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eCOACHING IMPROVING THE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF NOVICE TEACHER

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ABSTRACT

Continuing Professional Development Programme (CPD) aims to produce high-performing teachers and to support the aspirations of a quality education. Support through CPD, especially novice teachers to equip themselves with knowledge and skills as well as new practices of teaching and learning that is relevant to the development and needs of the 21st century. Novice teachers are often faced with several constraints stemming from the school or oblique views of individuals at the school. Thus, determination of novice teachers in their professional development is encouraged by their attitude to the profession of teachers despite the various shortcomings. The main indicators of a successful professional development is the extent to which teachers practice what they have learned. Provide a full-technology, offers professional development based on the teaching and learning in the classroom and coaching to give continued support will provide opportunity for novice teachers to practice effective teaching and learning and low-risk and receive appropriate feedback.

Keywords: professional development, coaching, novice teachers

INTRODUCTION

The aspiration is to raise the percentage of school-based professional development activities, such as peer observations and lesson planning, from its current level of 16% today. This is based on international research which demonstrates that on-site training grounded in what actually happens in the classroom is more effective than off-site training programmes. Focus groups of Malaysian teachers also reported that they find it most useful when their subject

head or principal observes them in action, as it enables them to receive direct insight into how they should improve their classroom practices.

(Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025, Chapter 5, p. 6)

The fourth and fifth shifts of Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (MEB 2013-2025) also state that teachers and school leaders are two important factors in determining student's success. Therefore, the implementation of career paths of teachers should be based on competence and specific potential in order to improve the career path of teachers for the role of leadership, teaching specialists and specialized field experts. Teachers' competence and potential can be used to carry out the Continuous Professional Development Program (CPD) to achieve the goal of producing high-performance teachers and to support aspirations towards high quality education.

BACKGROUND

In the MEB 2013-2025, several important aspects have been emphasized in transforming the teaching as an optional profession. Among the elements placed in this shift are: (1) tightening the terms of teacher's appointment from 2013 so that only among the top 30% of graduates will be chosen; (2) Improving the 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD) quality from 2013, focusing more on individual needs and school-based training; (3) Ensure that teachers focus on instructional core functions from 2013 by reducing administrative burden; (4) Implementing career paths based on competencies and achievements from 2016; (5) Enhancing teachers' paths for leadership roles, teaching specialists and specialist specialists by 2016 and cultivating colleagues-based excellence and certification process from 2025.

The implementation of the above elements shows the government's concern in upholding the highly respected profession of the entire society. This pure desire will definitely not be achieved by teachers if they lack the skills and have the resilience to face all changes and make paradigm shifts to realize the aspirations and aspirations of the nation. In this regard, through the support of CPD, novice teachers in particular can equip themselves with new knowledge and skills as well as new teaching and learning practices relevant to 21st century developments and needs, thinking skills across all disciplines among pupils should be given priority.

The importance of CPD was proven when the Higher Education Leadership Academy (*Akademi Kepimpinan Pengajian Tinggi,* AKEPT 2011) qualitative study of teacher teaching involves observation of 125 teaching in 41 schools across Malaysia, finding that only 12% of the teaching is delivered at high standards, which involves many pedagogical best practices, while 38% satisfactory standard. On the other hand, 50% of the lessons learned in this study were not satisfactorily presented. Teaching does not involve pupils completely when teachers are more dependent on passive lecturing methods in delivering subject content. Teachers are more focused on ensuring that pupils understand the basic content of subjects for the purpose of summative assessments rather than being more likely to test the ability to remember facts

(70% of all teaching observations) rather than analyzing and interpreting data (18%), or synthesizing information (15%). This statistic also shows the big challenges that will be faced because about 60% of teachers today will continue to teach for another 20 years (MEB, pg E16)

According to the study conducted by James W. Stigler and James Hiebert (2009) in his book The "Teaching Gap" summarizes 3 things that the teacher's ability to implement teaching, teaching activity is a culture and there is a gap in the method of improving teaching. The "Teaching Gap" is closely related to the teacher's professionalism. If teachers can not improve and improve their teaching methods, teachers can not deliver the knowledge to the students perfectly and effectively. Professional teachers should constantly review, improve and refine their teaching methods and techniques in a collaborative way to shape the teaching community to better affect the learning of pupils in the classroom. CPD programs are essential to improving the quality of teachers and ensuring they remain quality. This means the novice teacher induction program should be part of the CPD program (Lehman, 2003).

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Professional Development Stage

In the developmental phase of teacher professionalism, the most critical phase is between the first and the fifth year of their services. According to Seyfarth (2002), newly appointed workers in all occupational areas tend to produce less satisfactory performance as they experience the exposure phase to the real reality of the job environment. Accordingly, Glatthorn (1995) described the first year as a 'survival' for novice teachers. At this stage, novice teachers tried to protect themselves, being in a state of confusion, anxiety and uncertainty about a teacher's career demand. Boles and Troen (2002) added that this can influence the level of teaching effectiveness and attitude that will be practiced in the course of its service. The novice teachers also devote much time to inventions that are considered to be burdensome and disturbing their social lives (Huberman, 1989; Seyfarth, 2002). Hankin and Nolan (2004) say that novice teachers are faced with a surprising experience about the true school culture. This period is considered to be challenging and describes it as' a sink or swim situation alone without guidance from the lecturer. Most novice teachers find only a small number of colleagues who support them. This undermines their enthusiasm for work (McDonald & Elias, 1980).

According to Vennman (1984), a study conducted on novice teachers in America found that the main cause of those who left teaching professions was the lack of guidance by principals in teaching in the classroom, not creating an atmosphere of self-improvement as an effective teacher, do not appreciate the work and do not provide the appropriate service. The novice teachers are also unable to demonstrate good work performance in terms of teaching ability, many scholars find they have no knowledge in terms of content and teaching methods appropriate to their students (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Vennman, 1984)

In response to novice teachers in the first years of his career as a challenging year, they need to get support especially from management and experienced teachers in the school community (OCED TALIS, 2009). The combination of experienced teachers and novice

teachers will have a good impact if the coupling can produce a professional and meaningful situation. On the other hand, novice teachers will experience stress and disappointment with their performance in the first year of their services if no support is obtained (Mandel, 2006). Accordingly, the professional development model of teachers can be developed with a smart partnership coupling involving stakeholders. A study conducted on the quality of the new teachers' quality of the Bachelor of Teaching Degree Program (PISMP) from IPGK Ilmu Khas shows that there are some positive quality features as well as negative features in the activities conducted in schools (Ismail and Norliza, 2015). This new teacher's quality of attitudes can be enhanced through guidance and support in lifelong learning in order to create a knowledgeable community in line with OECD's (2009) recommendation. Ismail and Norliza (2015) suggest peer coaching strategies, learning walks and sharing sessions as the activities proposed by the National Key Result Area (NKRA).

The implications of the problems faced by novice teachers need to be addressed immediately to avoid any negative effects. Seyfarth (2002) found that novice teachers who received the correct teaching techniques from the mentor would maintain their use compared to those who did not get exposure on the technique. However, Moir E. (2010) found that the effectiveness of counseling depends on the skills of the counselor, the behavioral composition of the learned and the teacher's acceptance of the change. Rogers and Babinski (1999) argue that the development of professionalism of novice teachers can occur through discussions with other novice friends. Through the discussion they can share the joy or frustration and find solutions to the problems. Hence, the support of a community that practices the learning culture, appreciating the ideas and experience of all its members can help novice teachers through the successful phase of early service adjustment.

Professional Development Through eCoaching

Teacher learning and development is the main pillar of school improvement and provides a platform for improving achievement and success. When teacher learning takes place based on understanding and assessment of student learning, they can begin to adapt to their practices that will lead to different outcomes. The key principles for getting the most successful CPD can be identified. Helen Timperley (2009) has identified the key principles of teacher's professional learning and development, including the need for the following conditions to:

- teachers gain experience and build understanding on the integration of knowledge and skills
- teachers are given various spaces and opportunities to learn and apply information
- teacher confidence can be challenged through evidences when inconsistent with their assumptions
- teachers have the opportunity to process new learning with others

Coaching can provide a way for achieving these key principles and strengthening teacher learning. Coaching is a collaborative and CPD role in strengthening the dimension of

professional learning among teachers in the school. It is a genuine alternative to CPD teachers who are more collaborative and supported by research findings (Pedder et al, 2008).

eCoaching Approach

The American Research Institute (AIR, 2004) has resulted in a complete and comprehensive coaching categorization and has been modified by Denton and Hasbrouck (2009). This categorization not only takes into account how counselors spend their time working (Deussen et al., 2007), but also include the style or approach used. The identified categories consist of technical guidance, collaborative problem solving, reflective training, forming coaching and renewal teams or coaching changes. (Poglinco et al., 2003; Hasbrouck & Denton, 2007; Rosenfield, 1987; Garmston, Linder, & Whitaker, 1993; Showers & Joyce, 1996 and Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009)

The key indicator for a successful professional development is the extent to which teachers practice what they have learned (Resnick, 2010). Providing a full-tech environment, offering professional development on teaching and learning (T&L) in the classroom and coaching program to provide continuous support will provide space and opportunity for novice teachers on effective and low risk T&L practices. as well as receive appropriate feedback. Knight, J. (2004) study on effective classroom counseling programs by the University of Kansas Center for Research found that counseling programs have improved the practice they learned and successfully improved student achievement. While Joyce & Shower (1983) reported professional development without support and follow-up, only 15% of teachers practiced what they learned while through counseling programs, increased to 85% (Knight, 2007). The success of professional development recipes is coherent, consisting of consistency or compatibility between teacher's knowledge and belief with real learning during professional development process (Desimone, 2009). Guiding programs play a rational role of professional development content with teachers' knowledge and belief through additional support such as collaborative ideas sharing in collaborative community. Hence the emergence of technology couples, guidance and community.

Leadership success opportunities increase through the combination of three key components that are contextual, relevant, and persistent.
- **Context.** Practice guidance should be in a context that can be applied directly / directly.
- **Relevant.** Guidance should be closely linked to current R&D needs.
- **Persistent.** Guidance needs to provide continuous support as teachers practice what they have learned successfully.

The rapid development of IT technology and Internet technology opens new space in implementing coaching. Classical methods, face-to-face guidance if coupled with the use of internet technology will produce new methods such as eCoaching, also known as virtual coaching, online guidance, web-based guidance, mobile use guidance, long distance counseling and so on.

eCoaching

According to Rauen (2002b) electronic coaching (eCoaching) is a form of guidance, enabling guidance sessions to be conducted without personal contact (face-to-face) with coaches. This communication will be supported by web-based tools like e-mail, discussion forums or chat. Taranovych, Rudolph, & Krcmar (2007) also agree and suggest that web-based eCoaching should be supported by Internet technology. Dwyer (2004) states that eCoaching is a guideline implemented using the electronic medium. It focuses on the same goals as the habitual guidance. eCoaching is different from the usual guidance in the context of communication that exists using electronics with its customers. Marino (2004) said that eCoaching is a process that links long distance between coaches and guided through technology and distance communication methods.

eCoaching allows coaches and coachees to work independently in place and time across the boundaries of time and geography simultaneously. Coaches will share knowledge and data repositories, and can connect with expert coaches to gain specialized knowledge. Hence, data can be collected and developed trends based on all electronic transactions (Marino 2004). According to Taranovych (2011), quantitative or empirical evidence of eCoaching's effectiveness rather than face-to-face guidance is minimal. The same is true of the eCoaching advantages and benefits. Most studies and analysis of guidance are in general and eCoaching is qualitatively self-reported by researchers (Marino 2004).

eCoaching - Theory & Practice Nexus

The eCoaching program produces smart partnerships involving three complementary parties as shown in Figure 1 namely the Ministry of Education, the Institute of Teacher Education Technical Education Campus and the school. The eCoaching initiative is a professional development model for novice teachers integrating technology, guidance and professional communities. At the same time, eCoaching initiatives will enhance the role and quality of lecturers as coaches of novice or experienced teachers in line with the current demands of the national education system.
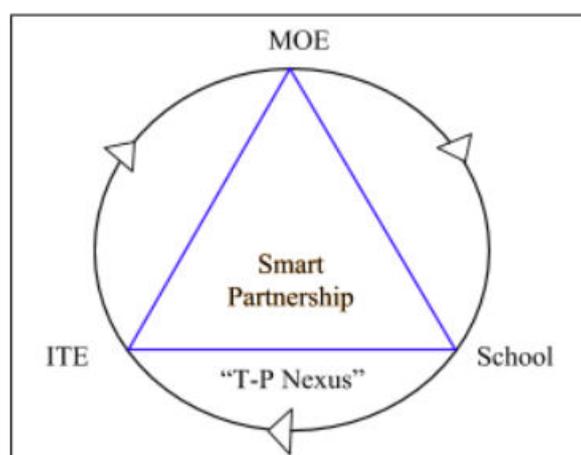

Figure 1: Smart Partnership

eCoaching Model

The novice teacher professional development model adapts the eCoaching Geissler model (2008). Based on **Figure 2**, novice teachers (coachee) have the option of interacting with counselors (coaches) or other collaborating parties. This option includes face-to-face communication as is the online communication process. Therefore, coaching can be dealt with either face-to-face or web-based, depending on the current situation.
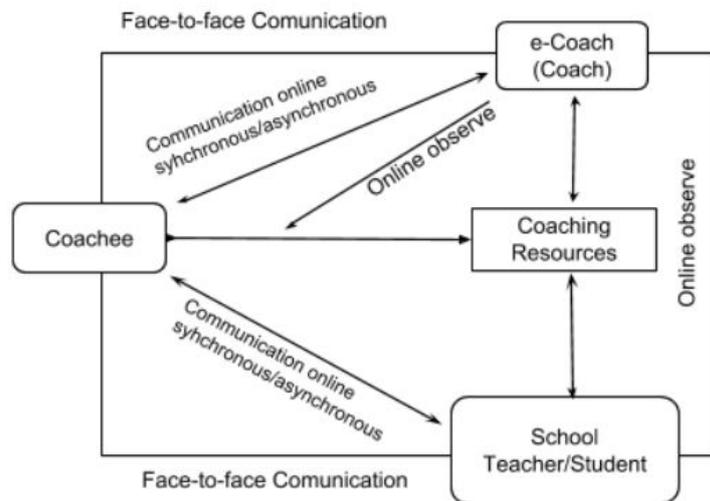

Figure 2: eCoaching Model (Adaptation: Geissler, 2008)

Based on the model in **Figure 2**, professional guidance activities are implemented collaboratively, forming communication according to the suitability of the situation. The supporting materials required during coaching sessions such as the Standard Documentation Assessment Curriculum (SDAC) and reference books or other supporting materials such as checklists, templates and others should be present at each participant. These guidance materials can also be stored as a material repository so that all stakeholders can easily make references. Web-based eCoaching, will enable supervision of materials and collaboration with other partners to be implemented online. Busch (2002) states that rules that can assist online guidance are checks or feedback, reflecting the situation in detail, brainstorming, discussion forums, simulations, polls and wikis (knowledge-based).

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, the Professional Development Model through eCoaching needs to be explored to guide new teachers (novices) of the Teacher Education Institute (ITE) to fulfill their needs while encompassing their content and approach. Through the implementation of the Professional Development Model, ITE lecturers will contribute significantly to the realization of MEB 2013-2025 to remain relevant and quality in the mainstream education system. eCoaching as one of the Professional Development Models to guide novice teachers. Implementing the eCoaching program will utilize appropriate systems and toolkit, and will involve lecturers as coaches according to the required competencies.

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