TEACHERS' ROLES IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENTS:

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS IN INSTRUCTION, MANAGEMENT, AND POLITICS AREAS

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Abstract

It is commonly known that there are some problems of education in schools in Indonesia. One of the problems is related to teachers. Teachers, in education managements, can be the agent of change as well as the implementer of the curriculum. In doing those two roles, there are three areas of responsibilities, namely instruction, management, and politics which relates to the policy made by the teacher in the classroom. This paper is going to underline the problems of the teachers' roles in those three areas seen from the school practice in Indonesia. Since this research discusses the problems and solutions which relate to ideal conditions and ideas, the research applies the library research. The problems of the teacher's role are viewed based on experiences by 12 teachers who were from different areas in Indonesia but they were in the same class in PPG (Training on Professional Teachers). The data were taken based on by asking them to tell their own experience related to the three areas. Based on the teachers' experience, the solution is proposed based on some theories which are related to the problems. Further, it will also put forward the possible solution for those problems. The solutions, of course, are proposed by experts whose theories are employed by this research. The result shows that the solution needs some practical trainings and actions in every policy.

Key words: teachers' role, education management, instruction area, management area

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are one of important elements in education management. They play important roles in the education management. Concerning the teacher's roles, Sergiovanni, Kelleher, Mc. Carthy, and Fowler (2009, p. 165) mention there are two roles of teachers in schools. The first is teacher as a technician (bureaucratic-rational conception) who transmits knowledge following a prescribed curriculum, obeys and enforces rules and procedures handed down from above, and administers standardized tests designed to ensure that a uniform product emerges from the factory school. The second role is teacher as an agent of change whose mission is to transform individuals (p. 165). In this way, teachers need to make independent and individualized decisions about the learning of students (p. 181).

In both roles, teachers have three areas of responsibilities, namely instruction, management, and politics (p. 165). The instructional role covers "the typical teacher duties

– planning lessons, deciding on instructional methods and materials, and assessing student learning" (p. 166). Management is related to the role of teachers to establish classroom management, and related to serving socializing purposes (p. 166).

The word politics here does not relate to the government policy. As Wirt and Kirst (2001) mention and cited by Sergiovanni et al., "the term politics refers to the social conflict that develops when groups that differ in their values and goals seek to influence public policy" (2009, 236). It relates to public policy applied in the classroom.

So, in relation to politics, there are two things covered as the roles of the teachers. Politics in the classroom which focuses on the use of legitimate authority to "allocate scarce resources to children, govern minors through a series of techniques, negotiate order, and bargain with the members of the class" (p. 166). Politics outside the classroom is related to the larger community of school, for example the use of the resources, the use of the computers for particular subjects (p. 166).

. This paper underlines **problems that are mostly faced by teachers in the area of instruction, managements and politics and possible solutions offered**. The analysis is based on the school practices in Indonesia and this research employs the theories proposed by Sergiovanni et al.

There are some researches about the role of teachers in the education system. The most similar research with this paper is the research done by Sergiovanni et al. whose theories are used by this paper. Even though their research is used as the basis of the theories, there is a big difference between their research and this paper. Their research took their data in the United States of America while this paper focuses the cases happening in Indonesia.

Another research on the teacher's role is conducted by Rahman Ibrahim. Rahman Ibrahim (2016) conducted a research on classroom management to see the effectiveness of teacher's roles. He states that the teachers who can "make great activation of their roles in classroom tend to be the top and the most first factor that improves classroom management." Rahman Ibrahim focused on the activation of the teacher's roles as a whole, while this research focuses on three areas namely instruction, management, and politics. The second difference is that Rahman Ibrahim took the data from the university teachers, while this research from the school teachers. Additionally, Rahman Ibrahim's data are taken from Arabian university teachers.

METHODS

This study belongs to phenomenological research. According to Creswell (2007), phenomenological research is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe the lived experiences of individuals to gain deeper insights into how people perceive and interpret the world around them. The data were obtained from different research instruments.

There are some steps in doing this phenomenological research according to Creswell (2007).

1. Agreeing that the research is best analyzed using phenomenological research.
2. Identifying the phenomenon.
3. Bracketing out/classifying the phenomenon or interests.
4. Collecting data by asking the respondents about their lived experience to shape and highlight significant themes.
5. Writing the significant lived-experience (textural description).
6. Come to a conclusion about the phenomena.

Creswell did not propose the solution for the problem. He stopped on the conclusion about the phenomenon which means it only showed the description of the agreed phenomenon. This research goes further by giving some probable solutions for the problems faced by teachers.

Research Subject

This research took 12 teachers as the subject of the research. They were from some different areas in Indonesia and they were taking a PPG (Training of Professional Teachers) class held by a university in Jogjakarta.

Data Gathering

As Creswell proposed, this research began by asking the teachers to tell their experience related to three areas of education; instruction, management, and politic since the writers agreed that these are phenomena in Indonesian education. All the teachers had the same perception on the problem discussed.

The experiences were described as the problems faced by teachers in their world of teaching. This step is called textural description (Creswell, 2007). All teachers agreed to

the problems discussed. They shared the same problems in their daily teaching practice. Based on the problems that teachers experienced, the writer proposed the solution that might be useful for teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The problems and possible solutions discussed in this paper are related to three areas of responsibilities, namely instruction, management, and politics areas. The analysis and discussions of last two areas are going to be combined. Therefore, this section will cover only two subsections; the first is problems and possible solutions in instruction areas and the second is problems and possible solutions in management and politics areas. There are some overlapping discussions among those two parts because the responsibilities of the teachers are interrelated. They cannot just be separated in completely different discussions.

Problems and possible solutions in instruction area

The instruction covers planning the lessons and deciding the methods and materials for teaching. Even when the teachers have already got much experience in teaching, there are still problems on this area of planning, and deciding methods and materials for teaching. While novice teachers will struggle to develop the lesson plans in their first-periods of teaching because when they were preservice teachers, they spent a lot of time learning how to write lesson plans (Sergiovanni, Kelleher, Mc. Carthy, and Fowler, 2009, p. 232).

When curriculum changes, there are many things which change too. The teaching administration, such as teaching documents, the teaching methods as well as the teaching materials might change. That also happened in Indonesia. The 2013 curriculum which is still used in some schools in Indonesia has quite differences from the previous curriculum, the 2006 curriculum. Some of the changes which are related to the teachers' roles are changes in the teaching approach, the materials used, the assessment system, and report of the assessment. Related to paradigm change, in some professional encounters in teachers' trainings and workshops, it was found that some teachers did not make any significant changes in response to the curriculum change. For these particular problems, it

is better that the training or workshop do not finish in the level of 10-day trainings. It is more effective if the trainings are continued to the classroom application level.

Concerning the changing in teaching approach, the current Indonesia curriculum assigns the scientific approach to be used in all level for all subjects. This becomes a big problem for teachers. It is not easy to implement scientific approach in all subjects. As a solution, teachers can work with any engaging activities to be utilized in each step of the scientific approach.

Dealing with the development in the world, the class instruction, for sure, will be different, especially related to technology use. Picture 1 shows differences in the students' world and what the teachers need to do. In the past, most teachers relied on writing things on the board, and students copied the writing from the board. The learning resource was only from the prescribed text book and the teachers.

Picture 1. Some environment changes in the students' world

However, now, teachers can use technology for example; computer and LCD projector, smart board, or video conferences, to deliver materials. It means that teachers should be knowledgeable as well as should have the ability to use technology efficiently and effectively. Buchanan and Sexton mention "the more instructors know about technology the more they can incorporate into their instruction" (2000, p. 1). Picture 2 shows an elementary school teacher in Indonesia teaching using technology in class.

Picture 2. A teacher teaches using technology

In addition to today's situation, the students can be even more resourceful than the teachers. The learning materials can be easily accessed from any gadget they have. The responsibility of the teachers is then to facilitate learning that leads the students to have access on the technology. In addition, it also becomes part of the teacher's job to educate the students the right way of using the technology; in other words, it is the teacher's job to teach technology literacy. With the unlimited bunch of information, students need to be equipped with the ability to have correct access to valid and reliable source of information (Buchanan and Sexton, 2000). This is in line with what Jolls underlines that the students will need new process skills when dealing with reading the electronic information (in Trotter, 2009).

Trotter mentions "teaching literacy—reading and writing—is a core mission for schools. He adds that a growing chorus of experts says schools should add these forms of communication to their literacy mission as "technology literacy" (2009, pp. 20-22). Blake suggests that teachers use technology for facilitating the curriculum, for example in choosing the specific readings and preparing discussion for the class (2008, p. 133). He continues "using new technology will not make up for lack of planning or foresight but rather will tend to intensify existing classroom methodological deficiencies" (p. 133). Therefore, teachers have to utilize the technology and the supportive task to "empower students to take control of their own learning process and, consequently, stimulate a more student-centered classroom" (p. 133). Also, when teachers are able to use technology, their administrative duties will be completed faster and they can reduce the paper work and can concentrate more on the students' needs (Buchanan and Sexton, 2000).

When facing students with different background of knowledge, of family, and of learning styles, teachers have to make sure that their teaching will cater all the students' needs and background. This is not an easy thing to do especially in a country which has many different backgrounds like Indonesia. An example of this is education in big cities in Indonesia such as Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and also Yogyakarta. In the case of Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya, many people come to those cities to find jobs and then settle down. Therefore, their children will bring their own different background to schools. In Yogyakarta, people usually come to study. Therefore, it is a common situation where there are many people having different background in a class. We can imagine if we have 30 students having different background; how to cater those 30 students effectively? To have a safe preparation, teachers should be ready with back up plans. They should also have various teaching activities so that the different learning styles can be managed well in class. As to increase the quality of learning, teachers may do reflective teaching or embedded action research in the classroom.

Shindler mentions that few teachers do not feel guilty when they do not meet the students' needs (2010, p. 219). Wang et al., (1992) in Shindler (p. 219) suggests a solution that teachers provide "differential learning experiences for students depending on their needs and abilities." In this way, the teachers as the class managers should invest more time and energy to plan the differential learning activities for the students. With students having different ability levels, Shindler proposes not to have either too difficult or too easy activities (2010, p. 219). Having too difficult activities, students may turn to have troublesome behaviors, for example acting out, getting attention, bullying, acting helpless, or blaming others. Shindler, further, suggests that teachers learn the students' learning style so as to be able to prepare appropriate design for the whole of the class (p. 220).

There is always a dilemma for some teachers when preparing the students for the National Exam. On one hand, they need to achieve the competency set for the students and on the other hand, they have a "responsibility" to make sure that the students are ready for the test. Therefore, in most schools, the class instructions approaching the National Exam time will change into a test taking strategies or teaching for the test periods. The class instructions have no longer related to conducting activities to achieve learning objectives. There are, in fact, activities related to solving test items conducted during the instruction hours. Based on some experiences in trainings dealing with accompanying teachers to prepare their students for the National exams, the writers found that the

teachers themselves felt a difficult conflict as to meet the demand of preparing the students to pass the test or to guide them to learn.

Fulcher recommends that teachers who have the responsibility to prepare the students for the exam "teach the language using the most appropriate methodologies and materials to achieve communicative competence for the learners to be able to function in the target domains and contexts" (2010, p. 292). Dealing with the tests and trying the test items should be only a small part of the class and the goal is to make the students familiar with the test. If they are already familiar with how to do the test and already master the competence, the drilling of test materials is of no use.

Problems and possible solutions in Management and Politics areas

The problems to tackle are related to students' relation with their peers in class or outside the class. Some students might get along easily with others but some might have difficulty. Peer pressure in the young kids does affect the class management. If they do not follow their peer's action, they will be alienated. Some kids might be bullied in class. The different physical features or differences might become the source of bullying. This becomes the problem of the teachers to manage the students' behavior. They can do it by setting up rules in the class.

Shindler mentions, "Pedagogy that fails to meet students' basic needs leads to management problems" (2010: p. 201). Therefore, Gettinger (1995), Gettinger & Kohler (2006), Glasser (1990) and Shindler et al. (2003) in Shindler propose the engaging, satisfying, well-directed, meaningful instructional activities to solve the unwanted misbehavior (2010, pp 201 – 202).

Picture 3. Different seating arrangements may help teachers create class dynamics

above: group seating arrangement, below: whole class seating arrangement

In the case of having big number of students in the class, teachers might have difficulties also. In case of class management, teachers might have problem to control the class, and to guide them when they have difficulties in understanding the lesson. This problem can be reduced by providing group activities and different seating arrangement. Picture 3 describes the situation where the teacher has the activities in group work and sets the seating arrangement (above) and where the teacher sets the class into the whole class seating arrangement (below).

The issue of big classes, further, can put especially language teachers in difficulty when paper work for productive skills and oral exam call for. They have to spend more attention in managing the class activities as well as assessing the students' performances. In most classes of the schools in Indonesia, there are 30 – 35 students in each class. Big schools might have parallel class also, for example in grade 10th, a big school can have six (6) or even eight (8) parallel classes. Therefore, when an English teacher is responsible to teach all the 10th grade, there will be more or less 35 paper work times 6 to check. When it turns to be assessment for oral ability, there will be also 35 students times 6 to assess. In relation to teaching multi-level large classes, Hess mentions that we often feel out of control, sometimes feel trapped in the control of management, we are frustrated by a huge amount of written work, difficult to provide individual learning style, activating the quite students is difficult (2001,4-6).

Lew and Bettner (1996) in Soheili, Alizadeh, Murphy, Bajestani, Ferguson, underline that children have four important needs covering the need to feel connected, to feel capable, to count, and to have courage (2015, p. 452). When teachers encourage students, they feel capable to complete their homework and other school tasks. Teacher

should share the responsibility of learning with their students, building students' confidence, and creating respectful, cooperative learning environment. Soheili et al (2015) further conclude "by applying the democratic classroom management program, teachers may be able to increase student satisfaction with the classroom environment, build stronger relationships with students, and contribute to more effective student learning" (p. 453).

Hess proposes some strategies that can be used in dealing with large classes (2001, pp. 7-15). There are 11 principles to cope the large classes, namely Scarlet O'Hara principle: think about it tomorrow, Variety, Pace, Interest, Collaboration, Individualization, Personalization, Choice and open-endedness, Setting up routine, Enlarging the circle, and Question the kind of questioning we use. The first principle suggests that if teachers have a bad lesson, they have to consider it only as one bad lesson and not dwell on it (p. 8). The second principle focuses that teachers should have variety of activities and techniques to provoke interest (pp. 8-9). The next principle underlines that to control the class teachers have to maintain correct pacing, not too slow and not too fast (p. 9). The fourth is maintaining the interest of the class so that students will not misbehave (pp. 9-10). Based on the fifth principle, teachers need to design collaborative activities where students can work in pairs or in group, for example to do jigsaw activities. Teachers cannot be everywhere at the same time, so collaborative work will help the teachers control the class (pp. 10-12). However, teachers should also provide activities for individuals at their own pace and interest. This is the sixth principle (p. 12). This is related to the next principle, personalization. Teachers need to give opportunity for the students to relate the lesson with their life, their opinion, their future (p. 13). The eighth principle suggests teachers to provide choice and open ended questions in giving questions. The next principle demands teachers to set rules for the class to maintain stability (p. 14). The tenth principle is asking teachers to include all participants and have strategies to enlarge the participation of the class by for example asking not the first student who raises the hand to answer the question (pp. 14-15). The last principle is to ask questions that involve all students by for example asking "why" questions (p.15).

To have a better ability to execute their roles in instruction, management and politics areas, teachers may maintain their professional development. This effort needs to be supported by the principal of the school as a higher education administrator. Baker mentions that the local authorities, the school principals or the local government, need to

facilitate the professional development for the teachers, for examples by attending a conference (2005, p. 62). This is also in line with the study of Stough, Montague, Landmark, Diehm, (2015) related to classroom management saying, "teachers' training needs in classroom management may persist throughout their professional careers,…" (p. 36). One of the goals of this kind of support is to enable teachers to cope with challenging situation by learning from others.

CONCLUSION

The problems that teachers face in relation to their role as agent of change and curriculum implementer are not few. It is because they have to be in the area of instructions, management and politics at the same time. With the high motivation to learn and to have better quality of education, teachers can solve the problems easily. However, to have updated information and to have continuous professional development, teachers' effort needs to be supported by the higher education administrator, namely the principal of the school. By attending trainings, workshops, or academic conferences, teachers will equip themselves with new updates in the teaching field and can learn from other teachers' best practices. Therefore, when teachers face similar situations, they will have enough alternatives to solve the problems easily.

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Sources of photos

Picture 1: captured from a video entitled: I teach therefore you learn, or do you? from: Technology and Education. www.boxoftricks.net accessed on December 13, 2023

Picture 2: private collection

Picture 3: private collection