

An investigation to novice English teachers' self-consideration upon their decision of joining teacher study group: a case study in Bandarlampung, Indonesia

Personality traits and personal reference of three NETs are observed through in-depth interview, participants' account through individual log book, and observation during initial group sessions. The result of the investigation signifies that introverts have more or less equal possibility to join group with the extroverts. In spite of suggestion that extroverts are likely to succeed a group work, this finding offers different idea. Personal reference that does not support their participation in TSG does not instantly drive NETs to decide to not joining TSG. On the contrary, they take the challenge and participate voluntarily.

Keywords: personality, past experience, self-directedness, andragogy

INTRODUCTION

This is an initial report of investigation to Novice English Teachers (NETs)' participation in a small group discussion termed as Teacher Study Group (TSG) as a professional development activity. The foci of the study is to observe NETs knowledge, or cognitive aspects, when it is utilized, generated, and formulated (or even reformulated) during a voluntary sessions in a study group. The knowledge obtained and possessed by NETs is in the form of concepts, principles, and theories from pre-service education. However, when it is applied in teaching practice, those types of knowledge are reformulated and rearticulated in the form of actions such as instructions, material selection, and strategies of assessment. To articulate appropriate forms of knowledge in particular occasion of teaching, NETs have to be fully aware of what they do. Only then can NETs be addressed as teachers who have understanding on their subjects (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

The understanding on subject matter cannot be realized unless NETs process concepts and theories in an active way of adult learning or education (Cole, 1996) (Freeman, 2001). It cannot be denied that inside the in-service period or working period lies down an excellent opportunity for them to keep developing their knowledge. This is based on the assumption that knowledge develops and evolves during human life time as they keep interacting with their societies (Cole, 1996). With this perspective bear in mind, NETs have to develop their knowledge and they still have plenty of time to do it. Also, this is interpreted that NETs just begin their quest on a long journey toward their expertise and they need learning experience or education both formal and informal during the proces (Craft, 2000).

Discussing about learning experience or opportunity for developing their selves, there are many forms of in-service professional development programs that can be offered (Richards & Farrell, 2005). From different programs, study group is selected as it provides safe environment for teachers to speak, offers continuous

effort for teacher development, and obliges collaboration from diverse members from different background and capacities. Different member backgrounds allows peers and more knowledgeable others (person) share knowledge and understanding (Johnson, 2009) (Hargreaves, 1994) (Kooy, 2006) (Lantolf, 2000).

DISCUSSION

In forming the study group, the researcher set several criteria for the member of the group selection. The participants are particular individuals who in the time of study currently (Yin, 2003) have:

1. Teach English in Bandarlampung area to narrow the geographical area into a city where access of information is nearly adequate.
2. Bachelor degree from English Education Department or English Literature with additional education training certificate (AKTA IV) because only the NETs with this qualification have studied both content (English language) and pedagogy.
3. Never or rarely join any professional development program in or out of their workplace.
4. Their schools supply minimum or no support for professional development
5. Teaching in junior high schools, considering that in junior high the teaching of English starts to be obliged. The researcher assumes that the types of understanding they will develop is the basic and the easiest one.
6. Just begin teaching after graduation up to 5 years in teaching because age is an important factor for the study. The study expects fresh graduate, young adult NETs will join the group.
7. Teach seventh or eighth graders to limit the curricular aspects which will be discussed in the group
8. They are willing to participate. This is important to show their willingness to learn
9. They bring recommendation from the principal, this is part of ethical consideration and to indicate cooperative attitude from administrator of each NETs school

Fulfilling criterion no.8 “they are willing to participate. This is important to show their willingness to learn” the researcher executed the following steps. First, when the researcher met with potential participants, she described what the researcher and the participants to be would do in the study group. This included the explanation on how the session would be adjusted and inserted within their working hours to not disturb their routines. However, as they did not quite comprehend the concept of continuing professional development, they rarely ask questions. In fact, most participants did not ask anything but passively follow what the researcher planned. When they are asked what to do in group, they could not decide as so many things in class were problematic for them. As the result, the topic was then explored through interviews. After assuring that minimum risk would happen and many advantages could be gained, participants were ready to form the group. In this initial stage, less information could be collected to see why they were willing to participate.

When this issue arose back after TSG had finished discussing a topic, there was some more information on participants’ willingness to participate. Regarding the importance of self-directedness in professional education, aspects related to intra-individual matter have to be taken into account. In this article, the investigated intra-individual aspects consist of personality traits and personal reference.

Personality of the participants was observed through questionnaire and their behavior in group sessions. The result of the questionnaire was scaled using *Bales Symlog Frame* (Bales & Polley, 2010) which is publicly used in internet. This calculation is strengthened by inserting the result of Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999). Personal preference is also observed through interview regarding their past experience. The experience will be categorized into three categories; too little experience, negative experience, and positive experience (Forsyth, 2006). Accumulative result will be related to their acceptance upon their involvement and participation in TSG.

The Symlog Frame indicates that the three participants in TSG are categorized as *Down, Positive, and Forward* (DPF) in High Evaluation. DPF and UPB are in middle potency while DP is in low potency. However, DPF has low activity while UPB has high one. This finding is also shown during TSG sessions in which DPF and DP participants has fewer talk and activity compared to the UPB participant. Down and Backward are indicated by negative scores, while Zero means that the score is zero and is not labeled. Up and Forward are indicated by positive scores.

<i>Down, Positive, Forward</i> (DPF)	<i>Down, Positive, Zero</i> (DP)	<i>Up, Positive, Backward</i> (UPB)
Salvation Through Love. Equalitarian, submissive, conformist. Sorrowful but forgiving; love is the master cure for	Trust in the Goodness of Others. Equalitarian, understanding, undominating. Believes people are good, truthful,	Emotional Supportiveness and Warmth. Favors relativism, permissiveness, equalitarianism; encouragement of young, growth. Warm, personal,

deviance. Religious; anti-sex and anti-aggression. Low interaction and only toward specific others; non-entertaining but socially positive. Good worker and group member; practical, responsible, high will control, stable.	dependable. Tender-minded. Low interaction and mainly toward individuals rather than group. Asks for opinions, friendly. Calm, stable, mature, responsible, low aggressiveness and sexuality.	well-liked, non-anxious, entertaining, receives attention. Enthusiastic, talkative, extroverted, poised, spontaneous, confident.
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More explanation to complete categories in detail can be seen in: <http://www.indiana.edu/~claswork/locked/S439/BalesTypes.html> last updated November 23, 2000.

The BFI shows UPB participant as having an extraversion traits. He has gregariousness (sociable) Assertiveness (forceful) Activity (energetic) Excitement-seeking (adventurous) Positive emotions (enthusiastic) Warmth (outgoing), the UPF participant as agreeableness as she has Agreeableness vs. antagonism Trust (forgiving) Straightforwardness (not demanding) Altruism (warm) Compliance (not stubborn) Modesty (not show-off) Tender-mindedness (sympathetic), and the DP as a conscientiousness because she tends to have Conscientiousness vs. lack of direction Competence (efficient) Order (organized) Dutifulness (not careless) Achievement striving (thorough) Self-discipline (not lazy) Deliberation (not impulsive). During the interview, the Extrovert admits that he is an extrovert person, while the conscientiousness also declares that she is an introvert person.

From two parameters, it seems that the most potential person who is likely to join the group is UPB-extrovert participant. The other two are unlikely to support the group (Stangor, 2004). However, these results do not match to the situation where all three different types of person voluntarily participate the group.

Personal preference drawn from personal experience also signifies genuine result. The UPB-extrovert participant is a person who is very skillful in organization, familiar with public spaces, discussions, dialogues, and meets many progressive people. He has positive experience in working in group. The UPF agreeable participant has mixed experience, both positive and negative. She actively involved in school organization but she felt that there was a critical incident in which she pondered and concluded that she was lack of responsibility and fairness. As the consequence, she could not “save” her friend from school punishment and decided not to get involved in public organization. She never joined any

student organization in her college years. In this case, she enjoyed positive experience in public space in the beginning while later she had a negative one. The last person in the group, the DP conscientious person has a deep personal negative experience when her father died. She admit that she loses her cheerfulness after her father passed away and she became a very closed and quiet person ever since. This character influence what she does, especially when it involves a public decision making like in teacher meeting. She thinks that she will wait people talk first and agree on any part that she feels she is agreeing with.

With variety of personal experience, these three people still accepted the challenge to join the professional development activities. Negative experience does not prevent two participants to participate in TSG. Andragogy supplies principles that may be owned by the participants so that they join TSG. The principles are the need to know, self-directed learning, prior experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and problem solving, and motivation to learn. The internal motivation from personality traits (the need to know) and personal experience (prior experience) indicate that they are not the influencing factors in joining the group (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The report indicates the varieties of personality traits and personal experience. Personal traits show three different traits and less different behavior in group while personal experience indicates that there are complete types of experience owned by each of them.

This background will be brought by participants into TSG process. This finding is related to the second part of the investigated aspect in the study, which is necessarily part of learning process in group from adult learning or education perspective. Further, the study might be able to examine group in its interaction and how each participant with their characteristics plays different roles. This diverse background will merge and the researcher has not known yet whether the merging process will lead them to transformation and new comprehension or stagnant development in cognition.

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