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Abstract: This study investigated the difficulty level of numerous teaching skills included in the classroom factors of the Dynamic Model of Educational Effectiveness Research. These teaching skills are represented in eight classroom factors i.e. Orientation, Structuring, Modeling, Application, Questioning, Assessment, Creating Classroom as a Learning Environment, and Time Management. Teacher has been found to be the most important actor in education and therefore it is important to find effective ways of improving teaching quality. Understanding the difficulty level of each teaching skill can serve as a basis to develop a better teacher development program. In this study, classroom observation was conducted to 59 English teachers from Banten and DKI. The Rasch Model was used to analyze the data to check the difficulty level of each teaching skill. In average, among the eight classroom factors of the Dynamic Model, Orientation, Structuring, Modeling, and Application were the most difficult teaching skills. This finding provides important foundation on what to prioritize in a teacher development program.

Keywords: teacher quality, teaching skills, teacher development program

Introduction

It is widely recognized that teacher has a very important role. A large number of studies have consistently found that teacher is the most influential factor (e.g. Creemers, 1994; Harris & Muijs, 2005; Marzano, 2007; Van der Werf, Creemers, De Jong, & Klaver, 2000). Therefore, it is not surprising to see that government in many countries has prioritized teacher development program in order to improve the quality of education. In Indonesia as the context of the study, various programs have been developed not only by government but also non-government institutions. Some examples are: in-service teacher training [INSET], the Islamic Schools English Language Program [ISELP], and the Madrasah Education Development Program [MEDP] (ADB, 2006; Hendayana, 2007; Jazadi, 2003).

In general, however, the teacher development programs have generally been criticized as ineffective, while the teachers have remained teaching in their usual fashion. Some authors have identified some possible causes, which include large classroom size, heavy teaching loads, insufficient preparation time for the teachers, noisy classrooms due to a lack of soundproofing and an ill classroom design, as well as equipment shortages (Hendayana, 2007; Nielson, 2003; Thair & Treagust, 2003). In addition, these authors also underline other issues such as the pressure of the national exam, which makes teachers take a safe approach to preparing the students for this test, ad hoc programs, the authority of multiple senior staff members, a bureaucratic environment, and the dependence upon external resources.

Consequently, it is not surprising to see the low quality of Indonesian teachers. Kaluge, Setiasih, and Tjahjono (2004) for instance found that teachers were not capable of creating an active, joyful and effective learning environment. Similarly, Utomo (2005) explained that the Indonesian classrooms in general were characterized by a didactic, whole-class style of teaching.
Individual learners’ needs were not really addressed and students’ ideas, opinions and conceptions about their world were not really recognized. Furthermore, Utomo (2005) viewed that the lesson mostly focus only on one topic while no links were made with previous lessons, daily life situations or other subject domains. Sadly, the recent situation is not different. As part of the certification program, the government launched a teacher competence test. In 2012, the national average score of teachers teaching in various levels of schooling was approximately 40 – 60 (out of 100) (Suharto, 2012). Moreover, the findings of a large scale study of the World Bank shows that certification has not yet improved the teaching quality and the student outcome although it has made teaching profession more attractive (Ree, Al-Samarrai, & Iskandar, S., 2012).

Considering this low quality, hence, it is urgent to find appropriate strategies to improve the quality of teachers, which could address the problems found in the previous teacher development programs. In this case, the results of educational effectiveness research particularly teacher effectiveness research could provide relevant basis to decide what to do when we want to improve the quality of teachers. Teacher effectiveness research deal with various factors at the teacher level that are found to be related to student outcome. In other words, when teachers perform those factors, their students’ outcome will improve.

One model of effective classroom based on the results of teacher effectiveness research has been proposed by Creemers and Kyriakides (2008), which is named the Dynamic Model of Educational Effectiveness Research. As seen in Figure 1, the model has four levels i.e. national, school, teacher/classroom and student levels. Teacher/classroom level is emphasized in this model, while the context and school levels are expected to provide the conditions necessary for maximizing its effectiveness.

Figure 1 The Dynamic model of Educational Effectiveness (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008)
Based on the findings of the teacher effectiveness studies, the teacher/classroom level of the model has linked the observable teacher instructional roles to student learning outcomes. Eight factors have been defined at the classroom level: 1) orientation, 2) structuring, 3) questioning, 4) teaching modeling, 5) application, 6) management of time, 7) the classroom as a learning environment (CLE), and 8) classroom assessment. ‘Orientation’ concerns the explanation of the objectives, which is expected to help the students understand the importance of their learning activities. ‘Structuring’ refers to the explanation of the distribution of the series of activities of the lesson. ‘Questioning’ entails the attempt to categorize the questions in terms of difficulty level and type (product and process) and the reaction to the students’ responses. ‘Modeling’ includes the provision of strategies of learning or the encouragement of students to develop their own. ‘Application’ relates to the immediate practice of the topics taught during the lesson. ‘Management of time’ requires the teacher to organize his/her lesson in such a way that the students’ attention spans are maximized and that they are engaged in tasks throughout the lesson. ‘CLE’ includes the following components: 1) teacher-student interaction, 2) student-student interaction, 3) students’ treatment by the teachers, 4) competition among the students, and 5) classroom disorder. Finally, effective teachers collect information on their students’ knowledge and skills in order to identify their learning needs.

The above factors cover various teaching approaches, such as constructivism and direct instruction or mastery learning. Orientation and modeling, for instance, which are the main elements of constructivism, are intended to develop students’ motivation and meta-cognitive skills. In addition, via the collaboration technique, another component of the constructivism, the teacher
plays an important role in making the classroom a learning environment. Furthermore, structuring and questioning are important principles in direct teaching.

Especially in Cyprus, several studies have been conducted to test the validity of the dynamic model (Antoniou, Demetriou & Kyriakides, 2006; Antoniou, 2009). Referring specifically to the teacher level of the model, an experimental study in which a classroom-intervention was based on this model showed an increase in teaching quality and student performance (Antoniou, ibid). In addition, the study of Antoniou also reveals that teaching quality represented in the classroom factors of the dynamic model could be divided into five stages, ranging from easier to more difficult skills. This finding is extremely useful for the development of teacher training programs. When teachers are found to be in level 1, they can focus their improvement efforts to master the skills in level 2. In other words, depending on current teachers’ teaching quality, different teachers may have different focus of improvement.

In Indonesia, there have not yet many studies which attempt to use teacher effectiveness studies as the basis to develop teacher improvement program. Moreover, there has not yet a study which investigates whether teaching quality could be divided into several stages. The study of Azkiyah (2013), indeed, used the classroom factors of the dynamic model of educational effectiveness research to develop a one-year teacher development program. However, this study did not incorporate the stages of teaching quality in the design of the program. Therefore, this paper is intended to investigate whether teaching quality could be divided into several stages as found in Cyprus. In addition, this study is also intended to serve as a baseline study to understand the level of teachers’ teaching quality, which is an important consideration in deciding the focus of improvement for each individual teacher.

**Research Questions**

The main question raised in this study is the difficulty level of numerous teaching skills included in the classroom factors of the Dynamic Model of Educational Effectiveness Research. This study is expected to be a significant endeavour in designing teacher professional development programs that have been long failed to meet their objectives.

**Method**

**Research Design**

The data required in this study is the data of teaching quality, which will be gathered through classroom observation. Although classroom observation is often considered as a qualitative approach, in this study it is considered as quantitative because the classroom observation instrument used in this study is a structured observation instrument, in which numerical data are generated (Cohen, Manion, & Morison, 2000). The observer will fill in the observation instrument by rating the observed activities in 5 scales of Likert scale to indicate the frequency and quality of observed activities. The teaching and learning activities will also be videotaped so that record is available when further investigation is needed.

**Sample**

The study involved 44 English teachers who were willing to participate. There were no specific requirements of the participants. Therefore, all teachers participating in this study voluntarily participated.
Instrument and Data Collection
The data on teacher teaching quality were gathered through classroom observation conducted by one observer who was previously trained. The original high inference observation instrument of the dynamic model was modified, simplified, and pre-tested for English in junior secondary school as the focus of the study. In this study all factors are included but time management as this factor is measured together with creating classroom as a learning environment especially those dealing with teacher effort to maximize students’ opportunities to learn.

Furthermore, the high inference instrument requires the observer to rate a Likert response scale to indicate the quality of observed activities. There are 52 items representing the factors and the dimensions, provided on 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum) scale. The number of items in most factors varies from 6 – 8 items, except questioning which has 10 items and assessment which only has two items. Questioning has the most items as this factor deals with more sub-factors, namely the provision of questions, appropriate reaction and positive and constructive feedback. On the other hand, assessment has the least items since some items in the original instrument are considered to be very close to questioning. The two items in the assessment refer to frequency and quality dimensions.

Data Analysis
In answering the research questions, the Rasch model (Andrich, 1988) was used to analyze the data. The rasch model enables the researcher to identify the difficulty level of each observed activity.

Findings and Discussion
As previously noted, the Rasch model analysis was used to investigate the difficulty level of teaching skills included in the dynamic model of educational effectiveness research. The findings describes the map of teachers’ performance in relation to the Classroom Factors of the Dynamic Model. In other words, the analysis of the difficulty level of the teaching skills included in the Dynamic Model was grouped in terms of the classroom factors of the model.

The findings are described in Figure 2, in which when the items on the right side are above 0, it means that the items were difficult. On the other hand, when the items were below 0, it means that the items are easy for teachers. This figure reveals that among the factors, application, structuring, modeling, and orientation are difficult factors because many of the items in these factors were located above 0.

As depicted by Figure 2, concerning application, most teachers did not seem to succeed in practicing the skills. Figure 2 illustrates that most of the items are above logit 0 as the middle value. It means they did not manage to carry out enough points included in the application. In fact, a lot of teachers provide exercise for students, but the exercises were not sufficient, which consequently did not give much opportunity for students to learn.

Figure 2. Map of Teachers’ Performance by the Classroom Factors of the Dynamic Model
Likewise, modeling which is expected to happen before the students do exercises during the application phase was also a difficult factor because the position of many items in the factor was above 0. Basically, modeling is teachers’ effort to provide learning strategy which enables students to learn on their own outside the classroom. With modeling, the students are expected to be self-regulated learners who are ready to learn both inside and outside the class, with and without teacher assistance. Unfortunately, as seen in Figure 3, more modeling items were above logit 0 which means that modeling is not an easy factor to implement by teachers in Jakarta and Banten.

Not only in application and modeling, teachers participating in this research were also found to have difficulty in carrying out orientation, which concerns teachers’ effort to explain the importance of learning certain topics and skills by associating them with daily life and/or the previous lesson. By knowing the importance of the materials presented, students are expected to be more motivated considering that what they learn is related to their daily lives. In other words, they do not only learn a particular topic or skill because of the topic itself, but they can also see what they learn is something beneficial for their lives. Unfortunately, many items in this factor were above 0, which happened because teachers did not connect students’ learning and students’ daily lives.

However, with respect to questioning, figure 3 shows that many of the items were below logit 0 indicating that items were easy as many participants practiced the skills. Beside questioning, another factor which has begun to emerge is creating classroom as a learning environment (CLE). In this case, a lot of teachers have engaged their students in the teaching-learning process by posing questions and listening to their answers. In addition, they seemed to create a comfortable learning environment without unnecessary noise so that the process did not encounter a lot of interference.
Conclusion
This study, in general, is intended to examine the difficulty level of numerous teaching skills included in the classroom factors of the Dynamic Model of Educational Effectiveness Research. Using the Rasch model, the findings of this study show that many teaching skills included in the classroom factor of the Dynamic Model were difficult for teachers since there were more items above logit 0 and consequently the teaching quality of participating teachers was low. Furthermore, concerning the factors, the analysis yields that among the factors, orientation, modeling, and application were the most difficult factors. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the teaching skills belong to these factors when a teacher development program is designed.
References


