaluate problems. Therefore, developing and using high-level-cognitive questions or evaluative questions could help teachers enhance students' ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate. In this coaching program, Bloom's Taxonomy was used as a guideline to construct teacher classroom questions and evaluate students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability.

Research methods

Research questions

In order to investigate the impact of coaching on teachers' professionalism in developing and using evaluative questions in the teaching of English in Vietnamese classrooms, this study attempted to find out the answers to the two following questions:

(1) What is the impact of coaching on teachers' professionalism in developing and using evaluative questions?
(2) What is the impact of teacher questions on students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability?

Based on the results of literature and research questions, it was hypothesized that coaching could improve teachers' professionalism in developing and using evaluative questions and enhance students' ability to respond to teachers' evaluative questions.

Research design

This study is a classroom action research which is designed to test the impact of coaching on teachers' professionalism in developing and using evaluative questions and that of teachers' evaluative questions on students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability. After the termination of the experimental study, some delayed interviews were conducted to gain insights into participants' perceptions towards the impact of the coaching program.

Participants

The participants in the study were three coaches (one teacher educator (leading coach) as a supervisor of the coaching program from the School of Education, Can Tho University, another from the Office of Secondary Education, Department of Education

and Training, Can Tho City and the other from Ly Tu Trong Specialized High School); and four coached teachers, all of whom were teachers of English who had a Bachelor's Degree. The coached teachers had between two and twelve years of teaching experience. The purposes of the coaching program were explained to the teachers and they were given information on how the study was to be conducted. It was also explained how the data would be collected and used. Convenient times for these 'coachees' to be coached, observed and interviewed were agreed. Moreover, they were assured that all the data would be treated confidentially and that pseudonyms instead of real names would be used in reporting the study. All participants volunteered to participate in the project.

School setting

This study took place in two public high schools in the Mekong Delta region, Vietnam. The schools were public schools where students can get partial government funding in terms of school fees. One school, located in the urban school district catered for gifted students, and the other, with a student population of about 280 catered for students of mixed abilities in a rural area.

Materials

The materials used in this study were 16 lesson plans adapted from the national curriculum and designed in light of teacher questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy (1956). All coached teachers first designed their lesson plans supplementing evaluative questions (i.e., questions in the higher levels of cognition) in order to enhance students' ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate. They then discussed their lesson plans with the coaches during the coaching sessions and revised them before applying then to their teaching practices.

Research instruments

Two main instruments were used to collect data: classroom observations and interviews.

Classroom observations: A classroom observation instrument was developed by the researchers to systematically determine whether coached teachers implemented the development and use of evaluative questions in their practices and to measure whether teachers' evaluative questions enhanced students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability. The framework for classroom observation was based on a cyclical supervisory model of classroom observation suggested by Okwen (1996) including pre-observation meetings, observations and post-observation meetings. During pre-observation meetings,

both the coaches and the coached teachers set a limited number of professional "targets" such as lesson objective, topic and content, lesson development, and teachers' evaluative questions in tasks or activities during the pre-, while- and post-stages of the lesson. During the observation, the coaches focused strictly on the targets set at pre-observation meetings and collected relevant data for the teachers' attention. During post-observation meetings, the teachers reflected on their teaching practices and the coaches made remarks on the strengths and gave feedback on potential areas for improvement. Sixteen classroom observations (i.e., sixteen lessons of 45 minutes, in which each 'coachee' was coached and observed four times) were carried out to collect the data.

To measure the quality of teacher implementation and student learning outcomes, information on the use of teachers' evaluative questions, the students' learning activities and behaviours, the interaction between the teacher and students, the interaction between students and students, teaching methods, the things happening in pre-observation meetings, during the observation and post-observation meetings were carefully collected.

Interviews: To get more insights into the coached teachers' and the coaches' perceptions on coaching, the impact of teachers' evaluative questions on students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability, and students' perceptions on lessons with teacher questions of different levels of cognition, participants were interviewed after the termination of coaching and classroom observations. Two coaches interviewed 8 students chosen randomly from two high schools after attending coached teachers' sessions. Each student was asked two questions designed to focus on their perceptions on the lessons. Each interview lasted ten minutes. Then these two coaches interviewed four coached teachers, each of whom was asked eight questions. The leading coach as the supervisor of the project, in turn, interviewed the two coaches, each of whom was asked seven questions. Each interview lasted 30 minutes. These interviews focused on the following main points: What the teacher participants learned from the coaching program in developing and using evaluative questions; how the learning took place in their practices applying evaluative questions; and whether they continued implementing the use of evaluative questions in their subsequent practices.

Methods of data analysis

Data from classroom observations and interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed in order to determine: (1) The impact of coaching on teachers' professionalism in developing and using evaluative questions; and (2) The impact of teacher questions on students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability.

Procedures

The leading coaches from the School of Education, Can Tho University led a professional development workshop designed to guide teacher participants in how to develop and use classroom questions of different levels of cognition. This session occurred after school and lasted one-and-a-half hours. After a fifteen-minute break, another session on coaching teachers was held in order to equip participants as coaches with some knowledge of coaching. This session also lasted one-and-a-half hours.

Following the workshop, two coaches were randomly assigned to work with teachers in two high schools. Each of the teachers received coaching on developing and using evaluative questions before their practices. Each coaching session was observed and assessed by the leading coach as a supervisor of the project from the School of Education. In total, two coaches observed and collected data during 16 sessions in eight weeks. In Week 9, four 30-minute interviews with coached teachers and eight 10-minute interviews with students chosen randomly from two high schools were conducted by two coaches. Two 30-minute interviews with the coaches carried out by the supervisor of the project ended the study.

Results

The impact of coaching on teachers' professionalism in developing and using evaluative questions

Six teacher participants all rated the implementation of coaching on teachers' professionalism in developing and using teachers' evaluative questions in their practices very highly. They considered this professional program helped them develop their professionalism in terms of *knowledge, skills and practices, reflective and critical thinking skills and confidence in dealing with problem-rising situations.*

Coached teachers: Four coached teachers expressed that they could develop and use questions of different levels of cognition more effectively to suit students' different levels understanding. They said that beforehand they just used questions of lower levels of cognition in their classes in order to avoid slow-paced lessons, keep the attention of the students and maintain control of the classroom. They used to think that their students could not answer questions of higher levels of cognition and thus these questions would take time. Given coaching on developing and using classroom questions, they recognized that for classes of mixed abilities, a wide range of questions could benefit not only good students but also weak ones.

> …My students are not good, so I often ask simple questions to avoid slow-paced lessons. After being coached, I recognise that questions of different levels of cognition can improve my students' different levels of thinking… ('Coachee' C)

> …I think that only good students can answer evaluative questions while the students in my class are not good. If I ask difficult questions, they won't pay attention anymore and it's very hard for me to control my class. But now I've changed my mind. Questions of different levels of cognition can benefit students of different levels of thinking… ('Coachee' D)

Coached teachers added that they knew how to design classroom questions appropriate for each activity of the lesson. Normally, the lessons were performed in the sequence of pre-, while- and post-stage. In pre- and while-stages, teacher questions of lower levels of cognition were used in order to activate students' prior knowledge, orientate them towards the new language targets and facilitate their process of learning. Post-stage was devoted to questions of higher levels of cognition in order to help students develop their analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability.

> …Before being coached, I don't know how to use questions of different levels of cognition appropriately for each stage of the lessons and for my students' different levels of thinking but now I can do that… ('Coachee' A)

> …I rarely use questions in my class…um…just yes-no questions. But now I can develop questions for each activity suitable for each stage of the lesson, which can help my students enhance their different levels of thinking… ('Coachee' B)

Importantly, coached teachers asserted that they could consolidate their knowledge, which helped them develop their critical thinking skills, improve their instructional strategies and become more flexible in solving problems. When their students could not answer questions of higher levels of cognition, they could modify and elicit their students to answer them. From the positive behaviours from students towards their lessons, teachers felt more confident in developing and using classroom questions.

> …When designing a lesson plan using questions of different levels of cognition, I have to spend more time thinking whether my questions are right at the different levels of cognition, reading Bloom's Taxonomy carefully and comparing and adapting my questions based on Bloom' Taxonomy many times… (4 'coachees')

> …I feel that with questions of different levels of cognition, my teaching method is not monotonous and goes well… ('Coachee' D)

> …Feedback after my session helps me reflect my teaching and draw valuable experiences in solving unexpected problems arisen, which supports me to teach better in subsequent sessions… (4 'coachees')

> …Carefully preparing questions in advance, I feel more confident during my sessions and teach more effectively… ('Coachee' C)

Also, coached teachers changed their attitudes towards the use of questioning in their classroom: Questions are used not merely to test students' knowledge but also to enhance their different levels of cognition. Through the use of questioning, they were able to manage their classrooms better by grouping students with mixed levels so that students could have good chance to support each other, making the classroom atmosphere more interesting, relaxed and less tense.

> …After being coached, I changed my view on the function of classroom questions: Questions can be used to enhance students' different levels of thinking, not merely to test their knowledge… ('Coachee' D)

> …With questions of different levels of cognition, I can group my students into groups of mixed levels so that strong students can work with weaker ones and they can support each other… (4 'coachees')

> …I used to think that questions took time and it was difficult for me to keep the attention of the whole class because only good students were likely to answer them. But now I realize that questions of different levels of cognition invite students to involve more in the lessons, which makes the learning atmosphere more interesting… (4 'coachees')

However, these 'coachees' also showed their hesitation in that it took them a great deal of time to prepare a lesson plan applying evaluative questions. They added that they had difficulty designing evaluative questions for lessons on grammar and writing.

> …However, designing lesson plans applying evaluative questions takes me a lot of time, normally from two to three days for a session of 45 minutes. Sometimes, it's very hard for me to develop evaluative questions for lessons on grammar and writing. I just don't know how to make suitable questions to help my students write better and understand grammar points clearly… ('Coachees' C & D)

Despite their hesitation, the coached teachers asserted that they would keep on applying questions of higher levels of cognition in their practices. They said that such questions could help enhance students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability, organize

their ideas logically, form the habit of learning discovery, and create a more active learning environment.

> …I will continue applying the use of questioning in order to enhance students' higher levels of cognition in the future because it establishes good interaction of student-student and teacher-student, and helps students understand their lessons more easily, know how to study by themselves, to find materials and organize ideas when presenting… (4 'coachees')

> …Such evaluative questions create open discussions, stimulate different ideas, and increase students' interest in building the lessons, which makes the classroom atmosphere more dynamic and interesting … ('Coachee' A)

Coaches: As for coaches, they said that they could learn good teaching experiences from the coached teachers. Observing the 'coachees'' classes gave them a good chance to look back at their own teaching practices in such a way that they could improve their teaching styles and manipulate teaching methods flexibly and effectively to meet mixed levels of students. These coaches expressed that classroom observations also brought them valuable experiences in terms of classroom management. In fact, they could learn not only how to control their own classes better through a logical system of questions but also how to deal with unexpected issues risen from classrooms in practice.

> …Observing the coachees' practices, I have a good chance to reflect on my own teaching practices and learn how to manipulate teaching methods flexibly and effectively in certain teaching contexts with mixed levels of students… (Coach A)

> …Observing the coachees' practices, I learn how to manage the classroom more effectively through a logical system of questions, which helps make the lessons more interesting… (2 coaches)

> …When observing the classroom, I learn how to resolve unexpected issues arisen from classrooms in practice… (Coach A)

Especially, learning from failures in the coached teachers' sessions was one of the important benefits the coaches could get from observing the 'coachees'' practices. They shared that they could draw valuable experiences on the implementation of evaluative questions for their own practices to suit the mixed levels of their students.

> Failure in the 'coachees'' practices raises my awareness of the teaching style and the suitability of applying questions of different levels of cognition to students of different levels of cognition. (2 coaches)

Furthermore, the coaches reported that through the process of coaching, they could learn valuable coaching experiences. These experiences could help them develop their communication skills as well as critical thinking skills through the process of negotiating and giving feedback to the 'coachees'.

> Before coaching, I have to read the lesson content carefully in order to have an orientation to explore the lesson. During coaching, I first listen to the 'coachee' present their lesson, and then ask them a lot of questions to help them explore options to address their lesson plans. (2 coaches)

> During coaching, I invite the 'coachees' to make decisions on inappropriate points in their lesson plans and assist them to source the solutions to their issues. (2 coaches)

> During feedback, I first praise their good points and encourage them to improve. Then I suggest them to evaluate their teaching practices and suggest their improvement. Finally, I negotiate with the 'coachees' for a better solution to enhance the quality of the lesson. (Coach A)

It could be seen that coaching has a great impact on both 'coachees' and coaches in terms of their professionalism. They all improved their new knowledge skills and practices, developed their reflective and critical thinking skills and gained their confidence in dealing with problem-rising situations in their classes.

The impact of teacher questions on students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability

From the observation and interview data, it could be determined that the use of evaluative questions could enhance students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation abilities. The coached teachers said that in groups, students discussed their tasks and shared their opinions and knowledge with each other, resulting in the fact they could all learn from each other's good ideas.

> …My students are enthusiastic about discussing questions of higher level of cognition because they can share good ideas with their peers… ('Coachee' A)

Also, given evaluative questions, students were willing to help their peers discover and find solutions to their issues, which created a helpful and friendly learning atmosphere in classrooms.

> …When working in groups, strong students often ask weaker ones to present their ideas first, and then they discuss and agree on the best solutions… ('Coachee' B)

Surprisingly, students could produce creative ideas when working with evaluative questions, which was beyond the coached teachers' expectations.

> …Sometimes weaker students can give very creative ideas although they just say their ideas in Vietnamese… ('Coachee' C)

More importantly, the coached teachers assumed that students giving feedback to their classmates' work was the most remarkable benefit. Giving feedback was considered to be the responsibility of teachers only, not that of students. The situation changed when evaluative questions were applied to the coached teachers' sessions, in which students became more attentive and got more involved in the lessons.

> …When my students present their work in front, their classmates pay much attention and then compare and evaluate the presentation with their own… ('Coachees' B & D)

As for students, when asked about their thoughts and feelings on lessons with teacher questions of different levels of cognition, they showed positive perceptions. They said that they had their process of learning facilitated because their teachers used many questions to orient their learning, focus on the main points of the lessons and guide them to discuss the tasks in discussion stages, which required them to analyse, synthesise and evaluate.

> …I like my teacher's teaching style because her questions help me understand the lesson better… (8 students)

> …I could do the tasks in discussions because the teacher gave me guiding questions… (4 students)

These students added that they could have many good opportunities to express their ideas. Their teachers' questions were arranged in order of increasing difficulty (i.e., questions from lower to higher levels of cognition) so they could participate in answering questions that were appropriate for their ability.

> …With a lot of teacher questions, I have more chance to express my opinions… (8 students)

Especially, the student interviewees expressed their pride and liking when their ideas were appreciated by their classmates.

…As a weak student in my class, I hardly say anything during discussion stages. Now with the teacher's guiding questions, I can contribute to my group and I feel very proud of myself when my ideas are appreciated… (2 students)

Also, they assumed that they felt more confident when presenting their work in front of class because they worked together, discussed and agreed on the most appropriate solutions.

…I don't feel shy and afraid to say my opinions out thanks to my teacher's guiding questions and my friends' help… (6 students)

More importantly, these students shared that they had a good chance to reflect on their studies thanks to their classmates' feedback. They said that they learned a lot from their friends' opinions, and in turn, they felt they became more critical when they evaluated their friends' work.

…I have a good chance to get feedback from my friends, which helps me improve my studies… (4 students)

…I have to think over before I give feedback to my friends' work… (4 students)

It could be seen that teachers' evaluative questions to some extent had a positive impact on students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability. They tended to be more active in learning and participate enthusiastically in the activities of the lessons. Teachers' good questions could help students organize their ideas better and more logically, become more critical. Also, students learned how to support each other in groups and form the habit of discovery learning.

Conclusions

In this classroom action research, the results clearly indicate that coaching on teachers' professionalism in developing and using evaluative questions in their practices result in positive gains in teaching practices and perceptions of teacher participants and students, and that teachers' evaluative questions could enhance students' analysis, synthesis and evaluation ability.

These findings raise important implications for pedagogical action. In the first place, coaching is a potentially important component of teachers' professional development for its tremendous benefits. However, coaching is not paid due attention as a tool for teacher professional development in the context of Vietnamese education for

the time being. It occurs spontaneously to fulfil the requirements of the observation and evaluation process. Therefore, it is highly recommended that a coaching program be widely implemented in high schools in the region to support and facilitate teachers' practices. This is essential in providing teachers with opportunities to learn new knowledge skills through the process of practices, feedback and reflection. As a result, this approach is effective in helping improve teachers' professional development.

Additionally, the issue of good use of teacher classroom questions for effective learning outcomes should be disseminated in high schools in the region. From the results of the study, it could be seen that teacher questions could help greatly to facilitate students' learning processes. Additionally, evaluative questions could encourage students' curiosity, make them think, and help them explore concepts and problems related to their lessons. Through evaluative questions, teachers can also help stimulate students' imagination, motivate them to search for new knowledge and enhance their self-confidence. Therefore, teachers' use of evaluative questions in high school classrooms is essential in improving students' learning outcomes.

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CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE EFFECT OF COACHING ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY TEACHERS

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Abstract

This paper presents coaching in teaching as one of the models of teacher professional development. We present implementation of this model in professional development activities conducted by lecturers of The School of Education to teachers of The Primary School of Practice in Can Tho city, in the Mekong delta. The chapter concludes with lessons learned and implications for teacher professional development.

Introduction

In recent years, education in Vietnam has been innovated in all domains such as reforming curriculum and textbooks; and designing and complementing credit programs in higher education. One of the key factors supporting the success of the educational reforms is fulfilling teacher professional development for teaching staff. According to Villegas-Reimers (2003), teacher professional development is considered as a vital phase of the reformation of education. Therefore it is important to consider what teacher professional development is. Villegas-Reimers (2003) and Gladthorn (1995) proposed that professional development includes many forms of training which are organized formally or informally such as workshops, professional groups, coaching methods, conferences, professional resources and so on.

Teaching requires teachers to maintain life-long learning. Teachers need to upgrade knowledge, skills, and awareness of their teaching role. Within this belief about the ongoing learning of teachers, educational specialists and human resource researchers have promoted the model of professional development as vital. One of these professional development models is the coaching method in teaching. In this article, we will illustrate the process of our using the coaching model in professional development for primary teachers in the specific context of The Primary School of Practice in Can Tho city, the Mekong delta.

Literature review

Coaching is linked with the 'growing of an individual' both professionally and personally. It is essentially related to specific areas of work performance and practice (Lord et al., 2008, p.iii). Coaching has been variously called mutual learning, peer support, and peer learning. Various models of coaching have been identified: one-to-one as opposed to group coaching and peer-to-peer support as distinct to 'expert-novice' support. Numerous types of peer coaching are found in the literature: technical coaching, team coaching, collegial coaching, cognitive coaching and challenge coaching. Wong and Nicotera (2003) suggest that these types can be grouped into three general categories.

> Technical coaching and team coaching focus on incorporating new curriculum and instruction techniques into teachers' routines. Collegial coaching and cognitive coaching seek to improve existing teacher practices by refining techniques, developing collegiality, increasing professional dialogue, and assisting teachers to reflect on their teaching. Challenge coaching concentrates on identifying and treating a specific problem and can be used in a larger context that a classroom such as a school or grade level (Wong and Nicotera, 2003, p.2).

The beginnings of coaching in an educational setting

Coaching has long been associated with sporting teams. It has also been used widely within the business sector. In 1980 Showers and Joyce proposed peer coaching as an on-site dimension for school staff development. They did this because research on the impact of staff development focusing on teaching strategies and curriculum revealed that very few participants in such development implemented what they had learned during one-off workshop sessions (Showers & Joyce, 1996, p.12). The model of peer coaching they advocated has since been adapted and modified so that in 2011 it is quite different to the original model they proposed.

From the mid 1950s national movements in the United States focused on academic quality and social equality in an attempt to improve the outcomes of schooling (Flowers & Joyce, 1996). Before 1980 it was assumed that teachers could learn new teaching strategies, return to their schools and disseminate to their colleagues what they had learned. There was a lack of research on how teachers learned and how innovations in teaching could be adopted within a school. Despite the best of intentions, and often with the support of well-funded programs, many educational reforms failed to produce the anticipated improvements in teaching and learning (Sarason, 1996). During the 1980s Joyce and a number of colleagues undertook a series of studies, based upon their reviews of the training literature as well as their work within schools, which led to their belief that coaching would produce expanded teaching repertories and more appropriate teaching

models over time. They developed an approach which involved the following sequence of steps:

- theory presentation,
- modeling or presentation,
- practice,
- structured and open-ended feedback, and
- in-class assistance with transfer (Flowers & Joyce, 1996).

From their Work Flowers and Joyce proposed four principles of peer coaching:

1. All teachers in a department must agree to be members of the peer coaching study team and agree to practice whatever the department has agreed to implement;
2. All verbal feedback must be omitted as an element of the coaching component, and emphasis must be given to the collaborative planning and development of teaching strategies in pursuit of shared goals;
3. When pairs of teachers observe each other, the one teaching is the 'coach', and the one observing is the 'coached'.

The GROW model of coaching

The GROW model, also designed in the 1980s by Alexander Graham, provides a different approach to coaching. The coach assists the coachee 'to unlock their own potential for understanding their desired outcomes and the goals that express those' (Connelley et al., 2003, p.9).

In the **Goal** stage the area of desired achievement is defined and a specific goal for a particular coaching session is made explicit.

The **Reality** stage examines the teacher's perception of the current situation, suggests other possible ways of perceiving the situation.

The **Options** stage identifies the criteria for defining a 'good' solution to the situation, generates a range of alternatives and weighs up advantages and disadvantages associated with each option.

The **Wrap-up** stage captures and consolidates the teacher's chosen option and determines criteria or measuring success and commitment.

These stages can be illustrated in the following diagram:

How do I coach?
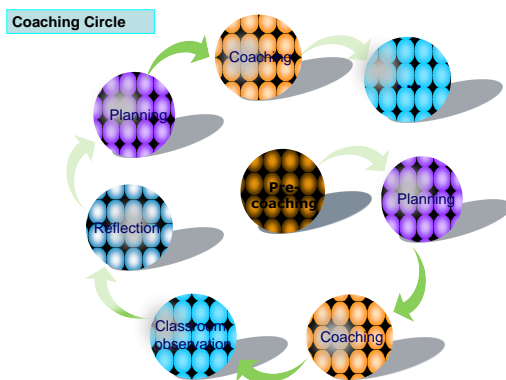The GROW model

The impacts of coaching

In a major study of the research evidence from the United Kingdom on coaching for professional Lord et al. (2008) the impacts of coaching on coaches and coachees, and upon the school as a whole and its culture were identified.

For coachees it was found that the following positive outcomes associated with coaching occurred:

- Greater development of reflectivity and thinking skills
- Increased psychological wellbeing and confidence
- Increased in problem-solving and creative behaviours
- New knowledge skills and practices were gained or improved
- Coachees were more prepared to share their practices and contribute to the positive development of the school
- Positive impacts were made on professional and career development
- Communication skills and personal relationships were enhanced
- Coachees gained confidence in managing their own learning (Lord et al., 2008, p.31-33).

Of great interest was the positive impact that the coaching process had on the coaches. They developed reflectivity and thinking skills, they gained in confidence, developed their creativity and problem-solving abilities, as well as being more prepared to contribute to the improvement of the whole school. They also gained knowledge and skills that contributed positively to their career development. In addition they gained greater insights into the knowledge, skills and practices they were coaching (Lord et al., 2008, p.33-34).

Coaching also had a positive impact upon the school learning culture, led to the development of more collaborative activities, and developed a culture of professionalism and recognition within the school (Lord et al., 2008, p.34-37).

The context of coaching

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) and Villegas-Reimers (2003) introduce models of professional development involving: individual orientation, observation and comments given, while teachers are coached. In Vietnam nowadays, training and observing models are the most popular. However, observing classes is mainly considered as a way to evaluate or classify teachers instead of listening, observing and discussing about effect of lessons to develop teachers' professionalism. The coaching model has rarely been used in educational institutions. So we have chosen coaching in this research to help teachers attending this project develop their expertise.

We also found that the teachers are not aware of the role of questions and the way to use them to develop pupils' thinking so we have organized two workshops on coaching activities and the method to design questions used in teaching. The first workshop was for coaches, the second was for all participants in the project.

The seminar on coaching focused on the answers to three questions:

What is coaching?
What is the role of coaching in developing the teaching profession?
What are the techniques used in the process of coaching?

In the workshop focusing upon the method to design questions in teaching, we discussed with the teachers two problems:

(a) The foundations of building a system of questions in teaching – mainly based on constructivist theory and the cognitive scale of Bloom and Anderson, and Krathwohd (2001);

(b) Methods in designing questions based on Bloom's scale.

Joining in this study were two lecturers of the School of Education, University of Can Tho and two primary teachers in Primary School of Practice. The two five-year-experienced lecturers took part in examining the lesson plans designed by the two primary teachers and conducting coaching activities before practical teaching; then the coaches visited classes and observed the teaching process, took notes and discussed the teaching with teachers, and shared ideals with the teachers after every class. The two primary teachers are referred to as the 'coachees'. The first teacher (referred to as Teacher A) teaches Grade 2 while Teacher B teaches Grade 4 and has one-year of teaching experience. Every week, the teachers drew up lesson plans, discussed them with the coaches and adjusted the lesson plans accordingly. During the process of teaching, they were required to record journals and take notes about their experience after every class.

Research was conducted with the two grades. There were 47 students in Grade 2 and 45 students in Grade 4. The experiment included 14 lessons which were conducted from 8th of April to 15th of May 2011.

The purpose of our study focused on two aspects: The first for coaches focused on how to advise primary teachers in terms of their profession and the second to 'coachees' focused on how to use questions in their teaching to develop pupils' thinking.

Our research attempts to answer the three following questions:

(1) What is the effect of coaching on the professional development of 'coachees'?

(2) What is the effect of the teacher's use of higher-order questions on students' learning?

(3) What is the effect of coaching on the professional development of coaches?

Research methodology

The means used to collect data included:

- Teachers' lesson plans before coaching,
- Revised lesson plans after coaching
- Journals/teaching diaries of teachers,
- Notes and records of meetings,
- Notes and records of lesson observations,
- Interview with 'coachees' and coaches.

The interview for 'coachees' contained 11 questions, of which five questions focused on the role of coaching activities and issues that teachers experienced during the process; Six questions focused on teachers' use of questions and their assessment about the impact of the high-level thinking questions on children's learning attitudes. The interview for coaches set eight questions focusing on coaching skills they have learned during the coaching process, and their observations about children's learning attitudes when teachers used high-level thinking questions. The study primarily followed a qualitative approach with written documents and formal evaluations were main source of data collected and examined. The methods in this study incorporate pedagogical changes, observation and interview.

Procedure

The study process was divided into two phases: Phase 1 and Phase 2.

In the first phase:

- Teachers composed and carried out their lesson plans independently.

- During these classes, coaches observed the classes

- Number of lessons: 4

In the second phase:

- Teachers' coached lessons were performed under coaches' observation

- Number of lessons: 10

Based on the results of two phases, comparisons were made between the two results of two phases of observation

Research results

The research questions addressed were:

- What was the impact of coaching sessions on the professional development of two primary teachers?

- How were lesson plans modified as a result of the coaching process?

- How did the feedback of two teachers show through their journals/ teaching diaries?

The impact of coaching activities on the professional development of two teachers was analyzed through their lesson plans, the teaching diaries and the notes of the two coaches.

Lesson plans and teaching activities in class

The coaching had a major effect on teaching activities, which was revealed in the two teachers' teaching plans as well as observations of classes. Prior to the coaching, teachers' lesson plans mainly listed the names of key activities conducted during the whole class (*E.g. Children look at the board; Children listen; Children give feedback*), these activities were often based around the teachers' guiding books. Teachers usually used the available questions in textbooks without paying attention to designing themselves questions to suit the children's background and the real context. Besides, the number of questions that prompted children to develop thinking skills was a low number, only about 10% of the total. In the teaching methodologies and classroom organisation, teachers primarily used methods of lecture and inquiry between the teacher and children. In the lesson plans, both teachers rarely expressed an intention to use the method of group discussion (During four classes, there was only one teaching activity of discussion in small groups). On the other hand, the teachers had devalued the role of activities to introduce the new lessons. Teaching hours usually started with habitual sayings: *"This week we have learnt about the topic of… (the name of the topic), today we continue our topic with… (the title of new lesson);* or *"The previous class we learned was… (the title of the former lesson), today we learn the next lesson that…"* The styles to introduce the new lesson revealed stereotypical procedures; considered the lessons as a responsibility that children had to act on. In addition, the teachers did not create the emotional state of excitement or curiosity for children about new knowledge in their classes.

In some of the first classes in the experimental process, in spite of the coaching, teachers had not enough freedom and courage to use positive teaching methodologies to engage the children in different learning activities. The reasons were that the teachers were influenced deeply by traditional teaching methodologies and they were also afraid that their children were not able to respond to the high-level thinking questions.

In the following classes, teachers became aware of adapting the organisation of teaching activities as well as using a system of high-order questions. In the Grade four classes, for example, on the subject "Practicing to Read", with the target of reading clearly and fluently, teacher A also set up the goal of reading comprehension requiring for higher-level of thinking that expressed children's *"illustration, contemplation, perception, and assessment"*. The approaches to use questions not only gained a higher level of generalization, but also created opportunities for children to think and indicate their individual ideas.

In the lesson plan of the subject called "Practicing to Write" with the topic "Describe briefly about Uncle Ho – the great man of Vietnam" the teachers had the intention of setting up a series of questions such as: "Where was the photo of Uncle Ho in our class?" "Describe Uncle Ho's face including the features of his forehead, eyes, nose, mouth and so on" and "When looking at his photo, what did you want to say to him?" After being coached, the teachers had awareness of designing questions with higher generalization. For instance, with another topic "Describe briefly about your close classmate", children were asked some higher-level questions: "What was the name of your close friend?", "Where is he/she sitting in the class?" "Describe his/her *appearance* and *characteristics* which made you be impressed?" and "How do you feel about your friend?" These questions and requirements created more opportunities for children to think freely, and to present personal opinions in observations and descriptions.

The rate of the questions requiring the capacity of generalization, analysis and evaluation of the children; and questions asking students to draw the meanings of stories and personalities of the characters, or finding the reasons behind events, were used more frequently than they were before. Especially, the questions which were free from textbooks began appearing in the system of teachers' questions. These were really set up to challenge the thinking of the children because these questions not only forced children to brainstorm but also adopt appropriate wording. The teachers also encouraged the children to raise queries relating to their current lessons by themselves. The response of the children to this encouragement surprised both teachers and observers: children raised many stimulating inquiries. For example, when studying about the story called "The kingdom of smiles away", children raised interesting questions and responses such as:

- Who brought smiles to this kingdom?
- The farmer kid coming from a rural poor village;
- Which were the characteristics the kid in this story had? And explain the reasons.
- He was a smart and brave kid. Because he himself dared to speak out many funny sites of The King and his court as well as his court officials to create smiles for the royal palace and from there, laughter spread out all over the kingdom. (The children supplemented each other);
- Which lessons did the story tell us?
- (Excitingly) Smiles in our lives are indispensable. /Without smiles, human being would be extremely sad, like the people in this story. /One smile was equivalent to ten restorative prescriptions (Vietnamese saying).

Teaching methodologies and organisational structures that the teachers used in their lessons became more diverse and the coordination between the two teaching factors was more rhythmic. Beginning with the ways to introduce new lessons, the teachers used a variety of styles: making questions to stimulate the curiosity of the children to new knowledge; or building situations for the children to take role-playing games; using interview activities to make conversations among schoolchildren about a topic and so on.

These activities really aroused the inquisitiveness and excitement of the pupils. Group discussion method was designed in most classes, which primarily helped children have the good studying habits, such as taking notes and presenting the results of their discussion. For example, a writing lesson with the topic of "Describe briefly your close classmate." (Grade 2), the teachers organized for the junior students discussing about the tone of describing the close classmate. After that, the representative of every group recorded their topics: Word groups used to indicate the position of your friend in the class; Ones used to depict his/her appearance and disposition; and ones that expressed the emotional attachment between him/her and you.

This was a truly motivating activity which developed the ability of the children in using their native language. They believed that their ideas were appreciated. Through such social interaction, the young students acquired the method of group discussion including many component skills, such as organizing and assigning duties, the listening and sharing of ideas with each other, reporting and verbalizing and so on.

According to the observer, however, some skills involved arranging and fulfilling the group discussion of the teachers in some classes did not work quite so well due to some confines of overcrowded classrooms and separate but fixed seats. As a result, these limited the effect of discussion activities. In some of the final teaching observations, organisational skills (role-play, group discussion) as well as designing and using questions considerably improved.

After being coached, an obvious point was that the teachers rather freely utilized constructive teaching methodologies. The first was role-play method, especially applied in lessons on social communication. The topic called "How was a deferential answer to a refusal?" (Grade 2) was a specific example. In the lesson plan, the teachers had intended to let children observe pictures and read the dialogues which were available in the textbook. After having coaching, the teachers adjusted this task by operating schoolchildren to complete a role-play of the characters in the dialogue in the textbook. According to this context, school boys and school girls took the roles of friends, or the parts of father/mother and their children and so on. Due to this role-playing game, the children had opportunities to use previous experience to build new knowledge.

The use of games in learning was the second active teaching methodology. The teachers designed learning games integrated into the lessons. For instance, there was one called "Let puzzle each other!" in Vietnamese subject named "Practicing to Read" for finding the content of stories. Other ones were "The professional flower" in the subject named "Enrich idiolect" (topic: Vocabularies about professions), or "Relay race" in The Mathematics class "Review about calculations with natural number" and so on. New knowledge and skills would be acquired by children through exciting learning games, which made the classes became more eventful. The children attended with excitement since their studying was less pressured by competition or time-limitation. At the same time, they had the possibility to cooperate each other in their studying process, which had a great significance in training them in communication skills, cooperation and team-work skills for every member in the group.

In regards to assessment methods in the lesson plans, it was obvious that assessment activities were only fulfilled by teacher at the beginning of the project. After having discussion among coaches and teachers, the teachers initially stimulated the children to assess each other in some suitable situations in studying. For example, the young learners made comments on their friends' answers and could add their personal ideas; or one group took the role of referee who evaluated the abstraction of other groups. These proved that the teachers gradually recognized the effects of training the skills of feedback and communication through the assessment activity.

A particular observation was that the teachers did not implement the ideas of coaches without giving them deep thought and consideration. They considered carefully the hints and points, and based on that deliberation, they adjusted and redesigned the teaching activities in order to make them appropriate for the specific context of the class. This was a good signal which indicated the deep awareness of teachers in applying the coaching ideas; simultaneously, this presented the high assessment and flexibility competence of the teachers. Thus, coaching produced convenient conditions for teachers to reconsider their teaching ideas in lesson plans and re-orient teaching activities suitably.

These were one of very important components making the success of the lessons. The magnitude of manipulation and adjustment of the teachers towards the coaching opinions depended on their teaching experience. The senior teacher proved more flexible in putting the coaching ideas into class than the less experienced teacher.

For instance, in the lesson titled "Adding adverbial phrases of place for sentence" (Grade 4), the coaches had suggested the teachers letting the children compare between the core sentences without adverbial phrases with the sentence having adverbial phrases. After collating two kinds of sentences, children identified similarity and difference between them and pointed out which part was the adverbial phrase. When conducting the lesson plan, the teacher supplemented an additional question: Define the subject and the predicate in the core sentence; then underline the adverbial phrase in the sentence. This adjustment helped the children easily specify the role of adverbial phrases in a sentence: supplementing meaning for core sentences.

The impact of coaching activity on professional development of teachers

This was expressed through the answers to the interview questions. The two teachers coached had quite deep awareness of coaching activities, the role of coaches and 'coachees'. This was showed by the answer to the question "Did you comprehend what was coaching? Teacher A replied that "Coaching was activity of conferring and discussing between coaches and 'coachees' involving some topic". Teachers B believed that "Coaching was also activity which coaches assisted 'coachees' to know more about teaching methodologies, skills of setting the questions in teaching following the objects of the lesson".

In terms of the role of coaching activity, teacher A thought that "Coaching suggested different issues to 'coachees' to think and consider" whereas teacher B had a different understanding: "Coaching assisted 'coachees' in their teaching". About the role of 'coachees', "Listening and replying the suggestion of coaches to be able to survey many aspects of the issues involving to teaching so that 'coachees' could obtain deep understanding the lessons" was the opinion of teacher A. While teacher B gave other idea, that was "Thinking and suggesting some ways to help children develop their high-level thinking as one of the long-term objects of educational process". Teacher B added that "Helping children to master new knowledge and skills was important, but assisting them to applying their knowledge and skills on their lives was more vital". The answer of teacher B indicated a deep understanding about the role of the 'coachees'. That was aiming to the long-term goal - developing high-order thinking for children and applying active methodologies on teaching. During the coaching process, we realized there was not always the time teacher B mentioned in the phrase "long-term objects in teaching". This teacher believed that because every teacher in primary school was always under heavy

pressure coming from the goals of primary school: high achievement at the end of each school year. Besides, the pressure also came from the parents of children. For the above reasons, teachers usually used available questions in textbooks or in the tests of periodical examinations in order to meet the short-term goals that were how the children got high marks in these examinations. Thus, they had not attached special importance to developing high-level thinking for children through inference questions. Teacher B indicated that it was necessary for teachers to put behind short-term objectives so that they could gradually obtain long-term goals. This proved that the coaching process contributed to a change in the perception of teachers about learning goals.

As regards assessing the part of coaching in this project, both teachers valued the coaching activity in teaching. The reason was that coaching "assisted teachers to study a variety of methodologies in designing various and active teaching activities, especially for inexperienced teachers". In the period before joining the project, both teachers found themselves had set questions which did not confine their level and impact on the study of children" (Teacher A). For teacher B, "questions which were wordy and lack focus were usually used. Especially, requirement to the answers of children was just re-appearing the knowledge within the lesson of that day" (Teacher B). After attending the project, they formed the awareness of setting teaching questions. Teacher A considered carefully about the level of the questions so that these questions could suit the standard of knowledge of children. Besides, designing learning activities to encourage children to become more active and take initiative in their study was conducted seriously. Teachers self-adjusted the methods in setting the teaching questions. They were also noticeable to stick content of every question to the teaching goals; addressing on the focus of knowledge which children thought and mastered. On the other side, the requirement of the answers of children should not be limited to repeating, re-presenting the knowledge but also should involve training skills and developing high thinking.

The difficulties that teachers encountered in the teaching process were "How to design logical system of questions; to organize learning activities in class: learning games, group discussion and role-play" (Teacher A); "How to design consistent questions with the level of every individual in class whereas in almost lessons, textbooks had several questions for every level of children". These challenges were solved through coaching process. The teachers also hoped "to receive more coaching in planning and fulfilling active teaching activities". Along with the experience in designing questions, the teachers confirmed that they also learned about methods of how to organize the activities such as role-play, learning games and so on so that they could assist children to learn new knowledge more easily; besides the teacher also acquired "much experience in taking notes, arranging works logically" (Teacher A). The lessons the two teachers obtained included "how to get students think more active as well as methods to deal with some specific situations to enhance the level of activity of children" (teacher B).

Coaching after every teaching hour always began with the self-assessing of all teaching periods of the teacher. We used two questions to help the teachers self-assess. The first was that "What made you feel pleased with this lesson?" and "If you had opportunity to conduct this lesson again, would you have any improvement in this lesson?" This was a chance for teachers to demonstrate their meta-cognition and reflective thinking about their teaching period. We observed that both teachers recognized their strengths and weaknesses; moreover, they also proposed ways to overcome the weaknesses. The teachers themselves understood the effect of self-assessment activity: They were able to explain the reasons why they fulfilled the lesson in such way. Besides, they can re-orient their teaching periods; and learned from experience for the following teaching periods (Teacher A). Teacher B believed that the self-feedback after every teaching period helped teachers explore the more suitable methodologies and engrave the use of methods which were coached; at the same time, teachers discovered other teaching methods to conduct the lesson if they taught it again.

After every class, we required the teachers to take notes in their teaching journals. In these journals, each teacher reported the teaching activities which had been conducted in the classes. Besides, the two teachers also answered two questions: "What made the success of this class in your opinion?" and "If you had chance to fulfill this lesson again, you would do any change on the teaching process?" These questions brought the teachers opportunities to look back their teaching periods so that they could summarize the strengths and the limitations and more importantly, solutions to overcome the limitations would be proposed. There was also the possibility of teachers themselves developing their professionalism. Overall, the teachers self-reflected rather accurately their strong and weak points from every class they conducted. For example, the teacher A had some notes after class like this: "Good points in this class included: Designing games in the learning process of children which involved them new knowledge; Step by step forming algorithm (in The Mathematic class) to help children study more easily". While the teacher B reported: "Using visual means in teaching effectively; organizing a variety of activities to develop the source of children's vocabularies the most (in The Vietnamese class). Besides, the questions to come upon the reasons of some event or issue in lessons by questions beginning with "Why" to engage high level thinking of children were usually used. At the same time, the standpoint that was evoking the prior knowledge to establish new knowledge was applied flexibly on during the teaching process" (the teacher B).

We were impressed by the interest of teachers to find methods to teach better in the next class. The number of statements that suggested better ways for following teaching periods was much more than they were before. This indicated the hard-working nature of the teachers and the desire constantly to improve the quality of the lessons. Teacher A solved the issue "If you taught this lesson again, would you have any change in the initial lesson?" by many proposals which included: "Designing more questions for children to think; modifying exciting activities for them to attend". Besides, the teachers lectured less,

children discussed and expressed more, and integrated more group discussion into the lessons go along with reformed monotonous teaching activities into enjoyable games in learning. Teacher B intended: "Requiring children to comment and assess each other by their own language; confining the goals before designing questions; beginning the lessons by visual means to involve children into their lessons and encouraging children to discover new knowledge instead teachers brought new knowledge to children as well".

Two coaches made a positive assessment on the improvement in the classes of the two teachers. They learned how to organize activities to develop high-level thinking for young students and how to operate group discussion. They also edited the available questions in the textbook in order to suit the specific level of children and set the questions to develop high-level thinking (Coach A); "teachers became more active and creative in their teaching methodologies" (Coach B). The questions which required thinking at high-level such as ability of overview, analysis, assessment and so on, were used more they were before, at about 20% - 25% of the total questions of lessons (in comparison with 10% of prior-coaching activity). Such proportions of this kind of question were suitable to primary school students. The results of interviews also confirmed this estimation. According to the self-evaluation of teachers, the questions which were usually used had various content and brought out high requirement to children. For example, there were some requirements as "Finding the meaning of an expression or a detail in a story; comparing two objects; phrasing the thought about the characters in stories; summing up the moral lesson from stories; evaluating the answers each other and so on". The teacher B self-commented "Before the training, usually request children to answer the questions by re-appearing or learn by heart"; after the coaching process, teacher B used a variety of questions to help children develop their high-level thinking mindfully.

It is regrettable during experimental process that teachers did not use the homework within the project. This was one of the active methods which could motivate the children to train many learning and social skills. There were two reasons, according to the teachers' explanation, that led to this judgment. The subjective reason came from the strict management about time of the parents on children so the children did not have freedom to do extra-activities outside of school. The parents usually set a high expectation on their children so they only had their children focus on study, they did not care much to develop other skills for their children such as communicating, planning, cooperating and so on. The objective reason was the psychology of the children who were still very young (in grade 2 and grade 4). Therefore, teachers took much time in organizing them to conduct a fact-finding trip, managing them for their safety and finding the funds to supporting this activity. Until now, primary schools in Vietnam have not had conditions to fulfill project methods.

The impact of using high level questions on the learning attitude of children.

Before the classes were coached, we observed some classes conducted by the two teachers to evaluate the situation, we found the atmosphere of classes not very motivating for the children. The teachers chiefly used methods of lecturing and interpreting, as a result, children just listened passively. When the teacher asked, only a few children answered while other children did not consider the answer to the questions of teachers as their academic duties. The teacher had also tendency to select the excellent children who were able to answer the questions correctly. This meant that the studying process just happened to several children in class. With such a way of organisation the teaching, children were not placed as active learners during the period. As a result, the teacher could not check how all children acquire new knowledge. Teachers themselves also gave comments about the learning attitudes of their students as follows: "The children was passive, students were not excited in the lesson". (Teacher A). One of the reasons leading to this state was the teachers' methodologies which were modeled on the teacher guiding book. The teachers did not pay attention to specific levels of students so teachers used the questions at low levels of thinking for all students. Besides, the teachers did not believe that their children could answer the high-level thinking questions, which took too much time for a class to finish in the time allowed.

The improvement in teaching methodologies during 10 classes had relieved the anxiety of teachers. Contrasting to the former thought of teachers, young students were interested in the high level thinking questions as "Why?", "How?" as well as the questions requiring the personal ideas of children. To children, these kinds of questions were challenges to their thinking, motivating them to brainstorming for answers. The children attended excitingly in the questions designed under team games such as "Giving strength each other". In the same way, the lesson: "Describing briefly about your classmate" attracted the whole class to attend enthusiastically because this topic was very popular with the children. They were elated with discussing each other about "Who did you love to describe? Why did you choose to talk about this classmate?" and many spontaneous reasons were given by the children, such as "Because he looked very lovely"; or "Because of her helpful characteristic, one time, she lent me a pencil". The brainstorming activity to collect different expressions for the appearance and characters of their friends also engaged children while the teacher continued encouraging children to think with question: "Is there any word or phrase?" The children in turn expressed themselves: "My friend was tall and thin with dark hair…" "He had fine handwriting…" "She was very kind and emotional…" "He was honest to everyone…" and so on. The children were competitive with each other to take notes on the class board for words and phrases which were divided into three groups to express the appearance, characteristics and sentiment each other.

Through these learning activities, children freely expressed their thinking including the mistake of using wrong-style words. For example, the sentence of children: "I *respected* my friend very much" made the children exclaim when they discovered the errors in the expressions of each other.

This meant that if teachers designed interesting learning situations, these would attract children to participate with excitement, which made their study become slower but more effective. Due to learning in small groups, children had the opportunity to study from many channels including not only teachers but also each other. Especially, learning from mistakes was one of the methods to help children deepen and widen their knowledge and skills.

Another valuable result presenting the improvement in the thinking of children since high-level thinking had been used was that the children became active and creative in their study. For instance, in the lesson "The polite refusal" (Grade 2), the teachers organized the children to attend a role-play game. Following the design of the teacher, children took the roles of mother and child. Every couple of schoolgirls expressed this situation with calling "mom and honey". Especially, when two schoolboys attended this game, they automatically changed the call each other into "Dad and son", they also had suitable gestures to the roles of "father and his son".

The reply and attitude in learning of children have increased the belief in the ability of young learners as well as belief in the effectiveness of active teaching methodologies. Because teachers hardly used questions or learning tasks which challenged the thinking of children. One reason was that they were afraid young students could not answer or did not have enough words to express the ideas leading to too much time for one class.

The project period proved that the children were interested in the challenging questions in spite of their young ages and the limitations in language and social knowledge. If teachers designed learning activities and questions which stimulated children to connect with practical life as well as created more opportunities for children express themselves, they would participate in the learning activities actively.

The self-evaluation of teachers in their journals also showed clearly changes in the learning attitude of children toward the question requiring practical knowledge. For example, teacher A noticed that "Children actively express their opinion, discuss excitingly"; the more detailed comment of teacher B was that "Children were keen on talking about their parents' professions". They also showed creation in their presentation. In terms of the teachers' assessment of the children's learning attitudes to high-level thinking questions such as "Why?", "How?", there were few children who volunteered to

speak because they were afraid their answer was false, which made their classmates laugh at them.

This proved that both teachers and children have still not fully understood that learning is a cognitive process moving from un-perception to perception or from misunderstanding to understanding. It is very useful for children to give partially right or even false answers.

The teachers realized that integrating questions under interesting forms such as learning games or group discussion created excitement for the class. Thus, the issue is not the content of questions but the way to ask as well as the way to organize the learning activities for children. Using high-level thinking question might take much time because children needed more time to think, discuss and so on, which led to overtime for a class. However, both teachers realized that children made fast progress during the experimental period. At first, children found it difficult to adapt to high-level thinking questions, as a result, few children volunteered to answer. When the project was coming to an end, children were more confident to express their answers and take part in learning activities with excitement. This was certainly because children were more familiar with such active learning activities. Besides, teachers also established much experience in designing and using the high-level thinking questions. Especially, the initial success of children should be noted and complimented by teachers because to children, these tasks encouraged them very much in their studying.

The effect of coaching on the professional development of two coaches.

Lecturers taking the roles of coaches also acquired much experience through the training in question. Coaches learned "methods in teaching, ways to use questions in teaching effectively" (Coach A), "noted to use high-level thinking questions in future time". They also acquired experience in coaching, including some useful lessons "After observing the class, it would be better to confirm the strength of the class first and contribute the ideas of coaches later" (Coach A). Coach B also "learned how to use words to avoid imposing the personal viewpoint on listeners and communicating skills to get mutual understanding between coaches and 'coachees'. For example, some expressions were proposed "I wonder whether the lesson was conducted in such way, how would children react to the lesson?" or "whether it is good or bad when fulfilling the lesson in this way".

Coaches summarized that the coaching usually began with listening to 'coachees' expressing their teaching ideas. Then coaches made suggestions to 'coachees' by asking questions focusing these intended teaching ideas so that 'coachees' could look back on the ideas and perform necessary adjustments. In some cases, teachers did not agree with

the abstractions of coaches and continued to defend their intentions. There were two different approaches of the two coaches. Coach A decided not to argue or disagree with the teacher because Coach A thought that through the teaching process in practice, the teacher would experience and self-recognize strong points and weakness as well as have self-correction. That might be a delicate solution showing the respecting of the self-experienced process. While coach B who had much experience in teaching primary students proposed other solutions for this possibility. That was setting supposed circumstances which were possible to happen in the class (If we conduct like that, how would children answer; or what would children do?). These proposed circumstances took the important role in orienting the thinking of 'coachees', helping them survey every aspect of the lesson and positively find the best solutions for these proposed circumstances.

Other significant impacts of the project were that coaches had the opportunity to directly have contact with primary education, had a better understanding of elementary school students, elementary school programs, and about the pressures on the primary teachers. These are extremely useful experiences for two coaches who are involved in training primary school teachers. They planned to use the experience acquired through the project in teaching students who would be primary teachers in their future. For example, they would apply coaching methods on the subject called "Micro Teaching in Vietnamese teaching methodology" when the lecturers would advise students to practice more closely, before every class, lecturers coached students so that the students had initial adjustment, after every lesson, the students gave feedback for their lesson (consultant B).

Not only having much experience in teaching methodologies, coaches also enhanced the knowledge of educational science, including "methods to get information, data; planning and organizing researching activities" (consultant A). Coach B also learned "how to collect data and ensure the accuracy of information; how to do careful, meticulous in designing the questionnaire". That experience is so precious that they can use to implement the action research to improve their own teaching and guide students to perform scientific educational research.

Conclusions

Due to limited periods of time, some comments drawn from the results of our experiments may not fully reflect the entire process of developing professional ability of teachers who participated in the project. However, on the basis of the data collected, we initially found that, the project has positive effects for both groups: 'coachees' and coaches. For 'coachees', they had a deep awareness of motivating children to study by combining many different teaching methods: learning games, role-play, visualization, group discussion and so on. Especially, teachers were aware of the design and use

questions to develop higher level thinking for children. When placed in situations of intellectual challenge, students are excited to answer the questions of the teachers. This established the belief of teachers in the ability of children and the teachers felt confident in using high-level thinking questions. Each lesson was assessed from an outside perspective: coaches taking on the role of the observers, and also from the inside perspective by the 'coachees'. Therefore, teachers were more deeply aware of the restrictions and their own progress. The most important thing that this process evoked was for teachers to desire improving their teaching methods, improving their classes so that the long-term aim was to develop high-level thinking. They are also more creative in their learning processes, with less reliance on teacher guiding books.

To coaches, the process involved in the project helped them develop the opportunity to get better understanding about the role of coaching methods in teacher professional development. They also learned coaching skills and had contact with primary education: programs, textbooks, teaching methods, and ways to assess students. These are very valuable experiences for those in charge of training teachers. Moreover, they also learned to use questions for those students, learned how to do a project: how to plan, how to communicate, how to design questionnaires.

We recognized that the scope of the project for expanding the use of professional coaching was limited by the range of two teachers and two lecturers, and would be strengthened by also involving as many teachers and schools as possible. Teachers themselves also expressed their need for further coaching on other aspects of their teaching process, especially skills to organize learning activities for children in their classroom. Teachers shared that in spite of the ideas of teaching, the design of teaching activities had not yet succeeded. So, it was necessary to continue training for teachers on active teaching methods, learning how to organize cooperative learning activities and how to implement project methods on teaching. At the same time, teachers continued to change their perceptions and belief in the thinking ability of the children and the ability in using creatively active teaching methods in the specific context of the classroom, reducing the reliance on teacher guiding books.

Improving the professional capacity of teachers is a long process requiring the participation of many factors. The coaches are also involved training teachers of primary school teachers. Therefore, their deep concern was how students are aware of the important role of training the teaching profession when the students are at the university. We organize students to analyse the training curriculum and learn fully about understanding the requirements of standard knowledge and skills. Besides, in our practical teaching, we require students to design learning activities with active approaches whether developing the best the initiative and creativity of the children. Then these future teachers practice their teaching under the observation of the lecturer and their classmates.

At the end of each period, the students self-assess their teaching to look back their strengths and weaknesses. On this basis, they self-orient the teaching activities so that they can conduct the class better in their practical teaching later. More importantly, the students establish the useful habit in fulfilling self-assessment and learning from their weaknesses.

To our interest, that is how to form the unity of the components involved in enhancing the professional capacity of teachers to create the best conditions for teachers to implement their changes. Because The School of Education are responsible for training teachers but the employers are the primary schools. One barrier still exists as the primary schools are not ready to participate in this process, still afraid to change the environment of teachers to implement what they perceive.

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