

## IN-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY IN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper reports on the portrait of in-service English teachers' knowledge and competence of developing syllabus and planning a lesson, and their competence of applying the syllabus and lesson plan. The study employed quantitative and qualitative method involving 80 in-service English teachers in West Java Province, Indonesia. The data were collected through two sets of questionnaires (on teachers' knowledge and competence), observations, and documents (seven sets of lesson plans). The results from both sets of the questionnaires (the teachers' knowledge and understanding, and teachers' competence in developing syllabus and lesson plans) were relatively low, 2.83 and 2.56 out of 5. However, the result from the observation seemed more promising (2.68 out of 4). These results indicate that the teachers' competence in conducting the lesson is better than their knowledge and competence in instructional design. This means that they needed more training in improving their knowledge and competence to develop syllabus and lesson plans.*

**Keywords:** teachers' knowledge and competence, syllabus, lesson plans

### A. Introduction

One of the teachers' competences mandated in the national regulation in Indonesia is pedagogic competence. The Decree of Minister of National Education No 16/2007 on Teacher Qualification and Competence Standar states that one of the pedagogic competences includes teachers' knowledge and competence in developing syllabus and lesson plans prior to their teaching practice in the classroom, as part of curriculum development. In the context of Indonesian National Standard of Education, this is reflected teachers' ability to formulate the given national education standards, such as content, process, and assessment standards into their instructional planning (syllabus and lesson plan) on the basis of their consideration of learners' potentials. In line with this, Richards (2001), Brown (1995), and Nunan (1989) state that learner factors, such as their backgrounds, expectation, their prior knowledge, and learning styles must be taken into consideration in curriculum development. The recognition of learner's characteristics is emphasized in overall process of curriculum development conducted by teachers in the school context. As it is stated in pedagogic competence that knowledge of learner's characteristics must be the one of the bases for planning instruction, implementation, and assessment of learning activities in school. Thus, pedagogic competence is one that is important for teachers to have.

However, a statistical result from the in-service teacher training held nationally by the government reports how low the teachers' pedagogic competence was. A survey in 2011 towards the in-service teachers in the training did not show satisfying result in their learning during their participation in the training (27.8%) (Alwasilah & Chodidjah, 2012). Besides, their professional knowledge and skill in developing materials was considered low. Based on the data taken from Teacher Competence Test administered to 243.619 teachers throughout the country, the mean score was below 50.

Surveys by Sundayana in 2010 and Suhendra and Sundayana in 2011 seem to support the existing data. In 2010, Sundayana conducted a survey to find out the in-service English teachers' understanding on the national standards of content and process for English subject in junior high school level. 85% of the teachers claimed that they did not understand the statements in the documents officially released by the ministry of national education and culture. They voiced that they did not take the standards as important documents to refer to in developing their lessons. Furthermore, in 2011, Suhendra and Sundayana surveyed a number of teachers on their competence in developing syllabus. It was revealed that they did not have sufficient knowledge and competence in developing syllabus.

Based on the data shown above, it needs a further study to get clearer picture of in-service teachers' knowledge and competence on the aspects related to syllabus and lesson development. This paper focuses on the in-service teachers in English subject in junior high school level in West Java Province, Indonesia. The survey enriches the data on teachers competences so that further effective and efficient actions can be taken to improve teachers' quality in Indonesian education system.

### B. Literature Review

It is no doubt to be assessed as professional, teachers have to have knowledge and competences in designing and developing lessons and to be able to conduct the lesson in the classroom. Law No. 14 (2005) on School Teachers and Higher Education Teachers states that a professional teacher has a minimum qualification of having undergraduate certificate (S1 or bachelor degree), and mastering four competences (pedagogic, professional, social and personality). Those who wish to have the profession as teachers in this country, they have to earn professional certificate through their participation in professional teacher education. It is stated in Law Nomor 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers that teachers in Indonesia must be academically qualified and professionally certified through both academic education and professional teacher education. Academic qualification for teachers must be equal to undergraduate degree or diploma 4 degree in related subject. As mandated in the law,

professional teacher education takes one year course focusing on strengthening or updating content knowledge and workshop on pedagogical content knowledge and conducting classroom action research while the candidates taking practicum in the assigned schools. This professional teacher education as it is stipulated in Ministry of National Education Decree No. 8 /2009 on pre-service professional teacher education is designed for undergraduates qualification in related subject. Whereas, for teachers in services, they have to joint professional teacher training held by accredited and assigned teacher education institutions. Meanwhile, those who have got their certificates, they have to improve knowledge and competences continuously through sustaining program on teacher education.

In relation to professional teachers, Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005, p. 11) mention that there are at least three important aspects of a professional teacher:

(1) "knowledge of learners and their development in social contexts that includes the of learning, human development, and language; (2) knowledge of subject matter and curriculum goals which includes the knowledge of educational goals and purposes for skills, content, subject matter; (3) and knowledge of teaching which includes knowledge of content and content pedagogy, teaching diverse learners, assessment, and classroom management."

The Minister's Decree No. 16 on Professional Teachers' Qualification and Competences infers that the first and the third aspects by Darling-Hammond & Bransford are in line with what is called pedagogic competence. Meanwhile, the second refers to professional competence. In other words, based on pedagogic competence, teachers are expected to design and develop lessons that are students centered, conduct the lessons, manage the class, assess the students' learning process, and improve the instructions. On the other hand, based on professional competence, teachers are expected to master the materials and develop the materials that suit the students' needs and interests.

In the official programs of teacher certification and teacher education, pedagogic competence is realised in the form of having the knowledge and competence in designing and developing instructions that includes mastering teaching materials, creating teaching aids, developing assessment, and developing syllabus and lessons. This is postulated in the National Standards of Education (NSE) and Guideline of Syllabus Design released by the National Board of Education. The guideline states that the whole process of designing instruction must be based upon National Education Standards, learning outcomes, content, process, and assessment standards and students' characteristics.

In designing instruction as recommended in NES, particularly process standard, teachers have to conduct the following procedure. First identify and analyze standard competences and basic competences mandated in the content standard of English for particular grade and semester. Second, select and develop core materials in the fom of text type which is recommended in the content standard. In selecting materials, teachers have to take into their consideration learners' characteristics and their prior knowledge. Third, formulate indicators of basic competences attainment by at least taking into account complexity of suggested core materials and learners' prior knowledge. Then, formulate further the indicators into learning objectives (outcomes). Fourth, select instructional activities that could help learners attain learning outcomes. In this connection, teachers should also consider learners' characteristics in selecting planned instructional activities. Finally, select and construct assessment tools that can identify learners' attainment of learning outcomes.

Shulman (1986) calls teachers' knowledge and competence in designing and developing lessons as *pedagogical content knowledge*. According to Grossman in Tom (1997, p. 232) *pedagogical content knowledge* is teachers' knowledge on instructional materials in the curriculum and students' knowledge towards the materials. In line with this, Goh, et al. (2005, p. 33) interpret Shulman's *pedagogical content knowledge* as "teachers' understanding of what is to be learnt and how it is to be taught". Interpreting the aspects stated by Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) and Shulman's concept in Indonesian context, in-service teachers' knowledge and competence in English subject in junior high school level include: (1) teachers' mastery of instructional materials stipulated in the national content standard and teachers' competence in interpreting the standard into the; (2) teacher's competence in developing materials; (3) teachers' knowledge of the principles and procedure of instruction mandated in the national process standard; and (4) teacher's knowledge and competence in selecting and developing assessment stated in the national standard of assessment. In practice, their ability in selecting and developing materials and instructional strategies must be adjusted to learner's characteristics as it is mandated in pedagogical competence for professional teachers in the Ministry of National Education Decree No. 16, 2006 on teachers' academic qualification and competencies. In this context, Shulman (in Grossman et.al. p. 207) indicates that pedagogical knowledge include teacher's ability to adjust teaching materials and ways of presenting them to learner's characteristics and backgrounds.

Teacher's knowledge of subject matter has a significant role on student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). This includes the understanding of pedagogical content knowledge such as choosing the most suitable topics for a certain group of learners, identifying parts of materials which may be difficult to learn, and the ability to create multiple examples and representations of challenging topics that make the content accessible to a wide range of learners (See also Tsui, 2003). Effective teachers need to know ways to solve problems coming from students in learning the knowledge being taught.

In addition to *pedagogical content knowledge*, a study conducted by Goh, et al. (2005) show that many teachers did not understand what they had to deliver. It proves that teachers do not know and master the concept, theories and even principles of teaching and learning as suggested by the existing syllabus or curriculum. Therefore, teachers do not have sufficient competence in designing syllabus and developing lessons. This is similar result of what was conducted by Sundayana (2010) that teachers' ignorance of the national standards (especially content, process and assessment standards) results in their low competence in syllabus design and lesson development. In the sense of surveying teachers' knowledge and competence in syllabus design, lesson development and classroom teaching practice is called teacher cognition and beliefs (Darling-Hammond & Bransford,

2005; Goh, et al., 2005). Other study conducted by Grossman cited by Borg (2006) examined the pedagogical content knowledge used by six beginning teachers of English in the USA focusing on the impact of teacher education on teachers' work in the classroom. All of the teachers mastered the content knowledge of English. Three of them had not undergone teacher education. The study indicated that teachers who had pedagogical content knowledge showed different conceptions of the objectives of teaching English, their ideas about what to teach, and their knowledge of learner understanding compared with the other three teachers who did not have formal teacher education. In other word, teachers who possessed pedagogical content knowledge tended to make curricular decisions, such as formulating learning objectives based and teaching materials based upon their knowledge of the students.

The studies cited indicate that teachers' knowledge of learners, their knowledge of pedagogical content and content to be taught will serve as the bases for their competences in teaching.

**C. Research Method**

This study employed quantitative and qualitative approach in the design of descriptive-qualitative (Gall, et al, 2003). In general this study portrays teachers' knowledge, understanding and competence in syllabus design and lesson development as the main data, and classroom teaching practice as the supporting data.

The participants surveyed in this study were 80 in-service teachers who taught English subject in junior high schools in West Java Province, Indonesia. The teachers were from seven subdistricts and cities such as Bandung, Bandung Barat, Bekasi, Majalengka, Indramayu, Cirebon and Sumedang. Among the teachers, 33 of them were observed while doing a teaching practice.

In order to collect the desired data, some instruments were used, for example two sets of questionnaire, observations and documents. The questionnaires were to get the information of the teachers' assessment on their knowledge, understanding and competence to design a syllabus and to develop a lesson. The participants assessed their own knowledge, understanding and competence towards the statements provided in the two sets of the questionnaire with 1-5 range of scale. The first set of questionnaire consisted of 24 statements related to the teachers' knowledge and understanding to syllabus design and instructional development based on the national standards. Meanwhile, the second set had 20 statements of the teachers' competence in applying the principles of syllabus design and instructional development.

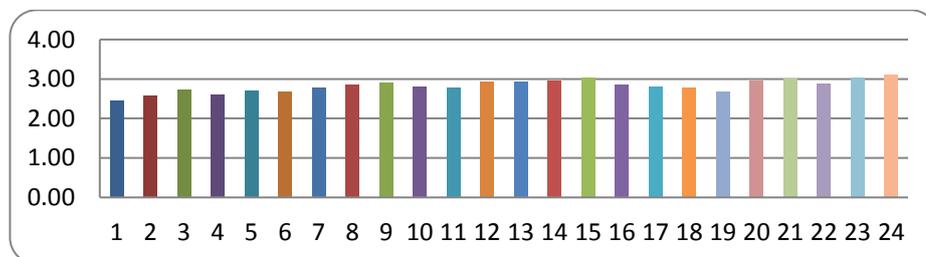
The other two instruments supported the first. The observations were conducted to get the real picture of how the teachers implemented what they had planned in the classroom. And, the document in this study were some sets of lesson plan develop by the teachers

**C. Data Presentation and Discussion**

With reference to concept of pedagogical content knowledge proposed by Shulman (1986) , data on teachers' knowledge and competence in designing and developing lessons are broken down into five aspects, (1) teachers' knowledge of instructional design principles, (2) their knowledge of steps or procedure of planning instruction, (3) their knowledge of instructional content, (4) their knowledge of selecting appropriate method of teaching, and teachers' knowledge of selecting appropriate assessment tools.

Based on the data collected through the questionnaires, observation and documents of lesson plans, the teachers' knowledge and competence in this study was considered low in syllabus design and instructional development. This result takes in the low competence in their teaching performance as well.

The first data to describe are taken from the questionnaires. The first set surveyed the teachers' knowledge and understanding of instructional design. There were 24 statements on the principles to design a syllabus and develop lessons based on the national content, process and assessment standards. It was found that the teachers showed relatively low level of knowledge and understanding of how to design syllabus and develop lessons based on the standards. The mean score was 2.83 out of 5. Below is the graph of the teachers' knowledge and understanding.

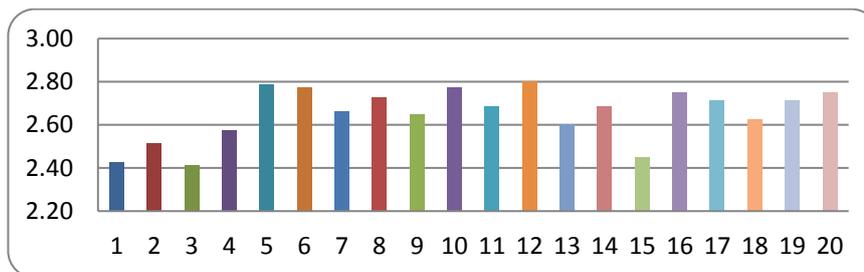


**Graph 1** The in-service teachers' knowledge and understanding on syllabus design and lesson development

The highest scores result in this set of survey are reached in the aspects of closing the class and eliciting (statements 15 and 21). Both were about conducting a lesson. Statements 24 and 25 also got high attention of which the statements were on applying instructional plan to classroom practice.

In contrast the least attention that the were gathered from the statements were numbers 1, 2, and 4, the other had quite similar results. The statements were all about designing a syllabus (the framework, principles, and stages of syllabus design). This can be said that the teachers had better knowledge and understanding on developing a lesson than desiging a sylabus. This caused by their familiarity with classroom practice (a small scope of instruction), compared to a bigger scope of instruction (syllabus for school's interest).

The second set of the questionnaire surveyed the teachers' competence in syllabus design and instructional development. This is to see whether what they knew and understood were also reflected in their competence. Of 20 aspects, the teachers competence reached relatively low level of competence (2.65 out of 5). The data is displayed below.



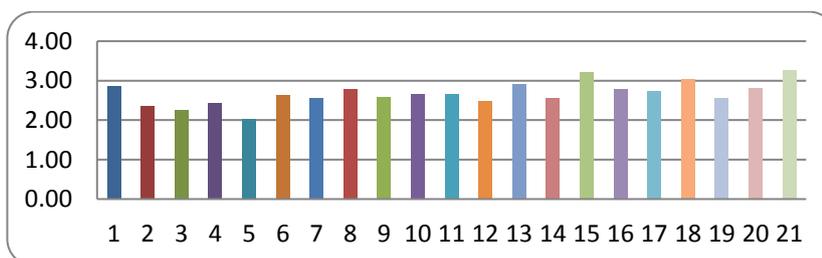
**Graph 2** The in-service teachers' competence of syllabus design and lesson development

Different from the result in the first set of questionnaire as displayed in the first graph, the findings in the second set varied significantly. Statements 5, 6, 10, 12, 16 and 20 had the most significant numbers. Statements 5 and 6 were on competences of developing instructional objectives and materials in English lesson. And, the rest was on opening and closing th class, and classroom management.

On the other hand, the lowest findings were on the statements 1, 3 and 15. They were about the competences in applying the national standards specifically to design a syllabus and develop a lesson and the in revising the syllabus and the instructional plan based on the findings during implementing the lessons. The data taken from the second set of questionnaire indicated teachers' self efficacy in desiging a syllabus and developing a lsson prior to teaching still needed improvement.

Another source of data collection is from observation. 33 in-service teachers were observed while conducting a lesson. The observations took the focus on the steps of the instruction conducted by the teachers. The result seem to better than the ones in the questionnaires, though it is still considered less satisfying.

The observation used an observation sheet to scale the teacher's performance. Of 21 aspects being observed, the mean score of the observation result was 2.68 out of 4. This indicates less sufficient competence of the teachers in conducting English language instruction in the classroom. The following is the data displayed in a graph.



**Graph 3** The in-service teachers' performace

The graph shows that the highest scores were reached in the aspects of numbers 15, 18 and 21. The aspects covered being open to the students' responses, monitoring the students progress in learning and providing a follow up activity in the end of the lesson such as giving homework. Meanwhile, the lowest scores were reached in the aspects of numbers 2, 3 and 5 respectively on pre-teaching (preparing the class), pre-activity (warming up activity) and fluency and accuracy of language use. It can be inferred that in terms of classroom management the teachers were good at handling the class. However, they need to improve their language proficiency as the content of their instruction.

The last findings were based on the seven sets of the teachers' documents of their plans to conduct instruction in the classroom. Prior to teaching, the teachers developed their instructional plans in a special format (commonly used by teachers in Indonesia). The elements in the format are class identity, Competence Standards and Basic Competence, indicators, objectives, materials,

activities, and assessment. The analysis sees whether or not these elements were interconnected one another to promote learning in the classroom.

From the documents, it was revealed that all of the instructional plans had the format. The elements were explicitly shown in the plans. However, there are two points that could be highlighted from the data, the formulation of objectives and activities. Four instructional plans were quite poor in their formulation, that they did not specifically mention what to measure in the learning. For example, an instructional plan showed that the objectives of the lessons were *to arrange jumbled sentences into a good descriptive text and to write a descriptive text about someone's job in three sentences*. The first objective does not seem to be an objective, but rather an activity, while the second does not show in what condition that the students were able to write the text.

In terms of stages of activities, the plans provided activities that are relatively general in the sense of effectiveness. The lessons start with opening and greeting, and moving to main activities, in which the activities are going straight to the objectives with less clear sequenced stages. An example of this was shown by a plan with the objectives mentioned earlier. It writes observing pictures of different professions, arranging the sentences into a good descriptive text, writing a descriptive text in three sentences, and reporting the result. It can be said that the process of instruction was in a hurry that the students were expected to be able to write a text (though a very short text) soon after they were exposed to a descriptive text.

The findings lead to the teachers' less competence in developing a lesson for English course, where language needs more exercises and exposures. This might be caused by limited guidance for the teachers in developing a lesson. This might also lead to an assumption that they tended to copy one's instructional plan into their own without making necessary adjustments to their own situations and conditions (Sundayana, 2010).

#### D. Conclusion and Recommendation

Two important competencies of English teachers in Indonesia are having the knowledge and understanding what to teach and how to teach it. These competencies are mentioned in the Law No. 14 year 2005 on School Teachers and Higher Education Teachers. They are pedagogic and professional competencies. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005: 11) state that there are three aspects that a professional teacher has, they are knowledge of learners' characteristics, knowledge of instructional materials, and knowledge of teaching and learning principles.

The collected data in the paper provide presentation of how knowledgeable and competent the junior high school in-service teachers were in developing syllabus and lesson plans. It was revealed that the in-service teachers' knowledge and competence on preparing the lesson and conducting the lesson needed improvement. They seemed to have difficulty in understanding the national standards, not to mention to apply them in the classrooms. This needs attention because we do believe that teachers' competence in developing effective instructions promotes high quality of students' learning.

One of the ways to help teachers to become more knowledgeable and competent is through intensive and continuing training. They can be trained through exercises on how to understand the national standards and how to implement the standards in their schools with their colleagues and students.

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Descriptors

Graph 1

No	Teachers' Knowledge
1	Foundations to develop syllabus for English course
2	Principles to develop syllabus
3	Types of syllabus
4	Stages of syllabus development
5	Statements in content standard and SKL
6	Statements in process standards and assessment standards
7	Stating indicators
8	Stating objectives
9	Materials development
10	Selecting and creating media
11	Approaches and methods of teaching
12	Insructional stages
13	Opening the lesson
14	Activities to reach the indicators and objectives
15	Closing the lesson
16	Selecting and developing assessment
17	Syllabus design
18	Assessment to show learning success
19	Revising syllabus and lesson plan
20	Classroom management
21	Elicitationstrategies
22	Helping develope stdents' character values
23	Assessing students' character values
24	Adjusting lesson plan in the classroom

Graph 2

No	Pernyataan
1	Apply the SKL, content standards, process standards, and assessment standrads in syllabus and lesson plan
2	Applying the principles of syllabus design and lesson planning
3	Developing syllabus based on the national standards
4	Stating indicators based on the basic competences
5	Stating objectives in lesson plan
6	Selecting and developing materials
7	Selecting and creating media
8	Applying appropriate methods of teaching
9	Staging instructional activities based on the process standards
10	Opening the lesson
11	Varying instructional activities to reach the indicators and objectives
12	Closing the lesson
13	Selecting and developing assessment
14	Conducting remedial
15	Revising syllabus and lesson plans
16	Managing the class
17	Eliciting
18	Help develop students' character values
19	Assessing students' character values
20	Adjusting lesson plan to the class condition

Graph 3

NO	INDIKATOR/ASPEK YANG DIAMATI
1.	Preparing the room and media
2.	Preparing students to learn
3.	Brainstorming
4.	Stating the competences
5..	Teachers' language fluency and accuracy
6.	Mastering the materials

7.	Providing activities to reach the competences
8.	Staging the activities
9.	Managing the class
10.	Contextual teaching
11.	Using English as the main language
12.	Time allotment
13.	Using and managing the media
14.	Using learning sources
15.	Open to students' responses
16.	Facilitating T-S and S-S' interactions
17.	Inviting students' enthusiasm
18.	Monitoring learning progress
19.	Assessing the learning
20.	Making reflection with the students
21.	Giving follow up