

Voice in Pre-service Teacher Development

Pintipa Seubsang, and Suttipong Boonphadung

Abstract—Recently, Thai education system is engaged in serious and promising reforms. One of the crucial elements in most of these educational reforms is the teacher professional development. Teachers today are under growing pressure to perform. However, most new teachers are not adequately prepared to meet the expectation. Consequently, this paper seeks to investigate the opinion of mentor teachers and university supervisors about professional development in the aspect of learning management skill of the pre-service teachers in Rajabhat Universities, then compare the opinion between the mentor teachers and university supervisors about professional development in the aspect of learning management skill of the pre-service teachers. The study involved a cohort of 40 university supervisors and 77 mentor teachers. The research concludes by showing that mentor teachers viewed pre-service teacher as a professional teacher with an effective learning management skill. However, in the perspective of the university supervisor, pre-service teachers still have inadequate learning management skill.

Keywords—Learning management, Professional development, Pre-service teacher.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE Ministry of Education has been implementing the Teacher Quality Improvement Plan in 2010 that emphasizes on professional growth of the teachers. This is so because Thailand as most other developing countries, education means teachers. Teachers with high quality are the heart of national development and inspiration the students who are vital for deciding nation's future [1], [2]. This implies that professional development of teacher is an important factor in enhancing and ensuring the success of educational system. Accordingly, these are changing times in educational systems of many countries including of Thailand to engage in serious and promising educational reform focusing on increasing quality of the teachers in terms of learning management skill to meet the standard expectation and objectives of the curriculum. Lampert and Graziani indicated that the initial aim of education reform concerns learning management and creating classroom activities [3]. However, the definition of teaching profession performance and the improving direction for teaching profession program is still ambiguous. It is, thus, important to focus on building a clear understanding of factors or variable affecting success or failure of educational reform as well as professional development for teachers which seems to be necessary for the teacher preparation institutes in order

to apply as a professional guideline for pre-service teachers [4].

With regard to professional development for pre-service teachers, the aspect of specific knowledge and skills appears to be the major qualification [5]. Since, it reflects knowledge and pedagogical expertise which are able to lead the students to effective learning context [6]. In the study of Boonphadung [7] revealed that classroom management, curriculum knowledge, measurement and evaluation, and ethnics of the pre-service teachers are factors that reinforce the pre-service teachers to become professional teacher in the future. The study also emphasizes the important of learning management and classroom management that should be taken into account of professional development for pre-service teachers in line with the study of Hammond and Bransford [8] that regarded developing learning management in particular lesson planning skill helps increase students' achievement to meet learning expectation.

Despite the Faculty of Education aims to provide the pre-service teachers content knowledge, instructional methodology and instruction professional practice, the pre-service teachers still experience difficulties. This is because what pre-service teachers face in the authentic classroom is different from what they have been learned in the teaching preparation program. For example, the pre-service teachers need to deal with unexpected problems in the classroom without assistance of their mentors and university supervisors. Furthermore, the pre-service teachers tend to confront with the pressure of social demands that expect a teacher who is a source of knowledge, wisdom, inspiration and models for the students [9]. More emphatically, Graham [10] asserted that professional teacher is who possess both content and pedagogical knowledge. Accordingly, it is necessary to prepare and boost the quality of pre-service teachers to accommodate the standard and expectation of the curriculum and the Teacher Council of Thailand.

With reference to the literature review, investigating opinion of the mentor teachers and university supervisors toward pre-service teachers' professional development in the aspect of teaching skill during performing instruction professional practice is an effective way to gain information as the basis for designing professional development plan for pre-service teachers

Considering the important of professional development for pre-service teachers, this paper seek to study the opinion of the mentor teachers and university supervisors toward professional development in specific area of learning management in instruction professional practice of pre-service teachers in Rajabhat Universities. It is further believed that examining opinion of the mentor teachers and university supervisors will be beneficial for the teacher professional

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preparation institutes in using as a professional development guideline for the pre-service teacher later on.

II. TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In light of teacher professional development in the new era, teacher training system has emphasized on effective learning of students in terms of learning outcomes and core competence. This transformation aims to develop the process of producing professional teacher, standard of curriculum design, qualifications framework for higher education, teacher professional standard of the Ministry of Education of Thailand, teacher profession development, and environment for the 21st century teacher preparation.

The process of professional development is the core of educational progress which needs continuing development [11]. Considering the effectiveness of teacher professional development, it is important to focus on factors and obstacles affecting quality of professional development. The opinion toward professional development appears to be the factor because if professional development is viewed by the teacher as irrelevant and time consuming, the impact can create or affect teacher's self-worth and low inspiration [12]. Besides, building motivation for engaging in professional development and better changing process in teaching profession is another factor [13]. Accordingly, Guskey [12] thus explains that the process of teacher professional development should be able to change the teachers' opinion about the importance of self-development and motivate teacher to take a role in developing students' classroom behavior and learning achievement as well as their own teaching methods and styles.

III. PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

A. The Definition of Professional Teacher

Professional teacher refers to the ability in teaching, supporting, motivating, and inspiring students to learn [4]. Morrow [6] states that a professional teacher is a teacher who is skillful and expertise in teaching. Uçgun [14] inserts that a professional teacher must be an expert in content and proficiency in both language used, and number. Moreover, a professional teacher needs to possess self-esteem characteristic and self-code of ethics, professional code of ethics, as well as professional autonomy. Moreover, Brunner [15], [16] summarizes that the characteristic of a professional teacher composes of (1) being emotional stability, (2) being positive self-acceptance, (3) having well-organized lesson plan, (4) focusing on students participation, (5) possessing effective management skill, (6) avoiding inflexible methods, (7) emphasizing on group dynamic, (8) using various kinds of motivation, and (9) being adaptative.

B. Concepts and Principals of Professional Teacher

Teacher is a key mechanism for effective classroom instruction and student achievement [14]. Hammond [8] points out that high quality teacher means students' learning success. Therefore, teacher professional development appears to be the most important factor for improving and enhancing the quality of education. Accordingly, Thailand has undergone a rapid

educational system transformation that focus on developing the quality of teachers. In this respect, a comprehensive and holistic understanding of factors and variables affecting success or failure of teacher professional development appears to be the main issue for the teacher professional preparation institutes in establishing a professional development guideline for its candidates [4].

In the past decade of research, there were significant investments in the discussion and questioning of social expectation for teachers, changing opinion on teaching profession, and creating educational innovation of teachers rather than studying the results and process of teacher professional development [4]. Assuming that teacher professional develop is as an indicator of successful educational system, it is believed that it is thus to underline the definition and the development of professional

C. Professional Teacher and the Quality of Teaching

Barth indicates that the pre-service teachers should behave as a leader and guide for the students. LeBlanc and Shelton additionally states that the pre-service teachers should realize the importance of cooperative working with their mentor teachers and peers because they are able to express, exchange, and gain opinions and different perspective about teaching experiences and techniques. In this regard, the teacher professional preparation institutes need to focus establishing the concept of leadership for the pre-service teachers by providing both knowledge, skills, and characteristic model about educational leadership before allowing the pre-service teachers to engage in teaching professional practicum [17].

In light of weakness and obstacle of teacher professional development, Neville, Sherman, and Cohen discover that teacher training program still faces with some limitations, for instance, professional teacher preparation program provides the pre-service teachers inadequate knowledge and experience for the practicum placement [18]. Therefore, the pre-service teachers tend to face difficulties in the authentic classroom that is different from what they have been practiced in the teaching preparation program. Moreover, it is discovered that the pre-service teachers still lack professional teacher skills and self-evaluation. In the same vain, the study of Ralph and Walker [18] reveals that the teacher professional preparation institutes and the partner schools appear to lack mentoring system and the pre-service teachers are assigned irrelevant tasks during performing teaching professional practicum. More emphatically, the study of Enrich et al. discover that in an attempt to cope with difficulties of the pre-service teachers when engaging teaching professional practicum, it is necessarily to facilitate the pre-service teachers with mentoring system. It is believed that mentor teachers play as a crucial role in the professional development of the pre-service teachers in the future [18].

In another discussion, Van Driel and Berry [19] draw attention to Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as the way to build an understanding on how student learn, fail to learn, and specific subject matter. Hence, PCK is seen as a model for the development of the pre-service teachers that

represents a powerful way in selecting the appropriate instructional methods for topic and subject matter. Additionally, PCK also relates to the association between teachers' content knowledge and instructional methodology. Additionally, Bausmith and Barry indicates that PCK relates to a set of specific guidelines for teaching certain subject matter which can be captured on teaching demonstration video of expert teachers [19]. After the process of teaching demonstration video, PCK additionally includes the process of performance monitoring and evaluation. Nevertheless, the concept of PCK principal is still unclear and limit in specific teaching context such as characteristics of school culture and its population, available time, and local support for teacher professional development. Kennedy [20] inserts despite teachers work in the same school, they may perceive different teaching experiences. Furthermore, it appears to be that individual teachers hold unique personally opinion and opinions such as the view on good teaching, appropriate learning style, and standard of curriculum.

By focusing on PCK, Van Driel and Berry [19] conclude that the PCK is a complex process that has implication for the teacher professional development. In order to reach the successful professional development program, it is necessarily to organize in the ways that closely align to teachers' professional practice such as providing the opportunities to enact certain instructional strategies and appropriate teaching aids, exchange teaching experiences, opinion, and opinion between teachers and their peers. Therefore, it is believed that PCK can be used to design constituting professional development. Meanwhile, Hollin [3] pays attention on Holistic Practice-Based Pre-service Teacher Preparation. Surakitjabowon [21] adds that professional teachers need to realize seriously "teaching quality" that consists of the competence in (1) applying suitable teaching strategy and learning management for students' learning style and demands, school context, and certain subject matter, (2) monitoring individual student achievement by providing them feedback, (3) supporting freedom of learning and establishing expectation for students' learning responsibility, (4) developing positive teacher – student relationship under ethics of teaching profession, well-communicative skill, fairness, and open-minded, (5) always updating knowledge and skill, (6) believing in the abilities of students, (7) promoting students with both life and learning experience, and (8) associating new and prior knowledge for the students.

IV. THE CONCEPTS OF LEARNING MANAGEMENT

According to The National Education Act of 1999, learning management refers to creating classroom environment, activities, and learning media in order to promote the students' effective learning. In the other words, it is important for the teachers to know and be familiar with their students, therefore, teachers are able to select the most appropriate learning management for their students. Moreover, it is demanded that teachers need to encourage the students (1) to think critically and make decision themselves and (2) participate in learning activities.

In recent years, there has been a growing appreciation for student-oriented learning management based on differentiated instruction. Tomlinson points out that differentiated instruction is a process of learning that respects the different learning needs of students as well as reflects students' interest and learning style [22]. Respectively, Vygotsky [23] asserts that the instruction must be concerned with the experiences and contexts that stimulate the students' learning. On the other words, teachers need to understand students' abilities and motivate them to participate in learning activities. When teachers have a comprehensive understand on the nature of their students, they are able to response the students' need correctly. As the result, the students tend to learn effectively. Another related discussion is Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development that highlight the ability of teachers in evaluating the difference of their students so that they can appropriately enhance positive learning experiences of the students [8]. In addition, Bruner [15] presented the concept of Spiral Organization, which stresses on the instruction that must be structured, thus it will be easily grasped by the student. Ausubel shades light on a theory of Meaningful Verbal Learning, which allows the students to learn from real experience, therefore, they are able to absorb new knowledge and make an association to their prior knowledge [24]. Marcus additionally supports that a theory of Meaningful Verbal Learning stimulates student's retention [24].

Kaemmanee [25] states that a good learning activities must encourage (1) students' physical participation by stimulating students' learning sensation to be ready for receiving new knowledge and information, (2) students' intellectual participation by providing them a challenging activity and allowing them to think critically, (3) students' social participation by helping them to settle a relationship with their friends or within their environment, and (4) students' emotional participation by motivating their emotion with physical, intellectual and social activities.

With regard to teaching professional practicum, Clark views that it is the most necessary process, which is able to promote professional development for pre-service teachers since it concerns professional teacher training, long-term performance evaluation, teaching practice, and experience and knowledge accumulation [26]. MET poject and Goe, Bell and Little further pay attention on instructional framework for the novice teachers that includes of (1) establishing a friendly learning environment, relationship with the students, and paying respect in one another status, (2) allowing the students to view the importance of subject matter and learning achievement expectation, (3) managing classroom into group work and preparing appropriate teaching material and media, (4) controlling students behavior and dealing with students' inappropriate behavior [27].

Melnick and Meister [28] point out that the novice teachers often encounter the difficulties in controlling student behavior in the classroom, motivating students, understanding individual difference, measurement and evaluation, and constructing teacher – parent relationship.

Underlining the quality of learning management, Darling-Hammond states that the factors of specific content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching experience influence the quality of learning management skill of the pre-service teachers [29]. In line with Cochran-Smith specific content knowledge of the pre-service teachers is able to lead to successful professional development [30].

In addressing the process of learning management, Bhatia and Bhatia present 5 processes to effective learning management that compose of (1) introducing and motivating, (2) presenting knowledge, (3) comparing and associating, (4) referring, and (5) practicing. In the same vain [31], Laslett and Smith [32] suggested that to start learning management the most important thing that should be taken in to consideration is to motivate and stimulate students with classroom activities. Teachers should select appropriate activities for the age and level of the student and type of the topic. Moreover, the teachers should divide their responsibility into 2 parts: (1) subject matter and, (2) learning management such as classroom activities, lesson plan, measurement and evaluation, and students' assignment.

According to the literature on learning management, it is able to conclude that to designing effective learning activities for the student, teachers need to:

1. Understand the individual students difference
2. Actively response students' needs and expectations
3. Attract students' interest and attention to the lesson
4. Stimulate and motivate students to think critically and actively answer the questions
5. Providing a safe and friendly learning environment
6. Facilitate and encourage students to learn
7. Know and understand the nature of students
8. Express aims teaching
9. Using suitable instructional methods and learning management principal
10. Using dynamic and various teaching techniques
11. Associate the topic with real life
12. Write a clear and well-organize lesson plan

V. LEARNING MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

With regard to the evaluation of learning management, questionnaire about the learning activity provides feedback for improving and evaluating teachers' learning management performance after the course.

The Student Evaluation of Teaching or SET designed by SET is seen as one of the most important measure of teaching effectiveness. More emphatically, SET particularly aims to evaluate the performance of classroom management, positive teacher-student relationship construction, learning facilitation, and overall teaching quality [33].

VI. PARTICIPANTS AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS

This study was an exploratory conducted in Faculty of Education in Rajabhat Universities, Thailand. Selection of participants was simple random sampling. The research participants consist of seventy-seven mentor teachers and forty

university supervisors. Data were collected through questionnaire. The study objectives were clarified, hence, the participants understood that their opinions and ideas were appreciated. The questions consist of two parts. The first part concerns the general data of the cohort: gender, educational background, department or program, teaching experiences, and mentoring experiences. The second part comprises of thirty-eight question based on the competency based for professional teachers in terms of learning management. The questionnaire was approved as content validity (Index of Item Objective Congruence: IOC of each item ranged 0.66-1.00) by the external experts, and the reliability was 0.973.

VI. RESULTS

The findings have been summarized and presented in the tables as follows:

TABLE I
PARTICIPANTS' BASIC DATA CLASSIFIED BY GENDER

Participants	Gender		Gender unspecified	Total
	Male	Female		
Mentor teachers	7	69	1	77
University supervisor	10	30	-	40
Total	17	99	1	117

Table I shows 7 males, 69 females, and 1 gender unspecified mentor teachers and 10 males and 30 females university supervisors. It is obvious that most participants are female.

TABLE II
PARTICIPANTS' BASIC DATA CLASSIFIED BY AGE GROUP

Participants	Age (year)								Total
	< 25	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-60	
Mentor teacher	2	5	9	14	2	12	16	17	77
University supervisor	-	25	11	2	-	2	-	-	40
Total	2	30	20	16	2	12	16	17	115

Table II shows that 45 of 75 mentor teachers are in the age of 45 - 60. Meanwhile, most 36 of 40 university supervisors are in the age of 25-34. On the basis of participants' data, it shows that 2 groups of participant are clearly different in age.

TABLE III
PARTICIPANTS' BASIC DATA CLASSIFIED BY EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Participants	Educational background				Total
	Bachelor degree	Master degree	Doctorate degree	Certificate	
Mentor teacher	55	21	-	1	77
University supervisor	1	31	8	-	40
Total	56	52	8	1	117

Table III reveals that the highest educational background of the mentor teachers is Bachelor degree. While, Master degree is the highest educational background of the university supervisors.

TABLE IV
PARTICIPANTS' BASIC DATA CLASSIFIED BY MENTORING AND SUPERVISING EXPERIENCES

Participants	Mentoring and supervising experiences (years)								Total
	< 3	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	>20	
Mentor teachers	43	21	3	2	2	2	2	2	77
University supervisors	31	6	2	-	1	-	-	-	40
Total	74	27	5	2	3	2	2	2	117

Table IV shows that mentoring and supervising experiences of both cohorts are not over than 5 years.

In order to compare the opinions of mentor teachers and university supervisor toward professional development in particular learning management, the researchers divided the process into 2 steps as follows:

(1) The analysis of variance: Because of 2 of mentor teachers and 2 of university supervisors did not answer all questions, 75 mentor teachers and 38 university supervisors were selected for analyzing variance.

TABLE V
THE NUMBER OF INFORMANTS

Participants	n	\bar{x}	S.D.	Levene's Test	
				F-test	p-value
Mentor teachers	75	3.7225	0.6341		
University Supervisors	38	3.5306	0.3867	9.268	0.003

As can be seen from Table V, the variance between the two group is significant difference at 0.05 ($F=9.268$, $p\text{-value} = 0.003$).

(2) The analysis of opinion difference: Independent samples test with Equal variances not assumed was used to examining the participants' opinion. According to the first step, it is found that the variance of both participant groups was different. Hence, the different opinion of both participant groups were shown as follows:

TABLE VI
THE ANALYSIS OF THE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The difference of opinion of the participants	Mean difference	t-test	df	p-value
Mentor teachers and University supervisors (Equal variances not assumed)	0.1919	1.991	107.10	0.049

Table VI presents the significant differences of mentor teachers and university supervisors at .05 ($t=1.991$, $p\text{-value}=0.049$).

VII. CONCLUSION

The study has explored the opinion of the mentor teachers and university supervisors on the professional development of pre-service teachers in term of learning management skill. In sum, according to the university supervisors' perspectives, weakness of the pre-service teachers are (1) choosing the most appropriate evaluation and measurement, (2) connecting the new lesson to the previous knowledge for the students, (3) providing learning summary and feedback for the students, (4) associating lesson in the classroom with real life, (5) assessing students' achievement following the requirement of the curriculum, (6) solving unexpected problem during teaching in the classroom, (7) creating questions for stimulating and inspiring students' critical thinking. In regarding to the professional development, the university supervisors viewed pre-service teachers as the initial professional teachers. However, mentor teachers expressed that the pre-service teachers need to develop learning management in the aspect of (1) associating the different substance knowledge, (2) applying instructional methodology and techniques, and (3) providing learning summary and feedback for the students. Overall, mentor teachers revealed that the pre-service teachers possess effective professional development in particular learning management skill.

The findings also emphasize the importance of learning management in line with many other studies that regard developing learning management skill as a key component of teacher professional development [7], [34], [35]. In order to reach the successful professional teachers, the pre-service teacher need to have a clear understanding and adequate knowledge in the teaching methods and techniques, writing teaching plans, and selection of teaching techniques appropriate to content to be taught [7].

Finally, and in relation to further research, findings of the study can be integrated into teacher preparation programs as a professional development guideline. In order to gain more accurate information and reach the sustainable professional development for teachers, a boarder studies with different concepts and research methodology, such as quality research approach, in-depth- interview with professional teachers, and focus group interview with the stakeholder, should be conducted.

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