Challenges for Teacher Educators in Indonesia among Changes in Educational System

Muchsonah*

muchsonah@yahoo.com

Abstract

Issues about education have often become thorny issues in the society, especially among educators. Many have criticized that education in Indonesia is getting worse and worse even though changes have been carried out in many aspects. This paper aims to provide a case faced by a core teacher in a teacher-training centre in Ngawi, East Java in carrying out her duty. The writer aims to share the advantages and disadvantages of various strategies she adopted in running English teachers' professional development program, ranging from Information transmission, experiential works, workshops, experiential learning, to self-directed learning. Several concepts and relations among Changes, Motivation and Learning Patterns in Professional Development will also be some significant discussions followed by some proposed development.

1. Introduction

There is a tendency in Indonesia, for frequent changes Cabinet is followed by the shift in policy. This results in education department changing or the developing curriculum. Regardless of impressive gains in basic education over the last twenty-five years in Indonesia with over-centralization of management, Indonesian government's efforts to improve the quality of education in various aspects have been started. In line with the needs of change in governmental administration, the educational department in each district is given autonomy to carry out its education administration, including recruitment of new staff and teachers. To meet the more advance of national and international societies, a new curriculum is usually implemented, and the professional development programs for teachers across levels, through teacher-training programs are also improved.

These changes, however, by many have become thorny issues. The most urgent question they are concerned about is whether this plan will result in better situation or on the contrary will make the situation worse, for the reasons that the implementation of the last curriculum had not brought about significant progress in many aspects. Moreover, socialising these changes is still a big deal for those who are in charge in professional development program, especially in district level, as described in the following case: "When I began my duty as a core teacher in teacher training centre or what Indonesian usually called PKG (Pemantapan Kerja Guru or Teachers Work Consolidation) in Ngawi, East Java 1999, the participants were teachers

---

* Dosen Bahasa Inggris UPT Bahasa ITB.

from 15 schools with different backgrounds of teaching experience, from town and village as well as their statuses as fulltime and part-time teachers who were sent to centre for professional development. It never occurred to me that I was practicing adult education, after teaching secondary school for almost 15 years. But they learned so differently than my students in secondary school in some ways that they taught me new ways to teach. Although I have provided myself with Andragogy and a set of preparation for teaching this group, I still found problems that I didn't come across when I taught younger students. I was aware of the teacher participants' needs in this centre to develop and improve their own professional practice, and I was aware about my function as a trainer to encourage them to develop themselves. For these purposes, I had implemented what professional development team had suggested as 3 stages of activities of Information transmission, Experiential works, and workshops".

During the process of implementing these three stages, as a mentor, I kept learning the effects of what I had done, the problems and what I should do to overcome them. This was a long journey and needed a deep reflection before finally I realised that these three stages had contributed advantages and disadvantages both for the participants and my own side.

I found these stages of activities useful as a framework to arouse motivation. The participants were encouraged to learn more theories and technical knowledge, to practice more pedagogical skills, to cooperate with other teachers in solving their teaching problems, and to encourage sensitivity when responding to teaching and learning difficulties. To some degree, however, these phases still had some significant shortcomings in its practice:

1. Although participants had been encouraged to be creative in providing materials for discussion, the core teacher was often the only resource of knowledge in the information transmission stage.

2. The experiential works had become the most interesting session for the participants, since they had more opportunities to observe, experience and evaluate teaching processes, through observing teaching models, peer teaching and real, or 'hands-on', teaching. These opportunities provided significant ways to integrate prior theoretical knowledge with new knowledge and implement them in their teaching practices. These works, unfortunately, are still seen as if the core teacher was evaluating the participants rather than assisting them.

3. Workshop sessions had also contributed valuable outcomes, particularly in assisting junior teachers to understand how to prepare a lesson that includes relevant activities and teaching resources. At this stage, however, several participants tended to replicate other teachers' work from previous workshops.

Above all, it was unusual for participants to formally document learned outcomes from the information

transmission, experiential learning and workshops. Therefore, there was a risk that participants would not remain focused on what they had learned, or be able to provide feedback on the long-term success of the program. Problems concerned with students and teachers throughout the district, and particularly those who had not attended the training, tended to remain unaddressed due to a lack of formal documentation detailing shared teaching problems and possible solutions.

Despite these problems, I found another significant concern that annoyed me since the first time I was employed. It was the lack of knowledge resources to encourage the teacher participants, and even myself as the core-teacher to acquire knowledge from this centre. Therefore, to fulfil the demands of the teaching I learned from a library of a university in another town as a member of self-access centre. At the end of my duty in this centre, I proposed to the head of the centre to provide at least a library for the teachers so that they can develop self-directed-learning. Unfortunately, this proposal was answered very simply by asking me 'Where can we get the money from?' Finally, the last concern is the way this centre had motivated the participants to come to the centre by providing Rp. 10.000, - or equal to AU $ 1.00 for each participant per meeting. This was not a big money at all, moreover after financial crisis in 1998.This money, however, was not given unless the teacher attended the sessions, and my additional job was to record who came and who did not, meaning who got the money and who did not. I understand that money often becomes a sensitive

issue. This amount of money did not enough to motivate them to come to the centre. Anyhow, I was happy since their participation was not because of money but because they needed to come to the centre to learn from it and share with others".

Apart from these various perceptions, government also pay attention to the professional development centre like teacher training centre. This centre is called 'PKG' which stands for Pemantapan Kerja Guru or Teachers' Work Consolidation and aimed to improve the quality of primary, secondary and high school teachers. For these centres, however, changes as planned by government are still a big problem, especially for those involved in it.

This paper aims to provide a case faced by a core teacher in a teacher-training centre in Ngawi, East Java in carrying out her duty. It goes from the identification of problems, followed by analysis of the problems, the relationship with human resource development issues and some proposed solutions.

2. Case Identified in a Teacher-Training Centre

"I began my duty as a core teacher in a teacher training centre in Ngawi, East Java in 1999. The participants were teachers from 15 schools with different teaching background and experiences. They had also different employment statuses. Some have become fulltime teachers, while some others are still part time teachers. They were sent to the centre for professional development. It never

occurred to me that I was practicing adult education, after teaching secondary school for almost 15 years. I realized that they learned so differently from my students in secondary school in some ways that it triggered my awareness to use new ways to teach.

Although I provided myself with Andragogy and a set of preparations for teaching this group, I still found problems that I didn't come across when I taught younger students. It was a rewarding experience to teach different levels using different strategies and in a different context. For this different background, I implemented three main stages of activities, namely Information transmission, experiential works, and Workshops.

During the process of implementing these three stages, as a mentor, I kept learning the effects of what I had done, the problems and what I should do to overcome them. This was a long journey and needed deep reflection. I realised finally that these three stages had contributed advantages and disadvantages both for the participants and me. I found these stages of activities useful as a framework to improve motivation. To some degree, however, these phases still had some significant shortcomings in its practice.

1. Although participants had been encouraged to be creative in providing materials for discussion, the core teacher was often the only resource of knowledge in the information transmission stage. Although the experiential works had become the most interesting session for the participants, these works, unfortunately, were still seen as if the core teacher was evaluating the participants rather than assisting them. Although workshop sessions had also contributed valuable outcomes, at this stage, however, several participants tended to replicate other teachers' work from previous workshops.

2. Although the results of these stages were considered useful, there had not been an effort to formally document the results, so there was a risk that participants would not remain focused on what they had learned, or be able to provide feedback on the long-term success of the program.

3. Although this centre aims to encourage the teachers to learn, this centre lacked of knowledge resources such as library.

4. Although this centre had motivated the participants to come the centre by providing Rp. 10.000, - (equal to AU $ 2.00) for each participant per meeting), this was not a large sum at all, especially after the financial crisis in 1998"

3. Concepts in Changes, Motivation and Learning Patterns in Professional Development

As a result of struggling with the situations in Indonesian change, the government had set up changes. The changes included shifting from centralization to decentralisation, involving all levels of authorities to cope with several significant problems with bureaucracy, poverty and the large amount of population, gap or conflict between central and district, uncertain

political situations, and many others. In education itself, the emerging problems were also various ranging from teachers' learning patterns, teachers' lack of motivation and teachers' lack of information source.

a. Changes

Indonesian government has been changing and growing overtime. Therefore, the evolutionary nature of the process of human and organisational change to make contribution has to be appreciated for each situation is complex and to a certain degree, unique. (Eisenhardt, 1998) Fullan (1999), states that learning organization is related to acquiring and using new and better knowledge continuously. Meanwhile, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) agrees that organisational knowledge creation is the capacity of a company as a whole to create new knowledge, disseminate it throughout the organization, and embody it in products, services and systems. Further, the success of a living companies, complex adaptation and systems, learning communities is that they consist of intricate, embedded interaction inside and outside organization, which mainly covers 4 main learning activities of shared, creative problem solving to produce current products; implementing and integrating new methodologies and tools to enhance internal operation ; formal and informal experimentation to build capabilities for the future; as well as pulling in expertise from outside. (Leonardo, 1995)
Fullan (1993), claims that there are two basic reasons of the failure of educational reform. One is the complexity of the problems so that solutions are hard to conceive and harder to be put into practice. The other reason is that the strategies used do not focus on things that will really make a different. Both reasons seem to exist in Indonesia. Therefore, (Wallace, 1991:392) it is important to consider whether the required developmental planning process would match the realities and complexities of the situation

b. Motivation

Work behaviour can be motivated by many different rewards- for example, money, praise, social relationships, sense of accomplishment, alleviation of boredom (Guzzo, 1979). Miskel (1982) classifies rewards/incentives into two: extrinsic and intrinsic incentives. The extrinsic incentives include recognition, money, promotion, social interaction with colleagues, and well behave students. The organization or other people usually give these incentives. The intrinsic incentives involve feelings of accomplishment, achievement, competence, efficacy, self-esteem, and self-actualisation.

Further Molen (2001) assumes that
"Professionals typically are not only motivated by income and career, although these are important factors as well. A professional worker values new and challenging tasks, and wants to improve his professional skills over and over again. Very important for the professional is autonomy in his work and he wants to be involved in

policy decisions that affect his work and work environment. Professional skills and knowledge are the only acceptable criteria for promotion. The professional worker has the right to challenge and critically follow the acting of the management and to enjoy doing that".

Herzberg's (1959) identifies two factors in motivational theories that are positive events and negative events. The positive events were dominated by references to achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself as a challenge, responsibility, and advancement (promotion). Negative events, however, were dominated by references to interpersonal relations with superiors and peers, technical supervision, company policy and administration, working conditions, salary, and personal life.
Incentive system aims to motivate the teachers to improve their work performance (Lawler, 1987). In Indonesian case, to facilitate these changes, government has also provided efforts to stimulate motivation among the participants by giving them both intrinsic and extrinsic incentive, for instance the increase of teachers' salary and Rp.10.000 for teacher training participants as well as points for promotion, although these incentives are assumed to be far from sufficient.

c. Teachers' Learning Patterns and Mentoring in a Professional Development Program

It is important to understand the nature of teacher training centre as a professional organization in which the

core teacher is motivated to work hard and produce good results. Molen (2001) identifies a characteristic of professional organizations is that they develop, retrieve, apply and "sell" knowledge to themselves and for internal and external clients.

In teacher training centre, professional development program is aimed to assist beginner teachers who are by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980, 1985) considered having little experience with real situations. Trainees' learning strategy implemented in the teacher-training centre so far is 'Innovation-focus' model (Broker, 1998; Owen, 1990 and Ingvarson, 1987). It involves learning from others by assuming that the participants need concrete and continuous provision from reliable people to enable them to implement new programs or practices. This model is implemented through 3 stages of *Information transmission*, *Experiential works and Workshops*. With these, the participants were encouraged to learn more theories and technical knowledge, to practice more pedagogical skills, to cooperate with other teachers in solving their teaching problems, and to be sensitive when responding to teaching and learning difficulties (Ur, 1996).

Kolb (1984) elaborates on the theory of experiential learning with the idea of 'experience + reflection' and defines four modes of learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. He recommends that for the purpose of optimal learning, the knowledge acquired needs to be followed by further processing in the next stage, and so on. Penny Ur (1996),

however, argues that Kolb's model needs to be enriched by external sources of input such as vicarious experiences which will affect concrete experiences, other people's observations which affect reflective observations, input from professional research, theorizing which will strengthen abstract conceptualisation and other people's experiments which will encourage the teacher to be active in experimenting, as shown in the following figure:
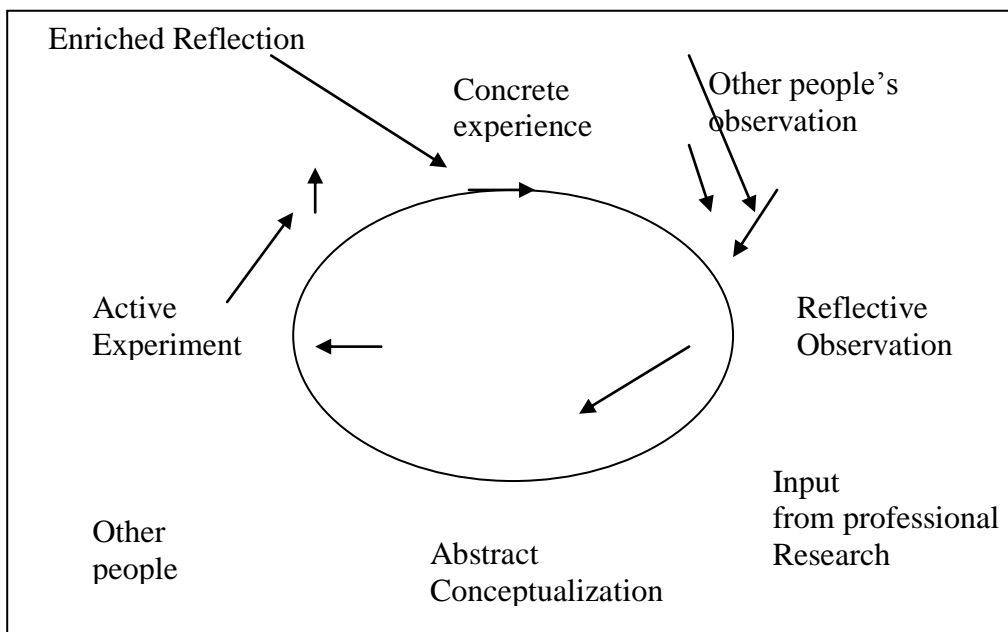
Figure 2. Enriched Reflection

Penny Ur (1986) concludes that knowledge may be derived from either personal thought or input from outside which, in principle, should be integrated into the trainees' own reflective cycle in order that effective learning may take place. Many practitioners and researchers have made efforts to put these theories into practice.

The core teacher's role is very significant in the implementation of the learning strategy. The education community understands that mentors have a positive effect on teachers' retention, but that leaves open the question of what mentors should do,

what they actually do, and what novices learn as a result. For mentoring helping novices survive their first year of teaching, it must be guided by an understanding of teacher learning, and supported by a professional culture that favours collaboration and inquiry (Feiman-Nemser, Sharon, 1996)

Cohen (1993) identifies 6 behavioural functions of mentor's roles as a relationship to establish trust, to offer tailored advice, to introduce alternatives, to challenge, to motivate, and to encourage initiative. Many factors, however, often hinder the core teacher from the ability to have these

roles in working with novices, such as the lack of opportunities to observe and discuss each other's practice, and the tendency to treat all teachers as equal (Little, l990). Therefore, the expected role should be supported by the working conditions, program orientations, and mentor preparation (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, l993)

Sharon (1996) claims that a mentor should assist not assess the grounds that novices are more likely to share problems and ask for help if mentors do not evaluate them. Thus, to eliminate this misconception among the teacher participants, the mentor's role in promoting observation and conversation about teaching can help develop tools for continuous improvement. If learning to teach in reform-minded ways is the focus of this joint work, mentoring will also fulfil its function as an instrument of reform.

There is a need to improve this learning strategy from dependence to be more constructive and self-directed. Therefore, the teacher should be led through changes in three aspects of performance (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1984), namely: (1) the shift of professional's working paradigm from reliance on abstract principles to concrete past experience, (2) the shift of professional from seeing situations as discreet, unrelated parts to seeing situations as part of a whole, and (3) the shift of professional's position from detached observer to involved performer.

The mentor's morale or satisfaction may be one of the most important factors affecting the participants' achievements. Sharon (1996) argues that job satisfaction is the result of many interrelated factors or what Maslow (1954) mentions as the connection between job satisfaction and need fulfilment. Further, Simmons (1970) classifies these factors into two, namely satisfaction from the content and context. The satisfaction from the content covers achievement in teaching, the nature of work itself, recognition, self-esteem and self-actualisation. These last two needs are believed to contribute most powerfully to satisfaction. The context/ job situation covering interpersonal relations, school policy, salary are claimed to serve only to reduce pain in the lower order needs areas (physiological and safety) and cannot lead to satisfaction.

4. Relationships among Changes, Motivation and Professional Development

Undeniably, each problem faced by the core teacher does not stand on its own, but is the result of the complexity of the changes and situations of the aspects in it. Professional development centre as an agent of changes in educational department has a great role in carrying out the goals of changes to improve the quality of education. To lead the professional development successful in carrying out the changes, those who are involved in the professional development program must be motivated.

Fullan (1999: 236-7) claims, "Any good ideas or programs that is hoped to spread must include in their theories of action, a focus on context. Local context (readiness to learn, local capacity, etc) is a crucial variable, and no program can be expected to spread

successfully if it does not take into account the various contexts which it will inevitably encounter."

As a professional organization, the teacher-training centre implies that the staff members of the centre must be professionals meaning that they are highly educated worker who like to work relatively autonomously, and who like to deliver thinking power, knowledgeable and creative, with the objective to realise their own goals and the goals of the organization (Molen, 2001)

As a professional organization this teacher training has shown what Ur (1996) highlights as the nature of the teacher-training centre as an organization for teachers to practice, reflect, and share. The activities provided in the PKG in this case as a whole have been aimed to fulfil the needs of teachers to get opportunities to practice, reflect and share as described in the 3 stages of information transmission, experiential works and workshops.

This centre has given the teacher participants more opportunities to observe experience and evaluate teaching processes, through observing teaching models, peer-teaching and real, or 'hands-on', teaching. These opportunities provide significant ways to integrate prior theoretical knowledge with new knowledge and implement them in their teaching practices.

5. Proposed Developments

Having considered this case, the concepts reviewed and the tight relationships among changes, motivation and professional development, the following reforms can be considered for implementation:

1. The changes of policy in education should be accompanied with the readiness of the facilities in the organization to accept the changes. In the Indonesian situations, there is a need for central authority to put needed pressure on the lower authority so that both put all their efforts to make changes. This pressure however, should also be accompanied by assisting the organizations with disadvantaged situations in the lower authorities with the facilities needed for changes.

2. The centre authority should empower the district authority to conduct pre-service training as well so that the teacher participants will be less dependent when they attend the in-service training. To conduct such training, collaboration with universities is encouraged so that the participants get information from wider resources.

3. Provision of knowledge resources such as education references, science equipments and updating materials on subject-specific pedagogy for teacher is also proposed. This will eliminate the participants' lack of information in dealing with their teaching problems, as well as building their independent and self-directed learning to improve the effectiveness of teacher training centres.

4. Considering that education should be self-directed, there are various

ways to teach well. Since the ability to be self-directed is situational, a self-directed learning model can be implemented. This model, however, does not lead the participants from dependent learners to be self-directed learners. Through *interested* and *involved* stages, they finally become self-directed learners. Each of this stage requires the teacher to have different role, moving from authority to motivator, facilitator and consultant.

The core teacher's role as an authority among dependent learners can be coaching with immediate feedback, drills, and lectures, which are expected to overcome deficiencies and resistance. As they move to be interested in these activities, the core teacher as a motivator may instigate lecture with guided discussion to set goals and learning strategies, and as they are involved in the discussion, the core teacher can facilitate them to be involved in a seminar and project. Finally, as they become self-directed, the core teacher's role shifts to become consultant to delegate them in activities such as research project, individual as well as self-directed work, and study group.

5. Based on the fact that teachers' salary is still very low, teachers in Indonesia not only need to be intrinsically but also extrinsically motivated, by increasing their salary so that they can live properly and their intrinsic motivation will also be increased.

6. It is important to provide a small grant system and support collaboration between teacher training centre and other institutions to conduct a research on the school basis to create an environment for a stronger research culture to improve their teaching quality.

7. The quality of teacher training centres should be upgraded through accreditation. This will allow the staff in the teacher training centres to improve their quality by continuous self-evaluation and improvement.

6. Conclusion

By analysing the case that occurs in Indonesian setting, several points related to organisational changes, motivation and professional development are drawn as follows:

The success of educational reform requires cooperation among agents involved in it. The more complex the changes and the situation, the less successful the changes are. It needs a strong pressure with top-down strategy and bottom-up approach. In this view, the role of the teacher-training centre is changing from carrying out the policy from the higher authority, to initiating the changes inside the organization itself.

In teacher training centre, the core teacher has autonomy to select teaching methods in accordance with the objectives, the learners' background, and the teacher training advantages and disadvantages. Experiential learning, enriched experiential learning and self-directed learning are all useful to fulfil

the needs in motivating the teacher participants to get more teaching experience, to do more reflection and to achieve more independent learning. Motivation in succeeding the changes in education may derive from both inside and outside factors. Both are equally important especially in Indonesian situation where the teachers are paid very low.

Changes in organization are not only empowered by internal environment, but also by external environment such as universities and other teacher training centres.

7. REFERENCES

Atherton. 2005. *Learning and Teaching: Experiential Learning Experiential Learning.*

Brockett, R G, Hiemstra, R .1991. *Self-direction in Learning: Perspectives in Theory Research, and Practice.* Routledge, London, UK

Brown, H.Douglas. 1994. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approaches to Language Pedagogy.* Prentice Hall Regents, New Jersey.

Grow, Gerald O. 1991/1996. *Teaching Learners to be Self-Directed. Adult Education Quarterly,* 41 (3), 125-149

Hammonds, Bruce. 2002. *The Latest Ideas on School Reform by Michael Fullan. Leading and Learning for the 21stC* , 1 (3)

Kolb, David. 2006. *Kolb's Learning Style.*

Ur, Penny. 1996. *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press