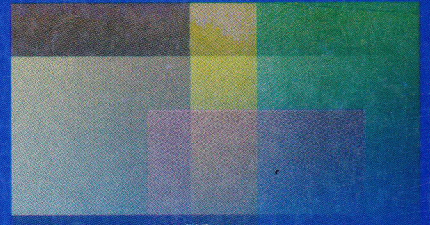


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Havid Ardi
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Developing as a Language Teacher: To be a good teacher

Joni Alfino
Universitas Bung Hatta

Abstract:

In the beginning 2010, it was reported that there were 1820 government-teachers in one of provinces of Indonesia to be fired for plagiarizing scientific paper. It is ironic, and implicitly, this means that our teacher is not professional. It also means that our teacher never develops himself. Consequently, it will make teaching-learning process bad. Related to this phenomenon, an English language teacher is required to do his best to develop himself because self-development will make him mature and professional to work as an educator. Development options can be grouped into three categories; self development, co-operative development, and formal development. Self-development consists of constant reflection, diary writing, recording lesson, and reading. Co-operative development consists of sharing with colleagues and peer observation. Formal development includes in-service training program, conferences, seminars, and short course.

Key word: Development, Language Teacher, Good Teacher

Introduction

Having a good education is a dream and hope many people have because the good education, of course, will create a good output. However, it does not come as easily as what we think. There are many requirements or factors that determine it. One of them is a good teacher. The word "good" here refers to professionalism performed by a teacher in running his/her activity as an educator. S/he should do his/her best to create a good teaching-learning process.

Unfortunately, some English language teachers in Indonesia have not showed this character. This can be identified from one of facts as stated by Darjowijoyo and Jacob (in Saukah, 2009). They state that the teaching of English in Indonesia is not satisfactory.

There are several factors causing unsatisfactory English teaching in Indonesia. One of them is teacher himself. In this context, the English teacher doesn't master English well and cannot teach English professionally. In addition, many teachers at present are confused to be able to be promoted to a higher rank position in his/her career because they are required to develop an action research report. They are worried because they never do self-reflection as a form of development

To improve the teacher quality, Indonesian government issued The National Education Regulation No. 18/2007 on In-Service Teacher's Certification through portfolio Assessment. In fact, the expected result did not come true because it was also found that many teachers plagiarized scientific paper required as one of requirements for teacher's certification through portfolio assessment.

Ornstein and Levine (2008) states that to empower their students, teachers must first empower themselves as professional educators. This statement implies two things. First, an English teacher cannot hope lot from his/her students if s/he does not develop as a good educator. In other words, s/he should prepare everything related his profession well before s/he presents it to his/her students. Second, an English teacher cannot hope much from students if he himself never changes. What he expect his students to be will come true if he empower himself first.

Shortly, developing as an English teacher should be an emphasis in order to get a satisfactory result. It should begin now.

Why should develop?

Probably, there is a question rising in our mind; why should language teacher develop? Freeman (2001) says that the impact of teacher development is self-assessed through reflective practice. From teacher development activities, an English teacher will know what s/he already knows, what s/he can do, and what s/he has not done in his teaching. This means that an English teacher, from development activities, will try to do the best to improve the weaknesses of his teaching. So, his teaching will be better in the future. Consequently, the improvement will produce a good result.

Another expert (Ur, 1991) also gives his idea about why a language teacher should develop. He says that a language teacher should develop for survival and progress.

The first year of teaching, for example, can be very stressful. This is true particularly of those teaching large heterogeneous classes of children or adolescents in schools. Difficult first year may cause some new teachers to leave the profession. Conducting teacher development, an English teacher can avoid himself from having such a stressful condition. If the stressful condition has disappeared in classroom, the teacher will be motivated to progress.

From ideas stated above, it can be concluded that developing as a language teacher contributes to the success of teaching-learning process. An English teacher does not have reason anymore to avoid development.

How to Develop?

Davies and Pearse (2000) state that Development options can be grouped into three categories. They are self development, co-operative development, and formal development.

1. Self-development

This development covers four strategies;

- Reflection

Murphy (2001) says that reflection is aimed at

-expanding teacher's understanding of the teaching-learning process

-expanding teacher's knowledge of strategic options as language

Teacher

-to enhance the quality of learning opportunities teacher is able to provide in language classroom

- Diary writing; keeping a diary of his teaching activities over a whole term can really help him to appreciate how much his learners and himself progressed. In this way, he can begin to know himself professionally-what he is good at and what you need to work on more

- Recording lessons; a teacher should remember what actually happened in a lesson, even immediately after it has ended to avoid repeating weaknesses in the future. Here, he can record the lessons

- Reading; one of the best ways of keeping up with the development in the profession is to read English teaching books, journals, newsletter, and internet publication

2. Co-operative development

- Sharing with colleagues: sharing experiences and ideas with colleagues will increase teacher's experience and ideas. It also give a better perspective on teacher's work...

- Peer observation: when observing, it is usually best to focus on only one or two aspect of the lesson. It is better to watch the learners rather than the teacher. What the learners do and do not do is probably the best indication of how effective the teaching is.

3. Formal development: it is now virtually essential during almost every stage of a teacher's career. Apart from actual in-service course, there are many conventions, seminars, and short courses for English teacher.

Becoming a Good Teacher

The main point to develop as an English language teacher is to become a good English language teacher. Harmer (1998) and Davies with Pearse (2000) identify some characters of a good English language teacher as follows:

- An English teacher should make his/her lessons interesting, so his/her students don't fall asleep
It is a reality that some students dislike English. Probably this is caused by the fact that English is not presented in a good atmosphere or as something interesting. A good teacher always tries to do the best for his class in order that s/he can attract the students' attention. If s/he has attracted the attention, the students will be motivated to study. To do this well, s/he has known what to teach and how to teach it before going to classroom.
- An English teacher should love her/his job
An English language teacher who loves his/her job/profession as an educator will make his/her lesson more interesting. Becoming a teacher should be a true dream, not because something else. Because it is a true dream, of course the teacher will loves his/her job. However, what is happening now is that many students go to teacher's education not because they really like teaching and want to be a teacher, but for something else; money oriented. As known that teachers in Indonesia now have been attending Teachers' Certification. This activity provides extra incentive for those passing the Teacher's Certification. This condition inspires some students to go to teacher's education.
- An English teacher shares his/her personality with the class
A good teacher always shares his/her personality with the class. This is aimed at a hope that students are open-hearted with their teacher to discuss any problem found in the classroom. In other words, students are not shy or worried to ask for clarification about difficult teaching materials. An approachable teacher plays a very important role in achieving successful teaching-learning process.
- An English teacher has a lots of knowledge, not only of his subject
This requirement is claimed to be important for language teachers, especially English teacher. This is considered necessary when the teachers are discussing, for example, Reading material related student's life like sport or art. They are very enthusiastic when talking about it. It will be ironic if the teachers know nothing about the topics discussed because it will decrease students' motivation to study and participate in teaching-learning process. In one hand, the students are enthusiastic. On the other, the teacher cannot explore his teaching. How can the student participate actively?
- An English teacher is an entertainer
An English teacher should be like an artist. S/he should be so attractive in presenting teaching material that his/her students are enthusiastic and motivated to participate during teaching-learning process. S/he may not be monotonous that will make students bored. In other words, s/he should attract students' enthusiasm and motivation all the time. S/he also should make his/her students miss meeting him/her for his attractive teaching.
- An English teacher considers students who are quiet and talkative
In classroom, there will be two types of students whom teacher meets; quiet and talkative students. Each type has certain reasons for such an attitude. The good language teacher should be able to accommodate equally the two groups. S/he must do the best to make the quiet ones participate as actively as the talkative ones. Probably, they are quiet because it is their character, not because they do not know. Teaching strategy used should vary in order that the quiet ones speak up.
- An English teacher corrects people without offending them
A good person is one who always appreciates other people (although s/he is younger). So is a good English teacher. S/he never makes students down when the students are corrected. S/he always should find words which can keep students' spirit all the time. What should be known is that the students have done their best to participate in the

classroom. It should be appreciated. Once the students are offended, their motivation and interest will disappear all the time because they do not want to be disappointed twice.

- An English teacher is a helper
It is true that some students will have problem understanding teaching materials. Therefore, the teacher's availability to help them will be very important and useful for students. A good English teacher should be available whenever the students need him/her for a help. The students may not go home bringing a problem unsolved.
- An English teacher knows students' name
Students will feel uncomfortable when their teacher never remembers their name. They will think that there is a gap between them. A good English teacher should try to remember students' name because it make them happy during teaching-learning process. In addition, remembering students' name will give a positive effect to students' behavior. It means that the students will be shy if they do not participate actively because the teacher knows their name well.
- An English teacher has a practical command of English, not just knowledge of grammatical rules.
A good English teacher should be able to apply his knowledge of grammatical rules in form of practical command of English. It means that s/he should simplify grammatical into understandable command of English because it will eases the students to imitate him/her and use or practice English.
- An English teacher uses English most of the time in every class, including beginner's class
Learning a language, including English, requires a lot of practice. A good English teacher should use English most of the time in every class, including beginner's class. This activity is aimed at stimulating students to use English as often as possible.
- An English teacher thinks mostly in terms of learner practice, not teacher explanation
Although teacher explanation about teaching materials is necessary, language mastery depends much on practice. Therefore, an English teacher should provide a lot of opportunity for students to practice. Teacher explanation is only for concept introduction. Meanwhile, practice is for concept application.
- An English teacher finds time for really communicative activities, not just practice of language forms
A good English teacher should provide really communicative activities as found in daily life because the patterns and expressions used in really communicative activities vary. By using really communicative activities, the students will not focus on one pattern only
- An English teacher focuses his/her teaching on learner's need, not just on finishing the syllabus or course-book
As known, teaching-learning process should meet students' need. So should English teaching. In other words, students' need should be a priority because it should be useful for their life. A good English teacher may not think just to focus on finishing syllabus or course-book. Teaching beyond students' need will be meaning less and useless because it will not contribute to their life..
- An English teacher establishes the goal of teaching English; to enable learners to communicate effectively and accurately
All English language learners want to be able to communicate in English well. A good English teacher should be able to accommodate the students' wish. They should be facilitated to be able to communicate effectively and accurately. Of course, this may not be an easy job, but it must be fulfilled.

Conclusion

Becoming an English teacher should be professional. The teacher has to conduct development related to his/her knowledge and competence as an educator. S/he may not be satisfied with what was gained in the past. Developing as a professional English teacher will contribute to a better teaching-learning process.

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