

# **Certified Teacher is not enough as a Professional Teacher: Between Theory and Practice**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Teachers play important role in education. As the agent of education, teachers do not simply deliver the knowledge to students. Teachers are those who conduct the learning in the classroom. In developing national education, having qualified teachers is undeniable need. This considers the important role of teachers in the process of education. Qualified teachers refer to those who have standard competence and professionalism. This paper described the theory of teacher certification and the practice in educational world and what certification do to teachers today. The researchers delivered questionnaires to 50 authoritative teacher in order to know the activity during PLPG.

**Keywords:** certification, teacher

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teachers play important role in education. As the agent of education, teachers do not simply deliver the knowledge to students. Teachers are those who conduct the learning in the classroom. It covers setting up the lesson, managing the class, and evaluating the students. Those all should be implemented by teachers in doing their duties. Thus, there is no wonder that teachers influence in education including the development.

In developing national education, having qualified teachers is undeniable need. This considers the important role of teachers in the process of education. Qualified teachers refer to those who have standard competence and professionalism. In details, teacher competence covers some aspects which are pedagogical competence, professional competence, personal competence, and social competence (Permendiknas No.16/2007). In short, a competent teacher should possess those competences. Professionalism means the key to quality and efficiency (Oxford Dictionary, 2013). In conclusion, teachers who have teaching competence and have quality and efficiency in teaching will contribute to the development of national education.

Considering the important of teachers' role, this paper aimed at investigating on teacher opinion toward PLPG program. 50 questionnaires were distributed to teachers who have passed the program. This reveals whether there is relevancy between teachers' opinion toward PLPG program and the expectation of PLPG program.

## **PROFESSIONAL TEACHER**

Being professional means being an expert, which means being competent and skilful, but it also means behaving in an ethical way ([www.totalprofessions.com](http://www.totalprofessions.com)). Further, professionalization does not only mean higher pay, of course, but several other things are interrelated: high admission standards, excellent undergraduate and graduate preparation continuing education on the job, and desirable working conditions including adequate supplies and equipment, opportunities to interact with colleagues, and reasonable attitude in making decisions (Brandt, 1993). Brandt adds that these changes will not be achieved 'overnight', but if and when they are achieved the cumulative effect will be a cadre of teachers better qualified than most current educators, not necessarily more committed or humane, but better qualified professionally to give students the kind of education that is the foundation for a world-class society. These all simply imply that being professional teacher takes years and much effort.

In Indonesian context, teachers are professional employees assigned for level of elementary, junior high and senior high school. The status of teachers as professional employees has the function of increasing the dignity and roles of teachers as agents of education, which in turn functions to improve the quality of national education (Anugerahwati, 2009:8). Legally, teachers are professional educators who have the primary obligations to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, and evaluate their students (The Education Bill No.14/2005). Considering their status as professionals, there is no other way for Indonesian teachers besides performing their function professionally.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in seeking to "identify and recognize teachers who effectively enhance student learning and demonstrate the high level of

knowledge, skills, abilities and commitments” has developed five core principles (Anugerahwati, 2009:2). The principles are:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
5. Teachers are members of learning communities

The Minister of National Education in Anugerahwati (2009:9) describes the requirement for professional teachers as follows: professional teachers should 1) possess various skills and special abilities, have a commitment for his/her work, and always hold the teachers’ code of ethics, 2) develop themselves professionally, in the knowledge and expertise of their subject, and 3) read widely recent literature in their fields, to keep abreast of the latest development in their subject matter.

Teachers or educators should have the minimum qualification and certification which are in accordance with the level of education they are teaching, be healthy both physically and mentally, and have the ability to realize the national educational objectives (Chapter XI article 42 verse 1 in Anugerahwati, 2009:7). The regulation also states the minimum requirements for the academic qualification of teachers (Anugerahwati, 2009:8). The requirements are as follows.

1. Teachers should have minimum academic qualifications of S1 or D-IV.
2. Teachers should have the educational background of higher education in the field which they teach.
3. Teachers should have a certificate of professionals.

Teacher professionalism in Indonesia refers to three main considerations (Joni in Suparno, 2008). They are the recognition of teacher as a profession by society and government which leads to service, the awareness from the teacher that the service is not just a routine practice but also competence gotten from academic through time and remarkably effort, and the allowance for those who competent on the service only to be in charge and given sufficient reward.



## **CERTIFICATION / PLPG**

Considering the necessity for qualified teacher, therefore the government launches the certification program for teacher. It certifies teacher as a professional teacher through a series of assessments and trainings. It aims to enhance teacher's competence, teacher's professionalism, determine whether teacher is awarded certification. One of the most influencing factors on the successful of this program is commitment and trainee's performance.

Based on the newest Standard Operational Procedure of PLPG in 2012, it is stated that teachers should take part in the Pre-Competency Test or UKA (Ujian Kompetensi Awal). It measures teacher's competence in the field of their subject and in pedagogy. The test consists 70% of subject field material and 30% of pedagogic knowledge.

As stated on PSG Rayon 15 UM in 2011, the trainees are included: a) home-room teacher, b) subject teacher, c) counsellor teacher or those who are recommended teacher by Rayon 15 UM.

The establishment of PLPG is based on the Standard Operational Procedures (SOP):

1. PLPG is conducted by LPTK
2. PLPG is held for 10 days contains 90 meetings hours (22 meeting hours of theory and 68 meeting hours of teaching practice)
3. The place of PLPG is determined by the representative and conducive consideration
4. The trainees are grouped into the same subject
5. On the peer teaching practice, trainees are assigned into several peer teaching groups
6. One peer teaching group contains 36 trainees
7. Each peer teaching group is facilitated by one instructor
8. The PLPG training is assigned in the form of workshop (delivering material by using multimedia and multi method based on the active, innovative, creative, and joyful learning.
9. The training is started with written pre-test to measure pedagogical competence and teacher professionalism
10. PLPG is ended with a competence test based on the SOP

11. Written test which consists of 36 trainees are supervised by 2 supervisors
12. Practical test is held based on 3 considerations:
  - a) Homeroom and subject teachers are assigned together to have peer teaching practice test, every teacher has 3 times of chance to perform
  - b) Counselling teachers are assigned in the peer counselling teaching test, every teacher has 3 times of chance to perform
  - c) Each peer teaching / peer counselling group is facilitated by a competent instructor.
13. The result of the test is selected objectively.
14. The trainees who have graduated from the program will receive a teacher certification.
15. The time setting of the test is assigned by the LPTK
16. For those who have not passed from the test/program will be reconsolidated to the Regency Education Department

The time and setting, the program is held for 10 days consists of 90 meeting hours, each meeting hours last for 50 minutes. The PLPG usually takes place in Batu regency especially for Rayon 15.

The instructors are those who compete to give and explain all materials theoretically and practically. The instructors should meet the following considerations:

Having commitment, be healthy both physically and mentally health

Having at least S2 degree or having Applied Approach certificate

Having at least 10 years experience of specific field

The activities during the PLPG program are as stated before, it is held in 90 meeting hours (22 meeting hours of theoretical activity and 68 meeting hours of practical teaching activity). Those activities include: tutorial, discussion, individual task, group task, concept analytical, peer teaching and peer counseling practice. Basically those activities are based on the four teacher competences (Pedagogic, Professional, Personality, and Social).

The test and retest here is as a tool to determine whether a trainee is considered to be passed or not. The test is in the form of written test which is aimed to reveal the professional and pedagogical competence. Whereas the practical test is held to reveal the professional, pedagogical, personal, and social competence. Personal and social competences are usually evaluated on peer assessment. The practical test is usually conducted for at least in one hour. Retest is for those who have not passed or reached the minimum criteria. This test is basically the same as the first test, consists of written and practical test.

### **On the Field**

Dealing with the issue, to support the paper, the writers did mini field research in order to get teachers' feedback about the certification/PLPG program, since the objective of the research is to find out the certified teacher's perspective toward PLPG program. Therefore, the writer composed and developed teacher's perspective in the form of questionnaire to the certified teachers. The questionnaire was developed by the writers themselves in order to get certified teachers' opinion toward the certification program related to the four basic competences. This reflects how they perceive the program before, whilst, and after joining the PLPG program.

The subjects of research were the teachers from two different schools (Junior private school and Senior public school). The writer actually gave questionnaires to 50 teachers, due to the time limitation and other non-technical reasons; the writer got only 17 questionnaires as the data. The respondents were assigned to answer 18 questions (4 questions related to Pre-PLPG, 10 questions related to whilst-PLPG, and 4 questions related to Post-PLPG), in addition they are also asked to give comment toward professional teacher.

Based on the data, it is found that at the pre-PLPG program all the respondents are totally agreed on the program, supported with the various reasons, yet it focused on the same reason to get the professional labeled teacher. Toward the requirements to be fulfilled by the trainees before joining the program, they commonly agreed supported with the reasons that the requirements have beneficial effect, such as to smoothen their progress to join the program, and they answered that the

requirements were not so difficult to be completed. Moreover, the school boards also facilitated this program as well.

On the whilst-PLPG activity, the questionnaires reveal that the teachers tend to agree and support the program. According to them, this program is believed to enrich and develop their knowledge and skills in teaching. Relating to the materials, they argue that the materials are useful to cope the students' needs. Toward the instructor, the teachers seem to have the same opinion that the instructors deliver the material clearly and have competence on the subjects being given.

However, the teachers have different responses to the materials they learnt. Some of them thought that the materials were difficult, whereas some respondents thought the materials were moderate. It seems that mostly did not have the problem in learning the materials. It might be caused by their reasons that the materials were not new thing to them. Dealing with the activity, most of them argue that the program was not boring. As it is stated by one of respondent's opinion, he thought that the program gave lots of experience and friends, to communicate and share their ideas in teaching. The most exciting response was found on the ninth questionnaire, dealing with the duration of the program (10 days), and majority assumed that the duration given for the program was not sufficient. They expect to have some more time to do the program; they did not believe that 10 days could change a teacher become as a professional teacher, as it is cited on their reason.

On the post-PLPG activity, they thought the program supplied many positive inputs. Some of them argue the program could develop their way in teaching, whereas some said that it could improve their skills related to the various students' background.

Frankly, beside the questionnaire, the writers did observation. It was found that there was something out of the expectation of professional teacher. Some of the findings were:

The certified teachers tend to use the traditional way of teaching, such as teacher centered, or tutorial teaching.

Some of the teachers still did not know how to operate the media in teaching, such as how to operate the laptop or LCD

Some of the facilities were still limited, such as LCD, since not all classes completed with LCD.

The teaching materials tend to be based on the text book. They put high demand on the text book in the teaching learning activity.

The lesson plans were commonly the same through years; even though they changed the different materials.

The teacher did not capable in teaching certain subject, as the example, a certain subject teacher passed on different subject on PLPG program.

## **DISCUSSION**

Related to those questionnaire and observation findings, there are some irrelevancies between the professional teacher theoretically and the outcome of the PLPG program. Theoretically, trainees are expected to be able to teach professionally. It means that they must have the four basic competencies (pedagogical, professional, personal and social), where those competences should be brought in every teaching and learning activity. Meanwhile, the observation (practically) did not meet the theoretical expectation of PLPG program.

Based on the observations found, it seems related to the previous finding, which the PLPG period was too short (10 days) to shift the teacher into a professional teacher. It is found that the pedagogical competence still not established. As the examples; certain subject teacher teach different subject. Some of the teachers did not really prepare the materials to be delivered to the class. The teachers seemed did not utilize the technology in teaching.

## **CONCLUSION**

Certification or PLPG program still worth to do, even though the theoretical and practical practice did not meet in certain aspect. The government should evaluate and develop the proper strategy of PLPG to fulfill the requirements of being professional teacher. The strategy might be in the form of facilitation needed in conducting the PLPG program, the time which should be lengthen, the

trainee should be related to their subject. Moreover, the certified teacher should be evaluated regularly, in order to guarantee the professionalism keep sustained.

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