

CHALLENGING ROLES OF THE TEACHER IN INDONESIAN MODERN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT – Since year 2000, Indonesian ministry of education has allowed open curriculum system especially for adopting foreign curriculum system into national middle school system. As a result, there are demanding trends amongst parents and communities to reshape the role of teacher. The traditional instruction which emphasized the role of teacher as primarily source of knowledge is considered no longer effective to cope with latest trend of globalisation and internet technologies. For this reason, the article addressed the changing roles of modern teacher along with enhancing instructional activities. The article also examines the important trends that commonly ignored by the teachers such as: advance internet applications and characteristics of digital generation, and link them with variety of learning approaches.

Keywords: *Trends amongst parents and communities, roles of modern teacher, advance internet applications, characteristics of digital generation.*

INTRODUCTION

Since year 2000, the Indonesian ministry of education has allowed all schools to adopt the foreign curriculum systems. Since the policy was introduced, major elite middle schools are racing to embrace this foreign curriculum and combined with national curriculum. Combining both curriculum creates the impact that teacher should be able to deal with the globalisation issues, complexities and dynamic learning environment (Glover et.al., 2007; Grisham & Wolsey, 2006). The traditional schools which apply uniform approach to the students are considered no longer effective to cater the needs of students (Bedi & Garg, 2000). There are strong movements amongst Indonesian parents demanding the changing roles of teacher from being a primary source of knowledge to become educator and coach (Djafri, 2017; AlAgha et.al., 2010). Being educator and coach, teacher should equipped himself/herself with appropriate coach education and continuing professional development to understand the needs of students (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003).

Modern teacher is expected to develop balanced skills between knowledge and pedagogical skills. Knowledge skills that commonly applied in traditional schools are no longer considered sufficient in modern school. With increasing trend of competition amongst schools especially in private schools has shaped up the paradigm of teaching in modern school (Baedowi, 2015). Pedagogical skills have evolved become important competitive factors for all schools to survive. The voices of the students, parents, principal and other stakeholders should be taken as important inputs to improve entire quality education system (Ingvarson et.al., 2005; Aicinena, 1999).

Modern teaching paradigm requires all teachers to upgrade their skills and knowledge to the expected levels required by the students, parents and the school (stakeholders of the education) (Roloff, 2008). This article examines the important roles of middle school teacher for carrying his or her daily professional work in school.

ROLES OF TEACHING

The teaching instruction in the twenty-first century should comprised of follows (Arends, 2014; Cassidy, 2004):

- Teaching in multicultural society. Challenges of the modern teacher nowadays are dealing with multi cultures environment in our society. Asian students tend to be quieter and passive compared to their colleagues in the west. Respect and politeness culture tend to dominant in Asian learning culture (Biggs & others, 1996). With multiple curriculum systems that apply in middle schools, teacher should be able to address multicultural issues as prerequisite to identifying the process of cognitive development of each student (Vygotsky, 1980). Although it sounds difficult, every teacher is advised to develop complete historical database system that captures the characteristics and trends of the students. By doing this, it is expected that the teacher have better preparation to cater with the student needs (Pahl, Barrett, & Kenny, 2004).
- Teaching for the construction of meaning. The traditional view of knowledge carries paradigm that knowledge is something lie out there and waiting to be discovered (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Learning is not merely about knowledge and truths, but also a social and cultural activity (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). Knowledge should be considered as personal, and that learners build the meaning of knowledge through interaction with others. Learning should not be shrunk into narrow meaning such as efforts to earn good marks or to imitate the teacher. Learning supposed to be deliberating and motivating the students. The ultimate purpose of teaching is to assist students become independent and self-regulated learners (McLeod, 2011).
- Teaching for active learning. Learning should not be interpreted as activities to pursue the objectives of the curricula or exams. Banner and Cannon identify the true meaning of learning as follows (Banner & Cannon, 2017): (1) learning means knowing and mastering a subject. The task of the teacher does not stop until delivering the materials and meeting with the objectives of curriculum, teacher should make sure his or her students understand the materials as well; (2) learning embodies the act of learning. Sullo (2009) emphasize that teacher should possess infectious enthusiasm for learning itself, as much as the student's own curiosity about the teacher's subject. Bandura supported this idea that teacher should act as role model for his or her students (Bandura, 1969); (3) learning requires keeping up with one's subject. It does not mean that teacher should stay side by side with knowledge instead of actual pursuit of that knowledge. Pursuing knowledge should be treated as effective habit of a teacher; (4) learning conveys the spirit and love of learning to others. Blundsdon et.al.(2003) emphasized that all teachers must care passionately about what they teach, and they should be able to reveal to their students how exciting learning can it be; (5) learning means being open to the knowledge of others, especially of one's own students. Teacher must work hard to encourage their students to make known their knowledge to other students; therefore, they should provide the setting, free from any pressure and evaluation, for students to do it (Dunn & Dunn, 1993); (6) learning provides the basis for independent thought. Teacher should recognize that learning is not about everything needs to be related to instruction, that thinking is a world without end, without known outcome; (7) learning justifies learning. Teacher's confidence in the inherent worth of knowledge is fundamental to all instruction. Teacher should not deliver materials that he or she does not believe it.
- Teaching and accountability. Current trends in teacher assessments and recruitments are surrounded with extended training programs for the teachers. National educational rules require that having competency alone in academic subject matter is no longer sufficient, particularly for teaching in classrooms that contain students with various special needs (Bashori, 2015). Motivation theory emphasizes the important skill of the teacher in classroom to implement mastery-oriented classroom goals, student decision making, autonomy, recognition and support (Bjork, 2005; Pintrich, 2003).
- Teaching and choice. Nowadays, there many curriculum systems apply in Indonesian schools. It makes us to reflect: should we move away from notions of fixed curriculum and fixed ways of knowing. The other question also arises related to the growing trends of parents questioning the efficacy of the standardized school (Baedowi, 2015). Should all students expose the efficacy of the same ideas in particular subjects, at the same time and in the same manner?.

- Teaching with new views about abilities. Common IQ and common knowledge tests have little impact to do with learner's ability or learning capacity, but instead of reflecting his or her social and cultural background. Learners from middle up incomes often do better on the tests rather than the learners come from poor family. Gardner challenges this view with multiple intelligence concept, where every teacher is expected to accommodate multiple intelligence frameworks in his/her instruction strategy that comprised of (Gardner, 1983): logical intelligence, verbal intelligences, body movement (kinesthetic) intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalist intelligence, visual spatial intelligence, and musical intelligence. Multiple intelligences framework also can be treated as a part of career development program for each student.
- Teaching and technology. Technology has become inseparable part of the modern learning culture where internet technology has evolved as giant library for all learners for all ages (Shambaugh & Magliaro, 2006). Middle school students are digital generations where they have been exposed with internet technologies since early ages (Buckingham & Willett, 2013). The use of internet applications and social media should receive special attentions by every teacher and it should become essential parts of instructional technologies (Seaman and Tinti-Kane, 2013; Dabbagh and Kitsantas, 2012). Digital generation emphasizes on fast delivery, mobile access and real-time interaction (Mellow, 2005; Tapscott, 2008).

CATEGORIES OF EFFECTIVE TEACHER

The roles of teaching into four categories of becoming an effective teacher as follows (Arends, 2014):

- Effective teachers have personal qualities that allow them to develop authentic human relationships, with their students, parents, and colleagues and to create democratic, socially just classrooms for children and adolescents. Academic motivation arises from a complex interaction of factors in the environment and within the learners; every learner should be considered as an active processor of information and his or her motives and goals are explicit information for every teacher (Weiner, 1972). Maurer and Sachs emphasizes that learning is not just cognitive matters, instead of encompassing all stakeholders in learning process as role models for the students (Maurer & Sachs, 2005).
- Effective teachers have positive dispositions toward knowledge. There are at least three aspects that effective teachers should develop as follows: (1) broad knowledge bases that deal with subject matter. Mastering subject matter until details is a mandatory skill for all effective teachers; (2) human development and learning. Effective teacher should possess adequate skills to approach and develop one's learning style and inner talents; (3) pedagogy. Every effective teacher is required to develop good teaching methods and systematic thinking; Gagne elaborated the pedagogy of teaching into (Gagné, 1970): identification of learner's capabilities; selection of appropriate instructional events; and task analysis for cumulative learning. All teachers should be able to use this knowledge to utilize the science and art of their teaching practice.
- Effective teachers command a repertoire of teaching practices, known to stimulate student motivation, to enhance student achievement of basic skills, to develop higher-level thinking, and to produce self-regulated learners. Motivation theories elaborate key motivation factors as: expectancy of success, goal orientation, and self-attributions about success and failure outcomes (Weiner, 1990).
- Effective teachers are personally ready toward reflection and problem solving. They should keep in mind that learning to teach is a lifelong process, and they are required to be able to identify situations and adapt, and be able to apply their professional knowledge aptly to improve student learning and promote overall quality of education in the school (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 2013).

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

To sustain the roles of effective teachers in the classroom, Arrends (2004) defines the following instructional activities as follows:

- Content. Content refers to the knowledge, skill, rule, concept, or creative process that expected to students to learn. Gagne identified five variety of learning skills that all teachers should attach in their content such as (Gagné, 1970): (1) verbal information; (2) intellectual skills; (3) cognitive strategies; (4) motor skills and (5) attitudes.
- Materials. Materials are the tangible written, physical, or visual stimuli that are used in instruction.

- **Instructional strategies.** Selecting a variety of instructional strategies used to teach content is a central planning decision for teachers. Common instructional strategies that used in the classroom are: (1) behaviourism; (2) cognitivism; (3) constructivism; and (4) social learning; Behaviourism perceives that learning is about changing behaviour (Duit & Treagust, 1998). Cognitive theories look beyond behaviour to explain brain-based learning (Chamot & O'malley, 1994). Cognitivism emphasizes on the mechanism of the human brain of capturing and retrieving knowledge (Skehan, 1998). Constructivism views learning as a process in which the learner actively constructs or builds new ideas or concepts. And social learning theory, conjectures that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modelling (Sweller, 1988). In order to reach the maximum results, teacher should possess adequate knowledge and skills to combine these techniques into instructional strategies (Zimmerman & others, 1989).
- **Teacher behaviour.** Teacher carries out list of activities during a lesson such as: to conduct the lesson and to assist students in learning activities. Bandura emphasizes that the teacher's behaviour is the direct model and the most important model of learning for the students (Bandura, 1969). Students learn by observing the model presented in the class (Ernest, 1989). According to cognitive models and theories of academic motivation (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996), Teacher plays important roles in implementing mastery-oriented classroom goals, student decision making, autonomy, and recognition and support (Bandura, 1978).
- **Structure of the lesson.** Structure of the lesson refers to actions that take place at the certain points in the class period or the lesson presentation (Lodewyk & Winne, 2005). Teacher needs to plan for the structure of a lesson.
- **Learning environment.** Teacher should be able to create type of learning that fits to the learning subject. Piaget emphasizes knowledge is an interaction process between the learner and the environment (Ginsburg and Oppen, 1988; Bond, 2012). Three of them highly related one another. Bandura proposes of using two types of operant conditioning such as: vicarious consequences and self-imposed consequences (Bandura, 1978). Vicarious consequences are associated with the observed behaviours of others. That is, a model receives reinforcement or punishment for certain behaviour, and the consequence to the model generates emotional effects in the learner. In order to effectively create good role model, a positive model should be reinforced regularly, while negative model should always be removed or suppressed.
- **Students.** Managing student characteristics is essential classroom learning topic. They comprised of: individual differences, readiness for learning, and motivation (Bloom, 1976). Piaget highlights three important classroom issues that every student needs to develop (Wadsworth, 1996): (1) how-to-learn skills; (2) transfer of learning, and (3) problem solving skills. Every student should be taught about how-to-learn skills. Every subject has its own unique way to learn it. For instance, Mathematics requires logical thinking and drilling, while language requires variety of delivery (Borg, 2003). Gagne identified the important aspects of the learning as follows (Gagné, 1970): (1) Learning is an important causal factor in development. (2) Human learning is accumulative process; (3) Human learning is both complex and diverse; Human learning cannot be reduced to either stimulus-response associations, or the insight experiences described by the Gestalt theorists; (4) Learning is the set of cognitive processes that transforms the stimulation from the environment into capabilities.
- **Duration and Location of the lesson.** Boredom in the class is the common problems faced by all teachers. To cope this issue, teacher is expected to prepare various problem-based learning and combined with location of the lesson such as: outbound activities, visiting industries, etc (Ainley & Ainley, 2011).

CONCLUSION

With more open curriculum adoption to foreign systems, the Indonesian middle school teacher is expected to switch from traditional system where teacher acts as primarily source of knowledge to the embracing the roles of educating and coaching. The article examined the dynamic and complexities learning environment faced by modern teacher. The teacher should be able to address the challenging learning environment such as: teaching in multicultural society, constructing meaningful teaching, promoting active learning, teaching and accountability, teaching and choice, teaching new views about

abilities, and utilizing technology in teaching. Teachers also should know about the several categories of effective teachers and apply them in instructional activities.

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