Improving Teaching and Learning

Perspectives

from

Australia & Southeast Asia

Edited
by
Kevin Laws, Lesley Harbon & Christabel Wescombe

Developing Educational Professionals in Southeast Asia

DEPISA
Monograph no. 3

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Developing Educational Professionals in Southeast Asia
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Cover: DEPISA members at Suratthani Rajabhat University, June, 2014.

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Introduction

DEPISA thrives because of the commitment of many individuals and groups. We have a core of very active people who continually research their professional practice and are prepared to share the results of their work with all. We have regular contributors to our monograph series and it is very pleasing to note that the quality of the research and writing is improving all the time.

I feel particular satisfied to note that more and more two, three and four members are now working together to research issues of mutual concern. Such collaboration supports our aim to improve the quality of teaching and learning in all of our workplaces. It is not only the results of the research that is conducted that is important, although it is interesting to note that educational professionals no matter the field in which they work can learn from the efforts of those confronting similar issues but in different academic disciplines. The way in which some of our members are utilising a wider range of research methodologies is providing evidence of the success of DEPISA in helping them think of new, innovative ways to research complex issues that cannot be answered through simple pre-test post-test research designs.

In our first monograph there were contributions from five groups from five countries. In this third monograph we have contributions from individuals and groups from six nations. We know that this will continue to grow as more individuals from more universities in more countries join in the activities associated with continuing professional development.

We in DEPISA are especially privileged to have the support of the Presidents of members' universities. If it was not for the Presidents of Can Tho University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, the National University of Laos, Universitas Negeri Jakarta and the University of Sydney providing facilities and resources for us to hold our meetings each year at no cost to members, we would be a very different type of organisation. The generosity of members' supporting universities ensures that those who are not able to access funding are still able to meet with us on a regular basis.

I must not conclude this Introduction to the third monograph without acknowledging another DEPISA supporter, friend and colleague, Christabel Wescombe. Christabel has taken responsibility for the technical editing of the monograph and other preparation required by the printer.

Our thanks to DEPISA members and to all those whose support is ensuring that the activities and research of the DEPISA community is being made widely available.

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November, 2014

DEPISA: A Community of Practice

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Abstract

DEPISA is a unique organisation. Since it was first established, under a different name, in late 2010 it has developed into an autonomous professional development group consisting of educational professionals from a growing number of universities from mainly ASEAN countries. In this paper the way in which DEPISA meets the characteristics of a community of practice, as outlined by Etienne Wenger is discussed in a personal narrative of one of the coordinators.

In November 2010 eighteen people from universities and schools in five countries attended a workshop in Sydney to discuss continuing teacher professional development and to develop context appropriate models aimed at changing teacher practice which would contribute in positive ways to the improvement of student learning outcomes. At the conclusion of this initial meeting participants agreed that it would be beneficial to meet in mid-2011 to share progress made and discuss possibilities for future collaborative research. It was jointly decided that the group should continue to meet twice each year in a member university to collaborate in research projects associated with issues of common concern and to share results.

Initially, the emphasis was on school teacher continuing professional development, but as time went by it became obvious to participants that university teachers lacked opportunities for their continuing professional development. What began as an Australian Government funded project with the title of 'Re-forming Teacher Professional Development Programs in Southeast Asia' morphed into something bigger and more encompassing.

The group we now call DEPISA (Developing Educational Professionals in Southeast Asia) meets twice each year and includes school teachers, teacher educators, nurse educators, and teachers in universities in a variety of academic disciplines. At the meetings participants make presentations on their research into their academic practices. Some members report on action research or action learning projects they have initiated in order to improve their teaching practice and their students' learning. What began as groups of individuals from four Southeast Asian universities, brought together by two colleagues from the University of Sydney, has developed into a community of practice with over 80 members from eight universities across six countries.

It now seems an appropriate time at which to review the formation of this group and to identify the nature of the community of practice to which we all belong. In doing this I will draw heavily upon Etienne Wenger's writings and illustrate how I think DEPISA is a very special community of practice.

A chronology

The forerunner to DEPISA began in 2009 when two teacher educators from the Faculty of Education and Social Work from the University of Sydney began to contact colleagues with whom they had previously worked to determine whether they were interested in joining in a workshop in Sydney. Four Southeast Asian universities indicated their interest in the project, but none of these Southeast Asian universities had previously worked together in any way.

Two teacher educators and two school teachers in schools affiliated in some way with the universities, plus the two Sydney colleagues formed the initial workshop group.

As time went by other universities either heard about the group and asked to join or were invited to attend workshops held in their countries. Presentations at conferences held throughout the ASEAN region attracted colleagues interested in joining the group. The chronology below illustrates how the group has grown over time to include some non-ASEAN members.

Year	DEPISA Chronology
2009	Applying for ALAF grant and planning for first workshop.
2010, Nov.	**Re-forming Teacher Professional Development Programs** *Host:* Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney. *Members from*: The University of Sydney, Can Tho University, Laos National University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, Universitas Negeri Jakarta.
2011, June.	**Teacher Professional Development in Southeast Asia** *Host:* School of Education, Can Tho University. *Members from*: The University of Sydney, Can Tho University, Laos National University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, Universitas Negeri Jakarta.
2011, Dec.	**International Conference for Teacher Professional Development** *Host:* Faculty of Education, Suratthani Rajabhat University. *Members from*: The University of Sydney, Can Tho University, Laos National University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University. Launch of monograph no. 1: Laws, K., Harbon, L., & Fielding, R (Eds.). (2011). *Teacher professional development in Southeast Asia: Perspectives from Indonesia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam*. Can Tho: Can Tho University for DEPISA. (12 chapters).
2012, July.	**International Workshop on Teacher Professional Development** *Host*: Faculty of Education, The National University of Laos. *Members from*: The University of Sydney, Can Tho University, Laos National University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, Phranakhon Rajabhat University.
2012, Dec.	**International Conference on Teacher Professional Development. Theme: Action teaching and action learning for quality education** *Host:* English Department, Universitas Negeri Jakarta. *Members from*: The University of Sydney, Can Tho University, Laos National University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University.
2013, June.	**Developing Educational Professionals in Southeast Asia** *Host*: Phranakhon Rajabhat University. *Members from*: The University of Sydney, Can Tho University, Laos National University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University, Santa Laurensia School.
2013, Dec.	**Developing Educational Professionals in Southeast Asia** *Host*: School of Education, Can Tho University. *Members from*: The University of Sydney, Can Tho University, Laos National University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University, Santa Laurensia School. Launch of monograph no. 2: Laws, K., Harbon, L., & Wescombe, C. (Eds.). (2013). *Supporting professional development with learning through action projects: Research from Australia and Southeast Asia*. Bangkok: Phranakhon Rajabhat University for DEPISA. (15 chapters).

2014, June.	**International Seminar on Educational Management to Meet ASEAN Standards** *Hos*t: Faculty of Education, Suratthani Rajabhat University. *Members from*: The University of Sydney, Can Tho University, Laos National University, Suratthani Rajabhat University, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University, Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University, Santa Laurensia School, East China Normal University, Daegu National University of Education.
2014, Dec.	**Collaborative Research-based Learning and Teaching to Foster Teacher Professional Development** *Host*: English Department, Universitas Negeri Jakarta. Launch of monograph no. 3: Laws, K., Harbon, L., & Wescombe, C. (Eds.). (2013). *Improving teaching and learning: Perspectives from Australia and Southeast Asia*. Jakarta: Universitas Negeri Jakarta for DEPISA. (15 chapters).
	Forthcoming meetings:
2015, June	Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University.
2015, Dec.	Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University.

What is a *Community of Practice*?

Wenger (2000, p. 229) points out that communities of practice have existed since the beginning of human history, when groups gathered around a cave fire to share cultural practices and learn from each other. He defines communities of practice as:

> *groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly*.
>
> (Wenger, n.d.).

DEPISA consists of groups of people from universities and schools concerned about opportunities for their continuing professional development. They address these concerns by conducting research into practices associated with teaching and learning, and policies and management practices which support the improvement of student learning outcomes.

Wenger advocates the benefits of learning in social settings and argues that communities of practice are the basic building blocks of social learning (Wenger, 2000). He sees communities of practice as social learning systems with emergent structures, complex interrelationships, self-organisation, dynamic boundaries, on-going negotiation about their identity. Each of the elements identified in the previous sentence encapsulate the nature of DEPISA. The structure of our group continues to change with each meeting we hold. New members are welcomed. Decisions about how we organise each meeting is negotiated between the host and the community coordinators. The direction for future research projects is determined by the members themselves, individually and in small groups.

'(3,6$¥ **domain**

A key task in any community of practice is defining its domain. A community of practice is more than a network of connections between people, and it is not a club of friends. A community of practice has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. At the same time it consists of a group of people informally bound together by their interest in a joint enterprise.

The overarching aim of DEPISA is to provide support to university and school teachers in their professional life within the fields of teaching and learning, and to develop their skills and knowledge in order to change teaching practice and prepare teachers for educational reforms. In undertaking these tasks DEPISA hopes to contribute to the quality of education in Southeast Asia by developing sustainable and region-specific models of professional development, and providing professional learning opportunities for members through encouraging them to make presentations and write up their professional development activities to share with others.

The DEPISA community

In pursuing their interest in continuing professional development the domain members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. DEPISA brings together scholars and practitioners from a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds. In so doing, it has created a network of teachers in Southeast Asia who are interested in investigating and reflecting upon their professional practice, and are prepared to share the results of their research with others through meetings and published monographs. Through these activities members continually seek to improve the practice of teaching and learning in schools, colleges and universities throughout the region.

DEPISA is working towards a mixed and inclusive membership. Any individual involved with research, teaching and/or in promoting the aims of DEPISA at any level is able to join. In order to retain membership of DEPISA it is necessary to attend at least one meeting every two years.

DEPISA practice

DEPISA holds one or more meetings each year. Up to this time the majority of members consider two meetings each year to be ideal. Not all members have been able to attend all meeting but a core of members have, often at their own expense. At meetings as well as encouraging members to make oral presentations, practical workshops are held to assist members develop their knowledge and skills in research and writing.

DEPISA publishes a semi-regular monograph containing reports of members' research into their own practices. Some members have indicated their desire for DEPISA to publish a journal of research. However, the main purpose (the domain) of DEPISA is to contribute to the continuing professional development of its members. It does this by providing opportunities for members to learn from opportunities to develop their research skills, their presentation skills, both oral and written, and from a sharing of individual's research into their own practices.

It is a mistake to think about communities of practice as a distinct structure. Communities emphasise identity. Wenger states that communities of practice do not fit easily within a traditional organisational hierarchy and points out that there is no single structure common to all communities of practice. However, there are three characteristic shared by all communities of practice: the domain, the community, and the practice.

In order for there to be a community of practice there must be a shared interest in a particular aspect of life or work among those who would seek to form such a community. In pursuing their interest domain members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other and share information. The interest domain of DEPISA is the improvement of teaching and learning outcomes. In undertaking activities which are aimed at researching better ways of doing their work members build relationships that allow them to learn from each other

(Wenger, n.d.). In building these relationships members are engaged in a shared practices, based upon experiences, stories, ways of addressing recurring themes, such that a shared repertoire of resources is developed.

We maintain the DEPISA community by holding regular meeting, two each year, we encourage members to contribute to these meeting by making oral presentations about their research, and we publish a monograph containing written reports of members' research. By providing a safe and supportive climate for oral presentations, as well as workshops on how to make oral presentations more effective all members contribute to the learning of each other, not only through the content of what is presented, but also through the way in which the presentations are structured and supported. Members who wish to improve their skills in writing their research in English are provided with editorial support, and learn more about the need to meet the requirements of the DEPISA monograph.

DEPISA is extremely fortunate to have the support of the Presidents of each university from which members are drawn. All members' universities agree to host meetings at no cost to members. Some universities, but not all universities, provide some financial support for members to attend meeting. In other cases individuals are prepared to fund their own travel and accommodation expenses to attend meetings as often as they can. DEPISA does not have any membership fees and no fees are charged for attending meetings, workshops, or for the provision of editorial assistance.

The coordinating group of DEPISA is located in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney. Prior to each meeting members are required to send an abstract of their intended oral presentation to Sydney where it is edited and returned to the author for their approval. Many presenters indicate that have learned much about writing from this process.

When members wish to submit a paper for consideration to be published in the DEPISA monograph they are required to do so in the format which has been outlined. Through the editing process the authors learn more about standard academic practices about reporting research, structuring a paper, and referencing their work in the approved manner. They also learn about the importance of writing to meet a deadline.

Designing a *Community of Practice*

When designing a community of practice Wenger (2000) identifies a number of questions which must be answered. When our group first met I would suggest that the individuals that attended the first workshop had no idea that they might eventually form a community of practice with the current membership and structure. However, it can still be useful to consider these questions, and to reflect upon the DEPISA responses to them.

- *What types of activities or events might be the focus of a community of practice? Should these activities be formal or informal? How often should the events take place?*

As has been outlined, DEPISA activities and events consist of formal meetings held twice each year, oral presentations by members, and the publication of members' research in a monograph. As a result of DEPISA individuals from different universities have formed alliances with colleagues and have undertaken activities in addition to the DEPISA activities.

- *How should the community be coordinated? By whom should it be coordinated?*

A community of practice should always be coordinated by someone who is a member. The team at the University of Sydney act as coordinators.

- *How will connectivity between people be established and maintained?*

Connectivity between people is maintained through a database. Email is the official channel of communication, although the development of a DEPISA website was trialled without great deal of success. Individual members connect with other DEPISA colleagues through social media such as Facebook.

- *Who will be the members of the community?*

The members of DEPISA have selected themselves. Anyone who contacts the coordinators and expresses an interest in attending a meeting and making a presentation are added to the membership list. This has led to a core group who attend almost every meeting, and another group that is more peripheral. The way in which DEPISA is structured allows individuals to determine the level of their participation. Initially all DEPISA members came from universities in ASEAN countries, but in recent times members from China and Korea have joined the community.

- *What will be the learning project of the community? Who determines what it will be?*

The general thrust of DEPISA is the continuing professional development of educational professionals. At each meeting one person from each country with DEPISA members reports to the whole membership of recent and possible future developments in education, both higher education and school education, in their country. As a result of this briefing the members decide on what their next projects might be.

- *What artifacts might the community develop and share?*

The main artifacts of DEPISA are the volume of abstracts for each meeting and the monograph.

Value in a *Community of Practice*

In our professional life we are continually required to provide evidence, preferably in a measurable form, that we are meeting our key performance indicators. In a community of practice, such as DEPISA, this may not be so easy to achieve. When we focus on value in a community of practice we must consider social learning activities such as sharing information, tips and documents, learning from each other's experiences, helping each other with challenges, creating knowledge together, keeping up with the field, offering new types of professional development opportunities (Wenger et al., 2011).

All communities of practice have stories – how they started, what has happened since, what participants are trying to achieve. Wenger et al., (2011) emphasise the importance of narratives in providing evidence of the value of a community of practice. But, as they point out narratives that frame the contribution of communities to learning are complex and involve multiple voices.

In this paper I have presented a personal narrative. Each of you has your own personal narrative. The collective narrative of DEPISA consists of the personal narratives of all members. In their 2011 publication Wenger et al. have provided a template for a personal

value narrative which I encourage you to complete and return to me so that we may begin to compile a collective narrative for DEPISA.

Concluding comments

The accountability and identification that form the basis for power in communities of practice is horizontal, mutual, negotiated, often tacit and informal. In DEPISA we might think that the form of governance practised by the coordinators is a stewarding governance with horizontal accountability. This form of governance is associated with engagement in joint activities. In achieving this negotiation is a key element. In DEPISA there is negotiation about issues of mutual relevance, standards of practice, peer recognition, identity and reputation.

DEPISA has a commitment to collective learning and we believe that practice is something produced over time by those who engage in it. We might ask how long will DEPISA last? The answer to this is indeterminate. As long there is an interest in maintaining the group and members consider that they get value from belonging to DEPISA and participating in its activities it will continue. Membership will continue to change over time, but as long as the basic belief that DEPISA can continue to meet the professional development needs of its members it can survive.

As Wenger (2010, p. 180) wrote *'learning is not just acquiring skills and information, it is becoming a certain person'.*

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Appendix: Personal value narrative: Empty template (for any professional)

Personal value narrative: empty template (for any professional)

Name:	How participation is changing **me as a professional** (e.g., skills, attitude, identity, self-confidence, feelings, etc.)	How participation is affecting **my social connections** (e.g., number, quality, frequency, emotions, etc.)	How participation is helping **my professional practice** (e.g., ideas, insights, material, procedures, etc.)	How participation is changing **my ability to influence** my world as a professional (voice, contribution, status, recognition, etc.)
Reasons for participation (e.g., challenges, aspirations, professional development goals, meeting people, etc.) **+/-**				
Activities, outputs, events, networking (e.g., lesson material, discussion, visits, etc.) **+/-**				
Value to me (e.g., being a better professional, handling difficult situations, improving organizational performance, etc.) **+/-**				

Note: +/- Indicates that you can provide positive / negative experiences

Short Term International Experiences During Students' Undergraduate Years

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Abstract

This chapter addresses one aspect of the field of research into teacher short term international experiences (STIE) (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Harbon, 2007a): that is, teachers benefiting from, and making the most of, their participation in such overseas activities. Such professional development activities in-country, systematically researched, can add support to the notion that these experiences are not merely the phenomena of teachers travelling abroad, rather informative and valuable professional development activities which can, like all higher education experiences, 'change lives' (Watson, 2013b). This chapter provides a brief overview of the history, scope and nature of short term international experiences for language teachers, summarises the research literature, examines frames for tracking teachers reflecting on the experiences, and provides suggestions as to how teachers can make the most of short term international experiences.

Introduction

This chapter addresses one aspect of the field of research into teacher short term international experiences (STIE) (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Harbon, 2007a): that is, language teachers benefiting from, and making the most of, their participation in such overseas activities. The notion of teachers professionally developing 'in-country' is not new, and teachers have often self-funded to undertake such activities. However, with an increase in public expenditure contributing to such programs, for example the *Endeavour Language Teacher Fellowships*, as well as *AsiaBound* and *New Colombo Plan* scholarships in Australia, there is an increasing need to conduct empirical research in the area. As well, in an era where teachers are increasingly focusing on their professionalism, such professional development activities in-country, systematically researched, can add support to the notion that these experiences are not merely the phenomena of language teachers travelling abroad, rather informative and valuable professional development activities which can, like all higher education experiences, 'change lives' (Watson, 2013b).

This chapter provides a brief overview of the history, scope and nature of short term international experiences for language teachers, summarises the research literature, examines the notion of teachers benefiting as their lives are changed as a result of the experience, and makes suggestions as to how teachers can make the most of such experiences.

Higher education changing lives

Professor Sir David Watson has recently published on the notion of higher education in general having the potential to change lives (Watson, 2013a; 2013b). The folk wisdom and other 'claims' of what higher education is and does for students encompass questions, the first is:

> *set ... around conscience [which can be linked with ethical behavior]; the second around character as formed through 'liberal' higher education; the third combines calling, competence, and craft as in the zones of professional and vocational higher education; the*

> *fourth involves citizenship as in respective obligations to civil society, the state and global responsibilities; and the final set introduces capability, or the role of higher education in inculcating life-skills, including employability*
>
> (Watson, 2013b, p. 1).

Improvements to a student's life can occur relating to faith, to character, and 'by giving you marketable abilities, by making you a better member of the community, or simply by being capable of operating more effectively in the contemporary world' (Watson, 2013b, p. 2). Watson concludes, 'in this way, higher education's purposes come together in terms of self-creation and the authentic life, the habit of thinking deeply, and the capacity to connect with others empathically'. It is also the purpose of this paper, to argue that such life changing experiences provided by higher education for teachers, are even further enhanced if the higher education learning occurs as a result of a short term international experience.

Teachers short term international experiences

The research cited in this paper concerns short term international experiences.

Short term international experiences sit in the wider Study Abroad literature: language majors largely from US colleges who take semester and year-long study programs and variously improve (or not) their language proficiencies. Barbara Freed (2005; 1998; 1995a; 1995b) has published seminal work in this area.

There are two terms associated with work in the area: Bodycott and Crew (2001; 2000) in Hong Kong refer to these programs as Short Term International Language Intensive Programs (STOLIP). Pre-service teachers from the Hong Kong Institute of Education undertake short term periods in teacher training institutions in England, Australia and New Zealand (for e.g. James Cook University, Townsville; The University of Wollongong). The STOLIP are characterised by local homestays, school teaching experiences and field trips of the local areas. Bodycott and Crew's (2001; 2000) research and Jackson's (2009) research examines the pre-service teacher aspects of the programs. Barkhuizen and Feryok's (2006) complementary research analysed their New Zealand institution's reaction to the STOLIP as the hosts of the Hong Kong programs. Interestingly the term used by Barkhuizen and Feryok is Short Term International Experiences (STIE).

More recently in the United States, Pence and Macgillivray (2007) have examined the impact of pre-service teachers' experiences in a Native Indian Reserve. Driscoll, Rowe & Thomae (2014) surveyed UK teachers who had spent four weeks in either France, Spain, Germany or Italy for their professional development learning. Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic and Jon (2009) and Bachner and Zeutschel (2009) have examined the impacts of such programs over time.

Some STIE for teachers offer learning experiences purely related to the target language/culture as well as field experiences. Some include a teaching experience.

Australian research on short term in-country experiences for language teachers

Apart from the author of this paper, the key Australian researchers in the area of short term international experiences for teachers chiefly include Booth (1997), Ferry and Konza (2001; 1999) and Hill and Thomas (1997). Halse (1999) undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of study tours to Asia on Australian teachers and teaching practice.

The author's academic engagement in this area began with a colleague at the University of Southern Queensland in 1986 when we jointly coordinated the University's Asian Studies Programme Study Tour to Bali and Java for a 3 week period. Our paper, entitled *A field trip*

for Australian adults learning about Asia – Some observations (Harbon & Bruce, 1986) examined our observations and handy hints we believed study tour organisers should heed in preparing for and leading these tours.

Harbon and Atmazaki's research was published in two papers in 1999, then followed by an article entitled *Stories of raw green chillies and unlocked cupboards* in 2002 (Atmazaki & Harbon, 1999a, 1999b; Harbon & Atmazaki, 2002). We saw that although our Australian teachers all had a proficiency in Indonesian language, there was little use of their language facility during their time in-country when they experienced culture shock or cultural mismatch.

Harbon and McGill examined teachers' pedagogical understandings in their journal data when a second group of Australian teachers traveled to West Sumatra in 2000 (Harbon & McGill, 2002; 2001a; 2001b; McGill & Harbon, 2006; 2003; 2001). Stepping out of their own familiar surroundings of an Australian classroom, confident in their pedagogy, the group of Australian teachers journaled their perceptions when 'decentering' and observing 'other' (Indonesian) pedagogies at work in West Sumatra.

Fearnley-Sander, Moss and Harbon's research (Fearnley-Sander, Moss & Harbon, 2004) focused on collaborative teacher learning about 'inclusive' 'civic' classrooms when a further group of Australian teachers traveled to West Sumatra.

Harbon (2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2006, 2005, 2003, 2002) has examined language teacher knowledge about language, culture and identity in her work since 2002 based at the University of Sydney. As part of a larger study, Harbon surveyed all 38 schools and faculties of education throughout Australia in 2006 in order to ascertain the extent to which this kind of activity was a part of the profile of the faculty or school in the recent past. Of 35 responses to the questionnaire, 24 schools or faculties of education indicated that they offer some kind of outgoing STIE for their pre-service (and sometimes in-service) groups of teachers. Research on these programs is sparse and serendipitous.

The premise underpinning all these research projects is that teacher learning will occur when teachers participate in international experiences: teachers taken out of their familiar environment, can be encouraged to systematically reflect on the meaning of all events and make subsequent meaning from events. Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006, p. 412) state that 'teacher candidates must have structured opportunities for critical reflection'. According to Brown (2004, p. 326, cited in Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006, p. 411), 'teacher education programs 'designed to examine self-concept, perception, and motivation will generate a more receptive attitude toward multicultural tenets''.

Teacher reflective practice

This chapter focuses on the methods and frames for teachers' self-realisation as their lives change during short term international professional development experiences. In the short term study abroad teaching contexts they are able to examine their 'knowings' (Moran, 2001) through reflection on language, culture. Short-term international experiences are a very suitable context in which this self-realisation can occur, and their reflective journals allow a framing of these 'knowings' through cultural values.

The 'self-realisation' evident in teacher journaling, as teachers reflected on language, culture, identity, teaching and learning, would hopefully develop teachers' understandings of themselves and their teaching practice through a process of writing. According to Farrell

(2001, p. 23) this involves ‘opportunities … created for teachers to use conscious reflection as a means of understanding the relationship between their own thoughts and actions’.

In each of the planned short term international experience programs the author has lead or co-lead since 1986, journaling has been a feature of her own professional practice, and students are strongly encouraged to write journals too. Hand-writing of journals has now, understandably, morphed to become ‘blogging’ online.

The process of analysing data through content of those journals involves condensing data into categories based on valid inference and interpretation. Such data analysis has the goal of seeing whether the ‘research findings … emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes within the raw data’ (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 179). This is a ‘directed’ inductive process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) where the coding follows the known theories.

Bagnall (2005, p. 105) adapted the work of Harris, Smith, Merritt, Simons and Reid in 2002 and the way they developed ways of analysing students’ reflective writing. This strategy has been helpful to see the value in journaling. The three strata of culturally reflective writing are: Culturally descriptive reflection, Culturally dialogic reflection and Culturally critical reflection.

Harbon (2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2006, 2005, 2003, 2002) has utilised reflective writing, descriptive, culturally dialogic and culturally critical reflections. Each reflective journal entry, considered as data from any of the authors’ short term international experience programs, was coded as being culturally descriptive, culturally dialogic or culturally critical. Most reflections included descriptive and dialogic reflections: fewer teachers write what can be considered culturally critical reflection. The three types of reflective writing serve a purpose in teacher self-realisation, all part of the process of higher education changing lives.

Culturally descriptive reflection can be described as *writing that referred to pre-service students’ learning of new cultural practices, ideas, terms, and people … In particular culturally descriptive writing included … language, and expressions that describe important aspects of the … cultural practices and beliefs… culturally descriptive writing showed pre-service teachers’ growing awareness of culture and its role in learning. Such culturally descriptive reflection provides the starting point for analysing the cultural assumptions in teaching and learning situations.*

Culturally descriptive reflection can be seen where the pre-service teachers noticed difference and labelled ‘other’ practices, ideas, terms and people could be seen through reflective writing. In capturing (Harbon, 2007c) these culturally descriptive reflections, descriptions of their students, the classroom environment, practices and cultural products were scattered throughout many of the teachers’ journals. The statements were often offered without value judgements, but were clearly statements about the difference of many observable aspects of the new context they encountered.

Culturally dialogic reflection is *writing that involved the pre-service students in analytic conversations with themselves and their culture, and their cultural practices. In particular, culturally dialogic reflective writing discussed how cultural practices conflict in school settings, and the meaning of this … Culturally dialogic reflective writing explored the underlying origin of particular teaching and learning situations, and tried to explain their cultural basis.*

Culturally dialogic reflection was observed of the pre-service teachers in dialogue with themselves, attempting to make meaning from where they saw their own cultural

understandings in conflict with the ‘other’. Statements exhibiting characteristics of the teacher involved in dialogic reflection have been cited (Harbon, 2007c). After making statements in the opening utterance about the cultural notions they are encountering, they make further utterances which I argue are examples of the teachers speaking to themselves (convincing themselves?), making sense of the situations. The dialogic reflections appear to contain two parts. The first statement in the dialogic reflection is a statement about what the Australian teachers perceived had occurred with the students’ learning (in the ‘other’ culture). This was closely followed by one or two or more evaluative statement about the learning task or pedagogy choice, as if the teachers were convincing themselves of their teaching strategies and pedagogy, or making statements about the student behaviour.

Culturally critical reflection involves *writing in which the pre-service teachers examined their own teaching behaviour in the context of the wider social, political and cultural context… In particular, culturally critical reflective writing focused on speculation about appropriate teacher behaviour and pedagogy in the context of reviewing cultural assumptions. Such writing evidenced pre-service teachers theorising about the best ways to plan, program and organise teaching and learning on the basis of their reflections on new cultural learning.*

Culturally critical reflection was seen in the way pre-service teachers synthesise the new cultural information and either make statements about the wider social, political or cultural context or make statements about power relations. Compared to the higher number of incidences of both culturally descriptive and culturally dialogic reflections, fewer of these culturally critical reflections were in evidence in the data cited in Harbon (2007c). The teachers appear to be making more global statements, and grouping all learners together as Indonesian or Korean learners, providing generic traits about student learning. There were other aspects of ‘critical’ including ‘weighing up’ or judging understandings of her own and ‘other’ culture.

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international experience

Harbon found in her unpublished audit of short term international experiences offered in faculties and schools of education in Australian universities in 2006 that many pre-service teachers are offered downloadable pre-departure booklets, itemising a comprehensive list of considerations for surviving the period overseas (*See* for example: http://www.uow.edu.au/educ/prac/files/Fiji_Prac06Hbook.pdf)

What is offered in this paper, in comparison, is the idea of conducting systematic research (assisted by pre-departure workshops) on teacher reflective journaling, so the teachers themselves are empowered to discover their understandings which develop – and change lives – before, during and after the short term international experiences. For teachers themselves to discover, and then maintain and foster newly encountered values gained during the in-country experience would provide not only the teachers themselves with an empowered view of their understandings and ‘knowings’ (Moran, 2001), but also be empirical evidence for stakeholders and funding bodies of the value of such experiences in the professional development of teachers.

A workshop series should be conducted during the pre-departure period, to cover aspects such as the nature of the theoretical underpinnings of these intercultural learning experiences, as well as seeking permissions from the participants to allow the research findings to become

part of a data set for subsequent analysis and reporting. Importantly the workshop needs to highlight the value of teacher reflection, and model the best ways to journal.

A concluding workshop session, preferably conducted at the point of program evaluation just prior to the teachers returning home, would allow:

- teachers the opportunity to share their beliefs about how such structured reflection may be valuable (if no suggestions forthcoming, the leader would be able to start the discussion with examples found in Table 1 below).
- teachers the opportunity to examine their reflective writing and the writing of others, to analyse their writing according to the three-fold culturally reflective frame, and then make meaning and conclusions about the value of such new understandings.
- the option for teachers to track their 'knowings' further at significant points after their return home, such as one month, three months, six months, one year

If not a workshop, some kind of booklet or guided study notes is easily able to support such teacher professional development.

Allowing the teachers to examine and classify their reflections

A step still in the planning stages is for teachers themselves to examine their own writings according to either their own frame, or according to the frame of culturally reflective writings reported in this chapter. Table 1 outlines the frame for this to occur through a process of questioning in a teacher workshop.

Table 1: Suggested structure for a teacher workshop

The value of short term international experiences for teachers: A workshop

Steps for teachers to examine own journal writing:

- Read through journal entries a couple of times
- Decide on an analytical frame (perhaps use the CDeR/CDiR/CCrR frame)
- Highlight how the reflecting has occurred
- Trace any movement in thinking/positioning/intercultural knowing
- Make conclusions and 'self-realisations'

Workshop leader (or the study booklet):

- Works through with the teachers why it is valuable to systematically reflect in a journal
- Shows examples of each type of reflective writing, getting participants to look at the value of each type (this paper is not suggesting that all teachers should demonstrate each type of reflection to be considered best practice)
- The focus can be any focus – language teaching, language learning, classroom environments, pedagogy, materials

Examples of how to 'locate' and 'classify' reflective journal text

Culturally descriptive reflection

- sets out people, places, events, practices – describes the scope of the teacher thinking
- shows teacher the extent of the impacting factors on their experiences

- lists teachers own actions, perceptions
- describes the context clearly and thoroughly
- in describing the context clearly, some aspects of the situations become evident

Culturally dialogic reflection

- allows a ‘compare and contrast’
- allows teacher to see ‘own’ and ‘other’
- allows teacher to outline what she knows she knows
- allows teacher to justify actions/behaviours
- allows weighing up and evaluative judgement
- allows teacher to compare and contrast and make meaning from problematic situations

Culturally critical reflection

- shows teacher has moved to another perceptive stance
- self-realisation through the reflective stance of own and other culture, relative to the wider context
- shows the teacher she has moved out from ethnocentric stage
- shows teacher she is capable of weighing up stereotypes

Further benefits (Kramsch, 2007):

Through this reflection:

- teachers can identify desires – what they are trying to escape/run away from
- teachers can know more about Australian culture/values (go abroad to see what are our Australian values)
- as bilingual/bicultural professionals, they can position themselves as an insider and as an outsider to the target culture and identify which parts of the culture they know they know (and thereby teach)

It is contended in this chapter that such a workshop (or set of workshops):

- trains teachers’ ways of thinking/knowing
- deals not only about culture shock but also about cultural mismatch (Harbon & Atmazaki, 2002)
- encourages teacher ‘self-talk’ and ‘self-realisation’ before, during and after the STIE
- may allow a flexibility in teacher thinking.

In that way, the teachers may be able to track their own lives changing.

Changed lives

In the same way that Watson (2013b) stated that ‘higher education's purposes come together in terms of self-creation and the authentic life, the habit of thinking deeply, and the capacity to connect with others empathically’, the author of this chapter has endeavoured to argue that teachers thinking deeply and systematically reflecting while participating in a short term international experience (Bagnall, 2005) through journaling, can be life changing.

The three strata frame (Bagnall, 2005) provides one way of viewing and making meaning from the journal text analysis. The suggestions as to how the teachers themselves could analyse their own thinking to come to conclusions about their changed lives are worth considering.

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Developing Attributes of Global Citizenship: Lessons for Vietnamese Higher Education from Partnership Programs with Australian and Korean Universities

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Abstract

In recent decades Vietnamese universities have made considerable advances in enhancing the quality of education. These have been achieved through strong support from the Vietnamese government, assistance from international organisations, but more importantly the efforts of the universities themselves.

The strategic plan for Human Resources Development for Vietnam from 2011-2020 identifies weaknesses found in university graduates and addresses plans for human resource development. In particular, Vietnamese universities have not been very successful in developing attributes of global citizenship in their graduates. The government's Human Resources Development plan indicates that an important goal is for four Vietnamese higher education institutes to be able to produce graduates of international standard by 2020.

This paper addresses issues relating to human resource development in higher education institutes in Vietnam, especially in the Mekong Delta region. The framework of attributes of global citizenship will be discussed in light of the Vietnamese context. Insightful lessons learned from partnership programs between Can Tho University and The University of Sydney, Australia, and Daegu National University of Education, Korea will be a focus of the paper in order to present possibilities for developing attributes of global citizenship for Vietnamese university graduates.

Introduction

The last 15 years have witnessed rapid improvements in education in Vietnam. These achievements are indicated in the strategic plan for development of education and training from 2011 to 2020. Both the quality and quantity of education have been dramatically improved, especially the quotient of university and college students, which is currently 227 per 10,000 people, and with up to 40% of working people having gained job skills in formal training courses.

In the strategic plan for socio-economic development for Vietnam from 2011 to 2020, the government identified principal targets for human resource development so that Vietnam is able to meet the demands of the local and international labour markets, and for Vietnamese

people to actively participate in a globalised world. To realise the planned targets, the government developed the Human Resources Development plan in which the role of education and training is highlighted.

Many education projects aimed at developing quality human resources for working and living in a globalised world have been implemented. For instance, the national project on comprehensive innovative education and training after the year 2015 has been established. This project aims to enhance the competencies of school children and students serving the cause of industrialisation and modernisation of the country in the context of a socialist-oriented open economy and globalisation.

Another initiative has been the establishment of the four higher institutions of excellence: Vietnam-Germany University, Ha Noi University of Science and Technology, Vietnam-Russia Technology University and Vietnam-UK University. These universities aim to produce graduates at international standards. A project on improving foreign language proficiency for Vietnamese to 2020 has been developed and is in operation. These investments in education signify the strong focus of the country on developing quality human resources, especially preparing school and university/college students for living and working in a globalised era.

The Mekong Delta of Vietnam, with 13 provinces, has a population of around 17 million people, and comprises 21.44% of the labour force of the country. The region has made remarkable achievements in education and socio-economic development during the past 15 years. The literacy rate has increased; access to higher education has been enhanced, and people's lives improved.

However, what concerns the government, leaders, scientists and educators is the quality of human resources in the region. Statistics indicate that the percentage of the labour force in the region without any job training is higher than that for the whole country, 83.25% and 74.6% respectively. Only around 4% of the human resource base aged 20-24 have successfully completed higher education programs. Opportunities for local people to access higher education are still limited, with one university/college per 1.5 million people, whereas the ratio in other regions of the country is one per 570,000 inhabitants.

To create favourable conditions for the inhabitants of the region to gain access to higher education the government has developed strategic plans to enhance the quality of human resources by establishing new universities and colleges.

Ten years ago, the only university in the region was Can Tho University and now 11 universities (both public and non-public) and 27 colleges are contributing in different degrees to developing human resources for the country. However, a big gap between the people's learning needs and the capacity of universities and colleges to offer quality programs in the region exists.

The Vice-Rector of a newly-established university in the Mekong Delta asserted '…Lecturers' capacity is still far from desirable' (Phan, 2011). The Rector of a college in the region also commented 'The majority of lecturers at the college are not qualified since those of high quality moved to big cities for better opportunities' (Phan, 2011).

Opportunities for university and college lecturers and staff members to develop their capacity are limited, and if they are offered it is usually through *one-off events* (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). It has become clear that the quality of lecturers could be better and creating opportunities for them to develop their capacity is an important investment towards achieving better human resources in higher education for the Mekong Delta.

The target of preparing people for living and working in a globalised world can only be achieved as long as there are qualified lecturers with corresponding qualities. Such qualities allow lecturers to be role models for their students, guiding them to become individuals with a strong competitive advantage in the globalised labour market.

There is no doubt that higher education institutes in the Mekong Delta, and in Vietnam in general, have to develop programs in which students achieve attributes which might assist them living and working in a globalised world. In other words, it is essential to help them develop attributes of global citizenship.

Global citizenship

Global citizenship refers to individuals who regard themselves as not only belonging to a nation-state, but also to a global civil society. They are informed and concerned about global issues and are prepared to act in an attempt to resolve these issues. Global citizenship is an approach to the internationalisation of higher education (Knight & de Wit, 1999; Qiang, 2003). Different authors view global citizenship from different perspectives including political, economic, ecological, and cultural. The attributes of global citizenship can be thought of as a competency approach to internationalising higher education.

In this paper the authors use attributes associated with global citizenship developed by Laws (2007) as a framework for the Vietnamese context. To Laws (2007), those with attributes of global citizenship possess (1) global values, attitudes, and beliefs such as democracy, morality, ethics, and social justice, (2) knowledge of local and world affairs, (3) skills at intercultural communication and (4) actions involving team work in international activities. Underlying Laws' 2007 framework is the competency-based approach to curriculum development which the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training chose for curriculum development in general education and higher education institutes in Vietnam after 2015.

In light of the competency-based approach to curriculum development, program objectives and learning outcomes are formulated in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In the Vietnamese context, learning outcomes associated with 'skills' embody 'actions' which graduates can perform. In other words, the framework Laws (2007) proposed is compatible with the approach to curriculum development in the project on comprehensive innovations in education and training for Vietnam after 2015.

Global citizenship has become a desirable attribute in universities worldwide since it has been seen as a concept to respond to the challenges of the 21st century brought about by globalisation. There is a call for 'global-ready graduates' (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006). For instance, in Australia, The University of South Australia, The University of Melbourne, Macquarie University and The University of Sydney have made official statements on assigning global citizenship as part of their graduates' attributes. In North America, for instance in Canada, the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria have introduced initiatives to develop their graduates into global citizens.

As higher education plays a leading role in human resource development, universities have to acknowledge the changing demands of the job markets. Globalisation has a strong influence on higher education. Employers are looking for graduates who have a broader world perspective and the capacity to cope sensitively with cross-cultural diversity. As a result, our graduates need to be 'cross-culturally aware' with international experience and able to 'understand the world in its global context' seeing the 'local in the global' (Shiel, 2006, p. 19).

Working in the higher education sector, we have to understand that people of the 21st century must be able to function effectively in international settings. They have to hold global values and attitudes to appreciate differences and tolerate ambiguities. They have to be equipped with knowledge of local and world affairs to deal with changes. They have to be able to communicate effectively across cultures, and most importantly they need to be able to participate in team work in international activities to solve global issues. Therefore, equipping graduates of the 21st century with competencies to become global citizens is one of the missions of higher education, as higher education has the power to change and positively impact on the issues in society as stated in the *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century* by UNESCO (1998).

To achieve the attributes of global citizenship, in addition to reforming curriculum while addressing critical global issues, universities may incorporate aspects of international education into their curriculum. International education provides the students with knowledge and skills and fosters attitudes and behaviours that students need in the global workforce. Haigh (2002) asserted that international education values social inclusion, cultural pluralism and 'world citizenship'. International education also develops students' understanding of themselves. They are aware of their own identity and perceptions (Crichton & Scarino, 2007). International education also helps develop students' cognitive abilities, understanding of differences, cross-cultural communication skills and comparative thinking skills (Mestenhauser, 1998).

Involvement in international experiences is also an approach used to develop some attributes of global citizenship. A number of universities have encouraged students to go abroad in exchange or internship programs. Living overseas, students can experience joys and difficulties and they can learn about cultural differences and adjust themselves to differences. This experience of cross-cultural understanding is gained through communication and working together in the university context and living with other students. The experience of living abroad may help students develop an understanding of international values and global perspectives (Marcotte, Desroches & Poupart, 2007).

Financial limitations hinder opportunities for lecturers and students in many universities in Vietnam, including those in the Mekong Delta, from gaining international experience. Using the framework of global citizenship developed by Laws (2007) as an evaluation tool to review what higher education institutes in the region could achieve regarding graduates' learning outcomes, did not provide evidence of their role in developing students' global citizenship competencies.

As stated previously, the teaching capacity of many lecturers at universities and colleges in the Mekong Delta is still far from desirable. Therefore, it is challenging for higher education institutes to take the leading role in introducing global citizenship as one of the graduate attributes into their programs. A big concern is how lecturers can teach students to become global citizens when their own knowledge of local and global issues, skills and actions for conducting activities in international teams, and attitudes and behaviours associated with

living and working in international settings is still limited. Capacity development is essential to help universities and colleges to complete their missions as an agent to have power to change and correct issues in the society.

Capacity development: A partnership between Can Tho University and The University of Sydney

In a recent document capacity development was seen as an evolving approach with movement from the conventional, traditional model, criticised by Kaplan and others, towards a capacity development approach to human development (UNDP, 2009). The authors state:

> *Capacity development is about transformations that empower individuals, leaders, organisations and societies. If something does not lead to change that is generated, guided and sustained by those whom it is meant to benefit, then it cannot be said to have enhanced capacity, even if it has served a valid development purpose.*
>
> (UNDP, 2009, p. 6).

As the first and biggest higher education institute in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, Can Tho University is a multi-disciplinary university. Fields of studies such as agriculture, aquaculture and teacher education have been offered at the University for more than four decades. The School of Education at Can Tho University has the mission of training students to become teachers in primary and high schools and offering professional development programs for in-service teachers. Before 2008, except for lecturers in English and French teacher education programs, not many lecturers in the School had opportunities to study overseas or to participate in team work activities in international settings.

This section of this paper presents the results of a partnership between the School of Education at Can Tho University and the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney which began in 2008 and focused upon the capacity development of lecturers of the School towards training students to become global citizens.

In a collaborative effort between the two institutions, the joint project *Re-forming Initial Teacher Education Programs for Can Tho University* was funded by the Australian Government and the University of Sydney. Fourteen lecturers and managers of the School of Education travelled to Sydney for a two-week training course on curriculum development. For some lecturers, it was their first trip overseas after 30 years of service. To almost all, global citizenship as graduate attributes was a totally new concept. Dr Kevin Laws and Dr Lesley Harbon were the co-ordinators of the project and arranged opportunities for the group to attend workshops offered by Australian professors, lecturers, and school teachers on curriculum development, teaching methods, technology in education, and linking assessment and learning outcomes of the curriculum.

The project was a big success. Models of good teacher education programs and good teachers in the Vietnam context were developed, and participants developed their knowledge and skills in redesigning their teacher education programs as a response to educational reforms in Vietnam. In addition to the success determined through the achievement of measureable outcomes, this project illustrated the importance of human relationships and mutual understanding (Laws, et al., 2009). In addition, participants from Can Tho had opportunities to develop their attributes of being global citizens, gaining broader perspectives on Australian

people, education and culture, experiencing how to communicate effectively in English in the Australian context, and working in teams among Vietnamese and with Australian academics.

Growing from this project Dr Kevin Laws and Dr Lesley Harbon worked collaboratively with Can Tho University and universities in Laos, Indonesia and Thailand to develop the project *Re-forming In-Service Teacher Professional Development.* In 2010, the project was funded by the Australian Government and the University of Sydney and this time four members from each country (two from universities and two from schools) attended the two-week training course at the University of Sydney. For this academic event, 16 members from the ASEAN countries and two members from Australia worked together as a team. Each country team identified issues in in-service teacher professional development in their own context and learned how to adapt or develop models for in-service teacher professional development for their own country by interacting with, and learning from, their counterparts.

The project, in addition to developing products associated with models of in-service teacher professional development for each country team, provided opportunities for participants to: develop their understanding of education in other countries in the ASEAN community; learn how to work in a team in an international setting; develop attitudes and values associated with the sharing of knowledge; and appreciate the differences among members coming from different national, educational and cultural backgrounds.

Evaluation from participating universities and schools showed that the two mentioned projects gained much success not only in terms of outcomes related to reforming teacher education or in-service teacher professional development, but also in building an international learning community where lecturers and teachers share, learn, treasure, respect and love each other.

Growing out of the successes achieved in the two projects, the organisation *Developing Educational Professionals in Southeast Asia* (DEPISA) was established in 2011. One of the important missions of DEPISA is to develop the capacity of lecturers and teachers towards students' achieving better learning outcomes. Since 2011 DEPISA has held two meetings per year. Past meetings were organised in Can Tho, Jakarta, Suratthani, Vientiene and Bangkok. The results of collaborative work among DEPISA members, especially the keen interest and support of Dr Kevin Laws and Dr Lesley Harbon, resulted in the publications of two monographs which included articles written by DEPISA members. Opportunities for sharing and learning are open to participating members from these ASEAN higher education institutes. Membership of DEPISA as a professional learning community (Hord, 2009) has grown dramatically with around 80 members participating in DEPISA at the moment.

For these capacity development projects, the move from training to learning has been practised (Laws, 2014). In the conduct of DEPISA workshops, Etienne Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning was adopted. Wenger based his ideas about learning, knowledge, knowers, and knowing on the following:

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 identified four components in his approach to learning as social participation: learning as experience (developing meaning); learning as becoming (developing an identity); learning as belonging (developing a community); and learning as doing (developing knowledge and improving practices).

Each of these components formed part of the approach adopted to facilitate learning by participants involved in our project. The discussions, based upon important aspects and understandings regarding teacher professional development were stimulated through shared readings and experiences. This formed part of everyday activities during the workshops' meetings and contributed to increasing the ability of participants, individually and collectively, to make the world of professional development more meaningful.

These discussions, shared experiences and reflections led to changes in understanding 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 issues of great importance. This, in turn, 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 learning. When each of the groups returned to their countries similar practices were utilised to develop and expand the membership of the group as team members worked with colleagues to create *professional learning communities* within educational organisations within and across the sub-regions.

For projects on capacity development, not only are their impacts on participants' professional development important but their sustainability should be taken into serious consideration. Learning to transfer is a good example of sustainability. The experiences, knowledge and skills teacher educators and managers at the School of Education at Can Tho University gained from capacity development projects facilitated by the Faculty of Education at the University of Sydney were transferred to their newly-established partnership with Daegu National University of Education (DNUE) in Korea. CTU participants learned to transfer their capacity in project planning, monitoring and implementation, in their partnership with DNUE. The partnership between CTU and DNUE focuses on developing attributes of global citizenship.

Multi-Cultural Education Program: Partnership between Can Tho University and Daegu National University of Education

The partnership between Can Tho University and Daegu National University of Education (DNUE) began in 2011. Activities related to this partnership focus on academic and cultural exchange. International experience is included in the training program at DNUE. According to Bennett (2009), international experiences facilitate students' intercultural competence. These experiences have strong influence for global engagement activities and thus develop global citizenship.

In collaboration with the local government during the past three years, DNUE has sent 26 teacher education students and 41 children from elementary schools to Vietnam to experience Vietnamese education, and culture and life of the people. DNUE welcomed four Vietnamese members (3 university lecturers from the School of Education and one school teacher) to Korea to develop their professionalism in Education for Sustainable Development and Korean culture. In addition, DNUE provided opportunities for three students from the School of Education to attend the Winter School in Korea. Organisers of these activities asserted that participants were happy making new friends, learning new things and developing new ways of looking at life and the world.

In light of the global citizenship framework proposed by Laws (2007), these programs fostered the development of respect, equality, diversity, empathy and open-mindedness in the participants (i.e. *developing global values, attitudes and beliefs*). Participants had chances to learn about their own cultures via the foreign culture to which they were exposed. They learned how to adjust their language use (i.e. *developing skills of global citizens*). Participants also participated in decision-making, team work activities with foreign counterparts, manifesting the development of their *actions and behaviour* associated with global citizenship. There is no doubt that activities conducted in the scope of the Multi Cultural Program equipped participants with *global knowledge and understanding* as local and world affairs/issues, knowledge of other cultures, beliefs, religions, customs and traditions, environment, pollution, and health were experienced and studied.

It has become clear that with exposure, interactions and experiences, children, students, and lecturers have been exposed to building competencies to live and work interdependently in our globalised world. It can be seen that DNUE closely collaborates with local government and the University aiming to produce school teachers with global perspectives, skills and actions for living and working in the 21st century.

Conclusion

Initial teacher education programs at Can Tho University are being re-formed at the moment.

Global citizenship has been addressed as an essential graduate attribute in these programs. To achieve global citizenship as a graduate attribute, plans and strategies for human resource development need to be focused on. In this connection, insightful lessons learned from partnerships between Can Tho University with University of Sydney (Australia) and Daegu National University of Education (Korea) for higher education institutes in Vietnam in general and in particular those in the Mekong Delta can be summarised as:

> Collaborative activities should be based on mutual trust, understanding, respect and love.
>
> Activities related to capacity development should lead to the building of professional learning communities. An international professional learning community will facilitate the transfer from lecturers to students of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to function effectively in international settings.
>
> The sooner it occurs, the better it is for students to be exposed to activities aimed at developing their competencies in living and working in a globalised world.
>
> The establishment of partnerships between the local community and higher education institutes plays a role in realising curriculum objectives and shows a great picture of

shared responsibility between schools and community in developing human resources for the society.

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Using Action Research in Changing a Work Practice: A Case Study at Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand

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Abstract

The concept of a good lecturer as a good researcher has been accepted in many higher education institutions including Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand. However, to encourage every lecturer to conduct research while they are responsible for a full teaching load as well is unlikely to be successful. The teaching load during the semester at Phranakhon Rajabhat University is normally 15 hours per week which takes most of the lecturers' time and energy. In order to change the work practices of staff so they become good lecturers and good researchers at the same time, action research concepts have been implemented to understand staff behaviours and attitudes.

Action research focuses on the continual process of changing human behaviour and finding the solutions for real situations, thereby providing rich information to plan change in organisational development. Following the action research approach of Kurt Lewin, there are three elements that are essential: 'the joint existence of research, action, and participation – in an ongoing cyclical process' (Greenwood & Lewin, 1998, 374). This study involves not only the processes of planning, action, and evaluation, but also involves the researcher's participation during the resolution process.

A retrospective introduction

In the past being a good lecturer in a university meant that a person could teach and transmit knowledge to the students, and the students could use that knowledge in practice. Today this is not enough when considering the university's goals. To be relevant to communities and societies, universities need to invest in research and human resources (Elena, 2004). Universities are acknowledged as places in which new knowledge is created and disseminated through academic publications (Warden, 2004). The fundamental goals of universities in any country emphasise excellence in teaching and research (Lombardi et al., 2000). It is important for every Thai university to focus on these two goals.

Since 2004 former Rajabhat institutes have become universities. There are in total 40 Rajabhat universities in Thailand (Rajabhat University Act B.E., 2547). To implement the objectives of a good teaching university is not difficult because this has always been acknowledged as a key element in this type of institution. However, to become a good research university requires different approaches. For more than 100 years all Rajabhat universities have been well accepted as the best teacher colleges in Thailand, but to be acknowledged as a research university will probably not happen in this decade. Staff who are working at Rajabhat universities have to prepare themselves to become good researchers and know how to share their research knowledge through academic publications.

Afiouni (2007) suggests that in order to increase the organisational performance of a university, it is important that every resource, human and technical, can be integrated to create value to the organisation. The research aspect of Rajabhat universities needs to be

further developed. Menkhoff, Chay, Evers and Benjamin Loh (2005) stated that if any university wishes to be accepted by society it needs to enhance research in six areas:

1. leadership
2. strategy
3. culture
4. human resource management and reward
5. technology
6. knowledge management processes

The concept of professional development in higher educational institutions has been found by many researchers around the world and especially from research projects in developed countries, to be important. For example, the concept of working and learning together in teams (Bui & Baruch, 2010) to develop academic staff in higher education; the mentoring system in order to share teaching experiences based on sound practices (Lin, 2004); the idea of flattening the organisational structure and forming multi-disciplinary research teams (Greenwood, 2009) to motivate and encourage autonomous decision making. All these areas of research have been suggested as appropriate ways of facilitating the continuing professional development of higher education lecturers. Such lessons from many countries can be beneficial for Phranakhon Rajabhat University in Thailand.

Action research for changing a work practice

As mentioned above, it is necessary to increase the performance of universities by increasing research publications. However, to change the staff behaviour will not occur by accident. Strategies and action plans are needed to serve as a foundation to facilitate a research culture in universities.

This study explores a project aimed at encouraging staff to undertake research and to disseminate the findings to a wide audience. The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. What are the processes for managing cultural change to incorporate more research activity in Phranakhon Rajabhat University?
2. Can action research support the process of change more effectively if young lecturers who have undertaken research during their PhD carry out action research into their own role as change agents?

In order to answer these questions the remainder of this paper will tell a personal story.

In 2012, while I was participating at the DEPISA (Developing Educational Professionals in Southeast Asia) conference in Laos with other researchers from five countries (Australia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Laos), I heard about the newly published monograph reporting on action research/action learning/learning through action and how these approaches might be used to contribute to continuing professional development (Laws et al., 2011, 2013).

When I came back to my university, I invited some lecturers to participate in contributing to such a monograph. Because we are all lecturers I assumed that we had conducted research

every year, so it should not be a big problem to write one paper to publish in the monograph. After four months, I received no response from any of the people I had spoken to. Then, in November 2012, I started my own action research project on changing a work practice in order to answer the two research questions above.

Planned change

The project involved five participating lecturers from Phranakhon Rajabhat University. All of them had graduated with a PhD in various research fields and had been working at Phranakhon Rajabhat University for less than five years after graduation. The reason I choose those participants was because they have just started their careers at the university, and their knowledge of conducting research after graduating with their PhD was still up to date. I assumed that they would be most interested to be involved with my project. All of them were single and they dedicated most of their time to achieving the teaching and researching goals of the university.

I decided to adopt the action research approach of Kurt Lewin. In this approach three elements are essential: 'the joint existence of research, action, and participation – in an ongoing cyclical process' (Greenwood & Lewin, 1998, 374). The issue is to understand how to implement the three elements into work practice.

The first step from Kurt Lewin's concept is the existence of research. It is clear that the five participants have developed their own research projects. They understood how to conduct research and they knew how to manage their time. However, their motivation to keep going until they have concluded their projects is the most critical thing for me.

I had been participating with them from the beginning and promoting collaborative learning among our group members (Tam, 1999), and also other techniques such as creating a learning atmosphere (Nejad et al., 2012) through regular meetings each month, and sharing the progress of each other's research in a safe and friendly environment.

Planned change is important for bringing about improvement, but at the same time it is difficult to motivate people to change. Lewin's three-step model (Lewin, 1947) begins with 'unfreezing' the old behaviour of lecturers who want to focus only on teaching. Meeting the lecturers both formally (monthly meetings for progress reports) and informally (meeting at the coffee shop, or at the fitness centre or at the supermarket) during the 'unfreezing' process became very helpful and created a strong relationship between the six of us. In the process of 'unfreezing' I found that the major issues hindering the conducting of research are time management, and lack of support from the university administrators.

Dealing with time management necessitates self-discipline. It is obvious that the five participants are prepared to follow their schedules. It is difficult at the beginning to have plans for each week and set up the goals by the end of the month, but after two months, it seemed like the five participants could solve their time management problems, and have no complaints about not having sufficient time to write or work on their research anymore.

As one of the participants said:

> *If anyone complains to me about they do not have enough time, I will tell them to make it. You cannot find the time but you learn how to make time. Honestly, I think it depends on us. We all have the same 24 hours per day, but I can spend at least 3 hours per day to work on my research, I still have enough time to sleep and preparing for my teaching stuffs. If anyone believes that they do not have enough time, I think they just do not understand how to make time and I can show them.*

The second major problem during the 'unfreezing' process is lack of support from the faculty's administrators. To solve this problem I spoke to a senior administrator who looks after the teaching and research quality at my university. I pointed out that it is important to reward academic staff who attempt both teaching and researching at the same time. If the university cannot reward them it is necessary to reduce some teaching hours, and other administrative work from their normal workload in order to support them in spending more time to work on their research.

The discussion with the senior administrator did not change the promotion system at my university but it has impacted on human resource development strategies. Because of the importance of each university producing a certain number of research publications per year in order to receive funding from the Thai government, my university announced a financial reward for every publication completed. The status of the journal in which the research had been published was also considered. If a staff member had published in high impact journals they would receive 10,000 baht per article, and if they had published in low impact journals they would receive 3,000 baht per article. This policy changed the attitudes of our academic staff and they realised that it is worth their while to conduct research and to publish as many articles as they can.

Action and participation

In my initial discussions with the five participants who had agreed to be part of my research project all of them expressed concern about the heavy teaching load that prevented them from thinking about or creating any research project or writing any articles. However, finally I set up the weekly plans and created our learning team both online and face-to-face, to share progress. We had many activities together, both formal and informal, every month. By the end of 2013, the five participants had finished their research writing and were beginning to attend conferences and submit articles to journals. I can say that my objective to increase the research productivity among the five participants was successful. The processes of Kurt Lewin about change is working and the 'unfreezing' and 'moving' had continued through all the meetings and activities in 2013.

However, how to make this process sustainable through the process of 'refreezing' is still unclear. It might need to have the second phase of my action research focus specifically on how to make this behaviour sustainable.

Typically, the five participants have to teach around 15 hours per week and they also have to do administrative work at their faculties. They have to spend time with their families and friends and on the weekend they have to teach part-time students for at least 6 hours every week. To maintain the motivation to conduct research when they had been teaching all day is very challenging, and I think it is really important to search for more information about this from other universities in the developing world. How the participants adopt measures for continuous improvement and how the systems of their universities work to promote professional development needs further consideration. A comparison study with an Australian university into how continuing professional development is maintained is an alternative way to access suggestions. The DEPISA conference network through the University of Sydney, Australia, is a good opportunity to access strategies and policies of professional development and these could be implemented at Phranakhon Rajabhat University.

Burnes (2004) suggests that the 'unfreezing' process does not confirm that the change behaviour process will be successful. The process needs to be controlled so as to ensure the

direction of the outcomes of the change. It is appropriated to use action research to promote the learning approach that starts from 'unfreezing'. The ongoing cyclical processes of action research means movement from old behaviour to new behaviour occurs until an acceptable set of outcomes are reached. Schein (1996) said that changing human behaviour will not be successful if the organisational culture is not changing. Individual change will not be sustainable if the new behaviour cannot be integrated with the rest of the environment. Lewin (1947) suggested that the best way to 'refreezing' the new behaviour is changing the group norms to ensure that the new behaviour will survive in that group. The emphasis on changing the organisational culture to sustain the new behaviour of academic staff has become very exciting. Phranakhon Rajabhat University's executive administrators have to review their strategic plans and policies in order to sustain the new behaviour of academic staff.

The meeting with five participants prior to the DEPISA conference in Bangkok in June 2012 produced some interesting comments, as well as concerns and issues that need to be addressed, as follows:

> *It is hard to become an active researcher when you have to teach 15 hours per week, not including some more extra classes during the weekend. I can do both teaching and conducting research because this is just the part of the research project; I want to participate in this experiment. However, if you want me to do it again next year, or keep doing like this until I retire from the university, I am not sure that I can keep doing both things at the same time. The university has to set up a good strategy for me and for others. I cannot keep teaching and writing research papers forever, if I don't see any good outcome more than the reward of around 10,000 baht for one paper. It is very exhausting work and at the end of the day, I don't care about that money and I would rather sit back and enjoy my life or spend more time with my family instead.*

One participant from the Education Faculty said that:

> *One good reason that I feel like I will not do research again is because the university doesn't show any appreciation of my research writing. The reward of 10,000 baht is very tempting but when comparing about teaching more classes on the weekend, I can get the same amount of that money anyway and I don't have to work hard as I had done for my research either. I think the only way I will keep writing research papers is if the university includes research productivity into the promotion criteria or shows some real reward to my career, even though it is good to try to create the learning community for all the staff to keep learning and developing in the future.*

It can be seen from these comments that participants want to achieve their professional development both in teaching and research. However, it is necessary for Phranakhon Rajabhat University administrators to consider including research productivity as the major part of the promotion criteria. Ortenblad & Koris (2013) suggest that in order to create the learning organisation higher education institutions should be providing 'a learning climate as well as inter-disciplinary cooperation, and listen more to their staff and other stakeholders' (p. 205).

It can be stated that if Phranakhon Rajabhat University wishes to maintain continuing professional development as a major strategy, the administrators have to create and support a learning environment and respond to the various ideas of other stakeholders. The society is changing faster than in the past and it is important that the university's administrators understand the processes for managing change, and are prepared to support staff.

Conclusion

It is obvious that change is a continuous process and the results of change are difficult to control. There are many ways to manage change and by using Lewin's three step model it is possible to transform humans and to encourage more acceptable behaviour. Action research can be used as the method to integrate research and action into practice with flexible cycles and ongoing activities.

The results of this study showed that changing behaviour is possible and that one way to manage change is by using action research. Using communication techniques and negotiation with academic staff and setting up a support team among young researchers will persuade the young researchers to agree to change. Planned change has been introduced into action research to make sure that the outcomes of change can be controlled and have gone in the right direction. However, even though change is possible, to sustain the desired outcomes of change the new group norms need to be reinforced through the development and support of the new organisational culture.

My study has shown how it is really important that the executive administrators participate in the process of change. The change will be successful if the whole organisation adopts new and appropriate behaviours and creates the new environment that is appropriate for fostering them.

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Strategies to Assist Pre-Service Teachers to Reflect-in-Action and Reflect-on-Action During Practicum: A Case Study from Vietnam

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Abstract

For many years a fixed procedure for teaching practice has been used in Vietnam: pre-service teachers draft teaching plans before submitting them to their mentors for comments, and then they revise the drafts; their peers and mentors observe the lessons and evaluate the student teacher by solely pointing out strengths and weaknesses. Such a long-standing practice model results in almost no prospect of reflection-in and reflection-on action of the pre-service teachers.

Thus, the aim of this research undertaken by a group of teacher educators at the School of Education, Can Tho University (CTU) was to enhance the pre-service teachers' reflective capacity during their practicum. Participating in the research were three teacher educators at the School of Education, CTU, three mentor teachers, and two pairs of pre-service teachers in Primary Education and Vietnamese Literature and Linguistics Education for the high school level.

Three areas were the focus of this study: the identification of effective strategies in forming and activating pre-service teachers' reflective capacity; the impact of integrated strategies such as teaching diary completion, video recording, and after-class discussions on pre-service teachers' reflective capacity development; and how reflective capacity development contributes to improving pre-service teachers' teaching practice effectiveness.

Data were collected through the use of: drafted and revised teaching plans and teaching diaries of the pre-service teachers; videos; group meeting reports after classes; and interviews with the mentee and mentor teachers. Research findings proved the effectiveness of strategies in increasing reflective capacity and teaching practice of the pre-service teachers. Recommendations from this research are influential in reforming the future practicum model at the School of Education, CTU and other training teacher universities in Vietnam as well as elsewhere in the ASEAN region.

Issue

There is correlation between reflective practice and professional development of teachers according to Zeichner and Liston (1996). However, in Vietnam, many teachers do not perceive the nature of reflection and therefore underestimate its contributions to professional development. Thus, forming and developing reflective capacity for pre-service teachers during practicum has long been overlooked. In the context of teacher training reform, the question on how to foster reflective capacity of pre-service teachers attracts increasing attention. This paper reports the study findings on this issue.

Background

Counseling pre-service teachers (PTs) in high schools of Vietnam is virtually the whole responsibility of mentor teachers (MTs), and it proceeds in a procedural regime:

1. PTs draft teaching plans;
2. MTs request PTs to revise the drafts according to either their verbal or written comments;
3. PTs revise the teaching plans;
4. PTs teach under the observation of MTs and their peer teachers;
5. Both MTs and PTs meet after class to mainly listen to MTs' evaluation about the lesson.

In these evaluation-based meetings, MTs hold overwhelming power to judge PTs' strengths and weaknesses. To practise teaching in such a passive manner results in PTs becoming unreflective practitioners, displaying high levels of stress. To remedy this situation, teacher educators (TEs) in the School of Education, Can Tho University (CTU) in collaboration with MTs in Tran Quoc Toan Primary School, Can Tho city, and in the Lab School, CTU conducted research on adopting integrated strategies to support reflective capacity development for two pairs of PTs during the practicum in the two schools.

Project aims

Three areas were the focus of this study:

1. The identification of effective strategies in forming and activating PTs' reflective capacity.
2. The impacts of integrated strategies such as teaching diary completion, video recording and after-class discussions on PTs' reflective capacity development.
3. How reflective capacity development contributed to improving PTs' teaching practice effectiveness.

Literature review

Definition of reflective practice

Definitions of reflective practice have been varied. According to Moon (2001, p. 1), 'reflection lies somewhere around the notion of learning', and practitioners 'reflect on things that are relatively complicated' or 'we all reflect on our practice to some extent' (Rolfe et al., 2001, xi). In education, reflection is identified as an indispensable and mandatory professional quality of all teachers. That viewpoint is supported by Moran and Dallat (1995; p. 20), stating 'Learning to teach involves learning to reflect on teaching in a characteristically systematic way'.

Reflection is an ongoing process of scientific inquiries and awareness. To reflect requires an individuals' willingness to think of their action. Dewey (1933, p. 118) stated 'Reflection is an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends'. Reflection involves 'intellectual and affective actions in which individuals engage to explore their experiences' (Boud et al., 1985, p. 19).

However, the definition of reflection by Schon (1983) is more specific as he provides insights into the nature of reflection with a range of actions as follow:

> *[practitioners] frame the problem of the situation, they determine the features to which they will attend, the order they will attempt to impose on the situation, the directions in which they will try to change it. In this process, they identify both the ends to be sought and the means to be employed.*

Reflection is a more collaborative and integrated act than merely employing intellectual competencies of individuals in the form of logical analyses. Schon (1996) notes that 'reflective practice involves thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline'.

In addition to an intellectual action, reflection defined by Epstein and Hundert (2002) cited in Surgenor (2011, p. 2) is also an emotionally conscious process comprising:

> *.....the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, reasoning, emotions, values and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individuals and communities being served.*

Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action

Based on time variables two main types of reflection have been identified (Schon, 1983): reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. According to Schon (1983), reflection-in-action means 'the idea that a kind of knowing is inherent in intelligent action' (p. 50). In contrast, reflection-on-action is a term referring to a process 'in which practitioners return to the experience, attend to their own and others' feelings about the experience, and re-evaluate the experience' (p. 61-63). Reflection as conceptualised by Schon is a process of double reflection in which reflection-on-action is to reflect on what practitioners have already acted in the state of reflective thinking (reflection-in-action). Therefore, in comparison to reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action results in broader and deeper insights into previous practice since it benefits from looking back on what was practised formerly.

Reflection is a part of teaching, but how can teachers benefit from reflective practice?

Benefits of reflective practice in education

Proven as an effective means in educational practice, reflection is instrumental in developing professional capacities for both pre-service and in-service teachers regardless of their teaching experience and level of their skill. Maloney and Campbell-Evans (2002) highlight the value of reflective practice in professional development of beginning teachers. In the research by Bracken and Bryan (2010), and Collina, Karsenti and Komis (2013), it is proven that 'pre-service teachers may reflect on concrete or abstract issues, but these issues always arise from the practice'. Teaching reflectively also assists teachers' continuous professional development (Aleman, 2003); continuous learning through integration of teaching dimensions (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2004); constructing bridges between theory and practice; and consideration of multiple perspectives (Kinchloe, 2004).

Reflection obviously offers teachers a wide range of benefits. However, to form and foster reflective competence for teachers requires using appropriate strategies.

Strategies to develop reflective competency

Strategies recommended for promoting reflective competency for teachers include:

- conversations held between student teachers and their teacher mentors about the dilemmas they face during their teaching practice (Johnston, 1994);
- reflective writing based on a journal, daily lesson analyses and analysis of video-taped lessons (Hoover, 1994);
- analysis of critical incidents in teaching with a colleague or critical group (Tripp, 1993);
- a teaching portfolio (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995); and
- action research (Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991).

Among these approaches, 'reflection is enhanced when mentoring or coaching is provided that allows teachers as learners to tap into their own realm of experiences, reflect on those experiences, and construct personal meaning to inform their developing practice' (Barbara Larrivee, James M. Cooper, 2006, p. 20).

To sum up, reflection is displayed through individual teachers showing their willingness to question their own practice in collaboration with others to draw scientific conclusions for improving their teaching effectiveness.

Implementation

This research was conducted in the Lab School, Can Tho University and Tran Quoc Toan Primary School, Can Thơ city, Vietnam, from 28 February 2014 to 10 April 2014. Participating in the research were three TEs at the School of Education, CTU, three MTs (coded as MT A, MT B and MT C) and two pairs of the PTs in Primary Education and Vietnamese Literature and Linguistics Education for the high school level (coded as PT A, PT B, PT C and PT D).

The process of the research was as follows:

1. The researchers discussed research aims and strategies to conduct the research with PTs and MTs.
2. PTs prepared lesson plans before sending them to MTs for feedback, and then revised the lesson plans.
3. The researchers and MTs observed the PTs' teaching activities focused on reflection-in during their teaching.
4. After each lesson, PTs wrote teaching diaries to present their reflection-on capacity.
5. The researchers, the MTs and the PTs met to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and what could be improved related to the teaching activities and problems. Through questions, the researchers determined their reflection-in and reflection-on capacity progress.

Data collection and analysis

Data collected were mainly qualitative in nature and analysed utilising a praxis paradigm.

Data collection

To answer the research questions, the group collected the following data: eighteen drafted and revised teaching plans; twenty five diaries of the PTs; eight videos; thirty class

observations; eighteen group meeting reports after classes; interviews with mentee; and interviews with three MTs.

Data analysis

The data were quantitatively analysed to measure the effectiveness of using integrated strategies in increasing reflective capacity and teaching practice of the PTs.

Research questions

1. What HIIHFWLYHVWUDWHJLHVGRHXHWRIRUPDQGDFWLYDWH37V¶HIOHFWLYHFI

In this research, we utilised integrated strategies to enhance reflective capacity for PTs.

Strategy 1: MTs used question-based comments to assist PTs in self-adjusting their teaching plans instead of directly correcting and commenting the teaching plans.

Strategy 2: PTs were asked to fill in For-Reflection Diaries after every teaching session. A For-Reflection Diary template incorporates a number of questions ranging from listing teaching approaches, the purposes for employing these teaching approaches, and modes of student assessment to solutions to problems in their lessons.

Strategy 3: Utilising videos recorded in three different periods of the practicum (at the beginning, middle and end) to provide visual and oral evidence to support PTs to reflect on their own practice.

Strategy 4: Applying a three step procedure into after-class meetings.

- Step 1: PTs watch videos (only when teaching sessions recorded).
- Step 2: PTs complete For-Reflection Diaries.
- Step 3: Discussions with peer teachers in pairs, MTs and TEs. All meetings proceeded under the instruction of TEs by using reflection-focused questions which are adjusted according to the specific situations of every lesson and employed to stimulate PTs to produce in-depth reflective thoughts about their teaching.

In addition to the above listed strategies, when observing PTs' class, we also compared their actual teaching with intended activities in the teaching plans. Such comparison helped identify and assess PTs' reflection-in capacity.

2. What are the impacts of integrateGVWUDWHJLHVHDSSOLHGRQ37V¶HIOHFWLYHFDSD development?

Prior to the introduction of integrated strategies aimed at developing reflective capacity for pre-service teachers, the Practicum Guideline edited by the School of Education, CTU provided general advice to pre-service teachers on what deeply impacts upon them in lessons. Nevertheless, this guideline is more likely to be optionally applied rather than compulsorily put into effect. It is also undervalued by the lack of detailed instructions on how to write about the most important events in their teaching practice. Almost all pre-service teachers did not react to such a recommendation by either refusing to write or accepting to write only when they feel emotionally ready. Therefore, diary completion was not fully functional at assisting PTs' teaching improvements.

At the first stage of practicum when reflection-focused strategies were initially implemented, reflection-in and reflection-on capacities of PTs were limited and poor in both quantity and

quality. In the first two lessons of the four PTs, there were very few changes due to low level of efforts the PTs made in their teaching compared to that contained in the lesson plans.

Observing their lessons and comparing these with their lesson plans, we realised that PTs attempted to remember and repeat exactly what they had planned with almost no changes. Lecturing and closed-ended questions were most preferred and dominant in their first lessons while they rarely allowed their students to discuss or use formative assessment. After class, when commenting on their own lessons, all PTs expressed great regret at their performance because of failures in memorising their lesson plans. Therefore, the focus of PTs' reflection at the beginning was narrow and poorly effective as they were unable to look back on their teaching in depth and from various dimensions.

The later stage of the practicum witnessed significant improvements in both quantity and quality of PTs' reflection-in and reflection-on capacity. This was the result of increasing effectiveness of applying reflection-focused strategies. PTs' reflection-on capacity developed gradually under the effects of questions in For-Reflection Diaries, watching their teaching videos, and question-guided meetings after class.

Firstly, questions in For-Reflection Diaries assisted PTs in improving their capacity of self-assessing and self-identifying areas for adjustment and enhancement. A question found effective in developing PTs' reflection-on capacity is 'Does my teaching approach encourage students' thinking and help them explore or acquire something useful for themselves?'

In response to that question, PT B wrote:

> *In this lesson, I employed so many factual questions that had limited contribution to growing my students' logical thinking ability. I should challenge them with more logical reasoning questions in the next lessons.*
>
> (For-Reflection Diary on March 15, 2014).

By answering questions in For-Reflection Diaries, PTs also critically looked back on their efforts to analyse underlying causes for their failures in achieving lesson aims.

A typical example for that is:

> *I used multiple-choice questions to test my students' reading comprehension. However, it was more unlikely appropriate as a poem provokes many interpretations that could not be assessed by only completing MCQs test. Instead, I should employ more open-ended questions in this case.*
>
> (For-Reflection Diary by PT C on March 20, 2014).

As a result of answering questions, PTs continuously maintained a good habit of investigating their teaching problems that are major barriers to their professional development. They were able to explain reasons for their failures and set up solutions that can be found in a number of diaries starting with words like 'because', 'I should/will do … in the next lessons'.

Secondly, video recording and watching after class played a crucial role in focusing PTs' reflective views on judging effectiveness of interaction and communication between them and students. Pressure of time and teaching to evaluate during practicum led PTs to either ignore many important things or to be unable to observe all students' reactions to their teaching activities, but watching videos facilitated them to review the whole process of their teaching. PTs all agreed that video recordings and watching were ideal moments and an

effective tool to activate and qualify their reflection-on capacity since they analysed their own teaching practice.

PT A shared:

> *I merely paid attention to fit with time allowance for a teaching session while neglecting to check whether or not my students actually understood the lesson.*
>
> (Minutes of meeting, March 25, 2014).

Sitting in front of the screen to watch videos also reminded PTs of how to effectively communicate with students and keep them engaged.

PT C said:

> *I feel quite shocked at my own lesson since it is not good as previously thought. Frankly, I made many mistakes and was not concerned about my students' answers to respond correctly*.
>
> (Minutes of meeting, March 28, 2014).

These examples indicated that recorded videos acted as a mirror which supported PTs to undertake multidimensional reflection. They had an opportunity to get insights into their action and produce reflective thinking based on vivid evidence contained in the videoed lessons. Thus, recording and watching videos worked as an effective supporting instrument for PTs to enlarge the scope of their reflection-on capacity.

After-class meetings benefited PTs in increasing their in-depth reflection which they were unable to achieve without teacher educators' assistance.

A list of questions we asked PTs included:

- Why did you use that image or diagram?
- What was your purpose?
- How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the discussion activity you organised in class?
- Did you succeed in achieving your lesson aims?
- Why were several students still not engaged in your lesson?
- What would you do differently if you had the chance to teach this lesson again?

Focused questions for teaching discussion varied according to a number of different strengths and weaknesses as PTs conducted lessons. Yet, teacher educators avoided imposing their personal evaluation of PTs in all meetings.

As a good example of that, a short extract from our discussion about the lesson on 'How to write an argumentative essay' illustrates how such a discussion proceeded:

> TE 1: What did you target when requesting students to read the text on 'Recommendations for founding the Law Faculty'?
>
> PT C: To help students perceive the role of an argumentative approach.
>
> TE 1: Was it as effective as you intended?

PT C: Not, really. It is more likely time-wasting. I had better request students to do that when turning into the section: Procedure of writing an argumentative essay.

TE 2: If having a chance to teach again, what will you do?

PT C: I will ask students to discuss: What does the author argue for or against? What are the author's purposes? Does he include personal right or wrong judgment?

TE 1: Is 'Recommendations for founding Law faculty' text easy to read and comprehend for all students?

PT C: It was not appropriate for all students. I intend to replace it with another text more updated, practically knowledgeable and specific to engage students and encourage them to discuss.

(Minutes of meeting, March 29, 2014).

Coming to such question-based discussions, PTs stayed in the atmosphere of academic conversations where they were encouraged to share, analyse and investigate issues directly related to their teaching practice. In evaluation targeted meetings after class, like an accused person in the court, they used to be intensively stressed, but in informal meetings they communicated with teacher educators as trustworthy friends.

PT A commented:

Despite its more time cost, question-guided meetings after class enable me to add more mature thoughts into my answers.

(Minutes of meeting, March 15, 2014).

From another aspect, PT D, the less confident among the four PTs confirmed:

I am scared of being criticised while questions given by the TE make me feel more comfortable and ready for discussion. Thus, I am supported to develop self-awareness and critical thinking.

(Minutes of meeting, March 27, 2014).

More importantly, results of question-instructed meetings contributed to facilitating PTs not only in reflecting on a particular teaching section for increasing practice quality, but also in forming theoretical lessons for their lifetime profession. When sitting together under the instruction of TEs for reflection, PTs upgraded the level of their consciousness by generalising lessons based on their teaching experiences. This enabled them to construct rules that continuously apply to and influence their teaching careers.

PT A shared:

I note down details of the discussion that I find it as theoretical regulations for my teaching effectiveness after graduation.

(Minutes of meeting, March 25, 2014).

From the other side, development in PTs' reflection-on capacity, in turn, accelerated their reflection-in competency that resulted in an increasing number of changes in their teaching.

Many question-instructed meetings led to adjustments during their teaching such as replacing factual questions by argument-simulated questions, or refining modes of group discussion.

The Class Observation Diary on March 3 2014 by PT A teaching at Class 4A1 recorded that the teacher intended to organise discussion in pairs, but then turned into a competition for gifts between all groups.

Another example is when teaching Reading, PT D had planned to only question ‘What are the aspects of art in this literary work?’. However, after one student answered ‘the art of story-telling’, the teacher immediately added ‘Can you prove it in the work?’. Explaining the reason for using such a supplemented question, the teacher said ‘It is necessary for the student to provide more evidence, not only to present ideas’.

Almost all changes during teaching of PTs were effective and appropriate. Nevertheless, several adjustments due to time pressure such as eliminating discussions or game playing activities diminished success of PTs’ lessons. In question-guided meetings after class, TEs considered these adjustments as the focus for PTs to double reflect on the effectiveness of their reflective thoughts arising during practice.

From the above mentioned analyses, by introducing reflection focused strategies to PTs during the practicum, their reflective potentials were gradually promoted and employed as an indispensable means of their daily teaching practice in the form of both reflection-in and reflection-on capacities. The end of practicum also marked a crucial stage in their initial professional qualities development, as they became more active in teaching as skillful self-reflective practitioners. Acting as a dynamic for teaching effectiveness, improved reflective capacity resulted in both short-term and long-term effects on PTs’ professional development.

3. How does reflective capacity development contribute WR LPSURYLQJ 37V¶WHDFKLQJ practice effectiveness?

Through watching video recordings, teaching diary completion and after-class meetings, increased reflective capacity of four PTs drove improvements in their teaching practice.

For the first two lessons, worries about not delivering planned knowledge, missing some points in teaching plans, or exceeding the regulated time of a teaching session, hindered PTs from reflecting on whether they entirely achieved lesson aims and effective teaching approaches. Teaching diaries written during the initial period presented the dominance of lecturing and the shortage of effective approaches to evaluate students’ comprehension after lessons.

Additionally, despite recognition of students’ poor engagement in class, PTs did not make sufficient attempts to find solutions. Also, they ignored how to achieve lesson aims. Therefore, the initial teaching sessions of the four PTs focused on knowledge delivery with very limited opportunities for discussions and the use of high-ordered thinking questions. This initial approach discouraged and bored students with a monotonous atmosphere.

From the third lesson, an increased quantity and enhanced quality of reflection was noted. The professional capacity of four PTs also developed at different levels and pace. In term of short term impacts, teaching reflectively fuelled increasing demands for adjustments to improve their teaching quality.

Firstly, replacing questions to make them more appropriate to the lessons was an effective adjustment demonstrating a progress in PTs’ awareness and practice. That happened in literature lessons of PT C and D after they had perceived strong links between literary texts and real life, as well as the significance of using exclusive questions in teaching literature. The sort of questions they used to teach literature shifted from close-ended to open-ended

questions that deliberately developed students' ability of imagination and connection between texts and reality.

PT C pointed out that:

> *questioning students is never nonsense, but how to challenge them to express their personal ideas requires selection and combination of appropriate kinds of questions.*
>
> (Minutes of meeting, April 1, 2014).

Secondly, teaching reflectively helped PTs explore the constraints of providing detailed instructions. Through their reflections PTs could make adjustments to their lessons by adding more supports to facilitate the students' learning process. In a discussion on the story telling lesson, PT A admitted 'the lack of proving an evaluation criteria when requesting other groups to evaluate the story created by one group is his weakness'. In the subsequent lesson on Describing a Tree Your Group Likes Best, he remembered to design an evaluation criterion and required the students to make comments based on listed standards. He clarified his adjustment by indicating:

> *introducing an evaluation criterion prior to writing practice offers students a basis to follow, to self-evaluate and to make peer evaluation more accurate. Criterion-based writing evaluation also ideally enhances students' critical thinking capacity*.
>
> (Minutes of meeting, April 1, 2014).

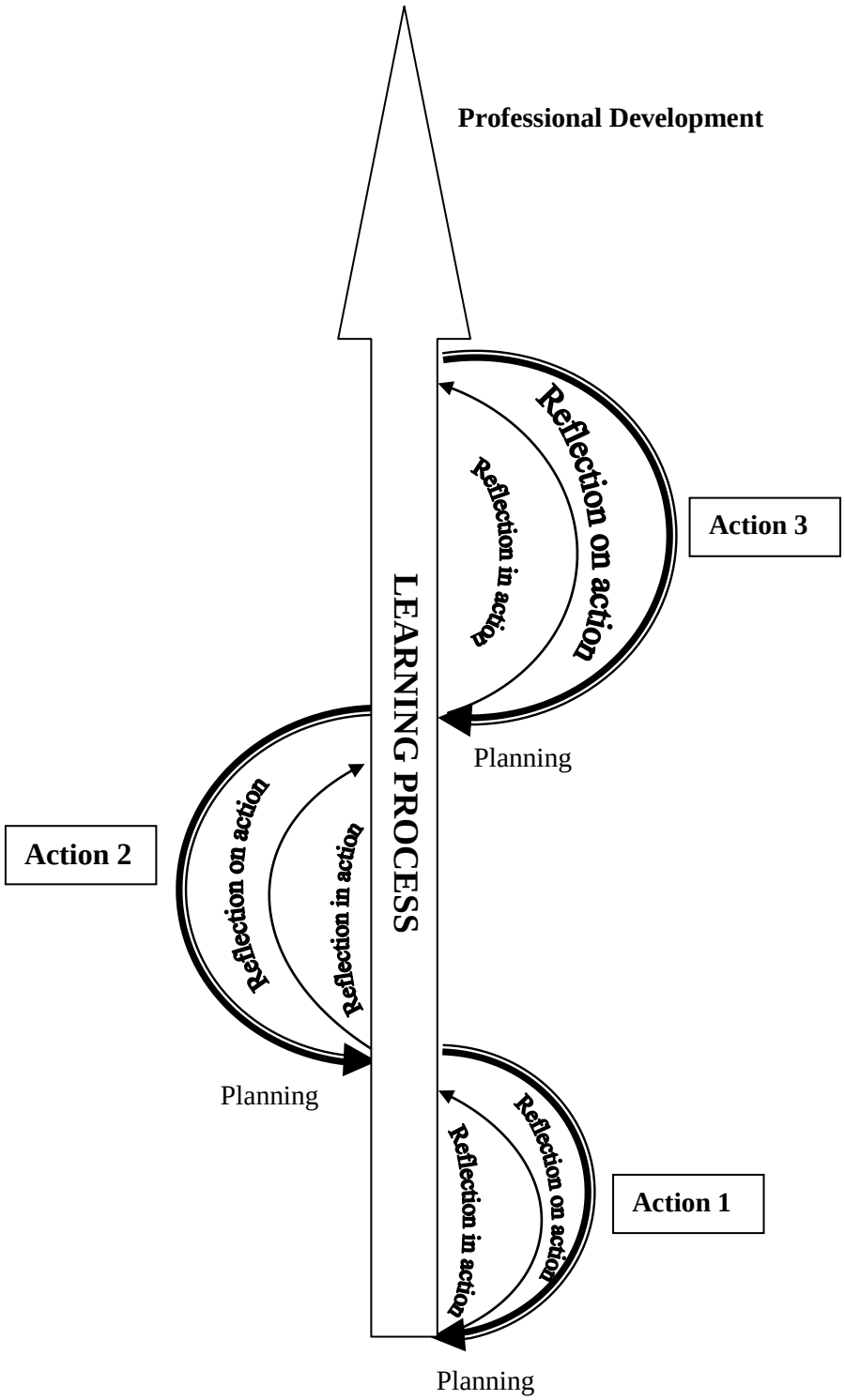
Thirdly, another adjustment in PTs' practice was seen in a higher level of confidence in combining a variety of teaching approaches. Instead of continuously using question-answer-question model merely targeted at very few outstanding students as in the first lessons, PTs reflectively considered questioning in collaboration with other teaching approaches and visual aids such as discussion, images and gap-fill diagrams.

For example, PT A applied the role-play approach to put all students into particular and exciting situations when teaching the lesson on Introducing Yourself. Similarly, besides lecturing and questioning, PT C creatively designed maps for summarising characteristics and plot to help students to get insights into the short story. Such immediate and effective adjustments received positive responses from students and this was reflected through a higher level of engagement in lessons.

For long-term impacts on PTs' ongoing professional development, reflection had positive contributions to their profession development. Higher level of belief in their teaching practice and career passion were most fruitful changes in all four PTs. At the end of practicum, three of the four PTs ensured that they would endeavor to teach after graduation.

From the above-addressed issues, there is correlation between reflective development and professional capacity illustrated by the following diagram.

Diagram 1: Correlation between reflective development and professional capacity



Progress in professional capacity of four PTs was dependent upon their enhanced reflective background. There TEs recognised gradual progress in their guided PTs' lessons. However,

reflective capacity varied from one PT to another. The pair of Primary PTs, PT A, with better reflective capacity, made more progress than PT B. This was also true with the pair of High School PTs when PT C's improvement in reflective capacity outshone her peer.

Comparing professional development between PT C and PT D, MT C provided an overall assessment as follows:

> *Due to the gap in professional capacity, PT C is much more creative, active and therefore makes more progress. In contrast, PT D used to be totally dependent on teaching plans, and anxious to cope with problems in class. Despite progress at a slow pace, she has gradually improved lesson by lesson*.
>
> (Minutes of interview, April 15, 2014).

Discussion

Our research presented the effects of integrated strategies: on fostering PTs' reflective capacity; on the connection between enhanced reflective capacity and teaching effectiveness; and on professional development of pre-service teachers.

Firstly, our research findings provide evidence to reinforce the well-founded conclusions in many previous studies on reflective practice as a learning process. The features of a reflective process such as 'a continuous cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation" (Brookfield, 1995 and Thiel, 1999) and 'an active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge' (Dewey, 1933, p. 118) were all identifiable in the reflective teaching practice of the four PTs.

Secondly, the reflective practice which the four PTs experienced was 'a process of problem solving, reconstruction of meaning, and subsequent reflective judgments while persons are engaged in significant new activity' (Reiman, 1999). Such a process continuously occurs at both an individual and a collaborative level.

In our study, individual learning was identified by the ways in which PTs' reflective practice developed through watching video records and diary completion after class, while collaboration was mainly done through discussions with MTs, TEs and other PTs. These discussions were opportunities for pre-service teachers to get insights into their own lessons and to enrich their understandings of professional knowledge and skills in a totally non-stressful environment.

Assisting to create a learning community where every member equally shares access to learn both implicit and explicit knowledge is an essential component of strategies to improve reflection. As direct learners, PTs acquired lessons through reflectively considering their teaching practice while observer teachers and MTs in the role of indirect learners also benefited from observing and commenting on PTs lessons. The model of learning to teach in our research adds more evidence to three pillars of action learning which involve 'action, reflection and evaluation' as outlined by Laws (2012).

Moreover, TEs even found something valuable for their teacher training interests as Williams & Burden (1997) state:

> *The reflective practitioner is to make this tacit or implicit knowledge explicit by reflection on action, by constantly generating questions and checking our emerging theories with both personal past experiences and with the reflection of others.* (p. 54).

Thirdly, at varied degrees of reflective capacity development, all four PT participants in our research became confident, reflective practitioners. Their step-by-step reflective development acting as 'a means of professional development' (Osterman, et. al, 1993) proceeded at three levels of reflection: technical, practice and critical (Marland, 2006).

- At the technical level, PTs mainly focused on 'the means that teachers use to achieve certain ends or goals and is concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of those means'.
- At the practice level, their reflection shifted to three items: 'the goal (or end) of the activity, the assumption underlying the practices and the actual outcome of the activity' (p. 111).
- At the critical level, PTs paid much more attention to 'individual needs and respect for students' (p. 112) through investing more efforts in designing interesting and motivating activities as they were fully aware of young students' psychology with expectations of being encouraged, curiosity and activeness.

Finally, our integrated strategies to enhance PTs' reflective capacity provided initial positive results. The limitation of this research is that investigating the sustainability of PTs' reflection competence as PTs become full in-service teachers needs to be addressed. If possible, we intend to continue to research on their ongoing reflection competence development and effects on their future teaching practice.

Conclusions

Reflection is considered a key to quality teaching and a means of professional development, especially for pre-service teachers during their apprenticeship. However, promoting reflective competence requires both the selection and combination of effective strategies.

The integrated strategies in our research offer a range of interconnected results such as PTs' enhanced reflective competence, improved teaching effectiveness, producing a higher level of professional confidence and belief which is correlated with professional development. As a result, PTs gradually become reflective practitioners with self-awareness and self-adjustment that are regarded as indispensable competencies of teachers in the twenty-first century.

Also, our findings are most influential in reforming micro-teaching and teaching practice subjects in the teacher training curriculum of the School of Education, CTU, and may also be applicable to many parallel cases in both Vietnam and elsewhere in the ASEAN region.

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Improving the Academic Performance of Students in the Fiscal and Financial Management Course at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University, Thailand

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Abstract

After a new curriculum was officially implemented by the Public Administration Program at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University (NPRU) in 2012, there were many changes made, including in the Fiscal and Financial Management subject. This course in the old curriculum was studied by the third year students when they already had basic knowledge about economics so they could understand fiscal and financial concepts fairly easily. The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. How does the performance of second year students differ from third year students?
2. What are the factors that support the successful study of Fiscal and Financial Management?
3. How can the instructor improve the academic performance of second year students studying Fiscal and Financial Management in the future?

This study utilised the concepts of action research to collect both quantitative data (from test results) and qualitative data (from focus groups) from 380 students in the second year and the third year of the Public Administration Program at NPRU.

Introduction

Nowadays, education is more important for Thai people because Thailand is developing and better jobs are available. In addition, Thailand will join the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 so there will be more opportunities and challenges for Thai people. For students who are graduating, there will also be more competition for good jobs. To help students prepare for the AEC, many Thai universities are trying to redevelop their curricula including Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University.

In 2012, the Public Administration Program revised its curriculum so that students can have on the job training for their entire fourth year. As a result, the timing of many courses had to be changed and condensed. One of these courses is Fiscal and Financial Management. This subject is concerned with fiscal policy, monetary policy, taxation, expenditure, public debt and government policies for development. Public Administration students must know about these topics so that they can be effective in government jobs in the future. This course in the old curriculum was studied by the third year students when they already had basic knowledge about economics so they could understand fiscal and financial concepts fairly easily. However, in the new curriculum, second year students have to study this course before they

study economics, so it is difficult for them to understand basic concepts like supply and demand.

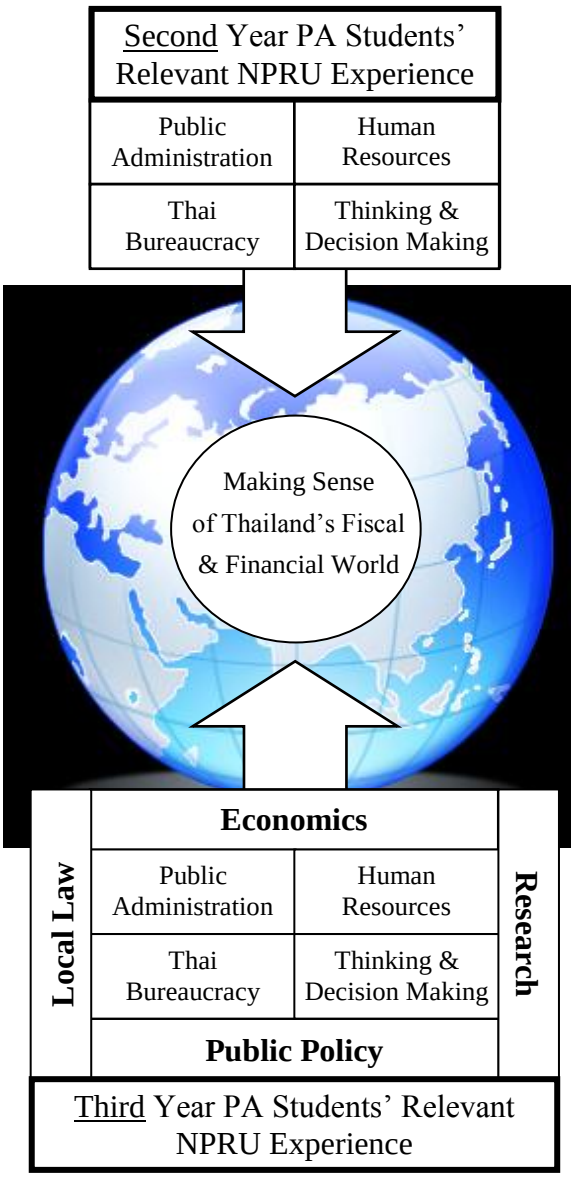
In the first term of 2013, there was an overlap between the old curriculum and the new curriculum, so both second and third year students had to study Fiscal and Financial Management in the same term with the same instructor. This created additional challenges because the large number of students studying the subject in the same term required joining smaller student groups to create much larger class sizes than usual, up to 94 students in one class. The instructor was concerned about students' comprehension, motivation and performance and, as a result, decided to undertake this research.

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. How does the performance of second year students differ from third year students?
2. What are the factors that support the successful study of Fiscal and Financial Management?
3. How can the instructor improve the performance of second year students studying Fiscal and Financial Management in the future?

Figure 1.1 is a diagrammatic representation of the impact students' prior university experience has on how they make sense of the world, specifically Thailand's fiscal and financial world, and it highlights why the second and third year students have different perspectives in relation to this course.

Third year students who study Fiscal and Financial Management have a reasonable amount of prior knowledge. They have more experience with other subjects, including Economics, Public Policy, Local Law and Research, so they can interpret and understand the new concepts more easily. Unfortunately, the second year students have much less prior knowledge and less experience so they struggle to make sense of the financial world of Thailand, specifically as it relates to fiscal management for effective public administration. While I can try to increase their background knowledge, I cannot create a year's worth of experience for the second year students.



)LJXUH0DNLQJVHQVHRI7KDLODQG¶VILVFDODQGILQDQFLDO&RQGLWLRQ **A comparison of the different perspectives of second and third year Public Administration students due to the differences in relevant 1358HSHULHQFHGDSWHGIURP)UDQN6PLWK¶VFRQFHSWVRIOHDUQHUVXLQJSDVWHSHULHQFHWRPDN RIWKHRUOG¶**

Literature review

According to Lin S. Norton (2009), there are two main classifications commonly used for concepts of teaching: information transmission and support of students' learning. The first is where instructors consider themselves to be knowledgeable about their subjects and they transmit what they know to their students. This can also be considered content-oriented or teacher-centred. In contrast, the second type of teaching has the instructors as facilitators rather than transmitters. They support the process of active students determining meaning and acquiring knowledge themselves rather than simply receiving it from instructors. Learning-orientated and student-centred are other terms for this process of learning support.

These concepts are related to how the Fiscal and Financial Management subject is taught. I use both teacher-centred and student-centred methods for this subject. For example, when I transmit the background information about the economy of Thailand, I teach by using PowerPoint slides, followed by some exercises for the students after finishing each chapter. In the second half of the term, I have focused more on case studies for students to discuss in groups in the class in a learning-oriented process (*See* Figure 1.4 in the Conclusion).

I initially avoided case studies this term due to the second year students and the change in the curriculum. Case studies are more difficult for second year students for two reasons. The first reason is that they lack the basic knowledge about general economics so I must spend more time in the information transmission stage. This, in turn, allows less time for student-centred activities. The second reason is that they are less able to participate in these discussions because they do not understand the subject as well as the third year students and also do not have other related background knowledge that the third year students have already acquired. Overall, this is detrimental to the second year students' motivation because simply receiving information from me is less enjoyable than the student-centred activities. This reduced motivation makes them less likely to pay attention, which also reduces their understanding of the subject. In contrast, the third year students can more actively participate in the discussions and understand the key concepts for use in their future careers.

Motivation is critical to the learning process. Without motivation, it is very difficult for students to learn. There are four factors that can affect the motivation of students according to Keller (1983): relevance, interest, expectation, and satisfaction. Student's motivation can be increased if they consider the work to be relevant or if they are interested in it. Likewise, if they expect to succeed and/or feel satisfaction in their achievement it can be motivating. Unfortunately, students can also be de-motivated if they have problems with the work, if it is too hard, if they cannot meet the expectations, or if they have had a bad experience before.

These factors are of concern in relation to my students. In terms of relevance, I can explain to second year students how fiscal and financial management is very relevant to their future work but, because they have not had any work experience, it may be difficult for them to imagine and it is not very motivating. It is a little more motivating for third year students, who are about to start their first internships in a government office or business, as they can see more directly how knowledge from this subject will help them in their jobs. In addition, if the class is too difficult for second year students, it may de-motivate them because they do not expect to succeed. Students who received low scores on test #1 (a large majority) may also be de-motivated because they do not feel satisfied with their performance.

Finally, my ability to make the class interesting with extra activities is limited by the large class sizes and the time needed to teach extra background information to the second year students. Therefore, student motivation is a big challenge this term and this research study can directly impact the learning experience of my students.

Frank Smith (1975) said that students try to make sense of the world by relating all of their experience to the theory of the world in their heads, which is what, from the time they were born, they have been developing and testing. This theory is what students bring with them to

school: their expectations; their attitudes; and their beliefs. When they want to make sense of what they are learning, they will use this prior knowledge because it is their foundation for learning. As they continue to learn, they will integrate the new experience with the old and their foundations will grow. However, just as the summary of their experience allows them to interpret new events, a lack of experience might distort the process and interfere with comprehension and learning.

Research methods

The study and related research

1. This study focused on quantitative and qualitative data from 203 second year and 177 third year students in the Public Administration Program at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University studying Fiscal and Financial Management.
2. Concepts from action research were used in order to deal with a problematic situation and improve student learning.

Research tools

The scores on the Fiscal and Financial Management test #1 and the midterm examination were used to compare the performance of second and third year students.

There were three methods of data collection: compiling test results; gathering student input from focus groups in class; and observing the second and third year students in the classroom while studying Fiscal and Financial Management in the first term of 2013.

Quantitative research results

Test #1 and the midterm results were analysed to find the maximum, minimum, and mean scores. They were also compared to show the difference in performance between the second and third year students. The midterm was additionally categorised to show the percent correct and equivalent grade ranges. Finally, the midterm results were graphed to show a clearer picture of overall results.

Table 1.1: Scores of the second and third year Public Administration Program students on the Fiscal and Financial Management test #1

Test #1	Number of students	Max (out of 5)	Min	Arithmetic mean	Comparison of mean scores	Percentage difference
Second year	203	4.0	0	1.83		
Third year	177	4.5	0	2.22	+ 0.39	+ 21%

Table 1.1 shows the total results for test #1 taken by five groups of second year students and five groups of third year students. When I evaluated these results, two important points were clear.

Firstly, the mean scores for both second year and third year were below the passing score of 2.5 (50% of 5). Test #1 was taken after the students finished the first two chapters. The questions were about fiscal and financial management in terms of the basics of public finance and how the government can manage the budget to give welfare to the people. If the students could not pass Test #1, they have failed to grasp the basics of the course.

Secondly, the performance of the third year students was better than the second year students in terms of both the maximum and the mean. The mean score of the third year students was 21% higher than the mean score of the second year students.

Table 1.2: Scores of the second and third year Public Administration Program students on the Fiscal and Financial Management midterm

Midterm	Number of students	Max (out of 35)	Min	Arithmetic mean	Comparison of mean scores	Percentage difference
Second year	203	25.5	6.5	16.03		
Third year	177	27.0	6.5	16.88	+ 0.85	+ 5%

Table 1.2 shows the total results for the midterm taken by five groups of second year students and five groups of third year students. Like test #1, the mean scores for both groups were below the passing score of 17.5 (50% of 35). Again, the performance of the third year students was better than the second year students, though the difference was much smaller at only 5%. Because the midterm was a much more significant test and the scores were quite low, I carried out additional analyses of the results.

Table 1.3: Scores of the second year Public Administration Program students on the Fiscal and Financial Management midterm categorised by range according to percentage correct and equivalent grade

Midterm scores	Percentage correct	Equivalent grade range	Number of second year students (out of 203)	Percentage of second year students
31.5 - 35.0	90 - 100%	A	0	0%
28.0 - 31.0	80 - 89%	A	0	0%
24.5 - 27.5	70 - 79%	B - B+	4	2%
21.0 - 24.0	60 - 69%	C - C+	18	9%
17.5 - 20.5	50 - 59%	D - D+	59	29%
0 - 17.0	Below 50%	E	121	60%

In Table 1.3, the ranges of midterm scores, percentage correct and the equivalent grades can be seen. Importantly, the table also shows the number and percentage of second year students who achieved those ranges. It was very troubling to see that only a total of 11% achieved a C

or higher, while 29% received a D or D+. Even more disturbing was the fact that 60% of second year students failed the midterm.

Table 1.4: Scores of the third year Public Administration Program students on the Fiscal and Financial Management midterm categorised by range according to percentage correct and equivalent grade

Midterm scores	Percentage correct	Equivalent grade range	Number of third year students (out of 177)	Percentage of third year students
31.5 - 35.0	90 - 100%	A	0	0%
28.0 - 31.0	80 - 89%	A	0	0%
24.5 - 27.5	70 - 79%	B - B+	7	4%
21.0 - 24.0	60 - 69%	C - C+	23	13%
17.5 - 20.5	50 - 59%	D - D+	48	27%
0 - 17.0	Below 50%	E	99	56%

Table 1.4 shows the same ranges as Table 1.3 but with the numbers and percentages for the third year students. Their performance was slightly better, with a total of 17% achieving a C or higher. However, 27% still earned a D or D+ and a majority, 56% of third year students, also failed the midterm.

Table 1.5: Comparison of the percentage of second and third year Public Administration Program students achieving percentage correct ranges on the Fiscal and Financial Management midterm

Percentage correct	Equivalent grade range	Percent of second year students	Percent of third year students	Percentage difference
90 - 100%	A	0%	0%	-
80 - 89%	A	0%	0%	-
70 - 79%	B - B+	2%	4%	+2%
60 - 69%	C - C+	9%	13%	+4%
50 - 59%	D - D+	29%	27%	-2%
Below 50%	E	60%	56%	-4%

On the positive side, the differences between the second and third year students were smaller than on test #1. This could indicate that second year students were starting to build their understanding of the subject. In addition, more third year students earned grades of B, B+, C, or C+ on the midterm and fewer third year students received grades of D, D+, or E in comparison with second year students. However, the scores were still poor, so I analysed them further to get a clearer picture.

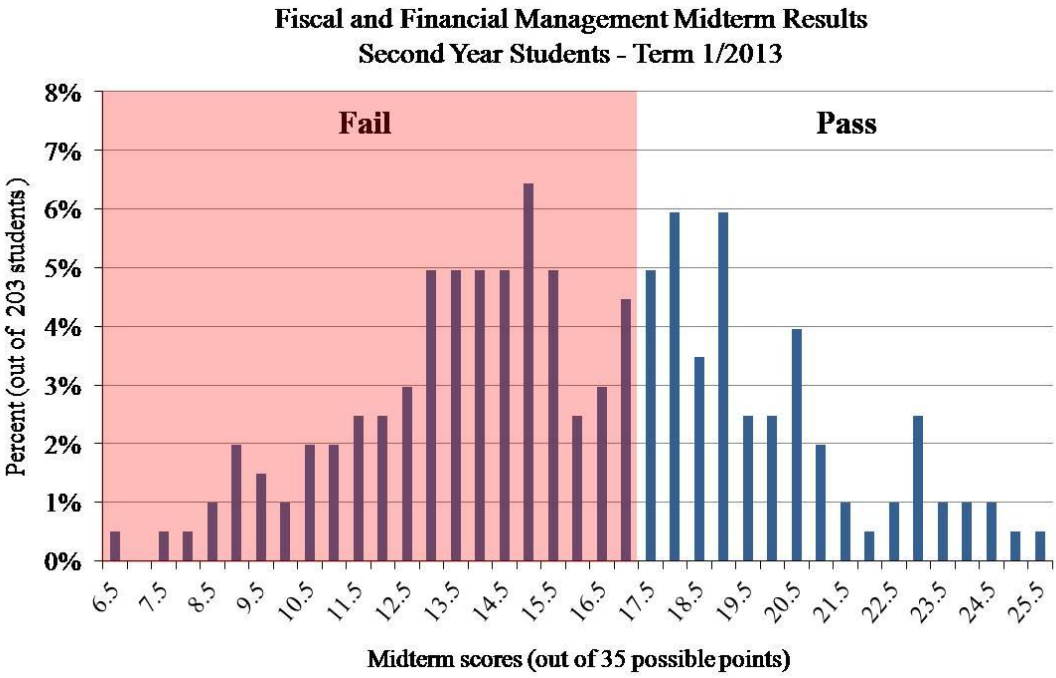


Figure 1.2: Midterm examination scores achieved by second year students analysed by percentage with failing scores highlighted.

In Figure 1.2, the graph shows the percentage of second year students achieving scores ranging from 6.5 to 25.5. When the failing scores are evaluated more closely, it can be seen that most of the failing students received 13 - 15.5 points. A student with 13 points would need to improve their performance by 35% to earn 4.5 additional points and a passing grade which might be difficult to do. On the positive side, the majority of the scores were not at the bottom of the range.

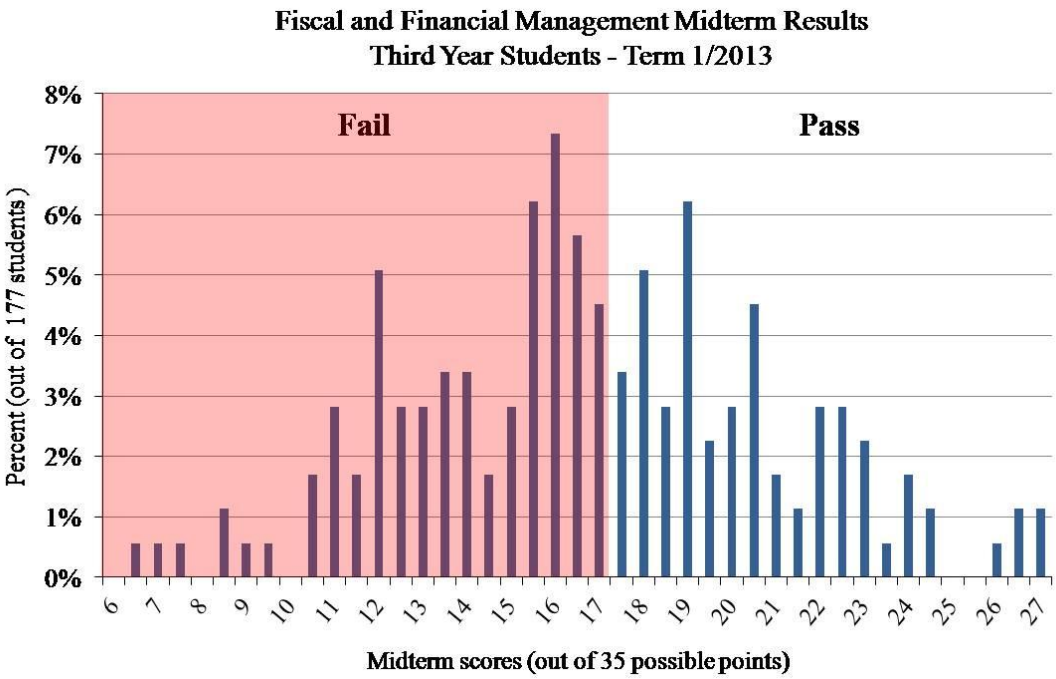


Figure 1.3: Midterm examination scores achieved by third year students analysed by percentage with failing scores highlighted.

Figure 1.2 can be compared to the third year students' scores and percentages in Figure 1.3. Percentages were used in these two graphs rather than the number of students to make comparisons easier. It can be seen that a higher percentage of third year students were close to passing with 15.5 - 17 points. A student with a score of 15.5 would only need two additional points, or a 13% improvement, to pass the test. Therefore, although 56% of the third year students failed the midterm, almost 24% were within two points of passing.

Qualitative research

After seeing the low scores on the first test and the midterm exam, I decided to organise focus groups to understand the students' challenges and brainstorm with them about ways to help them improve for the second half of the term. I also wanted to know the factors that support the successful study of Fiscal and Financial Management from the perspective of the students, especially from the students who did better on the exams.

My goal was to find new ways to motivate and teach the students so they could understand the subject better in the second half of the term and have a better chance of passing the course. In addition, my intention was to be student-centred by encouraging students to analyse their own performance and results and directly participate in the problem-solving process.

I wanted to involve all students in this process rather than just taking a representative sample of students. Therefore, I conducted the focus groups with each section. As previously mentioned, the class sizes are large so, in each class, I separated the students into three groups. I teach a total of 6 sections which means I spoke to a total of 18 focus groups. I also decided to talk to them during class time as their time outside of class is limited and it is difficult to coordinate everyone's schedules.

The criterion for separating the groups was the combined score of test #1 and the midterm which was a total of 40 points. The three groups were those with the highest scores (over 25 points), the middle scores (20 - 25 points), and the lowest scores (less than 20 points). I wanted to see if students with similar scores had similar learning strategies and ideas for improvement. I was interested in what they did in class, after class, and at home in their free time that affected their understanding of this subject.

In order to gather this information, I spoke with each group for 30 minutes. The other groups also listened as I spoke with each group so they could learn from each other and share ideas. The questions that I asked them to consider and discuss were about past behaviour as well as brainstorming for future improvement.

Past behaviour questions:

- How has their classroom behaviour affected their understanding of the subject?
- When did they read the course textbook after class?
- How did they study for the exams?
- How much time did they study outside class?

- Why are their scores low or lower than they would like them to be?

Brainstorming for future improvement:

- How can they change their classroom behaviour to improve their understanding and performance in this course?
- How can they increase their understanding of this subject outside of class?
- How can they study more effectively and get higher scores?
- What can the instructor do to motivate them and support their learning process?

I compiled the data from the six sections; analysed the feedback from the highest, middle and lowest groups; summarised the main ideas; compared the second and third year students' responses; and drew conclusions.

Qualitative research results

The following is a summary of the main ideas from the focus groups.

Student motivators:

- Third year students will have their first internships at the end of this term, when they will work in a government office or other business for 100 hours. They are more motivated to increase the knowledge that could help them in their internships.
- Second year students with low grade point averages are afraid of getting a grade of D in this course and having to leave the university. This motivates them to improve their performance in the second half of this term.

Negative effects on student motivation (both second and third year):

- Large class sizes negatively affected student motivation because of limited teacher-student time, limited activities, and increased noise.
- Students dislike studying with combined groups. For example, 54/69 has to study with 54/72. The groups are different levels, for example, 56% of 54/69 students passed the midterm versus only 29% of 54/72 students. They also have different overall characteristics and classroom behaviour so they do not always study effectively together.
- The schedule of some sections can have a negative effect on student motivation. Two of the sections study late in the day. Another section studies on Monday morning from 8:30 to 11:20 and are late for class.
- The second year students also have limited time outside of class because they are studying eight subjects. In contrast, the third year students only have five subjects.

Third year factors for successful study:

- Successful third year students prepared for examinations by reviewing in small groups in the library and doing the exercises in the book for each chapter.
- The third year students could understand the course relatively well because they had already studied Economics.
- From the instructor's classroom observations the third year students paid attention better in class than the second year.

Third year challenges:

- Their scores were lower because they did not have enough time to study. They had to participate in many activities in the Public Administration Program (Democracy Exhibition, ASEAN parade, and freshman orientation).

Second year challenges and ineffective learning strategies:

- They have not studied Economics yet, so they cannot understand Fiscal and Financial Management concepts very well.
- They do not have other basic knowledge related to the course.
- For examinations, many second year students did not read the recommended additional materials related to the course.

Challenges for both second and third year students:

- Most students did not read enough books for the examinations.
- They did not do the assigned exercises because the instructor did not check the assignments and did not give any points for them.
- This term, students had to take many midterm exams on the same day so they did not have enough time to study for each subject.
- Some students only studied right before the midterm exam in front of the exam room.
- Students felt they did not have enough time to finish the midterm exam.

Comments from highest, middle, and lowest scoring groups:

- Highest scoring groups: Reviewed notes and read books before going to bed. Other students did more exercises and participated in tutorials with their friends.
- Middle scoring groups: Read fewer books for the examinations and did not do the exercises for each chapter.
- Lowest scoring groups: Did not read books for the examinations and did not pay attention in class.

How can they change their classroom behaviour to improve their understanding and performance in this course?

- Pay better attention in class.
- Do not talk with friends or play on their phones.

How can they increase their understanding of this subject outside of class?

- Study more at home.
- Do the chapter exercises.
- Tutor with friends.

How can they study more effectively and get higher scores?

- Do exercises to help them review each chapter and understand the topics.
- Prefer group work in class and out, rather than individual work, so they can share ideas and help each other.
- Do case studies in groups so they can understand better by working together instead of having more lectures.
- Would like higher scoring students to tutor lower scoring students.

What can the instructor do to motivate them and support their learning process?

- Speak more slowly and explain each chapter more.
- Give more examples in the class for each chapter.
- Give a worksheet for students to do before studying the next chapter.
- Give points for completing the exercises to motivate and reward the students.
- Give more time for exams and reduce the number of choices per item from five to four.
- Take the students to see public sector management firsthand, such as visiting a municipality.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was threefold.

The first question, ‘How does the performance of second year students differ from third year students?’ the answer could be found from both the test scores and the academic behaviour of the students. The second year performance was lower than the third year as a result of a combination of factors: their limited back ground knowledge; their higher workload of eight subjects, and therefore, their more limited free time to study; their reduced attention in class; and, in general, their poorer study habits. However, even the performance of the third year

students was impacted by large class sizes and other negative factors and became a focus for improvement.

The second question, 'What are the factors that support the successful study of Fiscal and Financial Management?' the answers were gathered from student brainstorming and feedback as well as the considerations of the instructor. Basic factors such as student motivation, a productive classroom environment, and responsible study habits are necessary for students to understand this rather challenging subject. These factors were focused on, by the students and the instructor, in the second half of the term.

The final question, 'How can the instructor improve the performance of second year students studying Fiscal and Financial Management in the future?' I thought about the students' feedback carefully, focusing on student-centred group activities in class to increase students' understanding, and instituted the following changes in the second half of the term.

To reinforce important concepts and to serve as examples from the chapters as requested by the students, I gave case studies with group work to the students so that they could share knowledge with their classmates and work out their own answers. Some groups were then chosen to present their results in front of the class for everyone to consider and discuss. The case studies were quite successful in engaging the students, increasing attention in class, and deepening their understanding of the topics. The positive cycle can be seen in Figure 1.4 below.

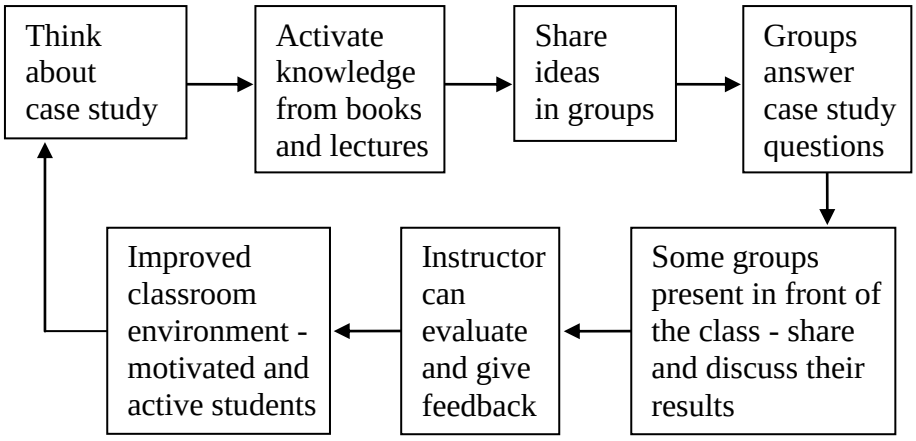


Figure 1.4: Positive cycle of student-centred case studies with group work

I also gave more economic background as well as the current news about the economy of Thailand. Then the students participated with group work in class to exchange ideas. To increase student motivation, I gave extra points when students could answer questions in class. Moreover, they could get rewards when they got the highest score in the class on an assignment.

As students requested, in the second half of the term I spoke more slowly and explained each chapter more. After the midterm exam, I used five new strategies to increase students' understanding.

I had students:

1. do more exercises after finishing each chapter and for which they were given points;
2. do a group report about public finance;
3. review each chapter in class with me before studying the next chapter;
4. complete writing assignments in class after finishing chapters; and
5. write conclusions about each chapter in their notebooks.

After I used the new strategies, students understood the concepts better than in the past. They can adapt and share knowledge with their classmates. Finally, I gave 90 minutes for the final exam, which is 30 minutes more than the midterm, and the number of choices for each exam item was reduced to four instead of five.

Some negative factors were identified in the qualitative research that were outside of the instructor's control, such as large class sizes, combining of groups, number of subjects being studied, exam schedules, and so on. Unfortunately, no changes could be made for these issues in this term, though they should be considered for future terms.

From the quantitative and qualitative results, I was able to conclude that both second and third year students needed significant improvement in their performance, supported by their own efforts as well as mine. However, the second year students would need much more effort in the second half of the term to pass the course.

Suggestions

1. We should study using student-centred methods in the class to share ideas together and motivate the students more.
2. Instructors should invite a mayor or other government officers to give firsthand knowledge and real world experience to students. This could help motivate students and help them understand the importance of the subject.
3. Students should read or watch the news before studying this subject so they will understand the Thai economic situation and government policies better.
4. In their second year, students should study Economics in the first term and Fiscal and Financial Management in the second term. If they study Economics first, they can understand Fiscal and Financial Management better in the following term.
5. When changes are made to a curriculum, it would be helpful to have input from instructors who teach the subjects. Subsequently, the curriculum should be evaluated for effectiveness by students and teachers and it would be beneficial to correct any problems. The curriculum could also be evaluated by recent graduates.

6. Class size should be considered carefully, especially for more difficult subjects. If the class size is too large, the time for individual teacher-student or even teacher-group interaction is limited.
7. The number of subjects that students are studying should be considered by all teachers when assigning homework and other assignments.

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Appendix

The Fiscal and Financial Management final examination was given right before this research study was submitted for publication. All grades and passing rates could not be calculated and analysed before the submittal of this article. However, the percentages from the final examination were quickly calculated to make a preliminary determination of the effectiveness of the changes in the second half of the term.

It appears that the changes were successful in improving the scores of the third year students. On the final exam, 13% of third year students achieved 80% or above, 25% earned 70 - 79%, and 37% reached 60 - 69%. Unfortunately, 20% were at a D or D+ level of 50 - 59% but only 5% failed the final exam.

For the second year, the good news is that 90% were able to pass the final exam and only 10% failed, though, overall, their scores were lower than the third year scores. However, the top scores of 80% or above were earned by 12% of second year students which is close to the third year percentage of 13%. At the next range, 19% of second year students earned 70 - 79%, compared to 25% of third year students. Likewise, at 60 - 69%, were 31% of the second year students versus 37% of third year students. Regrettably, 28% of second year students earned 50 - 59% in comparison with only 20% of third year students. Finally, as previously mentioned, the failure rate was 10%, which is double that of the third year students at 5%, though significantly less than the failure rate on the midterm exam.

These preliminary figures indicate that the changes made by the students and by the instructor in the second half of the term were successful, especially given the situations that could not be changed such as the large class sizes and the high number of subjects for the second year students. The instructor is, therefore, encouraged to revise the first half of the term in a similar way and continue focusing on student-centred ways to improve student motivation, understanding, and performance.

The Development of Teaching Skills of Second Year Student Teachers in an Early Childhood Learning Management Course

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Abstract

Teaching skills are the major part of a teacher's practice. Pre-service teacher's teaching skills need to be emphasised continuously during their studies. However, in the past most course time has been spent on teaching theories rather than practice, resulting in many pre-service teachers not performing well in teaching practice. This research was initiated to develop student teachers' teaching skills and confidence through specific learning activities. The target group was 78 second year Early Childhood student teachers undertaking the Learning Management course. Kemmis and McTaggart's action research (PAOR) procedure was applied in this study. The procedure began with:

1. *Plan*: Ten lesson plans, teaching materials and evaluation forms were prepared.
2. *Act:* The prepared plan and materials were applied in the classroom.
3. *Observe:* The target group's teaching practice was observed.
4. *Reflect*: The student teachers' reflections on the process were recorded.

A lesson plan, a teaching skill evaluation form, and a self evaluation form were used to collect data. Descriptive statistics, the percentage of change, and content analysis were applied to analyse the data.

The research revealed that undertaking teaching practice concurrently while practising theories of learning could benefit student teachers more than expected. In addition, student teachers gained a greater understanding of school pupils, better teaching skills, and greater self confidence. Some appropriate suggestions about university classroom experiences are made.

Introduction

Teaching is more than a job. It is difficult and rewarding work (Pelletier Radford, 2004:1). However, it is a major part of a teacher's practice. The teacher has to show the ability in linking theory to practice. To develop the skills of a successful teacher takes a considerable period of time. Skillful teaching should be based upon appropriate theories of teaching and learning and also some experience of supervised teaching practice.

In the Thai Teacher Education curriculum, Learning Management is a required course for student teachers. This course aims to promote the student teacher's knowledge and provide some prior experiences of learning management. Student teachers gain some knowledge in areas such as basic background to teaching and learning, learning theories, general teaching methods, teaching models, teaching skills, lesson plan preparation, and also some teaching practice.

However in the past, most class time was spent on theories of learning rather than skill practice. This affected students' teaching performance. They could not perform well in teaching practice. The main causes were: they lacked self-confidence; they were not

accustomed to the classroom teaching setting; they did not know what they should do with the pupils; and they could not apply teaching methods in practice.

A review of the literature suggested that practice repetition would help the students to be more confident, better accustomed to delivering lessons, and better able to perform. Moreover, teaching practice in classroom settings would be of more benefit for students.

Objectives

The goal of this research was to find:

1. whether there were any differences in student learning after the course;
2. whether various activities and more teaching practice could help students better develop their teaching skills; and
3. what were the students' reflections on the new approach.

Theoretical framework

The importance of teaching or learning management skills is accepted by the teacher, school pupils and also the teaching profession. For teachers, teaching skills are an indicator of a teacher's potential or career competency. Teachers should have high potential for skillful teaching in order to be successful in their teaching careers. The more skillful the teaching the more success they will have, as the skills will last in the memory of the students.

For school students, skillful teachers can assist learning to a great extent. They can maintain students' attention, encourage their enthusiasm and active participation, and promote desired characteristics and better learning achievement. Most students have a good impression of teachers who can provide effective lessons. For the teaching profession, skillful teachers can make the teaching profession more professional, and better acknowledged by parents and community.

Background learning theories

Some background learning theories were applied to promote student teachers' teaching skills. They were behaviourism, constructivism and social cognition theory. Thorndike's Law of Exercise was applied to confirm repetition of teaching skill practices; constructivism was applied to promote student's knowledge; and Bandura's social cognition theory was applied to provide a master teaching model.

In the Law of Exercise, Thorndike (1913) states that repetition practice can strengthen responsive behaviour. To be a skillful person, one needs to do things accurately, automatically, and in less time with confidence. However, Elliot (2000: 206) said that Thorndike had to revise his law after 1930 to clarify that reinforcement is another factor that also affects skill learning.

Besides, Marzano et al., (2005: 326) proposed five steps of skill learning:

1. Developing a model of the steps.
2. Skill shaping.
3. Skill practice in various settings or assignments.
4. Giving feedback both by self- assessment and teacher's feedback.
5. Skill internalisation so that students can apply the target skill automatically or at least at the fluency level.

Constructivism theory emphasises the active role of the learner in building understanding and making sense of information (Woolfolk, 2004: 323).

There are four main characteristics of constructivism (Eggen, et al., 2004: 283).

1. Construct understanding of meaningful content knowledge.
2. Learning new things depends on prior knowledge and understanding.
3. Social interaction is important to learning.
4. Environment and activity that is close to real life will promote student's meaningful learning.

Bandura (1986) proposed that observation can be a very efficient learning process. He also noted that observation learning is composed of four elements (Woolfolk, 2004, p. 317).

1. Attention.
2. Retaining information.
3. Impression producing behaviours.
4. Being motivated to repeat the behaviours.

If the students have a chance to observe a master teacher's teaching behaviour they can learn and reproduce the observed behavior (Eggen, 2004: 220) or have some idea of adapting the process to their lessons. This theory is used for designing and watching teacher T.V. program activities in the lesson plans.

Research design and methodology

An action research approach based on Kemmis and McTaggart (1997) was applied to investigate the effective activities that can promote students' teaching skills.

The procedure consisted of:

1. *Plan*: Ten lesson plans, teaching materials, and evaluation forms were prepared.
2. *Act*: The prepared documents were applied both in the university classroom and school classroom.
3. *Observe*: The target group teaching skills data were collected.
4. *Reflect*: The students' reflections on the process were recorded.

Research tools were:

1. Ten lesson plans, including various activities, such as group discussion, mind mapping, teaching skill practice, watching a VDO, self-study, classroom observation, and so on.
2. A teaching evaluation form.
3. A student self-evaluation form.

The target group was 78 second year student teachers in the Early Childhood Education program in the 2012 academic year who enrolled in the Principles of Learning Management course. Descriptive statistics of percentage of change were used for data analysis.

Research procedure began with the following steps.

Step 1: *Planning*

Table 1. Lesson plans 1-10 for developing teaching skills

Plans	Main objectives	Topics	Activities	Task
1.	1. Able to include principles of learning management. 2. Group sharing.	Principles of learning management.	Separate into 4 groups. Watch 1 program of teacher T.V. video and take notes. Share written notes with people from other 3 groups. Conclude principles of learning management in mind map form.	Mind map.
2.	Explain general learning management processes.	General learning management processes.	Classroom observation. Group sharing.	Bulletin board presentations.
3.	Practise general teaching method.	General teaching methods.	Separate into 10 groups. Study a general teaching method for the first practice. Do the first teaching practice and reflection.	Record the practice results.
4.	Practise learning process management as in base education curriculum guidelines.	Learning process management as in basic education curriculum guidelines.	Separate into 8 groups. Study a learning management process. Do the second practice and reflection.	Record the practice results.
5.	Practise model of teaching.	Teaching models.	Separate into 6 groups. Study teaching model for the third practice and construct a mind map. Do the third practice and reflection.	Record the result of the mind map.
6-7	Prepare a lesson plan.	Lesson plan preparing.	Watch a program of teacher T.V. Take notes in a lesson plan form. Explain the component of the lesson plan and preparation steps. Prepare a lesson plan in groups.	
8.	Provide teaching materials information. Construct a multiple choice test with 10 questions.	Teaching materials and evaluation.	Group discussion. Self-study and construct the test.	Teacher made test.
9.	Practise teaching in school classroom setting.	Teaching to be proactive in school classroom settings.	Prepare a lesson plan in a group of 3 people. Do the fourth teaching practice and be evaluated by classroom teacher.	A lesson plan.

Plans	Main objectives	Topics	Activities	Task
10.	Share teaching practice experiences.	Teaching practice for experience.	Present teaching practice experience with VDO clip. Do the reflection to include lessons learned.	VDO reflections.

Step 2: *Act*

Practise ten lesson plans in the university classroom during December 2012 to February 2013.

Step 3: *Observe*

Students' teaching skills data were collected while practised both in the university classroom and school setting.

Step 4: *Reflect*

Students reflected on the lessons learned and identified good performance and improvement issues after finishing their practice at the end of the course.

Data collection

Quantitative data were collected from student teachers by a self-evaluation form at the end of the course. A school teacher's teaching skill evaluation form was also used.

Qualitative data were collected four times from student teachers' during teaching practice in the university classroom. Students' reflections were also a source of data.

Findings

One-third of students gained knowledge and teaching skills after participating in the learning process, according to responses on the students' self-evaluation forms. The target group's teaching skill was at a 'good' level and even higher according to school teachers' evaluation.

Students who gained knowledge were better and more skillful at teaching, developed a more positive attitude towards teaching practice, and were more confident in their work according to their reflections.

Student Reflections

Lessons learnt from teaching practice

Students agreed that preparation would promote effective teaching and learning. More practice would make the students feel more confident about how to deliver the lesson. Appropriate lesson plans and materials could draw school students' attention to what was intended to be learned. In a classroom setting, students could apply their gained knowledge appropriately. They could improve their presentation skills, demonstrate appropriate teacher behaviour, develop skills in classroom communication, and have positive interaction with students.

Good impression/success

Students thought that they had success in improving their expression, demonstrated a better personality, wore appropriate dress, and maintained a suitable level of politeness. The classroom atmosphere was described as very interesting and exciting, and encouraged better learning.

Improvement

Students thought that they could improve some practices such as: following the teaching steps in the lesson plans more closely; increasing students' participation; maintaining better classroom management; and acting with more self-confidence.

Discussion

There was a high percentage of change in both gained knowledge and teaching skills after learning occurred. This was largely due to the ten well planned lessons. A variety of learning activities such as group discussion, watching teacher T.V. programs, co-operative learning, self-study, and teaching skill practice were used. These activities were designed by applying related learning theories.

If student teachers are more concerned about learning theories while preparing their lessons, more effective teaching and learning will take place. The various activities in this course aimed to demonstrate to the students that there are a variety of teaching methods and activities that can be applied in the classroom in addition to a lecture. Moreover, this approach to teaching provides opportunities to understand a more child-centred approach.

Undertaking four teaching practices during the semester promoted students' self-confidence to deliver lessons. They felt more accustomed to teaching practice and learnt some good teaching practice skills, as well as identifying weak points that had to be improved.

Conclusion and recommendations

Teaching with various activities that encourage students to learn through practice will benefit the students' learning achievement, and improve their teaching skills, as well as produce the desired characteristics of effective teachers. Lecturers in a faculty of education should be aware of these findings and apply learning theories to lesson planning, thus ensuring student teachers' benefit from example.

In addition, data and lessons learned from each teaching practice should be systematically collected and analysed in order to continue the improvement of courses for pre-service teachers.

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Continuing Teacher Professional Development Through Lesson Study for Learning Community (LSLC) in a Vietnamese Secondary School

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Abstract

In recent years, continuing teacher professional development of teachers has been strongly advocated by educators and scholars worldwide, including the United States (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999; Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004; and Lewis et al., 2004), the United Kingdom (Ruthven, 2005; and Dudley, 2007), Australia (White & Southwell, 2003), Brunei (Wood & Mohd Tuah, 2008), Indonesia (Saito et al., 2006a, b, 2007), Malaysia (Lim et al., 2005), Thailand (Inprasitha, 2008), and Vietnam (Saito & Tsukui, 2008; Saito et al., 2010; and Wheeler et al., 2007, 2011).

Lesson Study, an effective model of teacher professional development (Lewis & Tsuchida, 1997, 1998; and Stigler & Hiebert, 1999), is a process by which teachers of the same school work together to study their own lessons in order to improve classroom teaching (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004). Through Lesson Study for Learning Community (LSLC), groups of teachers of social sciences in a secondary school in Can Tho, Vietnam involved themselves in preparing lessons together, observing and evaluating each others' lessons, and having discussions throughout the whole process. They shared their teaching experiences and formed a supportive group and reviewed their classroom practice regularly.

In this paper, the procedures for conducting LSLC in a secondary school in Can Tho will be described in detail, and the results of the study will be presented. Finally, some recommendations will then be made.

Introduction

My interest in the Lesson Study approach (LS) came about in an accidental way. At the beginning of the academic school year 2013-2014, I participated in the summer training course for all department chairs of the city schools organised by the Bureau of Education and Training (BOET) of Can Tho city, Vietnam at the end of August 2013. During 6 three-hour sessions of the training course, I was introduced to a model of teacher professional development (TPD) implemented in Bac Giang Province near Hanoi.

The Bac Giang project, funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and assisted by two Japanese consultants skilled in LS, engaged teachers in school reform activities known as professional teacher meetings (PTMs), which is based on an approach called Lesson Study for Learning Community (LSLC) (Saito, Khong & Tsukui, 2012). Despite a scarcity of resources, especially technical ones, the teachers originally involved are still conducting LSLC. This could be explained in terms of achievements gained from the

project: teachers' faith in the effectiveness of the LSLC; enthusiasm and support of seniors and authorities that help sustain the LSLC; and the need to maintain a respectable reputation before external parties (Saito, Khong & Tsukui, 2012).

In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of Vietnam issued a directive known as 'Building friendly schools with active learners' (MOET, 2008), several targets of which were similar to those of the LSLC approach implemented in the Bac Giang project and its underlying philosophy, such as learners' active participation in the learning process. In addition, a directive regarding the development and quality improvement of teachers as well as school managers and local educational authorities was issued by the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2005). The LSLC approach of school reform is, therefore, in line with national policies to promote school-based professional development (PD) and teacher reflection on their practices.

From these directives as well as experiences learned from the Bac Giang project, the Department of Education and Training (DOET) of Can Tho city directed that the BOET organise a summer training course for all department chairs of all secondary schools in Can Tho city so as to disseminate the LSLC approach.

Following the guidelines by the DOET and BOET of Can Tho city, the principal of a secondary school in Can Tho city encouraged departments of the school to implement the LSLC approach with a view to renovating the conventional TPD. In Vietnam, at the secondary education level, each teacher is required to carry out two lessons, which are called 'public lessons', for their colleagues in the school to observe during an academic school year. During the Professional Teacher Meetings, observed lessons are evaluated and the best teaching practices are consolidated for a specific lesson or methods for a certain subject so that all teachers can follow the methods mentioned in the PTMs (Plan Vietnam Office, 2010).

These school activities are considered as a strategy to develop teachers' professionalism because they aim to demonstrate a successful lesson so that other teachers can see how effectively teaching methods and teaching aids are applied in classrooms. It is assumed that learning from observing others' practices and hearing feedback given to their colleagues could lead to their improved teaching. However, observers usually only pay attention to the observed teachers' teaching to judge whether he or she covers all the required content, whether his or her knowledge is accurate, how he or she conducts the lesson, how he or she speaks, whether he or she can ensure the steps and procedures, and whether the time is spent reasonably, not how students learn in that observation (Plan Vietnam Office, 2010).

Therefore, being observed and then being assessed and graded by all observers to determine whether they are excellent, good, average or weak teachers can be an unpleasant experience for many teachers, especially less experienced teachers, and to some extent, discourage them. In such a context, implementing the LSLC approach to support teachers in their PD, thus, is essential to retain them within their profession. This approach focuses on the observation of and reflection on lessons as one of the most important activities in the pursuit of TPD (Saito, Tsukui & Tanaka, 2008). Whether the school could be reformed depends on whether the existing system of observation of and reflection on lessons by collegial teachers could be revitalised.

Lesson study for learning community

The concept of a 'professional learning community' has been well studied and developed from a number of sources. According to Hord (2009, cited in Laws, 2011), a 'professional learning community' can be 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'. It could be seen from this definition that it is essential for members of a learning community to form a united group, share values and hold a reflective dialogue to improve practice (Louis et al., 1996).

With a view to improving practices, teachers should allow their colleagues to observe their own lessons, and in turn, should observe their colleagues' lessons (Stiggins & Duke, 1988; Barth, 1990; Leithwood, 1992; Noffke, 1995; Joyce & Showers, 2002; and Kilbourn et al., 2005). An activity for PD based on the observation of and reflection on lessons, known as LS, thus, came into being and became popular in Japan after the 1960s, although it had been practised since the 19th century.

Nowdays, LS has been attracting the interest of educators and scholars worldwide, including the United States (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999; Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004; and Lewis et al., 2004), the United Kingdom (Ruthven, 2005; and Dudley, 2007), Australia (White & Southwell, 2003), Brunei (Wood & Mohd Tuah, 2008), Indonesia (Saito et al., 2006a, b, 2007), Malaysia (Lim et al., 2005), Thailand (Inprasitha, 2008), and Vietnam (Saito & Tsukui, 2008; Saito et al., 2010; and Wheeler et al., 2007, 2011).

LS is a process by which teachers of the same school work together to study their own lessons in order to improve classroom teaching (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004) and relies on the 'observation of live classroom lessons by a group of teachers who collect data on teaching and learning and collaboratively analyse it' (Lewis et al., 2006, p. 3). It has been described in international literature as a process of various steps as follows:

1. collaboratively planning a lesson;
2. observing the implementation of the lesson;
3. discussing the lesson;
4. revising the lesson plan (optional);
5. teaching the revised version of the lesson (optional); and
6. sharing opinions and views on the revised version of the lesson.

(Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004).

When introduced worldwide, the style of LS is similar to the conventional approach of LS in Japan. Therefore, it is unavoidable that some difficulties are observed. Sato (2006a) stated that Japanese teachers tended to spend more time planning lessons and less time discussing the lesson observations. In addition, planning is considered as a process for developing a hypothesis on the 'flow' of the lesson, observing the lesson, and verifying it. In other words, the purpose of LS is to seek a good practice.

In reality, teachers are more likely to concentrate on the flow of the lesson than on analysing and interpreting the meaning of the students' experiences in the classroom. Furthermore, when working together in a planning session, teachers who are highly prestigious normally make decisions on what could be included in the lesson plan. Therefore, seeking consistency in joint planning suppressed the differences and uniqueness of each teacher (Inagaki & Sato, 1996).

To deal with these drawbacks, an alternative approach to LS known as LSLC is emerging in Japan (Inagaki & Sato, 1996; Ose & Sato, 2000, 2003; Sato & Sato, 2003; and Sato, 2006a, b). In the Bac Giang project LSLC was implemented in five pilot schools (Saito, 2008a; Saito & Tsukui, 2008; and Saito, Tsukui & Tanaka, 2008). This approach focused on changing school culture to the one that emphasised the importance of collaboration, inquiry and reflection as a way to improve teaching and learning.

Within this framework, all teachers were required to join in the collective observation of and reflection on a research lesson (RL) conducted in a classroom, which aimed to promote the norms of collegiality and reflection across the school. Under the LSLS approach, individual teachers were expected to design their own lessons using active learning strategies (Sato, 2006a). They were also allowed to discuss their doubts, questions, and problems with their colleagues. They then demonstrated these RLs in front of their colleagues in PTMs, which took place every two weeks. Following the observations of the RLs came the sessions of reflection and discussion.

According to Wheeler et al., (2011), the reasons for this adaptation are as follows:

First, a sense of 'insiders-outsiders' (those who participated in joint planning and those who did not) was not created and efforts to create a school-wide sense of a learning community were not hindered.

Second, under the LSLS approach, more RLs were designed than under the traditional LS approach, where teams developed and presented a single lesson taught several times by the same teacher. It was believed that more RLs focusing on student learning would help Vietnamese teachers move away from attention on teaching to the complexities of student learning.

Third, individual teacher differences and strengths in how they approached teaching and designing specific tasks were enhanced. Individual teacher authorship for a lesson, thus, encouraged teachers as professionals to reflect on their personal goals and tasks (Saito, 2008a).

From the lessons learned from the Bac Giang project, the authors of the paper found that the LSLC approach could be targeted as the focus of intervention for school reform, where the teachers in the same school could observe RLs together and conduct the sessions of reflection and discussion on these lessons, and that LSLC could be the most appropriate approach for PTMs. In this paper, LSLC is referred to as a visionary framework, and the PTMs as the actual activities and practices in the context of a secondary school in Can Tho city, Vietnam, where the study was conducted.

Context

The study took place in a public high school (with a student population of about 700) located in an urban school district. Students who can reach the required academic standard through an entrance examination are selected by this school, in which much emphasis is put on continuing TPD.

Groups of teachers of social sciences (5 teachers of History, 12 teachers of Vietnamese Linguistics and Literature and 11 teachers of English), under the leadership of the lead author of this paper (who is also the chair of the English department in the school) participated in this study. All of these teachers had between two and thirty years of teaching experience, and were teaching different classes from Grades 10 to 12. Due to their own workload, these

teachers had few opportunities to share content knowledge and teaching experiences and skills and to learn from each other. Realising the importance of the LSLC approach, these teachers formed a supportive group in order to help each other improve content and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Research questions

In order to investigate the impact of implementing the LSLC approach on teachers' professionalism, this study attempted to find out the answers to the two following questions:

1. To what extent does implementing the LSLC approach enhance teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills?
2. What are the obstacles in implementing the LSLC approach?

Implementation

This study was conducted in a secondary school for the gifted in Can Tho city, Vietnam from October 2013 to March 2014. The procedure was as follows.

Planning

Since the teachers involved in the study were not familiar with the LSLC approach to improve their good practices, department chairs of the school conducted 6 three-hour sessions to disseminate what had been learned from the summer training course to all teachers in their own departments. After these sessions, groups of teachers of social sciences were formed to involve themselves in the study. Due to time limit, workload and other duties and responsibilities in the school, the first author of this paper conducted this study with these participants, although the whole school got involved in implementing the LSLC approach as a means to develop its teachers' professionalism.

After negotiation among group members, it was decided to take turns to implement the LSLC approach for each subject every two weeks. This was because all group members had many duties to do in the school and extra time was needed to do the preparatory work for RLs of each subject.

Before the study, a holistic review of the current situation of teaching and learning History, Vietnamese Linguistics and Literature and English was conducted in each department and facts on the current practices and ways of improving those practices were gathered.

First, the curriculum for each subject in the school was studied carefully by group members to identify the problems found in the classroom.

Second, the choice of teaching materials, teaching approaches, and teaching aids based on students' characteristics and evaluations to be used were discussed to help teachers clarify unclear points and to confirm and strengthen the content knowledge necessary to teach the topic effectively (Baba & Kojima, 2004).

Third, the collection of data on the observation sheet, especially on determining the indicators of good teaching-learning processes seen from the aspect of teachers and students were suggested.

During the meetings at this stage, group members tried to be critical of their own teaching methods and the way their students learn, and weaknesses in classroom teaching and ways of implementing changes were identified in order to reach the teaching goals and the learning targets.

Preparation for a research lesson

Much time was spent in discussing the RL plan and some points were taken into consideration while the lesson plan was being prepared.

- identifying students' needs and pre-knowledge;
- setting the teaching goals of the lesson clearly;
- anticipating the misconceptions or knowledge gaps of students in learning this lesson;
- using suitable teaching aids and good designs of worksheets to facilitate student learning;
- implementing instructional strategies and learning activities during the lesson in such a way that the interaction among the teacher and the students will be enhanced; and
- allocating the time limit for each learning activity and clarifying the ways to assess student understanding of the lesson.

Under the LSLS framework, individual teachers planned the RLs, and then presented them to other group members in the PTMs, which took place every two weeks. During these meetings, group members contributed to the effectiveness of RLs.

Implementation and observation of a research lesson

The teacher who planned the RL conducted it in the classroom while other group members observed the teaching-learning process. The observers listened attentively to students' contributions to the lesson and made notes on the interaction and/or behaviors of the teacher and students in relation to achieving the lesson outcomes using the observation sheet.

Reflection and discussion on a research lesson

At this stage, the teacher who implemented the RL was given time to explain the intended outcomes of the lesson and the points he/she emphasised in the lesson plan. Next, time was given to other group members as observers to share the data collected on the teaching-learning process based on the observation sheets. They were encouraged to contribute to refining and improving the lesson by asking for clarification, recognising the strengths or good aspects and identifying the challenges. They then reconsidered the RL plan and discussed various ways of improving the teaching practices for the next teaching round.

Data collection and analysis

Data from various sources were collected for this case study by applying qualitative research methods. Data collected from eleven observations (i.e., eleven lessons of 45 minutes) and sessions of reflection and discussion on the RLs focused on teaching methods, knowledge content, students' engagement in classroom activities and the interaction and/or behaviors of the teacher and students. Data collected from twenty-eight interviews with teacher participants focused on their perceptions of the implementation of the LSLC approach and the obstacles they encountered when implementing the LSLC approach as a school reform activity.

Results

The extent to which implementing the LSLC approach enhances teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills

Data collected from eleven observations and sessions of reflection and discussion on the RLs and twenty-eight interviews with teacher participants, in general, were positive. Teacher participants stated that the implementation of the LSLC approach helped them improve their *content and pedagogical knowledge and skills*.

Teacher participants shared that, under the LSLS approach, there was good collaboration among group members, focusing on deep learning of content and pedagogy. Members all had equal power to discuss issues of content or teaching strategies and criticise the ways of conducting the RLs. Through negotiations, group members learned to understand different perspectives of others and worked collaboratively for a good lesson.

The following statements provide examples of teacher reactions to the process:

…The idea of working with others to plan and design lessons is a very beneficial way to share good practice and broaden my own teaching experience…

…Collaboratively setting goals for student learning and engaging in deeper conservations about teaching and learning lead to more effectively structured RLs that can increase my knowledge and improve student learning…

…I gain a sense of being an active and confident group member when my colleagues are open to my ideas…I feel like I have contributed to the success of the RLs…

Importantly, through implementing the LSLC approach, teacher participants could apply active teaching strategies shared by their colleagues, and change tasks/activities designed in the textbooks in order to enhance students' ability of critical learning depending on their levels of cognition, as are indicated in the following:

…From observing my colleagues' practices, I have gained invaluable insights into my colleagues' teaching methods and skills and I have been implementing these into my own teaching…

…I enjoyed using various active teaching strategies observed from my colleagues to help my students to be involved in lessons, engage in cooperation and enhance their own learning, which could help them improve in learning motivation…

…Weaker students didn't feel over-challenged and were able to keep up with the pace of the class and its activities because there was more focus on how they were learning and on how the teaching materials were simplified and presented to make them more relevant and suitable for individual students…

Especially, teacher participants asserted that, under the LSLC approach, they could overcome a psychological barrier of being observed due to the focus on the teaching-learning process and its impact on student learning rather than their personal performance.

…My colleagues were not there to analyse my teaching but to analyse the learning and development of my students…

…I was more confident when I realised that the lesson was collaboratively planned so I was just more of a facilitator of our group…

Also, implementing the LSLC approach enabled teacher participants to improve pedagogical knowledge and skills through observing colleagues' practices.

They shared:

...I learnt a lot from the sessions conducted by experienced teachers, especially the way how they could involve students in classroom activities…

...I could see what really worked and what could improve, which really helped my own practice…

...I have been inspired by certain strategies that my colleagues employ in their classrooms so this has allowed me the opportunity to learn from fellow professionals and continue to develop and grow…

Furthermore, teacher participants agreed that the stage of reflection and discussion on the RLs in the PTMs was important because this gave time for them to reflect on their practices and adjustments could be made for better RLs, which could lead to the improvement for the next teaching. Teacher participants' enthusiasm towards teaching, thus, was improved.

...It's great to have a chance to stop and reflect upon our teaching strategies from our own perspectives and from other members'…

...Through working as group members, we were able to share and learn from each other's good practices to ensure that we achieve quality teaching and learning…

... We have learned to share our points of views and our own teaching practices, so I feel that we are contributing to the development of knowledge and teaching profession of each other. Such activities could improve the teaching and help us in our PD…

Interestingly, teacher participants stated that implementing the LSLC approach helped them develop their pedagogical skills through the process of negotiating and giving and receiving feedback.

...After presenting my lesson plan, I invited my colleagues to suggest what other strategies they would find helpful to explore the lessons more effectively to achieve the target outcomes… and I have learned to be respectful to others in decision making...

...I learned from experienced teachers the way how they gave feedback to my teaching and learned from my colleagues the way how they received feedback, which aimed to gain a better solution to enhance the quality of the lesson…

It could be seen that implementing the LSLC approach has a great impact on both experienced and newly qualified teachers in terms of their professionalism. They all improved the way they planned RLs effectively and developed their content knowledge, teaching skills and professional capacity thanks to the collaborative nature of the LSLC approach.

Obstacles to implementing the LSLC approach

Data collected from twenty-eight interviews with teacher participants showed that although there were many benefits from implementing the LSLC approach, such obstacles as *workload, heavy curriculum, time constraint and school facilities* were unavoidable.

Some teacher participants reported that the major obstacle to implementing the LSLC approach was workload. They had to work longer and harder to make all necessary preparations in collaboration with their colleagues in another group and they found it hard to arrange their schedules to engage themselves in the PTMs because they had to do their own duties and responsibilities in their own department. This explained why this kind of RLs could not be done as often as would have been liked.

...My big issue is that my timetable doesn't match with the others', so sometimes I have to spend my break or free class periods on planning, discussing with and asking my colleagues for suggestions for the RL plans before I demonstrate them in front of my colleagues in the PTMs…

...It's hard to involve all group members in the PTMs when we have all other things to do... Arranging free time to observe my colleagues' practices and participate in sessions of reflection and discussion are a big obstacle for me…

Also, teacher participants claimed that the national curricula for their subjects were still heavy and that they had to deliver a lot of content knowledge to students in order to meet the requirements for the national, city and school examinations.

...It's hard for us to conduct the RLs on a regular basis because we have to transfer enough required knowledge to students for the tests and examinations…

In addition, due to time constraints, a few teacher participants shared that their students could not explore all necessary content knowledge at their own pace and that they could not analyse the lessons in depth, which was necessary for their tests and examinations.

...For Vietnamese Linguistics, it was fine to conduct RLs and enhance student learning and engagement in cooperation and communication with each other in classroom activities. However, for Vietnamese Literature, students could not explore the works in detail on their own although they worked in groups…

Furthermore, teacher participants stated that the school facilities were far from satisfactory. They had difficulty making their seating arrangements for their classrooms because the student population was over 30 while there were only 24 individual tables. Teaching aids and classrooms equipped with projectors were insufficient for the teacher population in the school, which made it hard for teacher participants to schedule their sessions that were convenient for all group members.

...It took me a lot of time to arrange seats for my students and observers before I could conduct a RL…

...I had to change my normal room for another which is equipped with a projector and where I could demonstrate some teaching materials and visual aids…

...I sometimes had to reschedule my session for my colleagues to observe my practices…

It could be seen that commitment from teachers, especially from the headmaster, as crucial support for conducting RLs, and the support of policy and finance from government, both national and local, or other sponsors were essential prerequisites for the sustainability of conducting LSLC.

Discussion

The results from this study indicated that implementing the LSLC approach helped teacher participants enhance their content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, which resulted in the improvement in classroom practices thanks to the transformation from teacher-directed instruction to student-centred instruction. The success of the implementation of the LSLC approach in this study could be explained in two aspects: *improvements in teacher practice and the promotion of teacher collaboration*.

First, many features embodied in the LSLC approach have been noted by researchers and scholars to be effective in changing teacher practice, like introducing concrete practical materials, teaching aids and group activities to the RLs, identifying learner needs and

knowledge gaps, taking the contexts of teaching and teachers' experiences into consideration, and providing on-site teacher support within a collegial network.

Implementing this LSLC approach might, thus, help avoid many features mentioned as shortcomings of typical PD, e.g., that is short-term, fragmented, and externally administered (Little, 1993; Huberman & Guskey, 1994; Miller & Lord, 1994; Firestone, 1996; and Pennel & Firestone, 1996). According to Lewis and Tsuchida (1998), LS was an important way to spread ideas about new content and approaches, especially when there were changes in the national curriculum, because teachers not only had the opportunity to watch new content taught in real classrooms but they were also able to discuss the reasons behind changes.

Through various stages of LSLC, teachers' professionalism could be enhanced.

In the planning process, teachers could share ideas with each other about content knowledge, teaching methods, strategies or techniques, and assessment strategies. In this stage, teachers who were not good at certain topics/themes could get content knowledge from other more experienced teachers.

During the implementation and observation of the RLs, teachers could identify students' misconceptions and achievements. In the sessions of reflection and discussion, teachers could share different perspectives on the RLs. The revised RLs were then presented to other teachers in the school as a kind of model lesson which could reflect the best practices to enhance student learning (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999; White & Southwell, 2003; Lewis et al., 2004; and Dudley, 2007). Therefore, teacher practice could be improved.

Second, teacher collaboration in the school could be promoted and maintained. LS involves a group of teachers meeting regularly to work on the design, implementation, testing and improvement of one or several RLs (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).

During the implementation of the LSLC approach in this study, teacher participants collaborated to: formulate long-term goals for student learning and development; plan and conduct RLs; observe the teaching-learning process; and hold the post-lesson reflections and discussions in order to revise and create more effective RLs (Fernandez, 2002; and Lewis, 2002).

Through these stages, teacher participants had the opportunity to: make sense of educational ideas within their practice; challenge their individual and shared perspectives about teaching and learning; learn to see their practice from the students' perspectives; and enjoy collaborative support among colleagues (Takahashi & Yoshida, 2004).

Teacher participants' interactions, thus, improved during the PTMs. Furthermore, thanks to their colleagues' support, all the interviewees shared that they improved their abilities in identifying and interpreting evidence of student learning in the observed RLs in terms of their learning attitudes and styles, collaboration with their peers, and confidence in learning.

Therefore, organisational support and collegiality among teachers could be strengthened under the LSLC approach because of mutual respect, learning and support (White & Southwell, 2003; Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004; Saito et al., 2012).

The reasons for the obstacles from this study could be explained in terms of objective aspects.

First, this was the first time the LSLC approach had been implemented, so it was unavoidable to disturb teacher participants' pre-arranged academic activities. They could not manage their

time well to conduct LSLC on a regular basis. However, this obstacle could be overcome in the future when teachers could recognise all the benefits gained from LSLC.

Second, the fact that students could not deal with some required content of some lessons (namely Vietnamese Literature) for the tests and examinations might be because they were not provided with enough analytic skills and perception of a literary language. This could be a challenge to teachers of Vietnamese Linguistics and Literature but it could be solved when they collaborated to plan RLs. As one experienced teacher of History shared, during her sessions, when her students could not explore the topics/themes in depth, she would give them some guiding questions from lower to higher levels of cognition depending on the requirements for the tests and examinations in order to orientate them towards which content knowledge they needed to engage in and acquire.

Third, as for unsatisfactory school facilities, it might need more time, finance and support from the stakeholders to solve this obstacle.

Conclusions and recommendations

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that implementing the LSLC approach, to a certain extent, enhances *teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills* by:

- promoting collective reflection on classroom practice and student learning;
- enabling opportunities to apply various active teaching strategies and skills;
- promoting successful collaborative professional development on classroom pedagogy across a range of school subject areas; and
- engaging students more actively and directly in their own learning and classroom activities.

From these findings, it is highly recommended that:

- the LSLC approach needs to be introduced more effectively for teachers to implement because it is in line with teachers' motivation to improve their teaching quality;
- the LSLC approach can offer teachers the opportunity to develop a professional community of inquiry, a commitment to inquiry, shared goals, and a sense of responsibility to their colleagues and students (Lewis et al., 2009); and
- the LSLC approach can be an appropriate model for teachers' ongoing professional development.

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Using E-learning to Improve Undergraduate Students' Use of Computers

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Abstract

The purpose of this research and development project is to:

1. Create and develop e-Learning lessons in relation to computer use for Suratthani Rajabhat University students.
2. Study students' achievement before and after using e-Learning lessons.
3. Compare student achievement between a control group and an experimental group.
4. Study students' satisfaction with the e-Learning lessons.

A sample group of 56 undergraduate students was selected by using purposive sampling. Students were divided into two groups: 28 students in a control group and 28 students in an experimental group.

Data for this study was collected from lesson plans, e-Learning lesson plans, and a satisfaction questionnaire. A pre-test and post-test was conducted. Data were analysed by using means, standard deviations, and t-tests.

The results showed that achievement in the experimental group was greater than the control group. The students' satisfaction with e-Learning lessons was at a high level.

Introduction

Suratthani Rajabhat University offers undergraduate degrees in various fields. The curriculum consists of general courses, and specific courses. General courses comprise language and communication, humanities, sociology, and mathematics including science and technology. Students are required to study general courses. A computer course is a required course in general study. This course has been usually taught through a lecture and demonstration approach. However, students have low levels of computer skills due to a lack of computer knowledge and a limited number of computers provided in classrooms.

It was decided to develop an e-Learning course in order to improve the level of students' learning. Using e-Learning lessons facilitates students' learning as they can learn up-to-date information from anywhere and save time. E-Learning lessons include digital media, texts, slides, animation sounds, and videos. Using e-Learning lessons could promote effective learning.

Review of the literature

E-Learning is a teaching method using internet resources to integrate instructors and learners (Aroonpiboon, B., & Jumnong, B., 2007). E-Learning supports virtual study which facilitates both instructors and learners. Laohajarutsang, T. (2002) states 'web-based instruction is the integration of technology and teaching methods which aims to enhance learning and problem

solving especially where there is limited of time and place'. Web-based instruction can operate through the world wide web. It can be used as either part or whole of teaching and learning activity. Malithong, K. (2002) defines web-based instruction as communication and interaction system by using at least two computers connected by telephone line, modem, wireless, and other tools.

A number of studies have indicated the positive impact of using e-Learning strategies.

In a study of students at a vocational education institution in southern Thailand Meepruk, H. (2008) found that students' achievement was increased significantly through the use of e-Learning. The study also showed that students' satisfaction of e-Learning lessons was at a high level.

Makchan, U. (2008) found an improvement in student learning outcomes by using e-Learning lessons in mathematics for information technology students.

Lakawiwat, P. (2007) developed e-Learning lessons in mathematics for first year students at Bangkok University. The results showed that the e-Learning lessons were effective. The students' achievement was increased significantly and their satisfaction of e-Learning lessons was at a high level.

Karolick, D. (2002) conducted comparative research with undergraduate students by using internet teaching methods. The study found that the achievement of students who were taught through web-based lessons was increased by 20%. In addition, they required fewer teaching lessons than students who did not study through web-based lessons.

Research instruments

E-Learning program

The interactive e-Learning program for the Computer and Life Course for undergraduate students at Suratthani Rajabhat University was developed by a researcher who based the process of creating interactive e-Learning courseware on the following steps.

Step 1: The researcher analysed and designed the contents for e-Learning courseware as follows.

a. The researcher studied the course description and objectives of the Computer and Life Course.

b. The researcher classified the contents.

c. The researcher identified a conceptual framework.

d. The researcher designed the content sequences: topic, notion, learning objective, learning material, and evaluation.

Step 2: The researcher prepared the contents with regard to the details of each page for four major parts.

a. Description.

b. Sound.

c. Still Picture.

d. Multimedia, which were proposed in motion picture and sound.

Step 3: The researcher specified the activities, scope of answers, and created the assessment for two parts: (1) pre-test and (2) post-test.

a. The researcher specified the activities and scope of answers.

b. The researcher created the assessment for (1) pre-test and (2) post-test.

Step 4: The researcher produced sound and picture.

a. The researcher: prepared the web page; designed font, picture, and graphic; and connected the web page through the network.

b. The researcher: proposed the technology; verified the format, position, and characteristics of pictures and graphics for the entire web page.

Step 5: The researcher created the supplementary media.

a. The supplementary learning resources were created for students so they could learn more about the contents and knowledge linked to the website, where the information related to the contents was prepared.

b. The bulletin board was used to post some questions so that students could express opinions or discuss interesting contents of each unit of study without collecting scores.

c. The common questions of each unit of study, which were accumulated after testing the efficiency of e-Learning courseware through single group and group test, were studied.

d. A forum was used to stimulate the interaction between students and teachers and students and students. After starting e-Learning courseware, the students were allowed to ask questions, express comments, and discuss opinions with others in the forum.

Step 6: The researcher prepared the study guide document in order to introduce the study steps of interactive e-Learning courseware of Computer and Life Course, which included:

a. Introduction.

b. Table of contents.

c. Pre-study enrollment.

d. Pre-test.

e. Contents.

f. Classroom activities.

g. Classroom exercises.

h. Post-test.

i. Web board and forum.

j. Other resources.

k. Personal information of instructor.

Satisfaction questionnaire

The researcher developed the satisfaction questionnaire in two parts comprised of 23 items of close-ended questions and 1 open-ended question.

Testing

a) Pre-test and post-test

Pre-test and post-test instruments were used to assess achievement levels. The tests were composed of five multiple-choice and parallel form questions. The following steps were followed:

1. The researcher reviewed the literature about creating tests.
2. The researcher specified the test formats for pre-test and post-test, which included 5 multiple-choice and parallel form questions.
3. The researcher created the analysis table for achievement levels based on the model of Bloom. The pre-test and post-test used in this research was designed to cover 5 levels: remembering; understanding; applying; analysing; and objective of cognitive domain.
4. The researcher prepared items for the pre-test and the post-test.
5. The tests were evaluated by experts and adjusted in terms of clarity.
6. The researcher trialled the tests with a sample group.
7. The researcher analysed the tests for quality by applying the discrimination index, and difficulty index.
8. The researcher selected the pre-test and post-test based on the specified criteria set by considering a similar difficulty index and discrimination index. The 120 questions prepared in parallel form were divided into 8 units/15 items each.
9. The researcher analysed test reliability of the items by using the model of Livingston (1971, cited in Nantasukon, R. 2013). The reliability fell between 0.67 and 0.79.
10. The researcher prepared the tests and trialled them with students.

b) e-Learning courseware

The researcher tested the quality of the e-Learning courseware using the following steps:

1. The e-Learning courseware, quizzes, and tests, were analysed for the reliability index by experts.
2. The adjusted e-Learning courseware was trialled with nine students, whose grades were divided into low, moderate, and high groups (3 from each group). The researcher

observed the behaviours, interviewed, and took notes about what should be modified in order to complete the e-Learning courseware.

3. The adjusted interactive e-Learning courseware was trialled again with students.

Progress of students through e-Learning courseware:

1. Students complete the pre-test.
2. Prepare students for e-Learning courseware.
3. Teach students through e-Learning courseware.
4. Launch the post-test and distribute the satisfaction questionnaire.

Results

7DEOH6WDWLVWLFDOFRPSDULVRQRIVWXGHQWVDFKLHYHPHQWWKURXJKXVLQJWKH Statistical Comparison of Students' Achievement through using the e-Learning

Units	Pre-test scores		Post-test scores		t
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	
1	4.29	1.58	9.21	0.96	18.465**
2	3.89	1.37	9.11	0.88	20.132**
3	3.79	0.83	9.21	0.63	34.372**
4	4.36	1.22	9.18	0.86	22.062**
5	4.32	1.59	8.89	1.23	19.664**
6	4.25	1.82	9.18	1.16	12.378**
7	4.04	1.77	8.46	1.23	14.465**
8	4.50	1.82	8.89	1.17	16.043**
Total	4.18	1.5	9.02	1.02	19.698**

**p<.01

From the table, the average score of post-test after learning with e-Learning is statistically significantly higher than the pre-test score at the level of .01 of the whole course and 8 units.

7DEOH&RPSDULVRQRIVWXGHQWVDFKLHYHPHQWLQOHDUQLQJZLWK Comparison of Students' Achievement between Learning with e-Learning and Lecture

Sample	Number of Students	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	df	t
Experimental group	28	83.86	6.28	27	4.703**
Controlled group	28	75.29	7.52		

**p<0.01

From the table, the students taught by using e-Learning get the higher score in doing achievement test when compared to the others who attend the class and heard a lecture.

Content	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
1. Introduction	4.49	0.46
2. Content	4.41	0.47
3. Screen design	4.37	0.47
4. Interaction and feedback	4.50	0.50
5. Evaluation	4.41	0.48
6. Benefits of E-Learning lessons	4.43	0.49
7. Benefits of turning in assignments through E-Learning	4.70	0.46
Average	4.47	4.08

According to the table, the students are satisfied with e-Learning at the high level (=4.47). When classified individually, the students are satisfied to a greater extent with the interaction, feedback, and benefits of e-Learning lessons at the high level (=4.50 and 4.70).

Conclusions

The researcher compared students' scores before and after using e-Learning lessons and found that students' scores after using e-Learning lessons were 19.70. It can be concluded that students' achievement after using e-Learning lessons was increased significantly at the 0.01 level. This supported the previous study of Meepruk, H. (2008) who conducted research by developing e-Learning lessons for high achieving vocational students at Vocational Education Institution in the south of Thailand.

The researcher compared scores between students studying with normal teaching lessons and e-Learning lessons. The results showed that mean scores of students who studied e-Learning lessons were 83.86 while mean scores of students who studied with normal lessons were lower with mean at 75.29. The researcher then analysed data using one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance). The results showed that there was a difference between two groups of students at the significant level of 0.01. This was in accordance with the previous research of Julnium, N. (2004) who conducted research with vocational students by using e-Learning lessons.

The results showed that students' satisfaction of e-Learning was at a very high level with mean at 4.47. This is in accordance with the study by Lakawiwat, P. (2007) who studied development of e-Learning lessons in mathematics courses of first year students from the Business Faculty at Bangkok University.

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Workshop and Field Project in a Research in English Language Education Class

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Abstract

Research skill, by nature, requires more than understanding substantial elements of research methodology. It is a requisite that a prospective researcher internalise the methodological issues through experience. Previous studies on students' difficulties to conduct research for their theses, and the writer's years of experience in having students under his tutelage, pinpoint students' insufficient knowledge and skill even to select topics and relevant methods of inquiry.

This paper aims to reflect how a workshop and field project in the course, Research in English Language Education, cultivated students' research knowledge and skills. The workshops get the students involved in preparing documents for conducting research. The deliverables include for example: formats for analysing documents of previous studies and literature; research proposal outlines; tables of specifications for instrument design; and guidelines for field projects. The projects expose students to real document study and field research activities, especially in relation to data collection. The workshops allow students to experience the planning of their research and to share problems and solutions as they outline their research proposals. The field projects expose students to the real hurdles of collecting the data so that they can anticipate the technicalities when designing various instruments.

Introduction

Research in English Language Education (RELE) is a compulsory course in the English Language Education Study Programme (ELESP), Universitas Negeri Jakarta. This course aims at preparing students to write their skripsi (research paper), as the requirement to get the graduate degree. This requires students to have sufficient knowledge and skill to carry out research in English language education. The final product of the course is a research proposal ready to be presented in a research proposal seminar.

The seminar's purpose is to improve the feasibility and quality of the proposal and to show typical problematic issues, like saturated topics, irrelevant literature reviews, and failure to maintain the chain of reasoning between key elements in a research proposal. These problems could have been avoided as the students participating in the seminar had actually taken at least two courses on research, *Introduction to research methodology* and *Research in English language education*. Yet somehow, the issues remain and are repeatedly encountered. Workshops and projects in RELE are expected to cope with the problems.

Workshops and projects are used in various contexts to enhance research knowledge and skills. A workshop provided by the National Science Foundation Graduate K-12 program at the University of Hawaii allowed teachers to experience environmental research and communicate with the local scientists (Baumgartner et al., (2009). The workshop was followed by research activities in the field and laboratory. It is reported that the workshop helped the teachers communicate with the scientists despite insignificant gains in research knowledge.

This paper presents the use of workshops and projects in a different way in that the workshops and projects are integrated thus allowing the participants to experience the planning, conducting, reflecting, and reporting of scientific inquiry.

Projects are also used by Devi et al., in India to enhance research skills of medical students. Their study proved that after taking part in the Mentored Student Project program at Melaka Manipal Medical College, Manipal Campus, India, the students believed that the project improved their research skills and fostered a positive attitude towards research. Berghahn during 2008-2009 provided four postgraduate research workshops in screen studies and visual culture for doctorate program students in the Department of Media Arts, Royal Holloway, University of London. The aim was to develop and practise transferable skills in a research context related to the doctoral students' research projects.

Team work and collaborative research are central during the workshops and prove fruitful in enhancing research knowledge and skills. The three studies indicate the potential of workshops and projects that include team work and collaboration to cultivate students' research knowledge and skills.

Problem and research methodology

This study deals with the question 'How do workshops and projects in RELE class help cultivate students' research knowledge and skills?' The study aims to reflect the ways workshops and projects in RELE class help students to plan and prepare their own research. Twenty one students of ELESP are the subjects of the study and workshop deliverables and project reports are the data. The study was conducted from February to May 2014 in the English Department of Universitas Negeri, Jakarta.

Workshops and field projects in RELE Class

Workshops and projects, by nature, are interrelated as they target work or activity. A project is discussed and planned in a meeting, or a workshop. Workshops and projects in this study are chosen so as to cultivate students' research knowledge and skills in the RELE class, as they could provide opportunities for the students to carry out the slogan *plan your work and work your plan*. The challenge is how could they plan research and carry it out given their inadequate research knowledge and skills.

An old saying from Aristotle is probably relevant to address the challenge: 'For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them'. This reminds us about the familiar teaching and learning phrase of *learning by doing*. There are several terms pertinent to the two notions in which experiential learning is the pivot.

Experiential learning requires individuals to get involved in an activity, reflect and judge the quality of it, and note important things as the lessons learned for another activity.

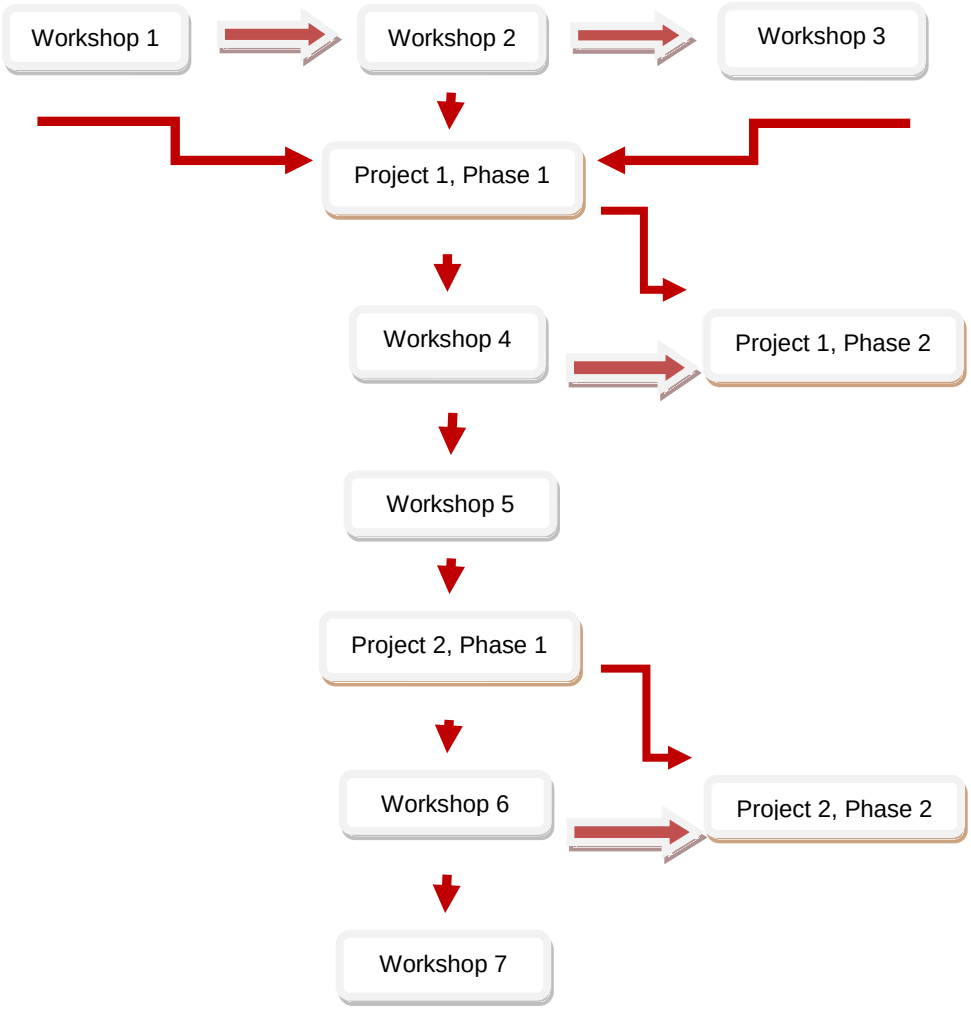
The four-step cyclical experiential learning model of Kolb (1984) comprising concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation, is the underpinning basis to carry out the workshops and projects in RELE classes. Kolb believes that knowledge and skill are gained through an individual's direct personal and environmental experience. Kolb develops Dewey's notion that teaching is the design and creation of environment and students learn by interacting with those environments and they study how to learn (Dewey, 1916 in Joyce, Weil, and Calhoun, 2009: 24). The most fundamentally decisive stage in experiential learning, the writer believes, is the reflective

observation and this is in line with Burns and Richards (2009: 300) who believe that reflection is an essential tool in professional learning.

Experiential learning shares its basic principles with other key notions in education. In experiential learning learners actively construct knowledge and adapt their experiences to activate mental processes, and these are two of the three beliefs in constructivism. Experiential learning puts learners in the context of discovery and inquiry through observation, inferring, hypotheses formulation, prediction, and communication. Learners get involved in planning, conducting, and evaluating their own learning. These processes are the basic principles of discovery learning. This learning through experience or learner's own personal discoveries consciously or unconsciously is also a characteristic of heuristics. Working in groups in the workshops and projects enables the sharing of the fundamental principle of co-operative or collaborative learning, and reflects student-centredness.

Experiential learning is the pivotal theoretical basis when conducting workshops and projects in RELE classes as it emphasises experience. So fundamental is the experience that Brown and Rodgers (2002: 3) define research as *an exploration of experience …. A good way of understanding the nature of research is to first to experience it by doing it, initially in a simple and elementary way.* They even use the subheading 'experiencing' in every chapter in their book, for example, experiencing research and experiencing case study research.

This study puts workshops and field projects in an interrelated consecutive program in the sense that workshops and projects are carried out one after the other and the workshop deliverables are the bases for the projects. To help students plan and prepare their research proposal, seven workshops and two projects were planned and conducted sequentially as shown in the scheme below.



Workshops 1, 2, and 3 are carried out sequentially to prepare students to carry out project one phase one (P1P1). Workshop 4 is conducted upon the completion of P1P1, where the results of P1P1 are evaluated and the plan of P1P1 is revised. The revised P1P1 plan is implemented in project one phase two (P1P2). After the submission of project one report, Workshop 5 is carried out to design the plan for project 2 phase 1 (P2P1). The results of P2P1 are reflected in workshop 6 where its plan is revised for P2P2. After the P2P2 reports are submitted, workshop 7 is conducted.

Each workshop and project is designed to achieve certain purposes indicated by their deliverables and reports. The purpose and deliverables/reports are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Workshops and projects with their purpose and deliverables/reports

No.	Workshop/Projects	Purpose	Deliverables/Reports
1	W #1	To develop students' ability to identify and determine: 1) research variables or focuses; 2) what to be written in the background of a research proposal; 3) what to be written in literature review in a research proposal.	Tables of: 1) variables or focuses; 2) pointers of background; 3) pointers in literature review of given research articles and of students' own research title.
2	W #2	To equip students with the ability to: 1) compare similarities and differences between research proposal and research report; 2) identify the seven key elements in a research proposal; 3) pinpoint the chain of reasoning between: title-problem-purpose; problem-data-data source-instrument; problem-literature review-data; problem-data-method.	Tables of: 1) similarities and differences between research proposal and research report; 2) seven key elements in a research proposal; 3) analysis pinpointing the chain of reasoning between certain elements.
3	W #3	To develop students' ability to: 1) make a table of specification (TOS) for designing instrument of an observation sheet; 2) make an instrument of observation.	TOS for designing an observation sheet and an observation sheet.
4	P #1 Phase 1	To collect the data and based on which prove whether teaching learning activities in a certain class at ELESP is teacher-centred or student-centred.	Data to decide whether teaching learning activities in a certain class at ELESP is teacher-centred or student-centred.
5	W #4	To enable students to: 1) measure the accuracy of their observation sheet in collecting the data; 2) to revise their observation sheet on the teacher and student centredness.	Table of measuring the accuracy of the observation sheet and the revised observation sheet.
6	P #1 Phase 2	To recollect the data on the teacher and student centredness using the revised observation sheet.	Newly recollected data on the teacher and student centredness.
7	W #5	To develop students' ability to: 1) make a table of specification (TOS) for designing instrument of questionnaire; 2) make an instrument of questionnaire.	TOS for designing a questionnaire and a questionnaire.
8	P #2 Phase 1	To collect the data and based on which explain the students' responses towards the use of presentation technique in a certain non-language skill class.	Data to explain the students' responses towards the use of presentation technique in a certain non-language skill class.
9	W #6	To enable students to: 1) measure the accuracy of their questionnaire in collecting the data; 2) to revise their questionnaire on the students' responses towards the use of presentation technique in a certain non-language skill class.	Table of measuring the accuracy of the questionnaire and the revised questionnaire.
10	P #2 Phase 2	To recollect the data on the students' responses towards the use of presentation technique in a certain non-language skill class using the revised observation sheet.	Newly recollected data on the students' responses towards the use of presentation technique in a certain non-language skill class.
11	W #7	To equip students with the ability to design the guidelines to carry out their research.	The guidelines to carry out research.

Experiencing the research process through workshops and projects

Quality research can be deduced from six characteristics released by the National Research Council of the United States, as quoted by Shavelson and Towne (2002, in McMillan and Wergin, 2010: 2-3). The characteristics are:

a) significant questions;

b) the relevance of research to theory;

c) relevant research methodology;

d) a coherent chain of reasoning between research question, literature review, methodology, results, and conclusion;

e) replicability and generalisability; and

f) scrutiny and critique through open dissemination.

Characteristics a) to e) are pivotal in delineating key topics for workshops and projects.

To emphasise targets to be achieved in workshops and projects, targets are put into questions. Learning materials pertaining to the workshops and projects are briefly presented by the researchers prior to the workshops.

Workshop 1 is concerned with the questions: *What are variables or focuses in research? What is to be written in a research proposal? What is to be written in a literature review?*

Students read a given research report from a journal thoroughly to answer three questions by filling in the tables provided for the workshop. First, they identified the variables or focuses of a study; next, they identified the pointers in the background of the research report; and finally, they identified the pointers in the literature review (*See* Tables 2-4 for Workshop #1 below). These three stages are repeated by the students with the research title and problem given by the researcher (the lecturer of RELE class).

Table 2 of W#1: The Identification and development of research variables/focuses

No	Research title	Variables	Focuses

Table 3 of W#1: The identification and development of pointers in background

No	Research title	Pointers in background

Table 4 of W#1: The identification and development of pointers in the literature review

No	Research title	Pointers in the literature review

In Workshop 1, students firstly trained themselves to recognise research variables or focuses, and pointers to the background, from a literature review from a given research article. Then, they identified the variables or focuses of the given research title and problem, and then developed pointers to the background and a literature review. These variables, problems, and pointers that they developed could indicate their ability to choose their own variables and to develop their background and literature review. To help them explore the related references to develop the literature review, e-books and internet access were provided. Here, the students experienced the identification and development of research variables, pointers to the background and literature review.

Workshop 2 deals with the questions: *What are the similarities between research proposals and research reports? What are the seven key elements in a research proposal?* and *How to maintain the chain of reasoning between the key elements in a research proposal?*

Students read thoroughly and compared model research proposals and research reports in groups of three. Research reports are research articles and skripsi. After that, students studied the model research articles and identified the seven key elements of title, problem, purpose, data, data source, instrument, and method. The last activity in Workshop 2 was when students decided whether or not the chain of reasoning between the key elements of the article was maintained. The three activities were carried out by making use of Tables 5-7 of Workshop 2 (below).

Table 5 of W#2: The Differences and similarities between a research proposal and a research report

No	Research proposal and research report	
	Similarities	Differences

Table 6 of W#2: The identification of key elements in a research proposal

No	Key element	Identification
1	Title	
2	Problem	
3	Purpose	
4	Data	
5	Data source	
6	Instrument	
7	Method	

Table 7 of W#2: The maintaining of the chain of reasoning between key elements

No	&KDLQRIUHDVRQLQJEHWHH	Remarks
1	Title-problem-purpose	
2	Problem-data-data source-instrument	
3	Problem-literature review-data	
4	Problem-data-method	

Students in Workshop 2 experienced the reasoning process emphasising logical and systematic ways of thinking. Babie (1990: 10-17) believes that logic is the most important characteristic of science. It was found that the research proposal is of the utmost importance in conducting research and that the key elements in a research proposal are interrelated. Krathwohl (1998: 64) uses the term *chain of reasoning* to link all elements and processes of conducting and reporting research (see the appendices). A seminar for writing skripsi proposals conducted as part of the research process proved that students' research proposals fail to maintain the explicit and coherent chain of reasoning between these key elements. Thus, allowing students to experience the research process is pivotal.

Workshop 3 deals with the question: *How do research problems and literature reviews help a researcher make a table of specification for instrument design?*

Students designed the research instrument by using TOS and that helped them see the required information and make reference to it. Students, in the first activity, studied a model observation sheet, item by item, and then identified the pointers in the literature review underpinning the items. The second activity had the students make their own TOS (*See* Table 8 of W#3) and design an observation sheet for an example of *teacher centred vs. student centred*. The students formulated the research problem based on the example and identified the relevant pointers in the literature review of the problem. Then they developed the observation sheet for the research problem.

Table 8 of W#3: Table of specification for instrument design (Observation sheet)

No.	Research problem	Indicators (based on literature review)	Items of observation

These activities made students see the explicit and coherent chain of reasoning between literature review, data, and instrument. They had to explore the pertinent references not only to be written in the literature review but also to be used to develop the instrument. When they managed to develop the instrument with the reference to the literature review, they knew that they had written the relevant review. The teacher did not decide if the items on the observation sheet were accurate as they were expected to find out themselves when collecting the data.

The first three workshops were the prerequisite sessions before the students went to the field to collect data, Project 1, phase 1. They had developed the observation sheet to collect data to decide whether teaching learning activities in a certain class at ELESP that they were taking

is teacher-centred, or student-centred. They had two weeks to collect the data and present it in Workshop 4.

Workshop 4 deals with the questions: *How accurate is your instrument of observation sheet which is used to collect data to answer the research problem on teacher and student centredness?* and *How would you revise your observation sheet?*

Students presented the data and the teacher used yes-no questions to elicit students' judgments whether or not the data could accurately answer the problem. The students themselves found that most items on their observation sheets were not accurate as they were not specific, were multi-interpretable, and irrelevant. They revised the instrument (Table 9 of W#4) and recollected data on a similar problem (Project 1, phase 2).

Table 9 of W#4: Table for instrument revision (Observation sheet)

No.	Observation items	Judgment		Remarks and revised items
		Accurate	Inaccurate	

This workshop allows the students to experience measuring the accuracy of their research instruments. The discussion on validity and reliability of an instrument could more easily be had by the students as they had their own experience of not only developing the instrument, but also of using it. Besides, the most basic thing in an observation, observability, is concretised through this experience.

Workshop 5 deals with the question: *How to make specifications for the design of a questionnaire instrument based on pointers from the literature review?*

The workshop activities are like those in Workshop 3 in which the students studied a model questionnaire item by item, and identified the pointers from the literature review underpinning the items. Then, they made their own TOS (Table 10 of W#5) to design a questionnaire for a case of *the students' responses towards the use of presentation techniques in certain non-language skill classes*. Research problems were formulated based on the case and the relevant pointers from the literature review for the problem were identified. The last activity required the students to develop the questionnaire for the research problem.

Table 10 of W#5: Table of specification for instrument design (Questionnaire)

No.	Research problem	Indicators (based on literature review)	Items/questions

To follow up Workshop 5, students collected the data using the questionnaire they had designed. They had two weeks to investigate the students' responses towards the use of presentation techniques in non-language skill classes (Project 2, phase 1). They did this in groups of three and presented the data in Workshop 6.

Workshop 6, students answer the questions: *How accurate are the items in the questionnaire in regard to collecting data on the students' responses towards the use of presentation techniques in a certain non-language skill class?* and *How are those items revised?*

The students, again, found that most of the items on the questionnaire were irrelevant, multi-interpretable, and too general. They revised the questionnaire and recollected the data (Project 2, phase 2).

Workshop 7, asks the fundamental technical question about research planning: *What to do to make a research proposal?*

Students made use of any information they had been exposed to during the workshops and projects to design the guidelines to carry out their research. The guidelines expected students to describe clearly step-by-step activities to achieve targets in writing a research proposal. The students were also expected to indicate how well they understood information required to write the proposal.

Table 11 of W#7: Guideline for research proposal writing planning

No	Targets	To do list	Time required
1	Topic and title.	Identifying, selecting, and exploring the possibility of similarities and differences with other titles.	… weeks
2	Problem and purpose.	Formulating and deciding the feasibility.	… weeks
3	Literature review.	Exploring and selecting the relevant references, reviewing and deciding the references to underpin the data collection and analysis).	… weeks
4	Method.	Deciding the appropriate method/way of solving the research problem and exploring the literature about the method.	… weeks
5	Time and place.	Predicting the time and place required to write the proposal, collect and analyse the data, and write the research report/skripsi.	… weeks
6	Data and data source.	Identifying the relevant data and data source.	… weeks
7	Instrument.	Determining the underpinning theories to design the instrument to collect and analyse the data and designing the instrument.	… weeks
8	Validity and reliability.	Measuring the validity and reliability of the instrument.	… weeks
9	Data collection and analysis procedure/ technique.	Determining the underpinning theories to collect and analyse the data.	… weeks

The workshops and projects allowed the students to experience and reflect on learning processes, and the teacher to function as a consultant whose aim it was to provide the context of discovery. The students discover the research knowledge and skills they need to develop research proposals through exposure to: research reports; planning research; designing required research tools; collecting data; judging the research instrument's accuracy; and revising the instruments by actively taking part in the workshops and projects. They

experience and discover problems in planning and conducting research, and finding solutions to problems. Thus they learn much!

Problematic issues encountered and the lessons learned in the workshops and projects

The first problematic issue encountered in the workshops and projects is understanding and formulating a research problem and its association with collecting data.

A few students taking part in the workshops and projects associated the problem with the question words, *what* or *how*.

> When discussing an experiment method the students were asked to formulate the problem from the title, *The effect of diary writing on students' writing skill*.
>
> Eight of the twenty one students wrote, *What is the effect on diary writing on students' writing ability?*
>
> When the title was modified to, *Using diary writing to develop students' writing skill,* in order to introduce the students to classroom action research (CAR), they wrote, *How to use diary writing to develop students' writing ability?*

An experiment does not address *what is the effect?* but *does it affect?* and so does CAR although in CAR the problem could be, *To what extent does it affect?* This is interesting because the classroom activities in RELE prior to the workshops and projects are lectures on research methodology. One of the lectures explicitly stresses that the research problem in an experiment is usually formulated as a *yes/no* question as the purpose is to prove whether or not a particular treatment works to change or improve something. The students could understand this, yet could not use their understanding to formulate the problem.

This also happened when they were asked to identify the data represented in the titles above. Some mentioned students as the data, and others wrote diary writing and writing skill. Only three students wrote scores as the data without specifying what scores. They missed the information that data is to answer a research question, they mixed the data up with the variables. Although this problematic issue of problem formulation and data was solved, this was not evident in the students' proposals submitted at the end or in the RELE class. This issue needs to be taken into account when conducting a class in research methodology.

The second issue deals with the literature review. The pointers from the literature review that the students identified from research titles, and other problems identified were not directly pertinent to elements in research methodology, especially in relation to data, data collection, and data analysis. The students tended to write explanatory definitions of the variables, which were not based upon the data collection and analysis strategies.

The definitions of various authors are identified and presented, not reviewed. When asked to write the literature review for projects 1 and 2, the students collected the definitions and wrote them out. Only seven students compared one definition with the others, the rest merely wrote them or even copied them. They write the literature, they just don't write the review.

The third issue might be the most substantial issue in research, that of explicit and coherent chain of reasoning between elements in a research proposal. The issue began when the students identified the chain of title-problem-purpose. Of the given titles, *Students' responses towards the use of presentation technique in non-language skill classes*, and, *Presentation technique in non-language skill classes: A Case Study*, five of the twenty one students could not identify the relevant problems and purposes based on the titles. They failed to maintain

the explicit and coherent chain of reasoning between title, problem, and purpose. Table 12 compares the existing result and the expected result.

Table 12: Maintaining the chain of reasoning between title, problem, and purpose

Title 1		*Students' responses towards the use of presentation technique in non-language skill classes*	
		Existing result	Expected result
1	Problem	How do students respond towards the use of presentation technique in non-language skill classes?	How do students respond towards the use of presentation technique in non-language skill classes?
2	Purpose	To improve students presentation technique in non-language skill classes.	To investigate students' responses towards the use of presentation technique in non-language skill classes.
Title 2		*Presentation technique in non-language skill classes: A case study*	
		Existing result	Expected result
1	Problem	How to use presentation technique in non-language skill classes?	How is presentation technique in non-language skill classes implemented?
2	Purpose	To improve the quality of non-language skill classes using presentation technique.	To describe the implementation of presentation technique in non-language skill classes.

The problem here is the inappropriate identification of the research problem and purpose of the research. There was also a failure to maintain the chain of reasoning. In the first title, the students' responses are maintained in the existing problem statement, but the logical unity between title, problem, and purpose breaks down. In the second title, the nature of case study research aimed at describing a phenomenon is not reflected in the existing problem and the purpose of the research. These would have been more appropriately addressed through action research.

The fourth encountered issue concerns the validity of the instruments. The first instrument the students design is an observation sheet to collect the data used to decide whether the teaching and learning activities in the observed classes are teacher centred or student centred. Most items on the sheet do not accurately list the observable indicators of teacher or student centredness, for example:

1. the teacher asks open-ended questions;
2. the teacher answers all students' questions;
3. the teacher pays attention to and improves students' pronunciation;
4. there was enthusiasm and excitement about the activity and the problems and questions that were generated from the activity.

Items one to three are not clearly indicating teacher or student centredness, while item four seems to be unobservable.

The second instrument is a questionnaire on the students' responses towards the use of presentation techniques. Most items of the questionnaire direct respondents to judge the advantages or disadvantages of the presentation technique, giving personal subjective judgments.

Study the examples of the items below:

1. Presentation technique (PT) makes me and other students independent;
2. PT makes my pronunciation and fluency improved;
3. PT helps me to be aware in selecting proper words in appropriate contexts;
4. PT improves my creativity in designing an attractive presentation;
5. PT helps me to practise reconstructing sentences into phrases or simply into words efficiently.

The items are not based on the proper references to presentation techniques and therefore fail to present the indicators of the advantages and disadvantages of PT.

These four problematic issues encountered in the workshops and projects are of the utmost importance to the study. The students are exposed to the real challenges that they themselves discover in planning and conducting research; they are experientially aware of what the hurdles are and of what to take into account to anticipate them.

Knowing a problem is the key to learning as Anton Chekov (1888) believed that … *not a single problem is solved, but they satisfy you completely just because all the problems are correctly presented.*

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Examining the Effectiveness of Visual Imagery Classes on Authentic and Modified Texts in EFL Reading

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Abstract

This research was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of visual imagery in reading activities practised by Junior High School students in Jakarta. In the investigation two classes were chosen in which both practised visual imagery in reading but one class read authentic texts whereas the other studied modified ones. For that purpose, two authentic, narrative texts and their modified equivalences were carefully selected and used as the material of instruction. At the completion of the study both classes were tested using the same instrument. Scores of the tests were calculated and compared using an independent t-test. In addition, classroom observations were conducted to analyse varieties of imagery practised by students in both classes. The research reveals the following:

1. Students who studied modified texts received higher scores compared to those who read authentic materials.
2. Kinds and forms of imagery made by students using modified texts varied from one student to another.
3. Students using authentic texts tend to practise less interesting imageries.
4. Students in the reading class with modified texts show higher activities compared to those using authentic materials.
5. There is significant difference in achievement between students in the class using authentic texts and those in the class using modified texts.

Introduction

An early study of imagery in education was conducted by Norton (2001), and Kanno & Norton (2003) who claimed that a conception of imagined communities (IC) might affect the understanding of learning in two forms: temporal and spatial dimensions. The first refers to the notion that IC facilitates learners to pull forward their visions of the future to their prevailing actions and identities. The latter examines inter-relationship between individual learner's identities and the influence of globalisation and transnationalism on language learning and identity construction.

It was Anderson (1991) who first coined the term imagined communities arguing that what we think of as nations are imagined communities because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. The example below might help to render our comprehension more concrete.

Norton (2000) describes the story of Katarina and the investment by her IC professional community. Katarina was an immigrant from Poland who wished to take a computer course

in Canada after having attended English as a second language (ESL) class for some period of time. Discouraged by her ESL teacher, saying that her English was not adequate to take the course, Katarina was insulted and never returned to her ESL class. The degree to which Katarina reacted seemed to appear extreme and destructive. However, Norton argued that such a reaction was significantly comprehensible related to Katarina's investment in her IC, that is a community of professionals in her home country.

For Lave & Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) what happened to Katarina relates to what is the so called non-participation engagement, a situation in which learners cannot fully and physically engage with their surrounding in class activities. In respect to non-participation engagement, Lave and Wenger point out two conditions: peripheral and marginal engagement. The distinction between peripherality and marginality is useful to explain Katarina's case. According to Lave and Wenger peripherality refers to the fact that some degree of non-participation can become an enabling factor of participation, while the term marginality refers to a form of non-participation that prevents full participation. I believe it is the first condition - peripheral engagement - that Katarina decided to choose so that she could overcome her case and finally succeed.

The above argument might draw one significant conclusion saying it is the imagination that drives people to succeed under any circumstances. This is no wonder why Einstein stated that imagination is more important than knowledge and I believe it is in this respect that Covey put one of his seven habits saying 'Begin with the end in mind'. It is the ability to envision in our mind what we cannot at present see with our eyes (Covey, 1989). When it is taken for granted that imagination, when properly managed, might facilitate success, there must be something teachers could do to drive their students to gain success in learning.

How imagination facilitates learning is complicated but possible to explain because humans are capable of making connections with communities that lie beyond the local and direct environment (Anderson, 1991). It is in this connection that Picasso once said, 'I paint what I think, not what I see.' What Picasso stated is comprehensible for Lave & Wenger as they argue that learning actually takes place in two forms of activities called engagement and imagination. The first refers to a tangible interaction between learners and their concrete and immediate environment, and the latter is an imaginative interaction (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998). In the field of language learning, however, empirical evidence showing the relationship between imagery and language acquisition in EFL or ESL classes is scant (Canning, 2001). Therefore, it is appropriate to investigate how imagery might facilitate learning in students.

The researchers (Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 1998; Toohey, 2000; and Kano and Norton, 2003) claim evidence that imagery facilitates language learning. More specifically Keene & Zimmermann (2007) stated there is ample evidence that visual imagery, the ability to build mental pictures or images, facilitates students in a reading class. Such is possible when they associate words on the page with images and memories of their lives. It is evident that their own visualisations would greatly depend upon their prior knowledge and engagement with the topic. In addition, if we are able to construct any mental image from what we read, it is likely that our understanding of the material will be greater than had we not (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993). In this respect, Chamot calls imagery a metacognitive strategy which is characterised by the application of prior knowledge to comprehend new problems, whereas Brown (2004) calls it schemata in which background information and cultural experience is always present to carry out interpretation effectively in a reading activity.

In this regard, Keene & Zimmermann (2007) identified seven principal comprehension strategies practised by good readers when they read, three of which strongly relate to imagination or mental activities. The strategies include:

1. monitoring for meaning—knowing when you know, knowing when you don't know;
2. using and creating schema—making connections between the new and the known, building and activating background knowledge;
3. asking questions—generating questions before, during, and after reading that lead you deeper into the text;
4. determining importance—deciding what matters most, what is worth remembering;
5. inferring—combining background knowledge with information from the text to predict, conclude, make judgments, and interpret;
6. using sensory and emotional images—creating mental images to deepen and stretch meaning, and
7. synthesising — creating an evolution of meaning by combining understanding with knowledge from other texts or sources.

In this article, Keene & Zimmermann's three strategies related to mental activities are elaborated to facilitate students in EFL reading classes. Below is the elaboration taken from the same resource (Keene & Zimmermann (2007).

1. *Using and creating schema*
   Schema is the way students connect the new to the known, recall relevant information, and further their comprehension, with prior knowledge. Researchers have shown that students will understand what they are reading better if they think about their own experiences as they read. To arouse experiences, teachers might apply helpful hints, such as (a) use an excerpt or extract of any passage as material for discussion, (b) raise probing questions, (c) discuss the importance of personal connections with the text content.

2. *Inferring*
   To infer is to create a personal and unique meaning from a text. A proficient reader creates meaning that is neither stated explicitly in the text nor is shown in the illustrations. Inferring also deals with the ability to think aloud to involve activities of modeling and demonstration in day-to-day comprehension instruction. Inferences are based in part on individual life experience and knowledge of the reader.

3. *Using sensory and emotional images*
   Creating images while we read allows us to bring the text to life. Images originate in our senses and combine with our emotions. The images that we create while we read have little meaning unless we associate them with words on the page along with other images and memories of our lives. Students need explicit instruction to develop their image-making abilities. They need to understand how their images help them to better comprehend what they read.

In line with the above description, Draper (2010) identified six characteristics of proficient readers – all of which relate to the activities of imagery, as follows:

Proficient readers

- spontaneously and purposefully create mental images while and after reading;
- use images to immerse themselves in rich detail as they read;
- use images to draw conclusions, to create distinct and unique interpretations of the text, to recall details significant to the text, and to recall a text after it has been read;
- adapt their images as they continue to read;
- understand and articulate how creating images enhances their comprehension; and
- change and modify their images in response to images that other readers share.

In addition, the following ways might be practised by smart readers before, during and after reading. Before reading, students visually organise their thinking by visualising possible content, linking background knowledge and forming predictions. During reading, they visualise the content by comparing predictions with ideas, themes and information in the text. This is to form a visual representation of what they are reading. After reading they visually link new information with prior knowledge, visually represent what they have read in a graphic summary, and build new understanding.

In more specific steps, Draper (2010) summarised some techniques of visualising, three of which are discussed and used to empower students to benefit from their power of imagery in reading. The three techniques of visualising are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Techniques of visualising

Activity	Purpose	Steps
Think aloud.	To demonstrate when, why and how students visualise while reading.	• Explain how to create images in the mind when reading. This is done by taking a part of the text to read aloud. • Begin reading, pause to verbalise thinking to create images. • Reveal how images are created in the mind. • Explain how to select words and phrases in the text to connect with own personal experiences and prior knowledge. • Involve five senses to create visual images. • Describe how creating the image helped them to understand and enjoy what is happening in the text.

Activity	Purpose	Steps
Gallery images.	To create mental images while reading.	• Explain the concept of using images to represent information by showing examples of different images representing different content concepts. • Discuss in small groups how images correspond to information. • Have students read a section of chosen text and create 2 to 4 images to represent the content. • Start a gallery on a classroom or hallway wall to exhibit images.
Story wheel.	To help students visualise story.	• Teacher prepares story wheels prior to lesson. It is a circle divide into 6-8 pie segments with a smaller circle in the centre of the larger circle. • Students read a story. • After completing the story, students list the important events in the story. Remind them that the events should be chosen from the beginning, middle and end of story. • Next, have students divide the list of events into a list of 6 – 8, depending on pie pieces. • Students write the events on the pie segments.

To assess the activity of visualisation in reading class, a scoring rubric is used, adapted from Draper's compilation. Table 2 is such a rubric.

Table 2. Scoring rubric

Score criteria	0=Minimal	1 = Basic	2= Proficient	3 = Exemplary
Picture show communicates literal understanding of the text.	No images or images bear no relationship to text.	Images illustrate one or two items directly mentioned in text, may be peripheral details.	Images illustrate key elements of character, setting and events in text.	Images illustrate key element of charter, setting and events in text. Images are detailed and students can describe additional details from mental image.
Picture show communicates main concepts and demonstrate ability to understand ad acquire informatio from text.	No images; or images that illustrate only literal understanding of words in text.	Images illustrate more than simple objects mentioned in text. Images demonstrate some understanding of concepts or relationships, but main concepts are missing.	Students combined the author's words with own back ground knowledge to understand the text. Images illustrate understanding of key concepts and relationships.	Images extend or enhance the text with student's own interpretation. Students can explain his/her inferences and communicate what was learned from the text.

Score criteria	0=Minimal	1 = Basic	2= Proficient	3 = Exemplary
Student is able to go beyond pictures, to use all senses to undersand text.	Images illustrate only visual elements of text. No emotional illustrations, such as color, are involved.	Images or student explanations illustrate some use of multiple senses or emotions.	Picture show illustrates use of multiple senses through use of color, composition, and rotation of objects. Student can describe a "mind movie" that includes more than visual images.	Images come from all the senses and emotion. Students describe a rich 'mind movie' that includes sound, smell, movement and feelings and can explain how mental images enhanced comprehension.

Methodology

This mixed methods research was conducted using a sequential explanatory design in which qualitative data were used to enhance, complement, and follow up quantitative findings (Creswell, 2008). In this design quantitative and qualitative data were collected sequentially in two phases.

Quantitative data were collected using a teacher-made test to assess students' achievement in EFL reading class. For that purpose two classes of Junior Secondary Schools, in which one class consisted of 29 students and the other 27, provided the empirical data related with the topic. Both classes were taught using steps and procedures of visual imagery in reading but the reading texts were different; one class read authentic texts and the other class modified texts. During the process of teaching reading the three Keene & Zimmermann's strategies were applied, i.e., creating schemata, inferring, and using sensory and emotional images. These strategies were carried out in Activity 1, think aloud, as proposed by Draper. This is to say that students were asked to think aloud, while reading, to demonstrate how they visualised the three mental activities: making schemata, making inferences, and using sensory and emotion.

Steps to practise think aloud activity, as proposed by Draper, are presented as follows:

- Teacher explains to students how to create images in mind when reading a text.
- Teacher chooses a part of a text to read aloud.
- Begin reading. Pause to verbalise the thinking and the images that are being created in mind.
- Reveal how images are created in mind.
- Explain to students how to select rich words from the text, connected with personal experiences and prior knowledge. Teachers might pull phrases from the text that connect to the five senses to create visual image.
- Describe to students how creating the image can help understand and enjoy what is happening in the text.

The other two activities of visualisation - story wheel and gallery images – were used to illustrate the end products as far as visual imagery in a reading class is concerned.

Qualitative data were collected using a rubric, as earlier discussed. Forms of a story wheel and a gallery images used by students to express their imagery in reading can be found in the appendices. Steps and procedures to operate a story wheel and gallery images are presented below.

1. Steps and procedures to operate story wheel:
    - Teacher prepares a story wheel prior to lesson.
    - Students read a story, reading text.
    - Students list important events chosen from beginning, middle, and end of the story.
    - Students divide the list of events into the pie segments.
    - Students write the events on the pie segments.
    - Students start to illustrate the events on the corresponding segments.
    - Students write the story title and author's name in the centre circle.
    - Students might post the story wheels in the reading centre or on a classroom kiosk or booth.
2. Steps and procedures to operate gallery walls:
    - Teacher explains the concept of using images to represent information. S/he can show 2 or 3 samples of different images representing different content area concepts. Discuss how images correspond to information.
    - In small groups, have students read a section of text and create 2-4 images to represent the content. Students share images with classmates.
    - Start a gallery on a classroom or hallway wall to exhibit images.

The quantitative data were analysed using an independent t-test formula. This is to confirm if there is significant difference between mean scores of both classes under level of significance (. = 0.05) and degrees of freedom = 54. For such confirmation two hypotheses were formulated, i.e. H_0, saying there is no difference between mean scores of the class with authentic text and that with modified text, and H_1 saying there is difference between mean scores of the class with authentic text and that with modified text. The confidence level of statistical significance is based on the following 'p' values, such as that 'p' < .05 which means the difference is significant and H_0 should be rejected.

Results

1. Quantitative data

The use of t-tests presented a ‘p’ value = .000 which is lower than that of .05 (‘p’ < .05). This means that the hypothesis, saying there is no difference between mean scores of the class with authentic text, could be rejected. In other words there is significant difference between mean scores of the two classes being studied in this research.

2. Qualitative data

Using the scoring rubric to assess students’ imagery in reading, the research reports the following results:

- Kinds and forms of imagery made by students in class with modified reading text vary from one student to another.
- Students in class with authentic text made less interesting imagery.
- Students in class with modified text show higher activities than those of authentic text.

Discussion

The statement by Gambrell & Jawitz (1993), that creating mental images while reading will facilitate comprehension, is not surprising when it is related to schema theory. Only after the schema is activated is one able to see or hear what he/she is reading (Harmer, 2001). Visual imagery or imagination in a broader context deals with the involvement of prior knowledge to build mental pictures. In a reading activity such an involvement might be articulated by associating words in the text with images and memories of the readers’ lives (Keene & Zimmermann, 2007). The notion of association in this regard is central and will be effective when it is personally meaningful to individual learners (Oxford, 1990). Since each reader has different background knowledge, it is culture specific (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). This implies, in a broader context, that certain reading texts might facilitate readers to generate their schemata by which visual imagery appears.

Therefore, this research deliberately set apart two different kinds of text, one is authentic and the other modified.

Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, including the previous explanation, some conclusions can be stated as follows:

From the quantitative analysis

1. Scores of student achievement in the class with modified text are different from those in the class with authentic text. Mean score of the first class is 81.44 and mean score of the second class is 65.59.
2. The ‘p’ value is less than .005 which means there are significantly different scores of achievement between the classes.

From the qualitative analysis

1. Kinds and forms of imagery made by students in class with modified reading texts varied from one student to another.
2. Students in the reading class with modified texts showed higher activities compared to those using authentic materials.
3. Students in the class with authentic texts practised less interesting imageries.

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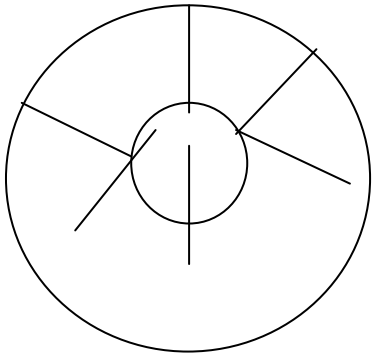
Appendices

1. A Story Wheel (Draper, 2010)



Notes:

1. Student's name and the story title are written in the small circle in the middle.
2. Imaginary events are drawn in the pie segments.
3. Teachers may have their students number the events.

Procedure:

1. Teacher prepares a story wheel prior to lesson.
2. Students read a story, reading text.
3. Students list important events: chosen from beginning, middle, and end of the story.
4. Students divide the list of events into the pie segments.
5. Students write the events on the pie segments.
6. Students start to illustrate the events on the corresponding segments.

7. Students write the story title and author's name in the centre circle.
8. Students might post the story wheels in the reading centre or on a classroom kiosk or booth.

2. Gallery Wall (taken from Draper (2010)

1				
2				
3				

Legend: 1 = Title and student name; 2 = Imaginary illustration; 3 = Description.

Procedure:

1. Teacher explains the concept of using images to represent information. S/he can show 2 or 3 samples of different images representing different content area concepts. Discuss how images correspond to information.
2. In small groups, have students read a section of text and create 2-4 images to represent the content. Students share images with classmates.
3. Start a gallery on a classroom or hallway wall to exhibit images.

A Discourse Analysis of English as a Medium of Classroom Instruction in Senior High Schools in Indonesia

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to describe the use of English as a medium of classroom instruction. The focus is on investigating the teachers' and students' utterances using the Sinclair & Coulthrad model in order to know who dominates the classroom dialogue, and to identify the cognitive level at which the students are operating.

Content analysis of data taken from three different schools produced the following results:

First: Each form of utterance may have more than one meaning. Teachers used questions to question, confirm, instruct and correct; teachers also used statements to convey greeting, answer, explain, instruct, point, close, and confirm.

Second: Teachers dominated the classroom interaction.

Third: Students' cognitive levels are at the understanding level.

Introduction

The use of English in the English class especially in senior high schools in Indonesia is still dominated by the teacher. The teacher speaks English more than students for a number of reasons: to explain materials; because of the anxiety of students when expressing their ideas; students' difficulties with speaking skills; and the lack of opportunities for students to practise because of the large number of students in the classroom. Sometimes, the teachers' domination in the classroom is also oriented to gain the teaching learning target as stated in the syllabus. In reality, the Indonesian language is used more often in English classes than the English language.

This research focused on oral discourse analysis in classroom instruction in senior high schools and was conducted to investigate the use of English in English classes and to identify quality of utterences. Based on preliminary observations, the intensity of the use of English language in the classroom was lower than the use of Indonesian language. Teachers often prefered to use English to give short instructions and then followed with the Indonesian language to explain the material and to elaborate students' answers.

This research will observe the use of classroom instruction and the role of teachers and students. The quality of speech will be analysed to map out whether the teachers use speech to stimulate high level thinking skills, or just operate at lower levels, and to ascertain whether there are any initiatives from students who are able to stimulate other students to think at a higher cognitive level.

The aim of this research is to describe the use of English as a medium of classroom instruction by focusing on the meaning of each form of utterance, by teachers and students.

The research question is: What is the nature of the use of English in classroom instruction in senior high schools in Indonesia?

This research used the Sinclair & Coulthrad model in order to determine who dominates the classroom dialogue, and to identify students' cognitive level.

Theoretical background

Discourse is defined as the use of language. Discourse analysis means an analysis of the use of language (McCarthy, 2000: 5; Cook, 1989: 6; Brown and Yule, 1983: 1). Discourse analysis refers to the study of the relationship between language and context, and between form and meaning in written or spoken text. Approaches to conducting an analysis of discourse are various. Dell Hymes (1964) used a sociological approach for analysing speech in a social context. Austin (1962), Searle (1969), and Grice (1975) analysed discourse with speech act theory. Levinson (1983) and Leech (1983) used pragmatics to analyse discourse, while Halliday (1973) used a functional approach in conducting discourse analysis. Halliday placed emphasis on the function of language, and its structure and thematic information in oral or written language.

The discussion of language analysis systems can be seen from three perspectives, namely: non linguistic; discourse; and grammar. Non linguistic analyses the language in terms of course, period and topic. Discourse analyses the language in terms of lesson, transaction, exchange, move and act. Grammar analyses the language in terms of sentence, clause, group word and morpheme (Coulthard: 1992).

The conversational analysis model by Sinclair & Coulthard classified levels of analysis as follows: transaction (one set of conversations consisting of one theme of the conversation); exchange (part of the conversation which consisted of one sub theme in conversation); move (every utterance in a conversation); and act (the smallest units of speech representing an act) (Michael McCarthy, 1991: 22). The result of this analysis can be used to interpret the role of participants in a conversation (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992: 1-34).

Act is the smallest unit in discourse analysis. There are three types of acts which often appear in oral discourse, namely: elicitation, directive, and informative. Elicitation is the act which has the function of literary response or to request a linguistic response. Directive is the act which serves to prompt a non linguistic response in a class. This could include the opening of a book, looking at the whiteboard, writing, or listening. Informative is the act which serves to convey ideas, facts, opinions, or other information to get the response of recognition or a sign that others are listening. Directives, informatives, or elicitations often appear in interrogative, imperative and declarative utterances. (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992: 8-20).

Move is composed of several acts, and moves are the elements in constructing an exchange. There are five classes of move that make up two types of exchange. The first is boundary exchange composed of framing and focusing; the second is teaching exchange made up of the opening, answering, and follow-up moves.

Each move has a different function. The move is the framing aspect of all oral discourse that often occurs in classroom discourse and is usually made up of one participant. The move will be identified by silent stress, such as *'Right^' 'now^' 'OK^*'which is followed by *focusing move* to introduce a topic such as, *'We are going to communicate/have been communicating; this is what our communication was/will be about'*. *Focusing moves* sometimes are ambiguous. For example, the utterance *'Today we are going to play Rounders'* should be immediately followed by '*but first we must finish our sums*', if not, students will think that the first utterance is *opening move* so they will go out and play Rounders.

There are three types of moves: *opening move; answering move; and follow up move*. The structure of *opening moves* is simple: *pre-heads* and *post-heads*. The structure of *answering moves* consist of three elements*: pre-head; head; and post-head. Follow-up moves* have the structure: *pre-head; head; and post-head.* (Sinclair & Coulthard,1992: 21-25).

Because *opening move* and *answering move* is a pair of moves, and the function of *opening move* is to give *information, direct an action, or elicit a fact*, *answering move* is dependent on the function of *opening move*.

There are two types of exchanges: boundary and teaching.

Boundary exchange functions to initiate and end what teachers consider to be a stage in learning. Teaching exchange includes all phases in the learning process. Boundary exchange consists of framing and focusing. Boundary exchange is divided into two types, namely, free exchange and bound exchange. The primary function of every exchange is informing, directing, eliciting and checking. Each type of exchange gives the name and function of initiation (I), response (R) and feedback (F). Moves can be coded as opening, answering and follow-up.

Some applications of exchanges in teachers' and students' conversations in the classroom (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992: 25-30) are:

- First: *Teacher informs:* This exchange occurs when teachers convey facts, opinions, ideas and new information. Then students give a response (not always) and there is no feedback so that its structure is the initiation and response IR.
- Second: *Teacher directs:* In this exchange the teacher asks students to do something and not to say something, nor necessarily give feedback. The structure is IRF.
- Third: *Teacher elicits:* Means teachers need a verbal response from students. They often use a series of elicit exchanges in the learning process. The stucture is IRF.
- Fourth: *Pupil elicits*: This exchange happens in the learning process when students ask teachers a question and they see the teachers' response and ask for permission to speak. The structure is IR.
- Fifth: *Pupil informs*: Students sometimes give information when they think there is something relevant or interesting to be delivered. The structure is IF not IR.
- The last: *Check:* Teacher wants to check students' involvement or students' understanding. The structure is IRF.

The analysis of language in communication can be seen from the form, meaning and use. The form is related to grammar and pronunciation; the meaning is related to the message or function of an utterance; and the use is related to the application of language in real context.

The relationship between form and function is described by Sinclair & Coulthrad (1992: 11-13) by providing a number of principles, namely:

- First: Interrogative clause has instructional meaning if there is the modality 'can', 'could', 'will', 'would' or 'going to', and the subject is an addressee, and the predicate is an action. For example: '*Can you play the piano, John*' means *instruction*; '*Can John play the piano'* means *question;* '*Can you swim a length, John*' means *question.*

- Second: Declarative and interrogative sentence has instructional meaning if it refers to the previous activity. For example: '*I can hear someone laughing'* means *instruction;*

'Is someone laughing' means *instruction; 'What are you laughing at'* means *instruction; 'What are you laughing at' means question.*

- Third: Declarative and interrogative sentence means instruction if it refers to the act that both teachers and students already know. For example: '*The door is still open'* means *instruction; 'Did you shut the door'* means *instruction;'Did you shut the door'* means *question.*

Conversational analysis also can be seen from the cognitive quality of the utterances. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) in *A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy* classify cognitive levels into: remembering; understanding; applying; analysing; evaluating and creating.

Research methodology

Qualitative content analysis was used in this research. Content analysis is a research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts, and a practical guide to action (Krippendorff, 1980). Data were collected by recording the teaching and learning processes from three different senior high schools and vocational schools in Jakarta and Bogor, Indonesia. Data was then analysed and interpretated.

Research findings

Sinclair & Coulthrad model of interaction

Teachers' and students' interactions were analysed using the Sinclair & Coulthrad model for calculating the number of transactions, identifying the number of exchanges and the function or meaning of each move. Data collected on conversations between teachers and students in the school included 3 types of transactions, 28 exchanges, and 196 moves which consisted of 119 teachers' moves and 77 students' moves.

Here are some examples of analysis in each type of exchange: (T: Teacher, S: Student)

1. Initiation: T: Good morning students.

Response: S: Good morning mam.

This type of exchange is *teacher inform* and means that the teacher initiates and the student responses or answers. The stucture is IR.

2. Initiation: T: Hari ini siapa yang tidak masuk? (Who is absent today?).

Response: S: Masuk semua bu. (All students come, mam).

Feedback: T: Masuk semua ya. (OK, all students come).

This type of exchange is *teacher elicit*, namely by IRF structure. The teacher asks, the student answers, and the teacher gives reinforcement or feedback.

3. Initiation: T: Hari ini kita akan mempelajari hortatory teks. (Today, we are going to learn hortatory text). (Please, deliver the text).

T: Kalian tahu korupsi? (Do you know corruption?).

T: Kalian tahu korupsi? Indonesia adalah negara yang banyak sekali tindakan korupsi. (Do you know corruption? Indonesia is the country which is many corruptions). This text is a discussing about corruption. Now, read this text and try to understand the content of the text.

Response: S: Membaca Teks (Reading a text).

This type of exchange is *teacher direct* and the structure is IR. The teacher made several initiations in the structure of IR, but the response from students was non verbal. The teacher said that they would learn hortatory text and asked the students to deliver the text. Students were asked about corruption, and then asked to read and answer the question.

4. Initiation: T: Ya, salah satu. (OK, one student).

Response: S: They are ....

Feedback: T: Dengar nggak? (Do you listen?).

Response: S: Nggak (No).

This exchange is *checking.* When the teacher asks 'do you listen?' it means he wanted to check whether the students are listening to their friend's answer or not. This move also means that teachers ask students to listen to their friend's answer.

Based on that analysis, the main types of exchange are *teacher inform, teacher direct, and checking.* It means that the teacher dominates the conversation or interaction. The exchange which occurs most frequently is *teacher inform* and the exchanges that never occur are *pupil inform and pupil direct.*

One form of utterance may have more than one meaning. The meaning depends on the function and context of communication

There are two forms of teachers' utterences: question and statement. One form of utterance may have more than one meaning. Teachers may use questions to convey the meaning of questioning, confirming, instructing and correcting. Teachers also use statements to convey the meaning of greeting, answering, explaining, instructing, pointing, closing, and confirming. Hence the meaning of utterance is based on the context of language use and not the form of utterance.

Teachers dominate the classroom interaction

Data taken from conversations between teachers and students were analysed and interpreted by the Sinclair & Coulthrad model. Three types of transactions were identified:

- the first transaction is made up of 14 exchanges and 73 moves (52 teachers' moves and 21 students' moves);
- the second transaction is made up of 13 exchanges and 112 moves (57 teachers' moves and 55 students' moves); and
- the third transaction is made up of 1 exchange and 11 moves (10 teachers' moves and 1 student move).

The overall moves are 119 teachers' moves and 77 students' moves.

Mostly the functions of teachers' moves are asking, instructing, and explaining, while the majority of students' moves are answering the question. Both the teachers' moves and the students' moves were in English and the Indonesian language.

It was also found that the type of exchange is *teacher inform, teacher direct* and *checking.* The exchange which occurs most frequently is *teacher inform* and the exchanges which never occurred were *pupil inform* and *pupil direct.* This indicates that teachers dominate the conversation or interaction.

Teachers' and students' communication reflects a low cognitive level

The conversation between teachers and students reflect their cognitive level. There are 28 conversations which reflect the level of understanding, three conversations which reflect the level of applying, and two conversations which reflect the level of understanding and remembering.

Discussion

The utterance can be analysed in terms of form and function. One form may have more than one meaning. In this research, teachers' utterances consist of two forms: question and statement. Question means confirming, questioning, directing, and evaluating, where as statement can be a greeting, answering, explaining, closing, directing, thanking.

These are the examples:

1. A question used for questioning:

   Teacher: Who is absent today?

   Teacher*:* What does *reliable survey* mean?

   Teacher: What is the meaning of *smuggling*?

Those utterances show that questions mean asking. The teacher asks the students.

2. A question used for confirming:

   Teacher*:* Sudah? (Have you got it?)

The form of utterance *' Sudah*?' (Have you got it) is a question but the meaning is confirming. The teacher wanted to make sure if students had found the page or not.

3. A question used for correcting:

   Teacher: There are or they are?

This question is used to correct a student's mistake. Students should say '*they are'* instead of '*there are'.* After this question students make an automatic correction.

4. A question used for instructing:

   Teacher: Ya, Bahasa Inggrisnya? (Yes, in English, please?)

   Teacher: Number two?

   Teacher: Number three?

These questions mean the teacher asked students to answer the question in English. Teacher asked students to do number two and number three.

5. A statement used as a greeting:

   Teacher: Good morning students.

6. A statement used for explaining:

   Teacher: Hari ini kita mempelajari hortatory teks (Today we are going to learn hortatory text).

   Teacher: Karena Jakarta adalah capital country, center of government di Jakarta. (It is because Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia).

These statements are used for explaining the text: the first explaining the type of text, and the second explaining the content of the text.

7. A statement used for instructing:

   Teacher: Now number your exercises from number 1 to number 8.

The context of this utterance was students had already discussed some questions and answers from a reading comprehension test, then the teacher asked the students to do the exercises, number 1 to number 8.

8. A statement used for reinforcement:

   Teacher: Ya, good. (Yes, good).

This utterance means the teacher gives reinforcement to the student because he can answer the question correctly.

9. A statement used as a means of closing:

   Teacher: Ya. Karena waktunya sudah habis, kita akhiri pelajaran hari ini. (Because time is up, we close the class today).

The statement above is for closing the class.

10. A statement has a meaning of thanking:

    Teacher: Thank you everybody.

The meaning of this statement is for thanking.

11. A statement has a meaning for pointing:

    Teacher: Ya, satu orang, Mawar. (Yes, one student, Mawar).

That statement has a meaning of pointing. Teacher pointed to the student named Mawar to answer the question.

Conclusion

This research concludes that:

First: In communication, one form of utterance may have more than one function.

Second: Teachers dominate the classroom instruction.

Third: Teachers' and students' communication is usually at a low cognitive level.

There are two forms of teachers' utterences: question and statement. One form of utterance may have more than one meaning. Teachers used questions to convey the meaning of questioning, confirming, instructing and correcting; teachers also used statements to convey

the meaning of greeting, answering, explaining, instructing, pointing, closing, and confirming.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusions, these are suggestions for English language teachers in senior high schools.

First: English teachers should become the model for their students. Students will learn how to speak and pronounce English correctly and appropriately if the teacher speaks English correctly and appropriately.

Second: Teachers should give more opportunities to their students to express their ideas, and motivate them to be more involved in learning activities.

Third: Teachers should improve students' abilities by: encouraging them to elaborate on their knowledge through mental processes; improving their ability in synthesising information; providing them with more opportunities to practise, and to identify similarities and differences; and helping them to make and test hypotheses. These activities will ultimately improve the cognitive level at which the students can operate.

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English Teachers' Conceptions of Learning Materials for Their Classroom

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Abstract

Learning materials are one of the essential elements used to facilitate the success of learning processes in the classroom. Teachers who can provide good and proper learning materials are likely to achieve the objectives of the lesson and the goals of the curriculum. The purpose of this research is to identify English teachers' ideas and conceptions of learning materials and their experience in providing materials for their classroom, as well as the problems encountered in developing the materials, and solutions for overcoming the encountered problems.

This is a descriptive qualitative study which employed questionnaires and interviews as the instruments to collect the data. The study was conducted in senior and junior high schools in Jakarta.

The findings show that high school teachers perceived learning materials as printed and non printed materials including audio, video, CD-ROM, MP3 and internet. This indicates that the teachers have some sophisticated ideas about the kind of learning materials and the types of activities that can be used to enhance the quality of their teaching. However, in reality teachers mostly used textbooks and tasks around the textbooks. They rarely used audio video materials and the internet. Most teachers have experience in developing learning materials when they create lesson plans for their own classroom. The process involves selecting texts from suggested textbooks or references, and then creating the tasks or student worksheets.

However, the quality of the teacher-created materials is still questionable since there was no systematic way to evaluate the materials. Therefore, the teachers asked for a workshop to provide them with knowledge and skills to assess the quality of teacher-created materials and also knowledge and skills for developing sound and appropriate learning materials.

Introduction

Teaching materials are one component of a curriculum which together with goals and objectives, teaching methods and techniques, and assessment and evaluation, determines the success of language learning and teaching. The use of good and appropriate learning materials will help equip students with the skills and knowledge to gain competence in English. Most language programs rely on a variety of materials. Classroom activities cannot run smoothly without the existence of learning materials, especially in a country where English is a foreign language (EFL) like in Indonesia. In Indonesia, most students rarely get a chance to listen to English language, or to talk, read and write in English, as people in the community do not speak or use English for their communication in their daily life.

Therefore, learning materials are the main input for most EFL students to learn English. The input that students get is mostly derived through exposure to the language when the teachers use or transmit the materials to the students in the classroom. The number of exposures will depend on how much English the teachers use in delivering the lessons and how the tasks and the planned activities make the students use or engage in English.

Teachers' roles in providing, collecting, selecting, and implementing teaching and learning materials are crucial and important. Teachers who can fulfill these roles are professional teachers who should have pedagogical content knowledge. Shulman elucidates pedagogical content knowledge as follows:

> *... Among those categories, pedagogical content knowledge is of special interest because it identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching. It represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction.*
>
> (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

From this quotation it can be concluded that only teachers who have special skills, content knowledge, and knowledge about materials development can provide lesson content that could be used as a teaching resource. These teachers would also be able to develop appropriate instructional tasks and activities as the basis for the lesson. Besides pedagogical content knowledge, teaching experience is equally important for teachers to provide sound and good lessons. Richards (2001, p. 99), and Harwood (2010, pp. 4-5), all state that teachers' experience will determine the quality of their teaching. Experienced and competent teachers can often compensate for the poor quality resources and materials.

Thus, teachers' skills and ability in developing appropriate teaching and learning materials are derived through a long process. They gain these skills and experience through practice and trial. Teachers who have limited experience in designing materials, evaluating materials, adapting materials, and the use of teaching resources need to be helped and equipped with sufficient skills, resources, chances and training.

A study to portray the quality of education in a senior high school (SMA) on the subject matter examined in the National Exam (UN) in the district and city of Bekasi, West Java, revealed the fact that the process of teaching and learning in the classroom had not entirely provided students with the opportunity to achieve the minimum standard of competence, as stated in the national standards (Darmahusni, 2011, pp. 45-46).

One of the reasons was the quality of the materials delivered to the students. There were few topics, and macro/micro skills in English had not been discussed in the classroom. There were few tasks, and the texts only developed students' lower order thinking or convergence. Students were rarely taught to understand the meaning between the lines and to be able to make inferences or judgments using objective criteria and offering opinions with reasons based on facts. Macro skills of reading were not fully developed. Another finding of that study was on the quality of the teachers. Some teachers had a problem in transferring the content of the curriculum to their daily lesson plans. In addition, they were also had difficulties in delivering the lessons. This was due to their lack of subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.

This paper describes the results of research that investigated high school English teachers' conceptions of learning materials for their classrooms, and how the teachers provided teaching and learning materials for developing four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The issues of developing students' vocabulary and grammar, and the identification of problems encountered while developing learning materials were also addressed.

Theoretical rationale

In this study, teachers' conceptions refers to what teachers understand and think about materials, and the kinds of materials and the tasks/activities built around the materials that teachers use for their students. The study also investigates the way or the process of providing teaching and learning materials, the role of materials for language teaching, and the characteristics of good materials.

The notion of materials can be interpreted in many ways. In the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), the word materials refer both to texts and tasks, or exercises and activities, built around such texts (Harwood, 2010, p. 3). When teachers develop teaching materials for their students, they provide not only the texts but also the tasks which are relevant with the texts and the objectives of the lesson. One definition of materials is 'anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language. They can be linguistic, visual, auditory or kinesthetic, and they can be presented in print, through live performance or display, or on cassette, CD-ROM, DVD or internet' (Tomlinson, 2007, p. 2).

Furthermore, Richards (2001, p. 251) states that materials may take the form of:

a) printed materials such as books, workbooks, worksheets, or readers;

b) non printed materials such as cassette or audio materials, videos, or computer based materials;

c) materials that comprise both print and non print sources such as self-access materials, and also other materials like magazines, newspapers, and TV materials, may play a role in the curriculum.

Basically, the form of teaching and learning materials can be classified into three categories:

- printed materials;
- non printed materials; and
- materials that comprise both print and non print sources.

Printed materials such as books, workbooks, and student-worksheets are the most common types of learning and teaching materials used in the Indonesian context. Non printed materials such as cassettes or audio materials, videos, or computer-based materials are less common. Not all schools can provide audio-visuals or computers to facilitate students learning. Moreover, the teachers need special skills or training in order to be able to operate this kind of technology. No matter what kind of learning materials are used, each type of learning material is equally important to support teachers to make the lessons effective, and assist students to achieve the learning objectives.

There are several roles of materials in language teaching:

a) as a resource for presentation materials (spoken and written);

b) a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction;

c) a reference source for learners of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on;

d) a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom activities;

e) a syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives that have already been determined);

f) a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain confidence.

(Cunningsworth, 1997, p. 7).

According to Graves, materials development encompasses decisions about the actual materials that teachers use – textbook, text, pictures, worksheets, video, and so on, as well as the activities the students do, and how the materials and activities are organised into lessons. The materials that teachers develop are influenced by their beliefs and understanding about teaching and learning languages, especially as applied to particular courses in particular contexts. In this respect, the process of materials development involves deciding how to put teaching principles into practice (Graves, 2000, pp. 150-151). Materials development involves the production, evaluation and adaptation of language teaching materials, by teachers for their own classroom. Materials development can be a means of facilitating and deepening the personal and professional development of teachers (Tomlinson, 2007, p. 1).

Research methodology

This was a descriptive qualitative study which involved thirty-two English teachers in Jakarta. There were fourteen English teachers from junior high schools, ten English teachers from senior high schools, and eight English teachers from vocational high schools. The study employed a closed questionnaire which is considered more efficient for gathering information on a large scale (Brown, 1995, p. 50).

The questionnaire had four sections:

- Section one, was aimed at gathering personal information about the teachers such as qualifications, educational background and teaching experience.
- Section two, was aimed at investigating a teacher's ideas, conceptions of and understandings about learning materials.
- Section three, gathered data on teacher involvement in developing learning materials for their own classroom.
- Section four, was designed to get information about problems and obstacles encountered by teachers using learning materials, and implementing the materials in their own classrooms.

In Section two, closed questions with a five Likert scale (1. Strongly disagree; 2. Disagree; 3. Neutral; 4. Agree; 5. Strongly agree) were employed.

The following are the items in the Section two questions:

1. In a classroom a teacher uses various sources for his/her classroom activities such as textbooks, videos, CDs, pictures, illustrations, real objects, games and so on.
2. Most teachers prefer to use whatever learning materials are available in their textbooks.
3. The use of internet, DVD, CD-ROM, newspaper/magazine articles, brochures, and the like can make a lesson more interesting, varied, and introduces real language in real contexts.
4. The easiest way for teachers to provide learning materials is get them from the available textbooks and follow the procedures and instructions systematically.

5. To select and decide learning materials for classroom teaching, teachers should consider the topic, the texts, the tasks and the relevance of the texts and the activities, as well as the needs of the students.
6. The recommended learning materials that teachers choose have been written by professionals/experts in the area of English language teaching.
7. The texts and the activities of the available materials can stimulate student cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills of the students.
8. Learning materials that teachers use can enhance student skills in listening, reading, speaking and writing as well as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.
9. Learning materials taken from newspapers, magazines and textbooks are not entirely relevant and appropriate to the needs of the students and objectives of the lesson.
10. To get sound and appropriate learning materials, teachers need to do a kind of modification. For example deleting a few parts of the task or activity, reordering the texts and tasks, and simplifying.

In Section three, there were eight questions provided for gathering data about teachers' participation in materials development. For example, question one was to find out the frequency of teacher participation in providing teaching and learning materials. Question two asked what kind of materials had been developed by the teachers. The next question asked for the process and the procedure of developing the teaching and learning materials.

The questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents and they were asked to answer the questions in Section one and Section two for about half an hour. They were then asked to describe briefly their experiences in developing learning materials as well as the problems they encountered in the process of developing materials. Data obtained from the questionnaire was then processed using descriptive statistics and presented in the form of charts based on the items. Individual interviews were taped. The interviews were transcribed and then analysed based on criteria that was relevant to the themes or items, and then interpreted.

Another instrument used in this study was an interview. Individual interviews were used for gathering personal responses and views, and to explore the issues related to the conception of learning materials. This information was collected in private. Conducting an interview is very time consuming. As a result individual interviews were only conducted with six teachers who represented all-school level teachers. The data from individual interviews was not only used to verify the consistency of the answers but also for getting deep and specific information related to the topic.

Research findings and discussion

The aims of the study were to investigate English teachers' ideas and conceptions of learning materials, and the teacher's experience in providing materials for their classroom. Problems encountered in developing materials, and solutions for overcoming problems were also addressed. Findings and discussion focus on these areas.

Teachers' ideas and conceptions about learning materials

The data from the questionnaire and interview indicated that most teachers in this study have an idea and understanding that learning materials may take the form of printed, non-printed materials, and materials can comprise both print and non-print sources.

The data showed that there were ≥ 40% teachers who prefer to use printed materials for their classroom rather than audio/video or MP3 and CD-ROM because most of the respondents lack knowledge and skills to operate audio video equipment/computer and the internet. Some of them cannot operate a computer at all. As a result, they cannot get resources and teaching materials from the internet. Even though most of the teachers cannot operate audio video equipment and computers, they still can provide interesting teaching and learning materials.

The questionnaire also revealed that about 60% of the respondents think and understand if they just stick to the available textbooks and systematically follow whatever is provided they may not be successful in helping their students to achieve the goals of the curriculum. Moreover, they could see that some of the tasks and the activities in the suggested textbooks might be too difficult for students in terms of the grammar or the vocabulary, and that some tasks were problematic. The teachers realised that they needed to do something like reorganise the materials, and add something to make the quality and the quantity of the tasks and activities more relevant and interesting for their students. It was considered not to be a good idea for teachers to blindly follow whatever was suggested in the textbook even though it is the easiest way for the teachers to prepare and deliver the lesson.

About 85% of the respondents agreed that materials development refers to both texts and tasks or exercises built around the texts. Responses indicated that the teachers have an understanding that developing materials means to select and decide as well as to develop not only texts for presenting the lesson, or conducting classroom activities, but also tasks or exercises to enhance students' learning.

In addition, 85% of the teachers thought that good, appropriate and effective learning materials can be provided through a modification or deletion of a part of the texts, the re-ordering of tasks/activities, or by simplification of the existing materials. The teachers also agreed that good learning materials should enhance students learning and develop communication skills. Materials should cover the four language skills with language components such as grammar, vocabulary and other language elements.

Teachers' involvement in materials development

All of the respondents were experienced teachers. They have been teaching for 10 – 20 years.

About 37.5 % of the teachers stated that they are always involved in providing learning materials for their students.

About 40% of the teachers often provided learning materials for their students, and about 20% of the teachers had only sometimes been involved in developing learning materials. The kinds of materials they developed were the tasks and activities around the texts about certain topics that have been stated in the syllabus and made available in the suggested textbooks. They only designed learning and teaching materials in the form of different kinds of plans: unit lesson plans; weekly lesson plans; and daily lesson plans.

About 30% of the teachers reported that they had made a textbook, workbook and supplementary book. In the book, they developed learning materials for each of the four language skills. They also created integrated learning materials. For example, they integrated listening, speaking and grammar.

The process for developing the learning and teaching materials was started from collecting texts, selecting the appropriate texts and tasks. After that they try the materials out with their students and do some necessary revisions. Data from the interviews showed that some of the

teachers were not sure about the quality of the developed materials since they had never done research on the effectiveness of the materials, and there was no program or activity to evaluate the quality of teacher-created materials. They thought that teacher-created materials needed to be evaluated and discussed in order to determine the quality from the perspective of pedagogy and linguistics.

Problems encountered in developing language learning materials

The questionnaire and the interview revealed that there were four main areas of problems encountered by the teachers in developing teaching and learning materials.

Firstly, the teachers need more time to prepare, select and adjust the materials in the textbooks to make them compatible with the curriculum, lesson objectives, and students' learning styles and interests, but their teaching schedules are heavy and sometimes they have to do some administrative work.

Secondly, the number of references and sources available in their school library is limited, less varied and less up-to date. The texts, tasks and activities from recommended textbooks and the resources do not always meet the needs of the students and the goals of the curriculum. This has meant the teachers have to find other sources which are more relevant and appropriate to their teaching context.

Thirdly, the teachers have realised that they have to do something to make the teaching and learning materials suitable for their students but they do not know how to modify the materials. For example, if they wanted to simplify either the text or the task from the recommended textbook, often they were not sure how to do this, and ensure accuracy of the grammar, and other language features after the text and task had been simplified.

Lastly, in conducting materials modification or materials adaptation/adoption, the teachers need help from professionals or people/experts in materials development, but they do not have access to them.

Possible solutions

There are some ways to overcome teachers' problems in providing materials for their students.

If school references and sources are limited, the teachers can be helped by providing them with access to the internet and good websites. From those websites the teachers can download different kinds of texts, articles, pictures, charts, graphs, stories, presentations, movies, etc. for their students. However, the teachers have to be able to operate a computer and access the internet. This may require them attending a workshop on information and communications technology (ICT). When the teachers are computer and internet literate, they can also add their references and relevant sources from electronic libraries and relevant websites.

Schools or institutions need to build networks around teacher forums at all levels of education with professionals or experts in English materials design and development, from recognised universities. This would enhance English teachers' knowledge and skills in developing materials. The experts and professionals can provide tips, frameworks, and guidance, as well as training for the English teachers to make them good material developers.

Conclusions and suggestions

English language teaching and learning materials have been perceived as printed and non-printed materials. Even though teachers understand that films, computers, the internet, and

videos are parts of materials, they mostly use printed materials. One of the reasons is that available sources and references are still limited and mostly in the form of printed materials. Many the teachers are still computer and internet illiterate. They still have difficulties in searching for, and downloading, materials from the internet.

This study also revealed that the teachers understand materials development to refer to both texts, and tasks or exercises built around the texts. Materials development can be used for presentations, in student practice, and in communicative interaction. They can also be a reference source for students on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on. Because of that, teachers realise that they need skills and knowledge to design materials that are pedagogically sound and linguistically acceptable. To address this issue, the teachers need to undertake workshops and gain the necessary information and skills from professionals and experts.

School principals, teacher forums, and experts and professionals need to collaborate to help school teachers gain pedagogical content knowledge and skills.

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An Investigation into Preposition and Article Errors in Vietnamese Students' Written English

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Abstract

This study is an investigation of preposition and article errors in compositions written by first-year Vietnamese BA students. It combines three areas within the studies of Second Language Acquisition: error analysis; contrastive analysis; and language transfer.

The aims of this study are:

1. to investigate preposition and article errors made by first-year Vietnamese BA students in their English written productions;
2. to determine the frequency of these error occurrences; and
3. to analyse the causes of the errors found.

Fifty compositions comprise the data for this study.

The results of the analysis can be helpful for both students and teachers. For students, the results show common errors and help them improve their English writing skills. For teachers, the results help them to improve their English teaching.

Introduction

Writing in English in general, and academic writing in particular, is considered the most difficult of the four language skills for Vietnamese teachers and learners. In practice, first year university students cannot write well and often make more errors than more advanced students since they did not learn writing properly in their high schools. Their written production has many kinds of errors, including grammatical, spelling, stylistic, and lexical errors.

The aims of this study are:

1. to investigate preposition and article errors made by first year Vietnamese BA students in their English written production;
2. to find the frequency of occurrence of these types of errors;
3. to analyse the causes of the errors found; and
4. to discuss pedagogical implications in relation to error correction in order to prevent the formation of bad habits.

Theoretical background

Errors in foreign language learning and types of errors

Corder (1967) cited in Köhlmyr (2003: 23), states that *errors* are systematic due to a lack of linguistic competence, whereas *mistakes* are random in performance. There are four different concepts associated with errors and mistakes: slips; mistakes; errora; and solecisms.

> *Slips can quickly be detected and self-corrected, mistakes can be corrected by their agent if their deviance is pointed out to him or her, errors require further relevant learning to take place before they can be self-corrected, and solecisms are breaches of the rules of correctness as laid down by purists and usually taught in schools.*
>
> (James 1998: 83).

Ellis (1994: 52) distinguishes 'overt' errors as an error 'easy to identify because there is a clear deviation in form', whereas 'covert' errors 'occur when the sentence appears grammatical until context reveals it is not' (Köhlmyr 2003: 24). In this study, 'error' means all 'overt' errors in relation to British English and American English as well as grammar books and dictionaries.

Through the study, three notions, *addition, omission,* and *substitution* are used to denote and classify the main types of errors found. Lennon (1991: 189) defines …

- *addition* as 'a linguistic unit or unit would have to be deleted'
- *omission* as 'a linguistic unit or unit would have to be supplied in order to eradicate the error'
- *substitution* as 'a linguistic unit or unit would have to be deleted and another or others supplied to eradicate the error'

Different approaches to investigate errors and to explain the causes of errors will be discussed in the following sections.

Investigating errors

Contrastive analysis (CA) involves a systematic comparison of the native language (L1) and foreign language (L2) in order to be able to predict areas of greatest learning difficulty (Köhlmyr, 2003: 25).

CA consists of four steps:

1. description of the two languages which are compared and contrasted;
2. selection of language features, units, rules and structures for comparison and contrast;
3. comparison and contrast of the selected language features, units, rules and structures; and
4. prediction of errors or difficulties (based on the results of comparison and contrast) of L2 learners.

(Do 2007: 30, author's translation).

Error analysis (EA) is 'the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language' (James 1998: 1). The object of EA is to 'describe the errors found in learner language' (Köhlmyr 2003: 26) and 'explain actually observed features

of learner language, not to predict what the learner might do' (Asher 1994: 740 cited in Köhlmyr 2003: 26).

Corder (1971: 21, cited in Ellis 1994: 48) introduces five steps in the EA for doing the error analysis, as follows:

1. collection of samples of learner language;
2. identification of errors;
3. description of errors;
4. explanation of errors; and
5. evaluation of errors.

Preposition and article differences between English and Vietnamese

Both Vietnamese and English have preposition systems. However, they are used in different ways. English notices the relationship between mentioned objects and their locations whereas Vietnamese notices the relationship between mentioned objects and the speaker's location as well as considers time a three-dimensional space (Le 2002; Nguyen 2005; and Do 2007, author's translation).

In this study, three main preposition differences between English and Vietnamese will help discuss the causes of preposition errors of Vietnamese learners of English. In English, there are three types of articles: the definite article *the;* the indefinite articles *a/n;* and the zero article (Quirk et al., 1985: 253). Vietnamese has no articles to determine definite and indefinite features.

Methodology and data

The present study is based on 50 compositions provided by three assignments, two writing assignments and one final writing exam, written by 50 first-year Vietnamese BA students. Fifteen compositions from each writing assignment and 20 compositions from the final writing exam are selected for analysis. The length of each composition is between 100 and 150 words.

The three methods of handling the data are:

- the frequencies of error occurrence were recorded by statistics;
- error analysis was used to determine errors in the written assignments; and
- compare and contrast method is used to compare the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 to illustrate the reasons why Vietnamese learners of English made these errors.

Throughout the study, all examples analysed were extracted and numbered in the list of grammatical errors. Although there may be several different types of error in the same sentence, only some examples are chosen for analysis and illustration. To sum up, only clear/overt preposition and article errors are analysed in terms of three strategies, *addition, omission* and *substitution.*

Data analysis and results

Brief overview of main results

In total, 117 errors in the use of prepositions and articles were found in 50 written compositions. Preposition errors are in an overwhelming majority, making up 65.8% of all errors.

Analysis of the common error types

1. Preposition errors

A total of 77 preposition errors found in 50 compositions are addition accounting for 37.7% (n=29). They are followed by omission, i.e. a preposition needs to be added, in 32.4% (n=25) and by substitution, i.e. the wrong preposition is chosen, in 29.9% (n=23) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Preposition: Category errors

Total	Addition	Omission	Substitution
77	29 (37.7%)	25 (32.4%)	23 (29.9%)

Table 2 displays the frequencies of all errors per preposition.

Table 2. Preposition errors per error type

Preposition	Addition	Omission	Substitution	Total errors	Percentage
In	16 (59.3%)	7 (25.9%)	4 (14.8%)	27	35.1%
To	7 (35%)	11 (55%)	2 (10%)	20	25.9%
For	3 (17.7%)	5 (29.4%)	9 (52.9%)	17	22.1%
About	1(12.5%)	2 (25%)	5 (62.5%)	8	10.4%
With	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	5	6.5%
Total	29	25	23	77	100%

a) The preposition *in*

Out of 77 preposition errors, the most frequent errors involve *in*, accounting for 35.1% (n=27). The major errors are addition, which account for 59.3% (n=16), followed by substitution 25.9% (n=7), and omission 14.8% (n=4). The major addition error is in adverbials of time and place as Vietnamese learners consider time a three-dimensional space and refer to their location. In English, in adverbial phrases of time, prepositions are absent if the words *next*, *last* and *ago* are present. Another reason is that at the first stages of the learning process, the learners do not have enough knowledge of syntax.

In English, adverbial phrases of time require prepositions, whereas in Vietnamese no preposition is required. The other frequent type of error is substitution in which *in* replaces *on* and *for* involving mainly prepositions denoting time and place due to the semantic transfer. In brief, errors with *in* mainly relate to adverbials of time and place. Literal translation and negative transfer, leads to the incorrect usage of *in.*

b) The preposition *to*

The second most frequent preposition errors involve *to*, accounting for 25.9% (n=20) of the total errors. The major errors are omission (55%; n=11), followed by addition 35% (n=7) and substitution 10% (n=2). The causes of these errors are semantic transfer and lack of grammatical knowledge. Also, in Vietnamese, there is no distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs.

c) The preposition *for*

Preposition errors with *for* account for 22.1% (n=17). The major errors are substitution (52.9%; n=9), followed by addition 17.7% (n=3), and omission 29.4% (n=5). Main cause of these errors is negative transfer; also, the learners' poor command of English grammar is evident in their wrong use of transitive verbs.

Substitution is the most frequent error, in which *for* replaces *to* (88.9%; n=8) and *with* (11.1%; n=1).

It can be concluded that the errors involving *for* are related to transitive verbs, such as *advise* and *serve*, fixed structures, such as "write a letter to someone" and "contribute to something", and some phrasal verbs, e.g. "apply for + a noun".

d) The preposition *about*

Errors in the use of *about* account for 10.4% (n=8) of the total errors. The major errors are substitution, which make up 62.5% (n=5) of the errors found, followed by addition 12.5% (n=1) and omission 25% (n=2). Main reasons are the learners mainly translate Vietnamese equivalent phrases into English and seem not to know some fixed structures.

e) **The preposition *with***

Errors in the use of *with* account for 6.5% (n=5) of the total errors. The most frequent errors are substitution making up 60% (n=3) of the errors found and followed by addition 40% (n=2). There is no omission error.

2. Article errors

This study only analyses definite and indefinite article errors. The zero article is not discussed, even though the definite and indefinite articles can be replaced by the zero article.

The 185 instances of article use provided a total of 40 article errors (=38.2%). The errors are mainly cases of category omission, i.e. an article needs to be added, in 55% (n=22), followed by addition, i.e. no article is required, in 37.5% (n=15), and substitution, i.e. the definite and the indefinite article replace each other, in 7.5% (n=3).

Out of 40 article errors, definite article makes up 67.5% (n=27), and the indefinite article accounts for 32.5% (n=13), Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of article errors

Article	Addition	Omission	Substitution	Total errors	Percentage
The	11 (40.7%)	14 (51.9%)	2 (7.4%)	27	67.5%
A/n	4 (30.8%)	8 (61.5%)	1 (7.7%)	13	32.5%
Total	15	22	3	40	100%

a) The definite article

The vast majority of article errors are omission, which make up 51.9% (n=14), followed by addition 40.7% (n=11) and substitution 7.4% (n=2). Most cases are due to the fact that Vietnamese does not have article systems and Vietnamese learners' lack grammar knowledge.

b) The indefinite article

Article errors involve *a/n* account for 32.5% (n=13) in the total of 40 errors. The major errors are omission, which amount to 61.5% (n=8), followed by addition 30.8% (n=4) and substitution 7.7% (n=1).

Conclusion

This study analysed preposition and article errors in 50 compositions written by 50 different first-year Vietnamese BA students.

Four main research questions were addressed:

1. What types of preposition and article errors often occur in their written production?
2. How often do these errors occur?
3. What causes their errors?
4. How can teachers of English help Vietnamese students avoid these types of errors?

Methods of analysis used were contrastive analysis (CA), error analysis (EA), and language transfer.

The major errors in this research relate to prepositions 65.8% (77/117 total errors) and articles 34.2% (n=40 of 117 total errors).

Among 77 preposition errors, the errors are mainly cases of category addition (37.7%; n=29), followed by omission (32.4%; n=25) and substitution (29.9%; n=23). Five prepositions, which are the most common, are *in* (35.1%; n=27), *to* (25.9%; n=20), *for* (22.1%; n=17), *about* (10.4%; n=8), and *with* (6.5%; n=5).

Among 40 article errors, category omission is the most common (55%; n= 22), followed by addition (37.5%; n=15), and substitution (7.5%; n=3). The errors involving *the* are 27 (67.5%), and errors with *a/n* are 13 (22.5%).

Most errors are due to negative transfer. This research can conclude that transfer errors also seem to be the most persistent errors in ESL writing, which is another reason for highlighting them in classroom instructions as well as in grammar books. This may suggest that CA is a useful tool in teaching because the purpose of CA is to compare L1 and L2 to predict where problems may appear. However, not all errors can be predicted by CA. EA needs to be used as a means for teachers to reassess their students' linguistic development, and thus, adapt their teaching accordingly (Köhlmyr, 2003: 355).

Pedagogical implications

Errors are a natural part of language learning. Errors do not represent poor knowledge, but 'errors constitute a valuable feedback in the teaching process. We may say that it is, at least partly, by locating errors that pupils learn to learn and teachers learn to teach' (Svartvik 1973: 9, cited in Köhlmyr 2003: 3). Therefore, as soon as errors occur, they should be corrected to help learners avoid fossilised errors and bad impressions.

Also, at the first stages of the L2 learning process, learners want to know the results of their progress in learning, and if they make errors, they need their errors to be corrected. In other words, teachers' feedback plays an important role in students' command of grammar in written production.

However, two main questions arise:

1. when is feedback useful; and
2. how to correct students' errors in their written production without intimidating them.

Dealing with the first question, James (1998), cited in (Köhlmyr 2003: 343), maintains that 'correction should be non-threatening and immediate in order for it to be most effective', i.e. whenever errors occur, teachers should correct and/or give feedback immediately in polite ways in order for learners to keep on practicing writing. One such way is delayed correction in which teachers collect common errors in many written compositions of a group of learners, preposition and article errors for instance, and correct them in the classroom and/or at seminars. For example, in this study, common errors are related to the use of prepositions of time and space which teachers can use and give general feedback to students of English, i.e. without mentioning specific names of these students.

The second question requires many ways of correction, including self-correction, peer review, and pair/group work. The strategy of correction suggested in this study is peer review. To begin with, teachers should give students some time for independent correction in order to reduce teacher-dependence. If students cannot recognise their own errors, peer review should be used because learners can help and learn from one another. Through this activity, cooperation between learners can be developed and they may be more self-confident. Teachers' correction/feedback is the last step because learners usually think that their teachers' correction is more reliable.

In conclusion, 'learners' error should be corrected as soon as they are made in order to prevent the formation of bad habits' Lightbown and Spada (2006: 190), and correction and/or feedback in the right ways and at the right time is, thus, useful for learners of English to promote their writing skills, as Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), cited in (Köhlmyr 2003: 341) state 'correction may of course serve other important purposes such as helping students … or providing the basis for a grade'.

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An Aberrant Tendency in Scientific Research

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Abstract

For a number of years there has been much news in the media about the education crisis and the backwardness of scientific research in Vietnam. This situation was evident from the extremely modest position of Vietnamese universities in the World Universities Rankings and through the paucity of scientific articles published by Vietnamese scientists in international journals. Yet the country has the largest number of professors and doctors in Southeast Asia. In the educational sciences, the situation is even more disappointing. Once again, we have to pay careful attention to the quality of scientific staff in our country in order to find radical solutions to treat the causes of this crisis and backwardness. In this paper, the results of a preliminary examination of over 600 titles of masters' dissertations in educational sciences are reported to identify the causes of weakness in educational research in Vietnam, and to suggest some fundamental solutions.

Preview

Education in Vietnam is facing many problems on many issues, among which are scientific research and research training. Especially, in social sciences and educational sciences, the situation isn't bright at all. Nguyen Dang Hung (University of Liege, Belgium) talked about the situation of Vietnamese education in these terms:

> *The education of Vietnam is seriously ill. We have to search its principal origins in order to find a cure. In effect, the disease has penetrated into the bone, and has become metastatic. It must have strong methods to treat its origins, even surgery to have a chance to escape from danger.*
>
> (Nguyen Dang Hung, 2012).

Darriulat (Academician of French Academy of Sciences) in commenting upon Vietnamese university lecturers recently revealed a truth: 'Many university teachers simply read their lectures in text books and are unable to conduct any research work.' (Darriulat, 2014).

Faced with this situation, we ask why higher education in Vietnam has reached such a crisis and why lecturers are unable to conduct research. In order to improve the quality of higher education in Vietnam, first we have to find out causes of negative aspects of this gloomy situation. In this article, an aberrant tendency that has been found in masters' dissertations in educational sciences in Vietnamese universities will be reported. This tendency can be considered dangerous for education and training in particular, and for sciences in general.

Overview

Scientific activities are often evaluated from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. Quantitatively, evaluation is based on the quantity of scientific articles published in international scientific journals. Qualitatively, evaluation is based to a large extent on citation statistics registered in citation indices.

According to statistics in 2012, Vietnamese scientists published about 1,200 scientific papers in international peer-reviewed journals, and in 2011, they published 1,324. From 1970 to 2011, the total number of papers published by Vietnamese scientists was 10,745, that is, 22% of the papers published by Thailand, 27% of Malaysia, and 11% of Singapore. The performance of Vietnam is lower than Chulolongkorn University or Mahidol University in Thailand, or University of Malaya in Malaysia (Nguyen Van Tuan, 2013a).

In addition, Vietnam is 50 years behind Thailand on scientific publication, even though the number of top graduates is large: 9,000 professors and associate professors, 24,000 PhDs and more than 100,000 masters' degrees (Duong Bui, 2013).

From 1996 to 2010, Vietnamese scientists published 39 papers in international journals, representing 9% of the total number of papers in social sciences (Pham Thi Ly & Nguyen Van Tuan, 2012).

Table 1: Scientific performance of some Asian nations 1996-2010

	Countries	Articles	Citations	Citations/art.	Index H
1	Taiwan	1,455	7,672	9.11	34
2	Hong Kong	1,193	6,194	7 .34	28
3	China	905	2,490	8 .18	17
4	Singapore	777	3,037	5.51	23
5	Japan	652	1,826	3.67	17
6	India	544	674	2.59	9
7	Korea	518	1,718	7.05	18
8	Malaysia	399	895	4.93	14
9	Thailand	177	310	2.91	8
10	Philippines	111	136	2.75	6
11	Bangladesh	68	87	2.24	5
12	Indonesia	50	93	2.51	5
13	Vietnam	39	62	2.22	4
14	Cambodia	8	6	0.54	2

Source: Pham Thi Ly & Nguyen van Tuan (2012)

Some people say that these data aren't exact because the number of papers in Vietnamese isn't precisely calculated yet. However, this is common for all non-English speaking countries. In addition, papers in Vietnamese reviewed by international peers aren't regarded as responding to international standards, especially in social sciences (Tran Thanh Ai, 2013). In any case, even if this above-mentioned classification doesn't exist, people can recognise the stagnation of scientific activities in Vietnam. It affects directly the quality of education and training in Vietnamese universities. There is proof that no Vietnamese university was placed among the world's top 2,000 universities 2012.

Tran Van Tho (Waseda University, Tokyo), who has collaborated for many years with Vietnamese universities in economics, made the following remarks about PhD theses of Vietnamese students:

> *The choice of subject of Vietnamese students makes the PhD theses lack academic characters and of originality. Therefore, the contents and level of those theses are still far from the minimum standards of the world, and people who have this PhD can hardly have discussions with foreign experts.*
>
> (Tran Van Tho, 2003).

In the field of medicine, Nguyen van Tuan (Garvan Institute, Sydney, Australia) had the same remarks:

> *I have read many PhD theses of medicine throughout the Vietnam, and I think that the majority are just a collection of several reports of a single study. Its contents are simple, and largely an inventory of clinic cases (like the statistical exercises, and the enumeration of cases). It's possible to say that the majority of theses that I have read are equivalent to the dissertation of bachelor honours degree or of master's degree.*
>
> (Nguyen van Tuan, 2013c).

P. Darriulat also talked about Vietnamese PhD training degrees in these words:

> *A recent article published in the newspaper An Ninh Thu Do reports on a number of dysfunctions of the Vietnamese system in awarding PhD degrees. Such a major dysfunction is illustrated by the case of students buying their dissertation at prices reaching up to 500 million VND […]. A second dysfunction is the inability of the panels supposed to evaluate the skills and knowledge of such students to do a job, tacitly that their members are either incompetent or corrupted or both.*
>
> (Darriulat, 2012).

Such opinions aren't rare; they make a gloomy picture on higher education in Vietnam.

Many Vietnamese researchers often think that foreign scientists are a little severe or 'unrealistic' when they evaluate scientific research from Vietnam. On the other hand, several Vietnamese scientists alert 'diseases' of education and sciences, and show many causes of this negative situation, as observed by Hoang Tuy (Institute of Mathematics, Vietnam):

> *Many scientific works and PhD. theses, even on international studies such as fundamental sciences and economics... are equivalent to waste paper if we evaluate them according to*

international criteria. A lot of professors are incompetent, and well below international standards.

(Hoang Tuy 2007).

More precisely, Dang Xuan Thi (Institute of Mechanics, Vietnam) also showed the impertinence of many researchers:

The majority of scientific works that we have led are the application of world achievements in the specific conditions of Vietnam. Problems that we have chosen as research objectives are often outdated up to 20 years, even 30 or 40 years.

(Vu Tho 2012).

In educational sciences, the Ministry of Education and Training recently made some official comments on the actual situation of scientific research:

Research methods, procedures and research techniques are relatively backward, therefore we often commit systematic errors and results of research lack convincingness, due to dearth of generalisation.

(Ministry of Education and Training, 2011, p. 16).

Objectives of this research

This short description leads me to focus on the causes of this situation. Many analyses show principal causes such as: a lack of budget; a linguistic barrier to English; incomplete conscientiousness to international publication; and absence of adequate remuneration for scientists. However, besides these causes, we are interested in procedures of scientific activities of Vietnamese scientists in general, and those of dissertation directors in particular.

We suggest that the most important cause of weakness of Vietnamese scientists is lack of knowledge of research methods. In order to verify this, an examination of masters' dissertations in educational sciences and educational management posted on the website thuvienluanvan.com was done. At this time, only the titles and subject matter of dissertations were examined with the purpose of exploring the feasibility of this research. It was estimated that the titles of masters' subjects represent more or less the knowledge of scientific research of students and their supervisors.

Some basic principles of scientific research

Whether it is natural sciences or social sciences, or educational sciences, whether it is fundamental research or applied research, there are basic principles of scientific research that people recognise as postulates:

- Scientific research consists of producing new knowledge (declarative or procedural) on the world, of 'uncovering new facts and adding them to the existing corpus of knowledge' (Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrisson, K. 2007), or of correcting, even of denying, false knowledge.

- Scientific research always begins with a phenomenon that science doesn't explain, or partly explains. Researching this kind of phenomenon consists of understanding the essence, attributes, and origins of the phenomenon. In educational sciences, research mainly consists of finding out deep causes of educational phenomenon, in order to build solutions. In this manner, scientific research involves solving the research problems *theoretically*.
- Scientific research is based on observations, analysis, objective measurement, and demonstrations, i.e. scientific methods.
- Results of scientific research must be verified and turned into scientific knowledge which is capable of explaining other same cases, 'of checking them out with the same or other materials and thereby test the results' (Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrisson, K., 2007).

In other words, researchers have to use scientific methods, i.e. 'a scientific approach necessarily involves standards and procedures for demonstrating the 'empirical warrant' of its findings, showing the match or fit between its statements and what is happening or has happened in the world' (Cuff and Payne 1979: 4).

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management

The website entitled, *Thư viện luận văn các chuyên ngành*, means Library of Dissertation in Training Fields. It comprises dissertations from more than 90 fields of knowledge and training, and includes dissertations in educational sciences and educational management.

Our research data contain 633 dissertations. By referring to the titles of dissertations, two categories were identified: empirical research and applied research. We call empirical research all works based on empirical data, and applied research all works consisting of applying some theories to professional fields of practitioners. In that way, empirical research comprises dissertations whose titles use keywords such as 'Actual situation', 'Solutions', 'Measures', 'Actual situation and solutions', and 'Examination'; and applied research comprises dissertations whose titles use the title keyword 'Application'.

Table 2. Summary table

Categories	Keywords	Quantity	%	Examples
Empirical research	Actual situation	173	27.33	***Actual situation*** *of using active methods of teaching at some primary school at district X.*
	Solutions, measures	96	15.17	***Measures*** *of developing the staff managing of high school at province X.*
	Actual situation and solutions	62	9.79	***Actual situation and some measures*** *of managing educational materials at high school Y.*
	Examination	77	12.17	***Examining*** *intellectual capacity of pupils at primary school Z.*

Categories	Keywords	Quantity	%	Examples
Applied research	Application	225	35.54	***Application*** *of conception on active teaching of Robert Marzano to…*
		633 dissertations	100%	

Empirical research

In this category, there are 408 dissertations, representing 64.46% of our research data.

Titles including 'Actual situation' (173 dissertations)

As the keywork 'Actual situation' shows, this kind of dissertation consists of undertaking fieldwork. The goal is to build a primary database in order to find out research problems and to prepare intensive research works in the future. As they are the first stage of scientific research, their results are only raw data, they lack scientific significance. Thus, they must be utilised in order to make a scientific contribution. In other words, it isn't possible to regard this kind of dissertation as scientific research.

Titles including 'Solution', 'Measures' (96 dissertations)

This kind of dissertation consists of building solutions or measures for problems in the field, or problems of day-to-day living, in order to solve difficulties in daily duty. In this way, solutions proposed are only based on personal experiences, or on causes that people have known. In other words, this means professional activities 'daily research' but not scientific research, because this kind of dissertation doesn't consist of finding out unknown causes. That's why this kind of dissertation can't provide novelties.

Titles including 'Actual situation' and 'Solutions', 'Measures' (62 dissertations)

This kind of dissertation contains two previous kinds, i.e. it consists of describing situation**s** and proposing solutions. It's a problem-solving process of following stages: identifying problems; consulting a list of possible solutions; and choosing or searching suitable solutions.

Titles including 'Examination' (77 dissertations)

This kind of dissertation consists of investigating some aspects of professional reality such as *intellectual capacity of pupils at primary school X* or *practice of teacher in course of…* It is intended to describe things or phenomena appearing in the process of teaching. In educational sciences, this descriptive approach is less useful than the explanatory approach, because it cannot detect causes that induce problems.

Applied research

In this category, there are 225 dissertations whose titles include 'Application' (225 dissertations, 35.54% of the total). As the dissertation titles indicate, the aims of these works are to apply theoretical knowledge to a situation in order to improve problematic situations.

This type of research is only considered as scientific research when the researcher generalises its results from knowledge in order to apply it to similar situations.

Preliminary interpretation

In principle, the title of scientific work has to reflect its content, and the dissertation director has to help students formulate the title as well as possible. However, there is probably clumsiness in this task. In any event, such clumsiness does not compromise the results of this exploratory research, because the analysis in this study focused on both quantitative and qualitative data.

Through the exploratory examination of 633 dissertation titles, a strong tendency to solve daily problems in masters' dissertations (64.46%) was noted.

The dissertations on 'actual situations' consisted of exploring blank fields where people don't have data, with the aim of collecting data to discover research problems and to prepare deep research. It is the first step of scientific research therefore, results from this investigation are only raw data, and need further treatment. Thus, this fieldwork is in incomplete works and does not have scientific significance, particularly in the educational sciences. In reality, it is possible to transform this fieldwork into research subjects if they are undertaken on a large scale, but they cannot constitute the full research process as is found in the natural sciences.

The dissertations on 'solutions' and 'measures' consist of building measures for problematic situations appearing in the educational field. These measures are often based on experiences and known knowledge because they are not findings of new causes, nor premises of new knowledge. Thus, these are daily tasks that people often do in their life, not scientific activities.

The dissertations on 'actual situation and solutions' used two research methods. These do not involve a scientific process because they consist of describing a problematic situation, making a list of known causes, and then choosing measures. This is the process of solving problems of practitioners in the service or problems of day-to-day living, because it follows the cycle of operations: identifying problem – consulting experiences or official texts – proposing measures.

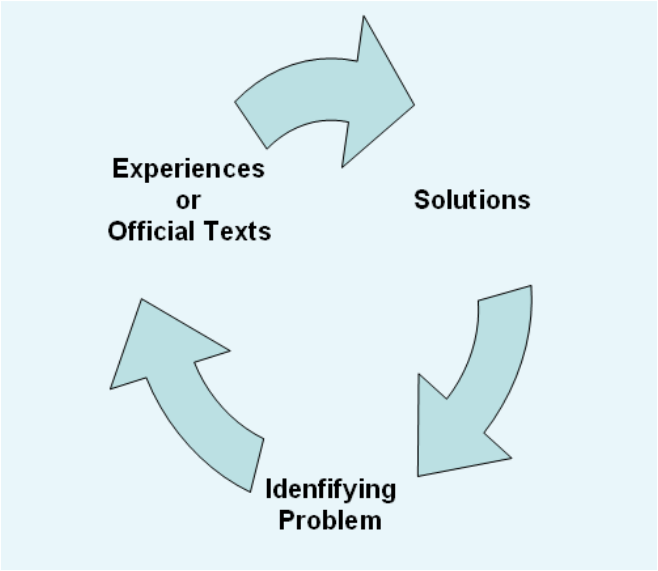

Figure 1. Process of solving problems of practitioners and problems of day-to-day living.

In empirical research, the researcher has to find out deep causes of the problematic situation, and justify and generalise results in order to build knowledge so that it can explain the same phenomena. In principle, writing dissertations involves training students to solve problems *theoretically*. Academic objectives and originality in scientific research is also an aim.

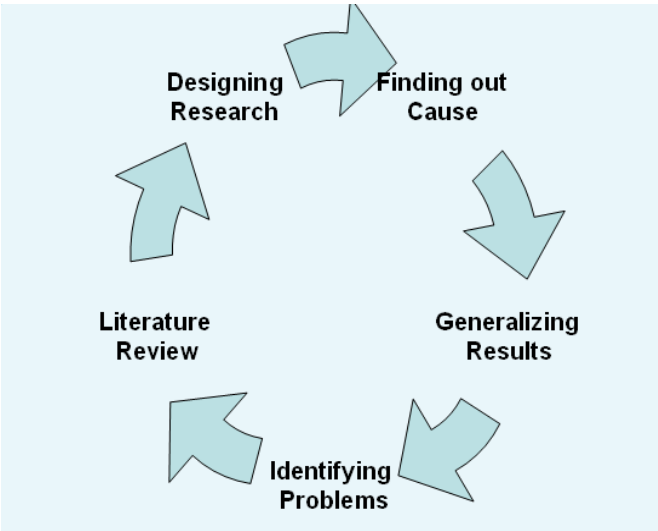

Figure 2. Process of scientific research

According to Prof. Nguyen Van Tuan, *International Scientific Reviews* often refuses articles because of bad research methods: 'around 70% of refused articles are due to weakness of research methods' (Nguyen Van Tuan, 2013b).

Dissertations on 'application' occupy an important quantity (225 subjects, 35.54%). They aim at the application of knowledge or theory to reality. This category is only considered as applied research if the researcher can provide new procedural knowledge which is capable of being applied to many similar cases. As contents of these dissertations were not read as part of this study, it is not possible to evaluate their research methods. This will be one of the aims of future work.

In summary, after analysing titles of masters' dissertations, it can be concluded that there is a tendency for researchers to want to solve daily problems in their dissertations, instead of following scientific processes to meet academic standards, i.e. 'scientific method', to use the words of Cohen et al., (2007). This aberrant tendency is dangerous for training and research in higher education, because it induces misunderstanding and causes stagnation of scientific activities in Vietnam. In a future research project, we will systematically analyse the content of those masters' dissertations in order to identify weakness in terms of research methods and to elaborate on pertinent solutions for improving the situation.

Some permanent measures

The important thing is for the scientific community to adopt common criteria. Based on the analysis undertaken in this study it is possible to establish some fundamental measures in order to improve the quality of scientific activities of teaching staff. Including:

Lifelong learning about scientific research methods

Weakness of research quality of Vietnamese scientists is evident, especially in educational sciences. The first cause is that researchers lack knowledge on research methods and do not possess adequate research competencies. Therefore, the basic and sustainable solution is to learn about scientific research methods. As research methods relate to scientific disciplines, we have to have lifelong learning about them. Departments and faculties must organise many activities such as drawing up and/or translating documents on scientific research methods, opening seminars to help each other in scientific research, and enhancing research competences of young lecturers.

Reorganising the system of reviewing scientific projects and dissertations

Reviewing research projects must be based on scientific procedures such as identifying problems, including a literature review, designing research, and generalising results, not just considering applied aims. According to Professor Harry W. Kroto, Nobel Prize Winner for Chemistry in 1996, before conducting scientific research, the majority of scientists often do not wonder if the results of their research can be applied to life.

Innovative system for the assessment of scientific works

To improve the quality of scientific works objective assessment criteria must be developed, i.e.: first, collecting anonymous pre-reports from experts in the field when dissertations or scientific works are completed; second, if the pre-reports are favourable, the faculty will establish an evaluation committee.

Conclusion

This analysis of 633 titles of masters' dissertations in educational sciences, concludes that topics unsuitable to the standards and procedures of the international scientific community predominate. This tendency consists of solving daily problems of practitioners, but without any new findings. In regards to research methods, these dissertations do not investigate the actual causes of phenomena, and are therefore not able to generalise results from the research. This weakness is due to the misunderstanding of research methods by students and their supervisors. This helps explain why scientific activities in Vietnam are far from reaching the levels of other countries.

In addition, we have also proposed some solutions: lifelong learning about research methods; improving research competences of scientific researchers by disseminating documents on research methods; and developing an innovative system of reviewing scientific projects and dissertations. In other words, we can't wait for changes of national policies, but should change ourselves first. Vietnamese education is facing extreme high risk. It is compared to a boat that drifts towards bankruptcy (Pham Toan, 2013). Thus, we have to improve our scientific knowledge and research competences, in order to contribute to changing the situation before it's too late. To finish this article, I want to borrow an advice of Dariulat made for Vietnamese scientists:

> *Today, pride prevents us from facing reality; humility prevents us from being ambitious. We should behave the very opposite way: pride should give us the ambition and the confidence; humility should give us the courage to face reality*.
>
> (Darriulat, P., 2012).

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