



Professional Development in Education: A Theoretical Discussion of Three Themes

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Abstrak

Pengembangan profesional dalam pendidikan memainkan peran penting untuk pertumbuhan pribadi, kinerja pekerjaan, efektivitas organisasi dan keberhasilan semua siswa. Secara umum, pengembangan profesional telah disajikan melalui lima tema. Namun dalam kasus ini, makalah ini memilih tiga dari lima tema yang menjelaskan komitmen pribadi, kolaborasi dan refleksi pada praktik, serta konteks dan budaya dalam pengembangan profesional.

Kata Kunci: *Pengembangan professional, Pendidikan, Tiga Tema*

Abstract

Professional development in education plays an important role for personal growth, job performance, organisational effectiveness and success of all students. Generally, professional development has been presented through five themes. But in this case, this paper chooses three of five themes that explain personal commitment, collaboration and reflection on practice, and context and culture in the professional development.

Keywords: *Professional Development; Education; Three Themes*

1. Introduction

Teaching and learning processes are a life long activity which involves three main features; teachers, students and curriculum. To ensure the achievement of the processes, the teachers supposed to use some approaches in their activities, for example professional development approach. Professional development can be defined as both formal and informal learning experiences of a teacher to enhance their professional career (Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991). Personal professional development is not only permitting teachers to improve their personal skill but it is able to ensure a high quality of students' outcomes. During activities in the classroom, some teachers might encounter classrooms' management, students' aptitude and pedagogical problems. To minimize the

problems, the teachers should improve their personal skills through professional development approaches. One of the approaches is collaboration with their colleagues to identify and solve the possible problems in the classrooms. Collaboration is a process that involves two or more participants to share and provide feedback towards the discussion of a problem.

2. A Commitment to Personal Professional Development

Self-directed and personal commitment is an integral part of lifelong learning. In addition, personal commitment is motivated by passion, enthusiasm, vision, personal interest and a work place. The best way to make a professional program work for a professional teacher is give them a responsibility for professional development. One way is through give them self-directed professional development (Clark 1992, p. 77). Clark (1992, p. 78-83) provides seven-principle for teacher as a designer. The first principle

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is about the way to define teacher professional, what is teacher beliefs and theorists. In this case, teachers should have their own credo and what they believe about teaching, student, curriculum, subject and so forth. For example, when I was a student in higher secondary school, there was an experienced teacher that had his own credo on teaching. He was a mathematics teacher that believed mathematics was his soul and an integral part of his life. The principle is an important part in order to be teacher as designer. The other principles are start with your strength, make a five-year plan; look in your own backyard; ask for support; go first class; and blow your own trumpet (Clark, 1992, p. 80-83). Beside that, Hammond and Collins (1991, cited in Collins 2009) describe self-directed learning as “a process in which learners take the initiative, with the support and collaboration of others; for increasing self and social awareness; critically analysing and reflecting on their situations; diagnosing their learning needs with specific reference to competencies they have helped identify; formulating socially and personally relevant learning goals; identifying human and material resources for learning; choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies; and reflecting on and evaluating their learning.” It means that self-directed is an integral part of life long learning not only for learners but also for teachers.

Furthermore, teachers’ commitments play an important part in education and school. Hubberman state “The most critical factor for the future success of education and school is teachers’ commitment” (1993, cited in Crosswell & Elliot, 2003). Moreover, Nias stated that there are four types of commitment namely “commitment to caring, pursuit competence, develop and maintain personal identity and career continuances” (cited in Raymond, D, Butt R, & Townsend D. 1992, p. 154). Teachers’ commitment is closely connected to teachers’ work performance and their ability to create new ideas in practice, as well as having an important influence on student achievement and attitudes toward school (Firestone, 1996; Graham, 1996; Louis, 1998; Nias, 1981; Tsui & Cheng, 1999 cited in Crosswell & Elliot, 2003). Personally, in my previous teaching, I did not have a commitment on teaching, but everything has changed right now. I just understand how important is a commitment for teacher, a commitment on how to make my own teaching more interesting and how to make my students enjoy teaching.

Teachers should have a commitment on their workplace. Particularly, they should have a commitment for their teaching and their students. Moreover, teachers’ commitment is influenced by some factors such as a leader school and community. Day, Fullan & Louis (2000, 2002, 1998 cited in Crosswell & Elliot, 2003) stated that the school

leadership is highly significant in determining teachers levels of commitment and engagement with new initiatives and reforms. Teachers should have a passion on their work. Jakson (1992, p. 66-67) has discussed that there are differences between teacher change and teacher development. In the article Jakson stated that the development is a form of positive change. However, in her article, Kwo (2004) argued that teachers who weak learners tend to see change as an impossible achievement because there is a lack of support in their community. It is true that there was a recent research only focus on student outcome rather than teachers’ live. This is a common situation at my working place, most educators and leaderships focus on student achievements especially student examination. Teachers’ lives tend to be neglected, whereas, in professional development, teachers’ lives play an important role. Kwo (2004) tried to observe personal teachers’ lives and found that an inner power in personal and professional development as a foundation for teachers in their professionalism. The inner power will convey to them of self-understanding and self empowerment. The self-understanding could be an integral part for teachers to develop their ability. When teachers have to develop, it is started by themselves not by others. On the other hand, others have to support them in order to develop themselves.

Furthermore, Albert Schweitzer stated that “Example is not the best way to influence others. However, it is the only way” (cited in DuFour, 2001). In this case, I would like to look at principals as a model for the teachers and staffs. When principals have a commitment on their professional development, the teachers and staffs will make similar commitments.

In short, in life, every body should have the commitment towards personal and professional development to achieve good levels in life and to be a good example for others to follow his or her steps. It can be a motivation for teachers or teacher educators to have a commitment toward personal and professional development because teachers and teacher educators are an example for both learners and communities.

3. A Commitment to Collaborative Reflection on Practice

Lortie (1975, cited in Guarino & Waterson, 2002) stated that “isolation, both physical and social is not new to teaching”. However, a learning take place in a social activity, If teachers continue to work in isolation, the teachers are not allowed to come together to share ideas, build lesson and curriculum; they would not develop their skills and knowledge. In most professions, most practitioners work mutually together. Seniors take advantages from juniors that have new ideas. However, in teaching, most teachers

work in isolation, neither not helping nor being helping by others. HØyrup & Elkjaer stated that “Habit does not prompt reflection”. (2006, p. 30). People need to think and review their works or actions.

Reflection on practice can be one of solutions to solve the isolation in teaching. Teacher collaboration is a powerful for reflection on teaching. Teachers can share their experience, ideas, knowledge each others. In my experience, I found my colleague did the collaboration. She is a biology teacher that taught bilingual students (English and Bahasa Indonesia). In addition, she often discussed her teaching with English teachers in order to reflect her teaching. the reason why collegial discussion is important in professional development because within discussion, we can share some thought and feeling for our colleagues which they probably curious what are we doing and vice versa. Moreover, the colleagues can provide some comments and suggestion for improvement. It means there a beneficial relationship both social and cultural context. However, there is some obstacle in collaboration such as lack of time and culture of school and teacher. The general conditions are poor social relation and communication among teachers. But this problem can be tackled by support them with right condition, context and processes. Moreover, to reflect their action, teachers need to keep journal. Holley claimed that “Keeping a professional journal provide a reflection on of perception, thought and feeling”. (2007, p. 10). In addition, another important part a writing journal is the collaboration and sharing with colleagues or peers. After writing of journal, it will be better to share for other in order to gain some feedback and suggestion and can be a reflection for improvement. On other hand, this kind of reflections is difficult to apply of teachers *in Aceh* because writing is not a habitual activity for most teachers *in Aceh*. Therefore, most teachers will have a reason that they did not have enough time to do it, especially for older teachers. Personally, I tend to keep diary in my note book for keeping an experience in my life. Hopefully, it can be applied in my teaching in future.

Moreover, Hoban stated that there are three models in professional development namely outside-in models, Inside-in models, and inside-outside models (1997, p. 1-20). These models are useful to enhance teachers or teacher educators as being professional teachers or teacher educators. In Aceh, the first model, outside-in models, has been implemented in many schools. Inside-in model is professional development model that was generated by others for teachers such as seminars, workshops and training models.

4. Recognising Context and Culture in Professional Development

The collaboration with colleagues or peers has positive impacts in professional development. However, there are some negative impacts found at a workplace such as community expectations and government roles. Because of some negative impacts, teachers or teacher educators should open some options to develop their skills and knowledge even must more critical. Folley (2004) mentions Paradigms such as education as science, the interpretive paradigm, and the critical paradigm. The interpretive paradigm sees knowledge both subjective and socially. Therefore, she stated that different people understand world differently. Moreover, the interpretive paradigm has influenced adult education that emphasises metacognitive learning. Furthermore, Folley describes how the critical paradigm influences in professional development. There is a connection between theory, ideology and power relation. It can be understood that we not only receive the radical changes but also need to understand the ideas behind the changes. It is an important part for teachers or teacher educators to know more about the changes that commonly happen in education.

Moreover, context and culture plays an important role in professional development. The relationships among context, culture and professional development influence in education. In the context, teachers or teacher educators have to look at their community for their professionals. Wenger (1999) describes the community and practice. There are dimensions of practice as the property of a community namely mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire.

The culture in professional development could be explained as the relations between teachers’ attitudes, their belief both inside and outside school, and the cultural norms in the school. Moreover, Wermke (2010) stated that “The idea of professional development, culture seem appropriate to describe relations between teacher professional development attitudes, practises and the influence of the school system”. In this case, the teachers should come and open others ideas such as their colleagues’ ideas. Moreover, they should perceive knowledge sources from outside school that have different culture. However, the teachers should consider that the knowledge sources appropriate in their teaching and school.

5. Summary

Professional development is more appropriate to demonstrate what teachers or teacher educators do for their development. As teachers or teacher educators, they should have certain attitudes toward culture, community, act as an agent of change and an

active agent in professional development. Moreover, they could choose certain offers and reject others. My thinking about professional development has enhanced influenced by Clark (1992) 'Teachers as designer', Holley (1992) 'Keeping a professional journal', and Hoban (1997) 'opportunities for knowledge building in professional development models'.

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