PROMOTING TEACHER NETWORK FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDONESIA

Aurora P. Kusumawardhani
(araradhanysta@gmail.com)

Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Pascasarjana Universitas Negeri Malang

Farid Munfa'ati
(faridmunfaati@gmail.com)

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Abstract: Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is very important for teachers in Indonesia for maintaining their quality of profession. Also, by conducting TPD, the teachers could improve their competences and skills for the enhancement of their teaching practice which brings the increase of students' achievement and the quality of national education later. Various activities can be conducted by the teachers for their TPD; nevertheless, many Indonesian teachers are unwilling to do TPD effectively. In this paper, we propose teacher network to be used by Indonesian teachers. The compatible and cost-effective nature of teacher network would be advantageous for the teachers. This paper provides three ways to do of teacher learning networks along with their advantages which can be considered to assist Indonesian teachers to have an effective TPD.

Keywords: teacher professional development, teacher network

INTRODUCTION

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) becomes a significant issue recently regarding the teachers' certification and Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) or *Penilaian Kinerja Guru (PKG)* in Bahasa Indonesia terms. Teacher professional development is one way for teachers to maintain the quality of their performance as required by the school authority or policy makers and improve their competence in order to enhance students' learning outcomes (Mizell, 2010: 3). The high quality of teachers' performance is affected by the teachers' efforts in renewing their competence and abilities for their teaching practice.

This definition is in line with the expectation from Indonesia government that teachers should keep the quality of their competence in accordance to the growth of science, technology, art, culture, and sports (Peraturan Pemerintah No. 74/2008 bagian 13th pasal 47). Moreover, TPD is an ongoing process which

should be done by professional teachers for the sake of the improvement of students' performance which lead to the improvement of national education quality (Pedoman Pengelolaan Pengembangan Keprofesioan Berkelanjutan (PKB), 2011: 9). Teachers' efforts in developing their competence and ability for maintaining their quality significantly influence the state of the quality of national education. Thus, it is very important for teachers to have an effective professional development in their career.

ACTIVITIES IN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers can do various activities in order to have their TPD effectively. TPD activities below are provided by Richards (2005: ix-x in Wahyuningsih, 2014) and Mizell (2010: 9):

Richards' (2005: ix-x in Wahyuningsih, 2014)	Mizell (2010:9)
1. Workshops 2. Reflective practice 3. Teacher support groups 4. Journal writing 5. Peer observation 6. Teaching portfolios 7. Analysis of critical incidents 8. Case analysis 9. Peer coaching 10. Team teaching 11. Action research	1. Individual reading/study/research 2. Study groups among peers focused on a shared need topic 3. Observation: teachers observing other teachers 4. Coaching: an expert teacher coaching one or more colleagues 5. Mentoring of new educators by more experienced colleagues 6. Team meetings to plan lessons, problem solve, improve performance, and/or learn a new strategy 7. Faculty, grade-level, or departmental meetings 8. Online courses 9. College/university courses 10. Workshops to dig deeper into a subject 11. Conferences to learn from a variety of expertise from around the state or country 12. Whole-school improvement programs 13. Proprietary programs by private vendors

Table 1. Various Activities of Teacher Professional Development

Those TPD activities are actually similar and can be categorized in the several classifications. First is TPD activities done by teachers individually such as reflective practice and journal writing (Richard, 2005: ix-x in Wahyuningsih, 2014) and also individual reading/study/research (Mizell, 2010: 9). Second is the TPD activities conducted by teachers cooperating with other teachers. This kind

of activity includes teachers' support groups and peer observation suggested by Richard (2005: ix-x in Wahyuningsih, 2014) as well as study groups among teachers and teachers' team meeting by Mizell (2010: 9). Third is the TPD activities conducted by teachers engaging in the institutions programs, i.e. workshops, conferences, and college/university courses. The last is the TPD activities performed by teachers online, e.g. when the teachers involve in online courses (Mizell, 2010: 9).

Besides, Ministry of National Education (MONE) has defined three kinds of activities teachers can do for their TPD in the Manual of Continuing Professional Development Management (2011: 12-22). First is self-development. This activity covers functional training and group teachers' activity. Second is scientific publication which includes paper presentation in scientific forum, scientific research in formal education publication, as well as text books and teachers' manuals publication. Third, and the last, is innovations. This type of TPD activity relates to the innovations of effective and efficient technology, art works, and learning tools, as well as composing standards, manuals, problems etc. in the range of national and regional level.

Moreover, Amin (2012) and Hartatik (2011) suggested similar ways for teachers to conduct their TPD. They defined three types of TPD; the first one is the professional development activities conducted by institutions. This type of activity includes teachers' participation in teachers' trainings such *as Pendidikan Profesi Guru (PPG)* as well as *Pendidikan dan Latihan Profesi Guru (PLPG)* and workshops conducted by education department in a certain city, schools, university, etc. The second one is the professional development activities done by teachers themselves collaborating with their colleagues. Various activities done collaboratively by teachers could be classified into this category such as team-teaching, peer-observation, lesson study, and conducting collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR) and Research and Development (R&D). In addition, the teachers' participation in any learning community such *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP)* can also be considered to be the part of teachers' collaborative professional development. The third one is the activities conducted independently by teachers' own initiative. This last type of professional

development activity recommended by Amin (2012) and Hartatik (2011) refers to teachers' self-evaluation activity, for example journal writing.

RESEARCH ON TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Various researches on Teacher Professional Development have been conducted. For example, Boling and Martin's (2005) study which investigated European American elementary teachers' change in their cognitive literacy strategies and pedagogical skills knowledge in Online Professional Development (OPD). They also provided positive implications for teachers' learning community done through this kind of development. Besides, in order to have an effective TPD, Gabriel (2010) proposed that different professional support should be given to teachers based on numbers of their teaching experiences. On the other hands, Kang et al. (2013) suggested to use a framework of Desimone, which is well supported theoretically and empirically, to evaluate TPD in South Korea.

In Indonesia, regarding the professional development done by teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Anugerahwati (2009) conducted a research on the professional development efforts of four teachers' competences by several exemplary teachers in Indonesia. She found that the development of personal competence has improved the other competences (pedagogical, subject matter, and social competence) which lead to the teachers' professionalism improvement. Meanwhile, Amin (2013) examined the factors affected EFL teachers to be professional or unprofessional. Mustofa (2011) investigated TPD by EFL vocational high schools teachers and discovered that those teachers improved their knowledge and ability by being autonomous learners, participating in teaching trainings, and reflecting from their teaching experiences.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDONESIA

The government has set standards and defined several types of TPD as well as provided opportunities for teachers to be participated in TPD, yet there are many teachers who hesitate to do their professional development. They give various reasons lying behind the teachers' act, several of which are financial consideration, limitation of participants' quota, distance matter, and unsuitable programs provided to their need in their teaching practice (Cahyono, 2008). In addition, many of Indonesian teachers also have low-awareness on conducting

TPD to improve their professionalism as teachers along with the current development of science and technology (Cahyono, 2008).

TEACHER NETWORK AS A SOLUTION

According to Sloep & Berlangga (2011 in Vourikari et al., 2012) teacher networks as learning networks means that technology-supported communities through which teachers as learners share knowledge with one another and jointly develop new knowledge. The ultimate aim of teacher networks is to contribute to both the quality of the teaching profession and the learning experience of students by encouraging collaboration and knowledge exchange at both teacher and student level. Teacher networks can exist on many levels, e.g. within a school and across-schools at regional, national and international level. Moreover, by the use of technology-supported communication tools and social media, we can observe that the intersection between online and offline cooperation is changing and that the physical world is increasingly mixed with the digital one. Such blended experiences are becoming the new norm, they are now more common than previously studied "online-only experiences" (Haythornthwaite & Kendall, 2010 in Vourikari et al., 2012). This trend is also acknowledged in the definition of learning networks. Finally, various forms of teacher cooperation can take place in teacher networks. According to the TALIS study, teacher cooperation implies teachers working together in groups or teams to improve educational processes and outcomes (OECD, 2009 in Vourikari et al., 2012). Teacher cooperation includes both teachers' exchange and co-ordination for teaching, e.g. exchange of learning material and professional collaboration, as in the project collaboration that takes place in networks.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORKS DESIGNED FOR TEACHER LEARNING

A PLN is a system of interpersonal connections and resources that support informal learning. Flanigan (2011 in Vourikari et al., 2012) describes PLN as teacher-driven, global support networks that decrease isolation and promote independence. There are two types of PLNs: information aggregation and social media connections.

Information Aggregation

The information aggregation type of PLN allows teachers to stay up to date on new information by following multiple Web sites and news sources through RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. RSS feeds allow material from one Web site to be read on other Web sites. RSS readers use RSS feeds to collect new posts, articles, and updates from Web sites those teachers identify as valuable and "push" this information to them via the RSS do not have to visit each individual Web site and check for updates. Teachers can rapidly skim through hundreds of articles in RSS readers and then select the articles they would like to read in their entirety. Another form of information aggregation is e-mail subscriptions. Many Web sites include a "Follow Me" or "Subscribe" widget that allows viewers to input their e-mail addresses and receive e-mails anytime there is a new post or update on the Web site or blog. This turns the e-mail inbox into RSS reader and allows teachers to gather information in their e-mail instead of visiting a RSS reader Web site.

Social Media Connections

The social media connections type of PLN refers to teachers' use of social media tools to connect with various individuals around the world. These social media tools include social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter), affinity-based group sites (Ning, wikispaces). Facebook and twitter have real time interaction capabilities, teachers generally use these sites for asynchronous learning, in that they post question to another individual and check back at later time to find a response. These sites also provide a space for collective knowledge building and sharing where teachers can find support from large groups of individuals that pool their answers to find the best solution to a problem.

Real-time interaction tools allow teachers to have conversation with others worldwide to receive feedback on new ideas, discuss lesson plans, ask for support, solve problems, and collaborate. Real-time interaction tools are useful for building relationships and seeking one-on-one support, such as through mentoring.

PLNs transform the paradigm of the isolated teacher who shows minimal professional growth into a lifelong learner who grows and shares experties with others in his/her network.

THREE POPULAR PLNS

Classroom 2.0, The Educator's PLN, and Edmodo are three popular PLNs for teachers that contain both information aggregation and social media tools. These Web sites make it easy for individual members to shape their own learning. These Web sites allow individual members to create a profile page, join interest groups, participate in discussions, share resources, and build relationships with other members. Teachers who want to conduct their TPD activity by doing PLN could choose one of these three popular PLNs below.

Classroom 2.0

Classroom 2.0 is a PLN built on the Ning platform, a social networking tool. One can create his/her own Ning.com Web site for a monthly fee. The website itself provides several features such as chat rooms, discussion boards, profile pages for members, interest groups, video and photo upload capabilities, and widgets that allow individual members to customize their profile pages. This website also is provided with wiki, Twitter feed, Facebook page, Diigo and also access to RSS reader (see figure 1 below). The presence of these links is advantageous since it would ease the members of the website to either upload or download materials or web pages for their need. Moreover, they could have a live discussion or conference with invited a special guest speaker using a feature called Classroom 2.0 LIVE (Trust, 2012: 35).
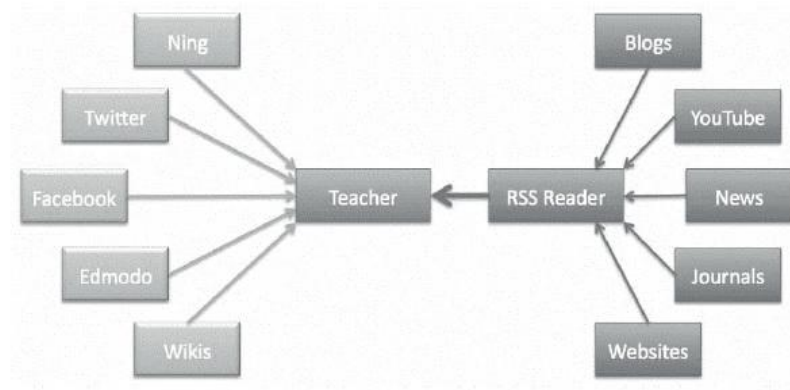
Figure 1. Professional Learning Network for A Teacher in Classroom 2.0

The Educator's PLN

The Educator's PLN is also a social networking site created on the Ning platform also. The Educator's PLN has more than 11,000 members, 900 blog posts, 730 videos, 100 groups, and 430 forum discussion.

The Educator's PLN and classroom 2.0 share many similar features. Different from Classroom 2.0 which is more administrator driven website, the Educator's PLN Web site is more member-focused because its main page features uploads and posts from members (Trust, 2012: 36). It also contains a list of upcoming events and a chat page that allows members to chat instantly with any other members who are currently viewing the Web site.

Edmodo

Edmodo is a social networking site which has more than 6.5 million users and hosts online conferences called EdmodoCon with thousands of attendees (Flanigan, 2011 in Trust, 2012: 36). Members can also upload a profile picture and share links and videos. They can have a personal library containing any resources which are useful for them and can be accessed everywhere and every time. Edmodo also provide publisher communities, which promote members' product, and subject communities relating to the members' specialty (Trust, 2012: 36) therefore the members could develop their competence based on their focus need. One of the unique and beneficial features of Edmodo, which is not

possessed by neither Classroom 2.0 nor The Educator's PLN, is that it allows teachers to create groups for their classes. In Indonesians context, Edmodo probably is more practicable since the layout and design is very similar to Facebook which has been one of popular social media in Indonesia for years.

VARIOUS LITERATURE SOURCES ADDRESSING TEACHERS' NETWORK IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recently, some focus on alternative approaches of addressing professional development can be observed. For example, Hofman & Dijkstra (2010 in Vuorikari et al., 2012) looked into the issue through the study of networks. Another survey conducted in the US found that teachers believe that collaborative professional development activities, such as networking with other teachers outside school, are more effective and helpful as professional development than traditional forms of training (US Department of Education, 1999 in Vourikari et al., 2012). Similarly, OECD's report finds that involvement in a "professional development network" ranks high as regards the perceived impact on teachers' professional development (OECD, 2009 in Vourikari et al., 2012). Moreover, the same study points out that "informal dialogue to improve teaching" is mentioned as the most common activity for professional development (participation rate of over 90%) and teachers report that is has a moderate or high level of impact on their professional development. A study by Caroll & Resta (2010 in Vourikari et al., 2012) explores how networks developed by prospective teachers can act as a form of support and mentoring during their careers and also as a means to access new research based teaching practices and resourses. Networks have been proposed to be an organizational answer to the diversity and complexity of educational needs (Bienzle et al., 2007 in Vourikari et al., 2012). As Bienzle et al. (2007 in Vourikari et al., 2012) argue while the expectations of the potential of networks is often exaggerated, networks can have an important role in education in providing a structure for teachers' professional development and in integrating the diverse and fragmented lifelong learning landscape. Moreover, they provide platforms where resources can be shared, hence reducing teachers' workloads as teachers do not need to create resources from scratch.

MOTIVATING TEACHERS TO ENGAGE IN PLNS

The involvement of teachers in the learning community has a big impact on their change in terms of teaching practice, beliefs and way of thinking. Jong (2012: 126) mentioned that teachers could support and motivate each other when they involve in learning community. Moreover, he stated that "Structuring communication between teachers can contribute to help teachers interpret curriculum innovations and to provide a context that builds professional learning" (2012: 126).

In Indonesia, the government has provide a medium for having a teacher of the same subject matter community namely *MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran)*—Association of Teachers of Subject Matters. In this community teachers are supposed to conduct a regular meeting to share ideas or experiences relating to their teaching practice (Hartatik, 2011: 419). Nevertheless, Tuhutsetya (2008) maintained that the effectiveness of MGMP is being questioned since educational society considers that this organization does not really make time to arrange creative and educated events to enhance teachers' professionalism. This kind of meeting also may give little chance to teachers to develop themselves for "meaningful reflection and professional growth" (Jong, 2012: 125), besides the matter of distance mentioned by Cahyono (2008). Therefore, it is worthy for teachers to consider to make use of Professional Learning Network (PLN) for their professional development.

Teachers engage in PLNs to grow professionally, learn from others, and contribute to a community. Teachers are motivated to engage in PLNs because they can solicit help and support, demonstrate their knowledge by helping others, and converse with individuals about new information and feedback. Edmodo is engaging PLN because it provides teachers with a safe space for asking questions, sharing resources, and learning from other members. Classroom 2.0 and The Educator's PLN also provide tools that engage members. Motivation also stems from the idea that one can contribute to the collective knowledge and help others. When teachers develop a PLN, they become part of the other members' networks. PLNs succeed and grow based on member input. Anyone can share their expertise in a PLN, and this collective knowledge from various experts is what helps PLN grow. It is also one of the reasons teachers join PLNs to learn from other

individuals that have expertise in different areas while also sharing their own expertise.

The advantages of teacher networks can be obtained by teachers who conduct this kind of activity are listed as follows:

1. Teacher's network brings the ideas, leads or referrals, advice, emotional support, brainstorming, and positive involvement with people.
2. The abilities to communicate, share resources, and network allow teachers to embrace life and its changes, not just to manage them.
3. Teacher's network provides sharing teachers' expertise in different areas.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the significance of conducting Teacher Professional Development (TPD) in teachers' career, the teachers should use appropriate TPD activity which is in line with their need and demand so that they could have an effective professional development activity. The unprecedented opportunities about by networking tools enable teachers to network and collaborate with other teachers from anywhere, at anytime. Such development in the profession of teachers is a significant aspect which cannot be ignored when discussing the future education. Many teachers have taken the initiative to continue learning by developing online PLNs. Teachers perform self-assessments to see where they can improve and then use their PLN to find information and connect with others who help them. Classroom 2.0, Edmodo, and The Educator's PLN continue to grow in popularity because they provide online spaces where teachers can learn new information and connect with other individuals worldwide who can offer support, advice, feedback, and collaboration opportunities. Teachers are motivated to participate in these Web sites because they can learn from others members while also offering their own expertise to help other members.

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