REVITALIZATION OF TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHER TRAINEES’ TEACHING PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF GALUH UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The present study reports on an effort of improving teacher trainees’ teaching performance quality. With reference to Indonesian Qualification Framework (the so-called Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia/KKNI), this study is concerned with curriculum development taking place in Teacher Education Faculty of Galuh University involving seven educational study programs (Indonesian Language, Biology, English, Accounting, History, Sports, and Mathematics). The curriculum development process also involved related stakeholders of the faculty. To investigate the curriculum impacts, survey, performance assessment, and portfolio analysis in the study were intended to draw the trainees’ achieved competencies as required to be professional teachers on the basis of newly revitalized teacher education curriculum. The senior students of those study programs as the focal trainees participated in the study. The quantitative data indicated the trainees’ scores of their reflected pedagogical and academic competencies in teaching practices, while the emerging qualitative included their perspectives on their perceived experiences of teaching their own subjects. The findings suggest that the new curriculum gave meaningful impacts to the trainees’ better performance, though it needs revisiting in terms of its ‘integratedness’ of technological, pedagogical, and academic (content knowledge) competencies as needed by the trainees.

Key words: KKNI/Indonesian Qualification Framework, professional competencies, teacher education

INTRODUCTION

Faculty of Education plays an important role in educating pre-service teachers in Indonesia. In terms of its existence, the faculty is guided by its vision, mission, and strategies/goals. Faculty of Education of Galuh University, with its vision to be outstanding, adaptive, credible, and globally competitive teacher training faculty, is committed to be the center of excellence in training professional teachers. The faculty is recently improving its academic performance and atmosphere so as to get high standards of giving services to its stakeholders through implementing the so-called Tri Drama, comprising education, research and community services.

Faculty of education of Galuh University, a private college established in 1981s in Ciamis regency, has indicated significant roles in educating subject matter teachers. The faculty offers seven educational programs: Indonesian Language, Biology, English, Accounting, History, Sports, and Mathematics. The faculty offers courses that possibly qualify the trainees to have required competences such as personal, social, pedagogical, and academic/professional. Personal competence refers to the trainees’ good personality as being educated through such courses as Religion, Pancasila education, and Civics. Pedagogical competence has to do with the basics of how to cater for students with reference to their psychological and age factors, principles of learning, professional ethics, and classroom management. The courses that offer pedagogical competence include Psychology, Educational Foundation, Educational Management, Curriculum studies, Professional ethics in education, and Guidance and Counselling. Professional and academic competence covers the trainees’ content knowledge dealing their own study program that comprises specific courses that support their understanding of their own field. In addition,
social competence supports the trainees to be good at socialization process. The relevant courses include Social Science and Cultural Studies, Field Study, and other related subjects.

Quality assurance of teacher education training plays an important role in the process of improving the outputs that meet the required standards. To avoid the ‘miss-match’ between the faculty outputs and the stake holders’ expectations, curriculum development and evaluation of the existing teacher education curriculum are central. In a sense, on the basis of needs analysis and the guidelines of KKNI (Indonesian Qualification Framework/IQF), revitalization of the curriculum is worth-noting. IQF illustrates the nine levels of competence gradation as needed by ‘the market’ and society. By means of IQF, the required competences of teacher education outputs of the faculty indicate level 6, which is similar to Bachelor degree. The sixth level suggests that the outputs be able to master their chosen discipline in terms of theoretical concept and knowledge (ability to implement a theory-into-practice program), to formulate in its procedural action and problem solving, to utilize appropriate science and technologies, and be able to adapt to countering contexts that illuminate the problems they face. In addition, Susilo (2015) confirms that level six shows good attitudes and values, working competences, field knowledge, and managerial competences.

Teacher education curriculum: Approaches to its revitalization

The current trend of postmodernism challenges the educational curriculum to be more adaptable to society needs. Postmodernism, as emerging concept that elicits lucid discussion about political, social, literary, artistic, and educational circles, has close relationship with curriculum development (Slattery, 1995, p. 33). Slattery further argues, curriculum development in postmodernism is a process approach to education, that is capable of engendering a significant reconceptualization of the nature of schooling globally as well as the experience of education locally because it respects the unique development of the individual and recognizes the interrelationship of all experiences (p. 252). Ideally, thus, teacher education curriculum can facilitate stakeholders with ‘rooms’ for paving the principles: ‘education for all’ and ‘education for human civilization’.

Reform of curriculum of teacher education seems to be the most vital ‘milestone’ of all systemic education service improvements. The revitalized curriculum normally affects the better outputs or graduates who are responsible for the next generation’s educational transfer. The ways of how they in the future hold their own classroom practices will be very much dependent on what they are now experiencing. Pedagogical implications of their past experiences in colleges, in other words, affect their classroom practices (see Senior, 2006). This means that the quality of their professional experiences will also influence their teaching quality that depicts their students’ educational quality.

Teacher education curriculum should be conceptualized as a comprehensive model. Sukmadinata (2004) outlines that it aims at enabling the trainees to have balanced competences in personal, social, pedagogical, and academic accounts (p. 212). It also offers sufficient knowledge bases. Shulman (2009) mentions some categories of the teacher’s knowledge base:

- content knowledge
- general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter
- curriculum knowledge
- pedagogical content knowledge
- knowledge of learners and their characteristics
- knowledge of educational contexts
- knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds

The educational curriculum also functions as the bridge of training the students to be more critical and sensitive to their environments at the very challenging era nowadays. Jacobs (2010) affirms that 21st Educational principles should focus on learning and innovation skills that promote “creativity and
innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration” (p. 212). Those educational indicators should be reflected in the ways of how curriculum developed in terms of its scope and sequence, syllabus, content outline, textbooks used, and courses of study (see Posner, 1992). While the revitalization of teacher education curriculum is currently being revitalized, scant attention is given to the evaluation of the impact to the trainees’ improved performances. This study, thus, aims at revealing the trainees’ achievements in their experiences of teaching practices as affected by the existing curriculum.

METHODS
The study follows the principles of a curriculum (program) evaluation (Posner, 1992, p. 244) as Tyler’s measurement-based model suggests. The steps comprise such follows:

1. Establishing broad educational objectives: as indicated by the faculty’s concern with improving outputs’ better quality;
2. Classifying objectives: improving the teacher trainees’ personal, social, professional, and pedagogical competences;
3. Operationally defining objectives: each competence is determined by its descriptors;
4. Identify situations: teaching practice in-situ-schools have implemented two different curriculum (School-based/KTSP and Scientific-based approach curriculum 2013)
5. Designing or selecting measurement instruments: rubric for performance measurement of each competence (representing the trainees’ overall professional performance)
6. Collect performance data: getting scores of all the descriptors from weekly/formative and its general average and last project/summative (general average) in final examination of practice teaching;
7. Compare performance data with behaviorally stated objectives: final scores of each trainee as compared to the ideal and balanced achievements in specifically academic and pedagogical competences.

The study involved senior teacher students of the seven study programs of the faculty who had finished their teaching practices (off-campus teaching program) at schools. The scores were collected from the documented final examination of teaching practice that represent daily performances as administered by trainees’ school subject matter mentors and study program supervisors. The measurements were based on the generated descriptors covering personal, social, pedagogical, and academic/professional competences. Testimonies and comments as their reflections also emerged as qualitative accounts in the findings of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Overall, the findings of the calculated scores of teaching performances under the one-year-try-out of the revised curriculum indicate trainees’ improvements. The mean score of each study program was bigger than 3.00. The history study program got the highest mean score. Unfortunately, their mean score of pedagogical competence was less than that of academic/professional competence as the following table shows.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Study Program</th>
<th>Mean Score of Academic Competence</th>
<th>Mean Score of Pedag. Competence</th>
<th>Mean Score of Daily Performance</th>
<th>Mean Score of Final Exam</th>
<th>Final Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Indonesian Lang.</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study assumes that the recent on-going process of refining of the education faculty curriculum offers academic and professional benefits for the trainees’ best teaching performances. As Posner (2006) outlines, evaluation of certain curriculum should be corroborated with real captured and examined actions of the trainees. The indicative betterment of teaching materials also supported the trainees’ pedagogical perspectives, though, as the evidence suggests, their achievement of pedagogical competence was less than that of academic/professional one.

The emerging qualitative data, self-reflections of their teaching practice experiences, were generated from four points of the trainees’ salient competences. The required reflections included knowledge or teaching material mastery (content knowledge), teaching approaches, methods, and strategies (pedagogy knowledge), teaching strategies to motivate students to learn (pedagogy content knowledge), and teaching strategies using ICT (technological pedagogical content knowledge /TPACK). Their testimonies indicate that the trainees have good command in understanding of the materials being taught and creating teaching-learning process that enable students to actively participate in their interactive classroom. However, some trainees acknowledged that they still faced problems in encountering the new materials found in school curriculum and alternating suitable or appropriate teaching strategies. Regarding technological knowledge, most of them admitted that they could use ICT in their efforts to cater for their students’ needs of learning. To note, then, the ‘integratedness’ of pedagogical and content knowledge should be enhanced so as to support the successful strategies of teaching.

CONCLUSION

The revitalization process of teacher education curriculum at the research site seems to challenge the stakeholders to be more attentive to the impact of the newly-revised curriculum in terms of its feasibility, accountability, and productivity. Under the spirit of IQF or KKNI, the significances of curriculum evaluation virtually indicates the actual cross-check and balance strategy among the input (of the needs analysis), the process, and the product) as expected and perceived by the stakeholders. The existing curriculum still really needs refining.
REFERENCES


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