

INVESTIGATING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SELF-AWARENESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Psychologically, self-awareness has been stated as one of the indicators of emotional intelligence. Plenty of previous studies have already discussed students' and teachers' awareness. However, many of them were not concerning the field of professional development, especially for the pre-service language teacher. A professional development itself is an aspect that could not be neglected since professionalism is necessary to reach a good teaching-learning quality. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the existence of self-awareness among the non-native pre-service language teachers toward their professional development. The data obtained from an open-ended interview is processed qualitatively and analyzed thematically. Within this regard, self-awareness of their professional development would be examined, analyzed and described. Furthermore, the requirements and suggestions for the professional development in which how non-native pre-service language teacher education program in an EFL context might have to be discussed. The result of the study would be discussed further in this paper.

Keywords: Pre-service teacher, Self-awareness, professional development

INTRODUCTION

It has been noticed that a lot of study has been discussed in the field of pre-service teacher. For instance, there are studies that examined pre-service teacher beliefs about English language teaching (Altan, 2012). Another study also examines the experience of pre-service teacher when they were conducting the teaching practicum, such as the challenges, the emotional feeling and the experiment of employing the strategy in teaching in the classroom. In addition, plenty of studies have also examined in the field of professional development, since nowadays professionalism is something crucial that could lead us to the successful achievement. However, very few articles appeared analyzing the professional development in the perspective of the self-awareness. Most of the articles discuss such strategy like how to develop a professional development and why it is important. Even though there are studies about professional development and its correlation with self-awareness, none of them addressing to examine that topic to the pre-service teacher as the participants of the study.

When it comes to the awareness, most of the studies examine in the field of either the language awareness or intercultural awareness. For language awareness the study aimed to see the awareness of pre-service teachers on their vocabulary and the grammatical error when they are teaching (Eser, Tuzel & Akcan, 2009). Moreover, for the intercultural awareness the articles mostly discuss about whether there is any intercultural awareness in the multilingual context or how to promote an intercultural awareness and understanding of the students in multilingual context of pre-service teacher (Acquah & Commins, 2015).

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Therefore, this study aims to complete while also filling the gap between two important indicators that are self-awareness and professional development. Self-awareness itself has been noticed as one of the essential tools to criticize one-self in order to compare the self with standards of correctness that specify how the self ought to think, feel, and behave (Duval & Wicklund, 1927). With that in mind, the researchers would like to see how pre-service teachers take over their self-awareness towards their professional development. The examined professional development here is the professionalism of teaching in three taxonomy, including behavioural component, attitudinal component and intellectual component (Evans, 2011).

Stated by Evans (2011) that the essential thing to succeed is comprehending professional development and the way it happens in individuals. Additionally, according to Avalos (in Mitchell 2013, p. 3) Professional development is defined as “teachers learning, learning how to learn, transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students’ growth transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students’ growth”. Professional development viewed as a process which is planned in helping the professional increase in terms of teaching knowledge and skill set (Ungar, 2016).

Evans (2011) identifies three main constituent components behavioral, attitudinal and intellectual in his professional development conceptualization. In teaching-learning field, the behavioral component relates to what teachers do physically at their work. Identified as process and procedures applied to their work, the teaching-learning goal, and their competences and skills. The attitudinal component relates to attitudes maintained. “Delineating their work-related attitudes through their perceptions, values and their morale, job satisfaction and motivation” (2011, p. 856). The intellectual component relays to teachers’ knowledge and understanding and their knowledge structures. Defining their intellectual to their work, through the level of their “knowledge and understanding, rationality and analyticism” (2011, p. 856).

Regarding the professional development in teacher field, we can get a deeper understanding of this term by knowing descriptions of professional development activities (Experimenting, Reflecting, Learning) from others without interaction. Learning from others through interaction mentioned in this paper according to (Kostera et al, 2007) including, (1) Experimenting: contributing to an aspect of curriculum renewal, writing policy advisements, designing an innovative workshop, using new materials or techniques, and stimulating students to broaden their scope. (2) Reflecting: reflect the lesson learnt and devising a report of self-conducted training. (3) Learning from others without interaction: reading literature and conducting written evaluations. (4) Learning from others through interaction: Having a conversation with colleagues and or executive staff, consulting a coach, supervisor or external expert and evaluations with students.

Self-awareness is the ability to take oneself as objects of thought - people can think, act, and experience, and they can also think about what they think, do, and experience. Besides, it can place people in front of a large mirror, recording it, making people listen to their sound recordings, or making people feel like they stand out. The level of momentary self-awareness can be measured by the use of referential words and person pronouns and how quickly people recognize information that is relevant to themselves.

METHODS

The participants of this study were three student-teachers of English Education Department at Siliwangi University who have already experienced the pre-service teaching program in the seventh semester. They had been selected for this study seen from students who are active in English Education Department, and the age of participants is about 21 until 22 years old. The three participants were invited to describe their experiences of teaching practicum obtained from an open-ended interview is

processed qualitatively and analyzed thematically. The form prepared by researchers that include open-ended questions concerning their experiences in teaching practicum and those questions are related to their self-awareness to develop professionalism as a teacher to-be.

FINDINGS

Presentation of Result

The 3 participants who already enrolled in a teaching practicum program conducted by English Department of Siliwangi University were interviewed. They were students of 4th-year level and had already enrolled the teaching practicum program at their 3rd-year level. The segmentation of the thematic analysis produced about 25 excerpts that were synthesized and analyzed. Three key dimensions emerged from the data, relating to the topic. They were: Challenges in conducting teaching practicum program based on pre-service teachers perspective, self-awareness, and professional development. These key dimensions are presented below.

Key dimensions 1: Challenges in Conducting Teaching Program: Pre-Service Teachers' Perspective

The data gained reveal that the pre-service teachers faced varieties of challenges during their teaching practicum program. The challenges themselves might come from both internal and external factors. The lack of experience in teaching might be their biggest internal challenge since it was the first experience they have that subsequently caused the culture shock and unpreparedness. Furthermore, students might come from varieties of backgrounds so that they brought their own characteristics, it could be positive or even vice versa. Undeniably, it might be the barriers in conducting teaching learning proses for pre-service teachers since they believed that collaboration seems impossible only derived from one side.

Key dimensions 2: Self-Awareness

The pre-service teachers' beliefs and their ability to recognize either students' backgrounds or characteristics might push the their awareness in fulfilling the students' needs. They might be able to decide which approach, method, techniques, and materials or even the words to deliver. Furthermore, the interviewee believed that awareness to reflect themselves might help them a lot in establishing the awareness of character, desires, feelings, and self-motivation especially in English language teaching field.

Key dimensions 3: Professional Development

Professional development is one of the emotional intelligence in which Evans (2011) identified three main constituent components of professionalism: behavioral, attitudinal and intellectual that undoubtedly, necessary for the pre-service teachers towards their professional career as the real language teachers in the future. Data from the interviews reveal that pre-service teachers tend to rely on their own beliefs in teaching. They are aware of the importance of professionalism but they have a lack of awareness towards the standardization of the professionalism itself. Including how exactly professional teachers have to be based on regulations from relevant agencies in this field including the government.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to investigate whether pre-services were aware towards their professional development during teaching practicum period through a case

study of three student-teachers who have conducted teaching practicum in an Indonesian university. As mentioned in the introduction section that there are three main constituent components behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual in professional development conceptualization (Evans, 2011) and the self-awareness concept is comparing the self with standards of correctness that specify how the self ought to think, feel, and behave (Duval & Wicklund, 1927). In conducting teaching practicum, the findings show that pre-service teachers had no experience in real teaching, thus, such program was very challenging for them at the first time.

Findings show that the pre-service teachers have a lack of understanding regards what professionalism is. In their teaching practicum experiences have conducted only few things in professional development components as conceptualized by Evans (2011) (Table 1, professional development). Firstly, behavioural component which related to process and procedures applied in their teaching. Secondly, attitudinal component in term of attitudes maintained includes motivation. However, for the intellectual component related to intellectual to their work, they did not mention explicitly level of their "knowledge and understanding. In addition, the regards professional development activities as mentioned by Kostera et al, (2007), the pre-service teachers only conducted the Learning from others through interaction activity (Table 1, self-awareness), and the other activities such as Experimenting, Reflecting, Learning from others without interaction were not carried out. The pre-service teachers could not completely conduct the components of professional development based either from Evans' theory or regulation from the country of Indonesia, because they have a lack of understanding regards what professionalism is, and it will be "difficult to be what one does not yet comprehend" (Orvin, 1984, p. 57, cited in Urdang, 2009).

In developing the professionalism as a teacher accompanied by self-awareness which comparing themselves with standards to determine how they should think, feel, and perform. This current study indicates that the pre-service teachers realized that they had to better in conducting teaching practicum and also they realized that to be a professional teacher need to carry out the duties of a teacher. The problem faced by the pre-service teachers based on the findings mentioned is that the pre-service teachers do not have a broad understanding how a teacher has to be either based on the theory or the regulations from relevant agencies in this field including the government in term of teachers' standard and competency.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, comprehending the phenomenon occurs in pre-service teachers in conducting teaching practicum as the goal to achieve competency in entry level skills in the teaching profession. Therefore, the understanding of professionalism as teacher need more emphasized to the pre-service teachers considering that "understanding professional development and how it occurs in individuals are essential to success" (Evans, 2011, p. 868). Promoting the professionalism as a teacher can be conducted by implementing Professional Development course at the level university, where students shifted to be a professional teacher. The current study investigated the self-awareness toward professional development of a small number pre-service specialization in a non-English-speaking country, further research is suggested. There should be a deeper investigation on the professional development of pre-service students of different context as in an English-speaking country and focusing on gender perspective to provide a better understanding of pre-service' awareness toward professional development.

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