

# PREPARING NEW TEACHERS THROUGH TEACHER-STUDY GROUP FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Oleh:

Sudirman

Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Lampung

## Abstract

This article tries to present theoretical view and related reasarches to contemporary development of teachers' professionalism. Dinamically consistent development of professional teachers should be continously maintained and enhanced following the unique character of teachers as social being. The reality has shown that there have been many gradutes from teachers-education institutions who have newly been teaching and those have not tauhgt at all. If they want to keep their knowledge and skill of teaching after graduation from S1 teahers-education they should have professional bridging—pre-professional phase through teacher-study group. What teacher-study group is is reviewed through reachable literatures.

**Key words:** *teacher/s, professionalism development, teacher-study group.*

## INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, teacher has been determined as a profession through *Undang-undang Republik Indonesia* (UURI) number 14 year 2005 about teacher and lecturer. It means that legally by law one who wants to become a teacher or a lecturer should meet the requirements stapled in that UURI. The first step done by Indonesian government for legally establishing professional teacher is through portofolio evaluation, which later changed to in-service teacher-training, and this then is still changed to a certain kind of after-graduate professional teacher-training, starting from 2016.

It can be inferred taht there is a continous process from one phase to the next to make teachers professional. It is stated in the UURI number 14, 2005 that being professional is high standard implemented in professional ethic, prosessional attitude, and professional work at the time of doing a profession. Being professional means how an individual behave and sefl-actualize by the time he/she hasbeen legally stipulated to have qualificatin of certain profession. To be considered as a pffessional teacher, a teacher should be able to do adiqute performance in class facing his/her pupils, and when interacting with pupils' parents and all people related to schools (Spencer, 2011). A professional teacher should at least know what and how to teach in order that what to teach can be presented and understood well by his/her pupils. Besides, a teacher is required to

always develop himself/herself during his/her career for about 35 years to the pension period.

By the establishment of teacher as professional worker, then a teacher is obliged to have four competences: professional competence, pedagogical competence, social competence, and personal competence. Professional competence has a broad definition relating to both cognitive knowledge and metacognitive knowledge of pedagogical aspects including curriculum, learners (pupils), institution and learning environment, communication ability with learners, ability to use the language being taught in communication, and competence related to language awareness. This language awareness is primary to especially language teachers, because they should inherently be language users. Teachers of other lessons or disciplines are adjustably language users in their context, but not definitely language teachers.

With the requirements described above, there is certainly little, if not impossible, possibility to a teacher to be professional in a short time for more or less 35 years career in Indonesia. For 35 year-career, a teacher will get through a long period of time with different need. Such a long period of time is like a continuum showing different condition and orientation of a teacher in a certain phase; so does with his/her professional development. Likewise, if the transition of time –after graduate period and five year-in-service teacher or less leading to a truly professional teacher has no systematical procedure (bridge) yet in preparing professionalism is also included; thus the need of professionalism development will be required more.

In Indonesia, there has no systematically sequential procedure yet to reinforce professional development to teachers in general and language teachers in particular. On the basis of reality, this situation and condition invite a question: How to begin teacher professionalism development process from the beginning of teacher-on-charge and after-graduate time? Theoretical view and related researches are discussed for providing tentative answer and conducting investigations on this matter.

## **DISCUSSION**

The concept of teacher-study during on-task profession is indeed newly issued implemented in form of research (Freeman and Johnson quoted by Mohamed, 2006). Though the concept is relatively new issue but it needs more attention and deeper exploration (Freeman, 2001). Concerning with teacher-study, Richards and Farrell (2005) explains four concepts in the scope of teacher-study: as skill study, as a cognitive process, as a personal reconstruction, and as reflection of teaching practice. The example of the first study is the study about how to explain new grammatical structure which then strengthens good teaching practice. The second, the example is the study that continuously pays attention to how a teacher can identify trust and concept underlying the teachers' teaching

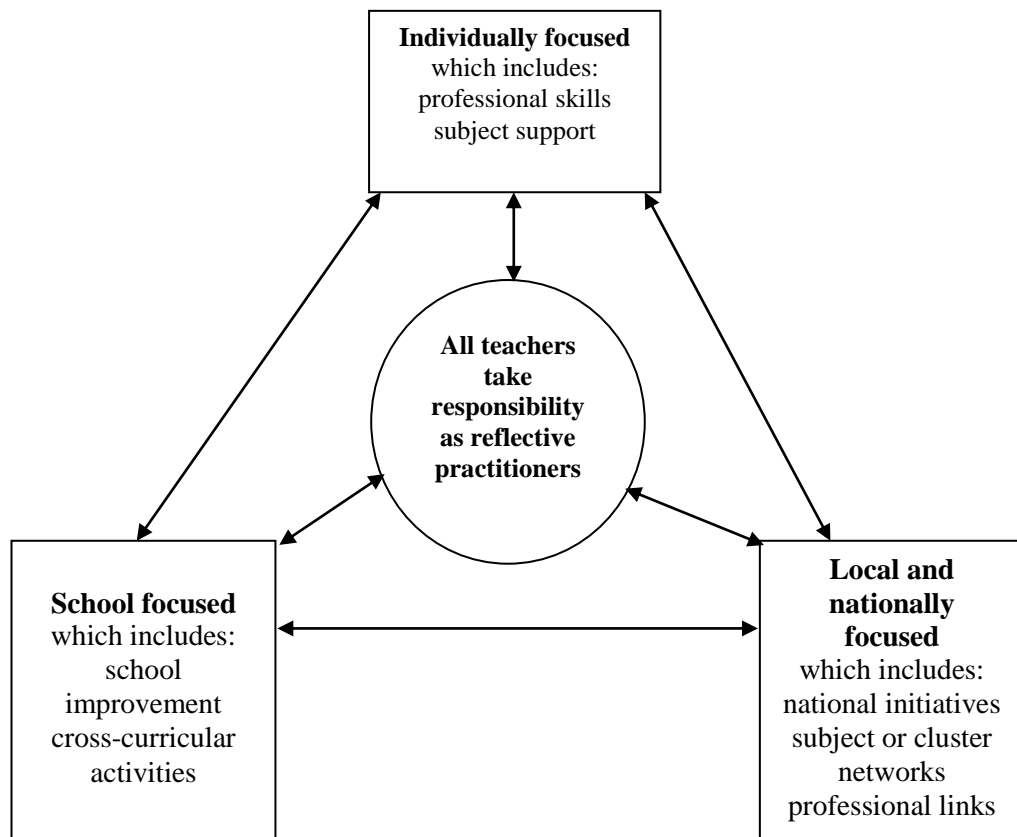
already done, presently done and will be done. The third perspective is basically using what has been learned as material gradually reconstructed and restudied, which by then, develop individual awareness and interpretation. The last (the fourth) concept is that using reflection towards what has been done in class (Mohamed, 2006). Specifically Richard and Farrel (2005) define reflection as “critical observation process towards experience, the process guiding to a better understanding of one’s routine or what daily is practiced”.

To teachers, teacher-study can be formal and informal (Richards and Farrel, 2005). They can study by adding new knowledge through their own teaching practice, through individual or self monitoring, and through classroom action research or reflection journal. This learning model is presently rarely found in Indonesian context. This is due to the reason that teachers in majority are S1 graduates, having no self-study habit and tending to consider their profession as mechanical.

Another learning type is assisted through interaction among teachers. This type of learning can be in form of relaxing talk in teacher room, or formal form like monitoring, peer-coaching collaboration, action research, and team teaching. Another formal program of teachers’ professionalism development includes teacher support/study group or teacher-study group, studying together with teachers consultant, also workshop carried out by profession organization or teacher education institution. The more formal one is to go to higher teacher education or post graduate program for developing professionalism as a teacher.

### **Teachers’ Continous Professionalism Development (TCPD)**

Continous development of professionalism should cover the whole type of teacher-education formally and informally which encourages teachers themselves to increase their ethos. TCPD can also be called in-service training or staff development as it has been well-known up to the present; it has been as common term which describes every aspect of teacher’s need in teaching (Bubb, 2004). TCPD can be done individually or in cooperation type.



**Figure 1.** Continuing Professional Development Framework (Jones, 2003: 37).

In TCPD there are three interrelated categories: focus to individual, focus to school, and focus to national.

1. Focus to individual is any activity that should be focused on the need of group and career planning.
2. Focus to school is any activity which is focused on school enhancement. It is a common practice in school enhancement planning that on the determined days there is professionalism continuous developing activity. Based on the school program, teachers continue their training that makes collegial enhancement possible among teachers; the school provides conducive learning to them
3. Focus on national is any activity that fills local and national demand.

The following figure shows Continuing Professionalism Development Framework by Jones (2003: 37).

With continuous professionalism development, according to Bubb (2004) and Senior (2006), teachers can have chance to:

- a. manage their time to involve in continuous reflection and structured learning

- b. make chance to study from daily practice like planning and evaluating.
- c. develop their ability to identify their own learning and need and others.
- d. develop individual learning plan.
- e. to have school base learning and participation may have approval for school accreditation
- f. develop self-assessment, observation, and peer review skill.
- g. develop mentoring and coaching building, also ability to offer professional dialogue and feedback.
- h. plan long-term career aspiration of their own.

Continuous professionalism development comprises all natural learning and conscious and planned activities aimed at direct or indirect utility to individual, group, or school and other sides contributing to it. Through this TCPD, in class education quality will increase. It is so logical with reason that individually or with other people teachers review, renew, and extend their commitment as agent of change. With moral teaching where they gain feedback to enhance professional and important ideas about planning and teaching practice with their pupils, with group and colleagues in every phase their teaching life or experience (Day in Bolam and Mc Mahon, 2004; Fullan in Smith, 2005; Timpeerley, 2008).

The key element in developing language teachers effectively is through collaboration – either between individuals and teacher-education institution and/or their professional colleagues, who now are involved in language teaching and learning among language teachers or educators or teachers themselves in the institutional context (Tedick, 2005). This, in other words, should effectively be done in continuous collaboration.

### **Continuously Collaborative Study of Teachers' Professionalism**

Before describing teachers' professionalism development, it is necessary to assert that Burns and Richards (2009) define professionalism as attaining qualification already established by local education authority or such institution in national or international level. However, this definition has recently been faced with many different procedures wherein teachers can reflectively and critically review their own experience which can be called as professionalism development. This change happens because development is truly related to development in general and is not focused on specific action. Professionalism development is aimed at reaching long-term goal and with an attempt of providing facilities for teachers' understanding development towards teaching itself and their development as a teacher (Richards and Farrel, 2005).

Why collaborative type? The answer is that collaboration makes various tasks and responsibilities possibly shared (Richards and Farrel, 2005). In line with this idea, Johnson (2009) states that this type of collaboration actually comes out from the view that teacher-study is groundedly social process. Further, he states

that ... teachers are able to continuously study if they do it in cooperation with their colleagues, for teachers are viewed as individual and community resulting knowledge, not only gaining knowledge about teaching. These all are believed that teachers are collegial profession. Clearly, the most important point is that, in collaborative teaching, teachers voluntarily involve themselves in the continuous and systematic learning process. Johnson and Golombek (2011) theoretically support this argument through sociocultural perspective/view on the thought that in teacher-study there is inside-out process by the time teachers develop themselves resulting new knowledge which at once emerges outside-in process inviting chance from other sides that might be involved in the study process.

In collaborative study, there is a concept of collaborative partnership with its variety. One can be superior, another can be complementary. This partnership is commonly committed by university and is recommendably complementary in nature so that the collaborative partnership is able to fill the gap between the two sides (Edwards, Tsui, and Stimpson, 2009).

In reference to collaboration with university, Johnson (2009) points out five kinds of activity that teachers can do. There is collaboration among teachers, with researchers of university grounded, pupils, or other educational stakeholders involving in that type of study such as school supervisor/superintendent or with teachers of different lessons. Johnson also gives example like action research, narrative enquiry, peering activity, explorative practice, journal, teacher-study group, and teaching in team. Narrative inquiry is a learning process focusing on telling teachers' experience.

The definition of study group according to Richards and Farrel (2005) is volunteer activity and does not involve all teachers within which teachers can bring about many problems that can be made as focus of meeting. The other names for teacher-study group are support group, teacher network, and learning cycles. Teacher-study group can have several purposes which mainly to encourage their awareness and capacity building in teaching and carrying out reflection of teaching and material development. In Indonesia, the types of professionalism development like in-service training (in profession) still follows traditional method, that is workshop and training like teacher-training education (PLPG), in-house training or workshop with specified theme such as teaching methodology, action research, or learning evaluation. These types of teachers' profession development has some weaknesses. Training is commonly used for preparation phase with the focus on (1) introducing conceptual aspect and its try-out, (2) the content/material of training is usually determined by experts without the involvement of participants' aspiration, and its format is standardized. Workshop is naturally intensive carried out in a short period of time with the aim for providing chance to gain knowledge or certain skill (Richards and Farrel, 2005). This activity can have long effect if carried out within smaller scale; unfortunately, what has been done with workshop activity has not reached all

teachers so that content synchronization with school context has more often not happened.

In his article, Aziz (2011) states that teachers' development program has no clear objective. The implementation of the program has been oriented still on giving licence to all teachers from many different backgrounds of education without considering what to be done next. There is no certainty of evaluating the licence that can be made as guarantee that instructional practice in class will be better than before. Indeed, the evaluation of teacher development during his/her career should be done holistically, covering the whole profession phase.

Another factor that should be considered tying to the teachers' continuous professionalism development grouping teachers based on teaching time period, like newly employed teacher or senior teacher (see research carried out by Petsch and Williamson, 2010). This research sees transition period from being new teachers who have just finished their teacher education with the period of entering the profession itself. Another such research by Varghese and Wilberschied (2002) which reappraises the dichotomy of noviced and expert which shows that new teacher (novice) tends to need professional knowledge and addaptation or success at school. In a while, the teachers already pass the first five year-experience have already been interested in adding professional development for research problems (Bartlett, 2006). Senior teachers prefer self development to be expert teacher or to be leading to leadership; or considering justifiability of program with local condition of the place where he/she teaches. This is shown by the research carried out by Faez (2011) which develops knowledge-base to English teachers in Canada. Though theoretical knowledge-base has been available from some experts and previous researchers, however, Faez formulates the knowledge-base based on the situation in Kanada. Mainly, thus far, the term "one size fits all" is not implentable in teachers' professionalism development.

### **Teacher-study Group**

There have been researches about teacher-study group which all carried out not in Indonesian school context. Firstly, research carried out by Dubetz (2005) which studies project for teachers' professionalism development collaborative in nature in a group of studying. This group is focused on enhancing teaching practice quality by involving belingual teachers. Secondly, a study by Smith (2005) which sees the effect of classroom action research towards professionalism delovement and cooperation attitude of teachers conducting the research. Thirdly, a research by Gersten et al. (2010) with the objective for evaluating the effect of teacher-study goup towards the way of teaching reading and vocabulary and the success of pupils in the first year, their skill in reading and vocabulary with the hypothesis that when the teacher actively participates in the teacher-study group, the rteacher does not only study basic principle of research in teaching reading comprehension and vocabulary but also continuously

gets chance to review, to do reflection, to discuss all principles of the research which then implemented in their school curriculum. Fourthly, Scribner et al. (2007) conducted research on teacher team from how leadership in group turns is analyzed from their conversation during group discussion. These researches all are thus strengthening the positive effect of partnership in teacher-study group.

### **Partnership**

Partnership can be linked between two or among more institutions. McLaughlin and Black-Hawkins (2004) identify advantages and disadvantages of the type of cooperation between school and university in terms of teachers' professionalism development. They assert furthermore about requirements enquired for practice-based teaching research at one school out of two and when it is conducted in cooperation with university need more consideration and adjustment. Another research on partnership by Edelfelt and Cook (2004) also studies about university cooperation in North California, which is on charge to assist schools. This research discusses problem, experience, and success during the cooperation was going on. A research by Varghese and Wilberscheid (2002) which reappraises the dichotomy between novice and expert in class 12. Traditionally, novice is meant not to have any experience and becomes mentoring participant; and vice versa, experience is meant as an experienced teacher and mentor all at once. This study investigates problem and conflict happening during the interaction between mentor and mentoring participants. With the same concern, Sharon and Murray (2009) study elementary school teachers' perspective related to collaborative teaching. These researches also support how attention should be paid on partnership as one type of teacher-study group for enhancement of teacher professionalism development, especially in Indonesia.

To language teachers there are a number of questions that can build professional language teaching awareness. These questions are fully quoted from *Language and Language Learning*, 2nd edition by Nelson Brooks (New York Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964, pages 257—259). Even though the questions are old but their spirit is consistently dynamic. These are the questions:

1. Do you explain at the first meeting of the class what the objectives of the course are and how you propose to attain them?
2. In the training of each student do you distinguish between the hearer and the speaker?
3. Do you distinguish between learning and performance?
4. When you give a new type of assignment, do you then demonstrate fully how it is to be carried out?
5. Do you give your class models of what you ask for or do you let them guess what is right? or vote on what is right?
6. Does your class period always contain some review of old material and sample demonstration of new material?



7. Are the assignments you give busy work? paper work? language learning?
8. Do you give assignments as the students are leaving the classroom? at the beginning of the class? orally? written on the board? printed on slips of paper?
9. Do you put yourself in the position of maintaining that language is logical?
10. When a student performs correctly do you ask him why he said what he said the way he said it?
11. Do you emphasize the analysis of structure or the formation of habits for using it?
12. While teaching phonology, morphology, and syntax, do you add the burden of vocabulary problems, too?
13. Do you permit your students to think that one word means another word?
14. Do you ask your students to memorize isolated vocabulary words or lists of equivalents in English and their own language that is, lexicography?
15. If you use the native language in your classes, do you allow your students to speak the native language?
16. When you say something to your class in English, do you habitually repeat it in the students' language in the same breath?
17. Have you ever in your professional career banished the native language entirely from your classroom for four weeks in succession?
18. Do you correct a student as he speaks? just after he has written? a week from the following Thursday?
19. In your classes are books open all the time? some of the time? none of the time?
20. Do you make your students "really learn" the language by concentrating on uncommon irregular verb forms?
21. Do you judge a student's knowledge and control of English by the way he spells it on a piece of paper?
22. Do your students keep a notebook record of important matters as they come up in class?
23. Do you hold your students up to the standard of your possible performance or their possible performance?
24. Is your class schedule unchanged by, interrupted by, or distorted by, review for extramural tests and examinations?
25. Are your students forced into making mistakes by not having at their disposal adequate patterns of language to which they can refer?
26. Are written compositions always done orally first?
27. When you give a reading assignment, is all or part of it heard by the students first?
28. Do you spend any, some, or all of your class time translating from English into the students' language?

29. Do you spend the first five minutes of your class period talking English on a subject not previously announced?
30. Do you focus attention only on what the student does with pencil and paper or do you treat as equally important what he can do in English with his eyes closed?
31. Do you try to set up in your students' head a second language system independent of the mother tongue, or does your teaching tend unite the two systems, rendering them permanently inseparable?

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Teachers' professionalism is a trade mark in the world of teaching that no other words can be given except it should continuously be developed during teachers' career. Continuously yet consciously individual awareness and effort can affect personal teachers' attitude and thus build mental character of professional teachers. The effort is through teacher-study group as one way solution and other types are teachers cooperation in any way and type as other ways of solution. By this way are teachers, including language teachers, recommended to consciously involve themselves in sequential and regular activities formally and informally to develop their own professionalism as a teacher. So, programming for such activities are recommendable to be made by any groups of volunteers, socially independent group, teachers group, or educational institution.

### **References**

- Aziz, E.A. Profesionalisme Guru di Persimpangan Jalan. *Harian Pikiran Rakyat* 17 November 2011.
- Baratlett, S. 2006. An Evaluation of the Work of a Group of Best Practice Teacher Researchers. In *Journal of In-Service Education*. vol 28(3).p.527-540.16
- Dubetz, N. 2005. Improving ESL Instruction in a Bilingual Program Through Collaborative, Inquiry-Based Professional Development. In D.J. Tedick (ed), *Second Language Teacher Education; International Perspectives*. New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.p.231-256.
- Edelfelt, R and Coble, C. 2004. University-School teacher education Partnerships in North Carolina. In *Journal of In-service Education* Vol 30 (3) .443-462.
- Gersten, R.et.al.2010. Teacher Study Group: Impact of the Professional Development Model on Reading Instruction and Student Outcomes in First Grade Classrooms. In *American Educational Research Journal*. Vol 47 (3) p.694-739.
- Grossman, P & Thompson, C. 2004. District Policy and Beginning Teachers: A Lens on Teacher Learning. In *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* Winter 2004, Vol.26, No. 4,pp.281-301

- Harrison, J.K. 2002. The Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers in Secondary Schools. *In Journal of In-Service Education. Vol 28 (2) p.255-276. 20*
- Johston, B. Pawan, F. and Taylor, R.M. The Professional Development of Working ESL/EFL Teachers: A pilot Study. In D.J. Tedick (ed), *Second Language Teacher Education; International Perspectives*. New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates,Publishers.p.53.72.
- Jones, M. 2002. Qualified to Become Good Teachers: a case study of ten newly qualified teachers during their year of indication. *In Journal of In-Service Education vol. 28 (3) p.509-526.*
- Kearns, H. 2001. Competence-based Early Professional Development: First Impressions of the Northern Ireland Programme, *in Journal of In-Service Education, 27:1, 65-82*
- McLaughlin, C and Black-Hawkins, K. 2004. A Schools-University Research Partnership: Understanding, Models, and Complexities. *In Journal In-Service Education vol 30 (2) p.265-284*
- Richards, J.C & Farrell, T.S.C. 2005. *Professional Development for Language Teachers; Strategies for Teacher Learning*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge
- Scribner, J.P, Sawyer, K, Watson, S.T, and Myers, V.L. 2007. Teacher Teams and Distributed Leadership: A Study of Group Discourse and Collaboration. *In Educational Administration Quarterly vol 43 (1) p.67-100*
- Smith, L.C. 2005. The Impact of Action Reserach on Teaacher Collaboration an Professional Growth. In D.J. Tedick (ed), *Second Language Teacher Education; International Perspectives*. New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.p.199-214.
- Spencer,P. 2011. *Surviving your Teacher Practice*. Open university Press. Berkshire.
- Stotsky, Sandra. 2006. Who Should Be Accountable for What Beginning Teachers Need to Know? *In Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. 57, No. 3, May/June 2006 p.256-268*
- Varghese, M and Wilberschied, L. 2002. Recosidering the Novice/Expert Dichotomy in the K-12 Mentor-Mentee Relationship. *In Journal of In-Service Education, vol.28 (1) p.23-34.*
- Williams, E & Johnson, M. 2006. Politics and Principals: Beginning Black Teachers' perceptions of Relationships with Administrators in 21st-Century Schools. *In Improving School vol.9 Number 3 p.187-199*