

Teacher Professional Training: Instructional Practices and Classroom Management

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Abstract: This study explored teachers' general perceptions about their learning experiences with instructional practices and classroom management gained from teacher professional training, known as *PLPG*. 149 English teacher participants attending the 2013 *PLPG* at a public university in Palembang completed a survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistical measures were used to analyze the survey items. Study findings showed that the majority of the teachers perceived *PLPG* as a vehicle for learning such pedagogical knowledge as instructional practices and classroom management informed by theory and research. Other empirical evidence showed that the teachers argued that (1) continuous professional development, (2) salary increase and incentive, (3) supportive teaching environment, and (4) adequate teaching and learning facilities would sustain quality teaching. This study provided an evaluative account of program effectiveness in providing teacher professional training. Further studies should be undertaken to probe into how teachers translate their learning experience in their routine teaching practices.

Keywords: *instructional practices; classroom management; teacher professional training; teacher professional development*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi persepsi umum guru tentang pengalaman belajar mereka terkait praktek pembelajaran dan manajemen kelas yang diperoleh dari pelatihan profesi guru yang lebih dikenal sebagai *PLPG*. Seratus empat puluh sembilan guru bahasa Inggris sebagai peserta *PLPG* 2013 di salah satu universitas negeri di Palembang melengkapi pertanyaan survei. Analisa respon survei dilakukan dengan pengukuran statistik deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas guru menganggap *PLPG* sebagai sarana m berbagai pengetahuan pedagogis seperti praktek pembelajaran dan manajemen kelas yang sesuai dengan teori dan hasil penelitian. Bukti empiris lainnya menunjukkan para guru menganggap bahwa (1) pengembangan profesi berkelanjutan, (2) kenaikan gaji dan insentif, (3) lingkungan pengajaran yang mendukung, dan (4) fasilitas pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang memadai akan mendukung proses pembelajaran yang berkualitas. Penelitian ini memberikan masukan terkait evaluasi efektivitas program pelatihan profesi guru. Studi lebih lanjut perlu dilakukan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana guru peserta pelatihan profesi guru menerjemahkan pengalaman belajar mereka dalam praktik mengajar sehari-hari.

Kata-kata kunci: *peraktek pengajaran; manajemen kelas; pelatihan profesi guru, pengembangan profesi guru*

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Since a decade ago, Indonesia issued a package of educational reforms (teacher law no. 14/2005) that includes as a priority improving the quality of teachers in every Indonesian classroom. The law, in particular, mandates teacher quality reform through teacher certification program. Teachers in Indonesia can earn certification through teacher professional training, known as PLPG, one of the three pathways offered. To date, about one million teachers have earned certification. Nevertheless, whether this certification program has advanced the quality of Indonesian teachers still remains a question. Attempting to examine the possible influence of the training on teachers' quality in Indonesia, the study explores these teachers' beliefs about the extent to which PLPG has offered them experience to learn instructional practices and classroom management informed by theory and research.

Teacher Quality

Coskie and Place (2008) associate teacher quality with teacher's knowledge of teaching and their teaching practices. Berliner (2005) points out that teacher quality consists of good teaching and effective teaching; the former means that teachers should satisfy the criteria expected by their profession, such as possessing relevant academic qualification and utilizing accordant teaching practices. The latter refers to how the instructional practices exercised by teachers in class improve student academic performance. Kennedy (2008) asserts that teacher quality is composed of three dimensions: personal resources, performance, and effectiveness. Personal resources refer to such traits as belief, knowledge and expertise that teachers have possessed even prior to starting their teaching service. Performance deals with the duties conducted by teachers in their routine profession both in and beyond classroom activities. Effectiveness, which takes account of fostering students' motivation and their learning, refers to how

good teachers are in improving students' performance on tests.

The Indonesian government equates teacher quality with teacher competence, which is as a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that teachers must possess, internalize and actualize in carrying out their professional duties (Government Regulation No. 74/2008). It includes, among others, pedagogical competence referring to teacher ability in management of student learning at least covering understanding of educational concepts and foundation, curriculum and syllabus development, and instructional practices as well as learning evaluation. This is in line with Goe (2007), who argues that teacher practice is one of the components of teacher quality. In her point of view, this trait of teacher quality covers teachers' classroom instructional practices and classroom management and how these are linked to student academic performance. Pedagogical competence is one of the main areas of teacher quality targeted for improvement during PLPG program.

Teacher Quality and Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence deals with teacher ability in terms of managing student learning. Ingvarson and Rowe (2007) relate pedagogical competence to *what teacher should be able to do*, and how to make sense of his/her teaching. Two main components of pedagogical competence are: instructional practices and classroom management. A handful of studies (Foorman et al., 2006; Gersten, & Baker, 2000; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Stronge, Ward, Tucker & Hindman, 2007; Wenglinsky, 2002) have investigated teachers' pedagogical skills in terms of instructional practices. Another group of studies (Jones & Vesilind, 1995; Martin, & Sass, 2010; Putman, 2009; Weinstein, 1998) examined pedagogical skills in terms of classroom management.

Instructional Practices

Educational researchers have highlighted

the multidimensional nature of instructional practices. Instructional practices take in the provision of explicit high-quality teaching experiences and practices, dynamic classroom time that allows more opportunities for teaching and learning, intensive scaffolding and feedback to students about their progress, stimulating instructional format, and engaging content of teaching (Foorman et al., 2006; Hamre & Pianta, 2005). Also, effective classroom instruction shows evidence of both oral language engagement and intellectual or cognitive (content areas) engagement (Gersten & Baker, 2000). In short, instructional practices refers to teaching experiences and practices orchestrated by teachers that provide learners with effective and conducive learning opportunities containing teaching materials designed and instructed in motivating ways and that incorporate learner-friendly scaffolding and constructive feedbacks.

Three studies (Stronge et al., 2007; Gersten & Baker, 2000; Foorman et al., 2006) show some components of effective instructional practices. For example, Strong et al. (2007) found that effective teachers provided more complex instructional practices that emphasized meaning instead of memorization, demonstrated numerous instructional strategies using various materials and media, and gave more differentiated student assignments than ineffective teachers did. Also, high quality teachers asked 7 times more high-level questions – application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation – than unaccomplished teachers. Consistently, Gersten and Baker (2000) found that high quality teachers performed three features of effective instructional practices including use of visuals to reinforce concepts and vocabulary, incorporation of cooperative learning and peer-tutoring strategies, and modulating of cognitive and language demands. Specific to reading and spelling, Foorman et al. (2006) found that effective teachers appeared to spend more time in

phonemic awareness and alphabetic activities than in such non instructional practices as disciplining students, interrupting instruction with long transitions or being absent from classroom.

So far, the previous discussion has focused on characteristics of effective instructional practices. Some researchers also investigated the impact of the successful instructional practices on student learning, and argue that the benefits of effective instructional practices could be significant for student academic experience and performance. As evidence, Wenglinsky's (2002) study shows that students from schools who engaged in hands-on learning and unique problem-solving activities scored higher on the mathematics assessment than those who did not. Another study (Hamre & Pianta, 2005) found that when placed in classrooms offering high instructional support (focused literacy instruction, high quality feedback, and the engagement of students in discussion of academic concepts) children whose mothers held less than a 4-year college degree gained similar achievement to children whose mothers were more educated at the end of school year. By way of contrast, academic performance of students at high demographic risk was significantly below their counterparts with low demographic risk when studying in classrooms with low instructional support. Thus, Hamre and Pianta (2005) conclude that high-quality instructional practices are greatly beneficial to increasing the academic gain of children with lack of socioeconomic resources. Foorman et al. (2006) confirm that there was a strong positive correlation between word reading (letter-word) outcomes and ratings of teaching effectiveness. Importantly, teachers employing effective practices reduced the incidence of disruptive behaviors; while effective teachers encountered one disruptive behavior every 2 hours; ineffective teachers faced one disruptive behavior approximately every 12 minutes (Stronge et al., 2007).

In sum, the studies reviewed in this section have suggested some features of effective instructional practices. Drawing upon the findings of the aforementioned studies, supportive instructional practices encompass at least five elements: engaging and relevant teaching materials, dynamic content format and activities, effective time allocation, scaffolding, and constructive feedbacks. When featured by these elements of effective instructional practices, a classroom would most likely promote a conducive environment for students to learn – lack of disruptive behaviors (Stronge et al., 2007) – and subsequently improve their achievement (Foorman et al., 2006; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Wenglinsky, 2002). However, high quality of instructional practices is not the only determining factor for success in student learning. Classroom management has also a facilitative role. The elements of instructional practices emerged in the studies mentioned above intersect with a teacher's ability as a manager. For instance, effective teaching, time allocation, and motivating classroom activities rely on a good quality of classroom management.

Classroom Management

Educational researchers have explored the role of teacher ability in terms of classroom management in supporting student learning. Classroom management refers to “teachers’ effort to foresee the activities of the classroom, including learning, social interaction, and student behavior” (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998, p. 6). This infers that teachers are deemed to make beforehand plans and preparations in order to be able to anticipate and in turn administer their classroom activities; these activities deal not only with student learning but also with interactional activities, social interaction between teacher and students or among students, as well as student behavior. As a multi-faceted construct, classroom management is made up of behavior management and instructional management

(Martin & Sass, 2010). While behavior management takes into account social interaction including student behavior and teacher manners, instructional management is pertinent to teaching and learning activities overlapping with teachers’ instructional practices. Classroom management and discipline are frequently used interchangeably, even though the two terms are not tantamount. Discipline deals with “the structures and rules describing the behavior expected of students and teacher efforts to ensure that students comply with those rules” (Martin & Sass, 2010, p. 1). In contrast, behavior management includes pre-planned efforts to prevent misbehavior and teacher’s response to it (Martin & Sass, 2010). In short, classroom management is the umbrella term that mirrors teacher’s discipline, communication, and instructional methods as attempts to conduct daily instructional activities for desired pedagogical objectives.

Putman (2009) found several common themes of classroom management that came into surface in his study, including more teacher direction, student-centeredness, promoting student responsibility, establishing respectful relationship. In addition, structuring classroom and administration of consequence or rewards were found to be important for a successful management plan. Educational researchers have made attempts to study how teachers could accomplish effective classroom management – behavior management and order (Martin & Sass, 2010; Weinstein, 1998). Both studies found that behavior management and order were achieved through such managerial strategies as establishing rules, forming a reward structure, and providing opportunities for student input as well as establishing rapport. Order encompassed rules, procedure, rewards, dealing with discipline problems, and authority (Weinstein, 1998). Ways used in formulation and implementation of classroom rules could indicate whether or not a teacher is an effective manager, and, in

order for rules to be effective, students are to be motivated to follow the rules (Martin & Sass, 2010).

While studies by Martin and Sass (2010), Putman (2009), and Weinstein (1998) explored concept and aspects of classroom management in in-service teachers' classroom, one study (Jones & Vesilind, 1995) focused on the concept and aspects from pre-service teachers' point of view. Jones and Vesilind (1995) found that, at the outset, the student teachers concerned more about their authoritative roles and being liked by students; for them, these two aspects were the most crucial part of classroom management. Toward the end of their program, their concepts of classroom management shifted to (1) relationships among class management variables – rules, consistency, organization, planning, parent, (2) fairness and flexibility, and (3) relationships with students. The student teachers in this study were able to positively shift focus from themselves to their students.

In sum, the concept of classroom management is very rich and fluid beyond controlling routines and discipline. Classroom management is not simply about disciplining students, but it includes many aspects that are critical for achieving targeted instructional goals. Drawing upon the findings, classroom management ranges from behavior managements (rules and order enforcements, giving rewards and punishment) to establishing rapport and respectful relationships with students. Teachers may have their own opinions about managing their classrooms. Some teachers manage their classroom by putting emphasis on teacher direction and student-centeredness, and promoting student responsibility (Putman, 2009). Teaching experience appears to influence the perception and the ways teachers implement their classroom management (Jones & Vesilind, 1995). Novice teachers tend to

perceive themselves as the main element of successful classroom management, and rely heavily on their authoritative roles (teacher control) and strive hard to being liked (survival skill) by their students. As the teachers gain more teaching experience, they change their management focus from themselves to students by establishing routines and supervision of students' performance. This positive shift of effective teaching concept is the sign of their psychological maturation (Jones & Vesilind, 1995). Whatever the beliefs underlying the way teachers administer their classrooms, the ultimate goal of classroom management is to establish a conducive, safe, and secure learning environment, making classrooms like home for students.

Teacher Quality and Certification

Teacher quality is foundational to teaching and learning. Attempts to improve the standard of education and students' academic achievement should start with advancing the quality of teachers. Teacher professional development through certification programs has been argued as one of the ways to achieve this goal. Literature has indicated that teacher certification exerts a positive effect on teacher quality. In terms of effect on student outcome, students taught by certified teachers gain learning outcome above those taught by non-certified teachers (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007; Stronge et al., 2007). In terms of effect on teachers, certification process provides opportunities for teachers to review their instructional practices and classroom behaviors. After participating in the process, they become more purposeful about their teaching practice, changing instruction to allow students to have more choice in classroom activities (Coskie & Place, 2008). Also, certification process has made the teachers more confident in their teaching ability as the results of reviewing literature underlying their teaching practice

(Kelley & Kimbal, 2001).

Research Findings on Teacher Certification Program in Indonesia

Unlike studies above, the majority of studies of teacher certification programs in Indonesia (e.g., De Ree, Muralidharan, Pradhan & Rodgers, 2012; Fahmi, Maulana & Yusuf, 2011; Hastuti et al., 2009; the Indonesia TIMSS Video Study, reported in Chang et al., 2013) revealed disappointing results. Hastuti et al. (2009) found that the effects of certification on teacher quality improvement was still not clear-cut; although a one-monthly-wage incentive might make some teachers better concentrate on teaching, many teachers were not confident that the certification process has increased teaching effectiveness. Likewise, Fahmi et al. (2011) asserted that teacher certification programs in Indonesia might have improved the welfare of teachers, but had no impact on students' academic performance. Supporting this claim, De Ree et al. (2012) found no statistically significant difference between the academic gains of certified teachers' students and of non-certified teachers' students. Looking at what happens inside classrooms, the Indonesia TIMSS video study found that there were no significant differences between certified and non-certified math teachers' teaching practices.

The findings of the studies have raised doubts about the role of teacher certification program in improving teacher quality in Indonesia, driving positive changes in classroom, and increasing student academic outcome. However, the researcher of the present study has some reservations with certain aspects of the studies as follows. Fahmi et al. (2011) and De Ree et al. (2012) looked at the impact of certification on teacher quality in Indonesia solely through the national exam results of students. The exam, which is standardized across the nation, has been criticized for how well it measures the academic outcome of students due to some administration and implemen-

tation issues such as leakage of examination questions and answers. Hastuti et al.'s (2009) study explored the early implementation of teacher certification programs in Indonesia; the findings of the study may not be relevant enough to be used to judge the current certification program since MOEC has revised and improved the format and design of the program. It is argued that these revisions could drive positive changes to effectiveness of the program in improving the quality of Indonesian teachers participating in the program. The TIMSS video study examined what happens inside Indonesian mathematics teachers' classrooms only; its findings may not be representative to describe the daily teaching practices of teachers of other subject matters. In summary, there are relatively few studies that examine the influence of certification programs on teacher quality in Indonesia. Importantly, none of the studies particularly study learning experiences pertinent to instructional practices and classroom management that English-language teachers achieve from *PLPG* certification program.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach during data collection and analysis phases of the study. It involved statistical analyses of questionnaire results to elicit participants' general perception about their learning experience with instructional practices and classroom management earned from *PLPG*. The research site was the training centres designated by the certifying university, as the locations for 2013 *PLPG*. The training centers were located in a hotel in the city of Palembang. Three rooms were used as the main place for the teaching and learning process. Six more rooms (nine rooms in total) were occupied for peer teaching/teaching performance test. The survey was administered in 1 of the 3 training main rooms, in which the closing ceremony was held. The study involved English-language teachers registered to

pursue 2013 PLPG certification program in a public university in Palembang, South Sumatra Province. One hundred and forty-nine English-language teachers pursuing the 2013 PLPG certification in a public university in Palembang, South Sumatra Province, volunteered to complete a survey questionnaire. The survey respondents were the first and second cohorts of 2013 PLPG certification participants. The researcher invited them to complete the survey at the end of the training right before the closing ceremony. Demographically, the teachers were between 27 and 50 years old. They had a minimum of a four-year degree of academic qualification (S1 or D4) in English Education or equivalent. They had years of experience in English-language teaching in schools from cities/regencies in South Sumatra and Bangka-Belitung Provinces.

This study employed a self-administered survey questionnaire adapted from Marzano (2003). The survey particularly aimed to measure the teachers' perception of the degree to which PLPG provided them with experiences to learn research-based instructional practices and classroom management. The survey had Cronbach's internal consistency reliability estimate of $\alpha = .98$ and $\alpha = .95$ respectively; this reliability coefficient indicated that the survey was highly internally consistent. The content validity of the instrument was confirmed by the field-testing that the participants thoughtfully completed the survey items (Marzano, 2003). The questionnaire consisted of two scales – the instructional practices scale and the discipline and classroom management scale. The instructional practices scale (17 items) measured the overall level of PLPG participants' report to provide them with experiences to learn research-based instructional practices. The discipline and classroom management scale (four items) measured the respondents' perceptions of the degree to which PLPG provided them

with learning experiences in regard to the management of student behavior. All the items responses were on a 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*. Participants responded to the statement: *PLPG effectively provides me the learning experiences that teach me to ...* Participants used the space provided below each item if they had comments about their rating (for example, an explanation of why they agreed or disagreed, etc.). Six demographic questions supplemented the survey to collect additional information from the respondents; the first three questions asked teaching responsibility, academic qualification, and UKA score, the fourth question asked gender background, the fifth asked teaching experience including any work related to education, and the last one was an open-ended question asking types of support that would best help respondents to continue to improve their teaching practices.

The procedure of data collection included distribution of the survey, including consent form and instructions for completing each section, to all of English-language teachers who participated in the first and second cohorts of 2013 PLPG certification. One hundred and forty-nine teachers voluntarily completed the survey, the first cohort at the end of August 2013 and the second cohort toward the middle of September 2013. Completion of the survey took up to 30 minutes and the respondent responses were anonymous. The researcher collected the questionnaire right after completion by the respondents. The surveys were entered into an SPSS database for data analysis. Simple descriptive statistical measures were used to analyze survey items and describe demographic information. Response frequencies were computed for all items. Mean and standard deviation were computed for all items on the Instructional Practices and Classroom Management scales.

FINDINGS

Demographic Information

Out of 171 middle school English-language teachers participating in the 2013 PLPG program, 149 completed the survey but some did not answer demographic questions. In terms of demography as shown in Table 1 below, about 65% (88) were female and 35% (48) were male. Most of the

teachers, 84% (109), held a Bachelor/S1 degree followed by 10% (13) holding a Master's degree and the rest about 6% (8) holding diploma degree. More than half of the teachers, 63% (85), taught junior high school students. In terms of working experiences, about 71% (94) had taught English for 5-10 years and only 9% (12) teachers had taught English above 20 years.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Characteristic	Percentage	N	Missing
Gender			
Male	35.3	48	13
Female	64.7	88	
Level of Education			
Bachelor/Strata 1	83.8	109	19
Master/Strata 2	10.0	13	
Other	6.2	8	
Level of Teaching			
Junior High School/SMP	62.5	85	13
Senior High School/SMA	37.5	51	
Working Experience			
5-10 years	70.7	94	16
11-15 years	12.0	16	
16-20 years	8.3	11	
21 years and above	9.0	12	

Level of learning experience to implement effective instructional practices

The majority of the teachers “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that PLPG is a vehicle for learning instructional practices informed by theory and research (Table 2). With item mean ranging from 3.98 to 4.25, the strongest components of learning experiences are as follows: “beginning my instruction units by presenting students with clear learning goals” (95.3%), “organizing students into cooperative groups when appropriate” (94%), “ending my units by providing students with clear feedback on the learning goals” (93.2%), “assigning tasks that require students to practice important skills and procedures” (93.1%), “recognizing students who are making

observable progress toward learning goals” (92.5%), “asking students questions that help them recall what they might already know about the content” (91.8%), “providing students with specific feedback on the extent to which they are accomplishing learning goals” (90.6%), and “providing specific feedback on the homework assigned to students” (90.5%). The weaker component of learning experiences with item mean between 3.58 and 3.80 are: “organizing students into groups based on their understanding of the content when appropriate” (69.1%), “prescribing assignments that require students to compare and classify content” (73.1%), and “ending my units by asking students to assess themselves relative to the

learning goals" (77,6%).

Level of Experiences to Implement Effective Classroom Management

With item mean ranging from 3.92 to 4.03, about 80% or more of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with each item (Table 3). More specifically, the teachers perceived PLPG as an effective medium for learning such classroom management as having comprehensive and well-articulated rules and procedures for general classroom

behavior, beginning and ending the period or day, transitions and interruptions, use of materials and equipment, and group work (89.8%), using specific techniques to keep aware of problems or potential problems in classrooms (89.1%), responding to inappropriate behaviors quickly and assertively (84.4%), and using specific disciplinary strategies that reinforce appropriate behavior and provide consequences for inappropriate behavior (81.5%).

Table 2. Participant response frequency percentage: instructional practice items

PLPG effectively provides me the learning experiences that teach me to ...	Percentage Responding							
	Strong-ly Dis-agree	Dis-agree	Neut-ral	Agree	Strong-ly Agree	M	SD	N
Begin my instruction units by presenting students with clear learning goals.	0.7	2.7	1.3	61.7	33.6	4.25	0.68	149
Provide students with specific feedback on the extent to which they are accomplishing learning goals.	0.7	4.0	4.7	73.8	16.8	4.02	0.66	149
Ask students to keep track of their own performance on learning goals.	3.4	2.0	10.8	66.9	16.9	3.92	0.81	148
Recognize students who are making observable progress toward learning goals.	1.4	2.0	4.1	72.1	20.4	4.08	0.67	147
Emphasize the importance of effort with students.	1.3	1.3	8.7	65.1	23.5	4.08	0.70	149
Organize students into groups based on their understanding of the content when appropriate.	3.4	11.6	15.8	62.3	6.8	3.58	0.91	146
Organize students into cooperative groups when appropriate.	2.0	1.3	2.7	74.5	19.5	4.08	0.67	149
Provide specific feedback on the homework assigned to students.	1.4	2.0	6.1	70.9	19.6	4.05	0.68	148
End my units by providing students with clear feedback on the learning goals.	2.0	0.0	4.7	71.1	22.1	4.11	0.66	149
End my units by asking students to assess themselves relative to	2.7	3.4	16.3	66.7	10.9	3.80	0.78	147

the learning goals.									
End my units by recognizing and celebrating progress on the learning goals.	1.4	4.8	11.6	64.4	17.8	3.92	0.78	146	
Ask students questions that help them recall what they might already know about the content.	0.7	2.7	4.8	72.1	19.7	4.07	0.64	147	
Provide students with direct links with previous knowledge or studies.	0.7	2.1	7.6	78.6	11.0	3.97	0.58	145	
Ask students to take notes on new content.	1.4	2.8	18.8	70.1	6.9	3.78	0.67	144	
Ask students to represent new content in nonlinguistic ways (e.g., graphic organizers: table, flow chart, thematic map).	2.7	3.4	15.0	66.7	12.2	3.82	0.79	147	
Assign tasks that require students to practice important skills and procedures.	1.4	2.8	2.8	82.8	10.3	3.98	0.61	145	
Prescribe assignments that require students to compare and classify content.	1.4	3.4	22.1	71.0	2.1	3.69	0.64	145	

Table 3. Participant response frequency percentage: classroom management items

PLPG effectively provides me the learning experiences that teach me to ...	Percentage Responding					M	SD	N
	Strongly Dis-agree	Dis-agree	Neut ral	Agree	Strong-ly Agree			
Have comprehensive and well-articulated rules and procedures for general classroom behavior, beginning and ending the period or day, transitions and interruptions, use of materials and equipment, and group work.	0.7	2.0	7.5	73.5	16.3	4.03	0.62	147
Use specific disciplinary strategies that reinforce appropriate behavior and provide consequences for inappropriate behavior.	0.7	4.8	13.0	65.1	16.4	3.92	0.74	146
Use specific techniques to keep aware of problems or potential problems in classrooms.	1.4	2.0	7.5	70.1	19.0	4.03	0.69	147
Respond to inappropriate behaviors quickly and assertively.	1.4	4.1	10.2	70.1	14.3	3.92	0.73	147

Future support for teaching practice improvement

When asked what types of support would help them continue to improve their teaching practices, the teachers' identified four types as depicted in Figure 1; some teachers listed more than one type of support but only the first item recorded in their list that counted. Fifty-three teachers (51%) believed that professional development-like support, such as training, workshop, and scholarship for continuing study as well as MGMP (Teaching subject conferences for teachers) would help them make continuous improvement on their instructional practices. Forty-one teachers (39%) were convinced that teacher welfare (e.g. salary increase and incentive) would make them more enthusiastic to develop their pedagogical competence. About 5.8% of them, six teachers, gave credence to the importance of supporting teaching/learning environment, supervision from headmaster, and opportunity to share with colleagues for their teaching practice improvement. The rest, four teachers (3.8%), considered good teaching and learning facilities that would support their instructional practice development.

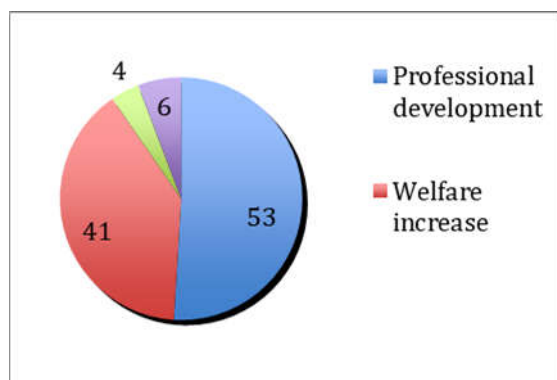


Figure 1. Types of support for future teaching improvement

DISCUSSION

This study found evidence that contrasts with previous studies (De Ree et al., 2012; Fahmi et al., 2011; Hastuti et al., 2009) that claimed that teacher certification programs in Indonesia failed to increase the quality of

Indonesian teachers. In particular, while teachers in Hastuti et al.'s (2009) study expressed their lack of confidence that there was an increase in terms of pedagogy from the certification process, the majority of teachers in this study perceived PLPG as a vehicle for learning such pedagogical skills as research-based instructional practices and classroom management, which chronicled evidence of learning experience. In terms of instructional practices, they indicated a number of areas of strength, which included beginning units with clear learning objectives, organizing students into cooperative groups, ending units with clear feedback, assigning tasks that center on important skills and procedures, recognizing students who progress, and asking students questions to recall content. Most of them also indicated that PLPG has provided them learning experiences to implement effective classroom management and student discipline strategies. These learning experiences are deemed necessary for the teachers to achieve a professional level of quality in their duties (Sparks, 2002). These pedagogical aspects of knowledge and skills were part of one of the main traits included in educational researchers' definition of teacher quality (Berliner, 2005; Goe, 2007; Ingvarson & Rowe, 2007) and defined by the Indonesian government's definition of an accomplished teacher (Government Regulation No. 74/2008).

Overall, the learning experiences the teachers gained from PLPG were fairly consistent with the findings of studies of other teacher certification program (e.g., Coskie & Place, 2008; Kelley & Kimbal, 2001; Lustick & Sykes, 2006; Stronge et al., 2007). Thus, the study raised doubts concerning the claims made by teacher certification studies in Indonesia. Fahmi et al. (2011) and De Ree et al. (2012) in particular based their claims on the findings of their study that showed no significant disparity between the academic gains of certified teachers' students and that of non-certified teachers' students on the national

exam. The investigator in the present study argues that the national exam results' might not exhibit the true quality of Indonesian teachers due to various issues concerning the implementation of the exam, among them, leakage of the exam questions and answers. It was possible that non-certified teachers' students performed well or even better than certified teachers' students in national exam simply because of the answer keys in their hands.

While teacher quality plays a vital role in student achievement, in the case of Indonesia, it appears inconclusive to blame teachers as the sole factor that generates the poor academic performance of Indonesian students. Other aspects such as insufficient support and supervision, and inadequate facilities and teaching sources could also be the causative factors. Hence, the efforts to improve teacher quality should be hand in hand with attempts to enhance educational infrastructure and ultimately the national education system, which is equally accessible to all Indonesian citizens. The teachers' responses indicated that they needed adequate teaching and learning facilities and support as well as supervision in addition to continuous professional development to help them maintain and improve their teaching practices.

CONCLUSION

This study provided evaluative information for the Indonesian government regarding its current teacher certification program. In contrast to negative findings from previous research, most teachers participating in this study expressed strong confidence that PLPG has prepared them to use a variety of specific research-based instructional practices and classroom management behaviors. The study also identified four types of support that would help sustain teachers' efforts to maintain and improve their routine teaching practices, including ongoing professional development, salary increase and incentive, and

supportive teaching environment as well as adequate teaching/learning facilities.

While most of the teachers perceived PLPG as a vehicle for pedagogical knowledge and skills learning, they also expressed the need of further professional development to maintain and improve their routine teaching practices. This suggests that, in addition to giving sufficient supervision and improving teaching and learning facilities, MOEC should provide teachers with opportunities for meaningful ongoing teacher professional development, one that helps teachers increase their teaching motivation and develop their teaching practices. Research has shown that extensively well-designed continuing professional learning, approximately 50 hours annually, is effective to improve teachers' teaching practices. A system of peer support and review/feedback may also be integrated into these long-term professional development programs as a way to give teachers time to integrate their learning experience into their classroom.

Further efforts need to be made to corroborate the implementation of the learning experiences in the teachers' classroom; one could observe the teachers as they are teaching in their classrooms. Additionally, their principals' opinion and students' input could be used to further confirm to what degree the teachers put into practice the learning experience in their daily teaching practices.

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