

Certification for Teachers and Lecturers and Its Implications for Staff Development

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ABSTRACT

The improvement of quality and relevancy of education with the societal needs has been one of the big educational issues in Indonesia. It has been one of the considerations for the decision to adopt Education Act No. 20/2003 on National Education System. With its quality being improved, education will fulfill well its function, which is "to develop the capability, character, and civilization of the nation for enhancing its intellectual capability" (Education Act No. 20/2003, Article 3). The enhancement of the intellectual life of the nation is in fact one of the four aims of our independence in 1945, as stated in the fourth paragraphs of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution.

The quality and relevancy of our national education will certainly contribute to the achievement of the goal of our national education stated in Article 4 of the 2003 Education Act, which is "developing learners' potentials so that they become persons imbued with human values who are faithful and pious to one and only God; who possess morals and noble character; who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and as citizens, are democratic and responsible."

Since formal education is the main stream and its process mostly takes place in classrooms in which teachers and lecturers play their various roles, the quality of teachers and lecturers is the one of the determining factor in solving the problem of quality and relevancy. Related to this was the promulgation of "Teachers as Professionals" on 2 December 2005 by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. In the same year, Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers was declared valid.

Certification is related to the needs for ensuring that teachers and lecturers as professionals possess the qualities which can contribute to the success in achieving quality education which is relevant for societal needs which change with the developments resulting from the advancements of science and technology. This paper will explore aspects of certification and its implications for teacher education, especially EFL teacher education, both pre-service and in-service.

Key words: education, certification, teachers and lecturers

A. Certification for Teachers and Lecturers

1. Teachers and Lecturers

a. Who are teachers and lecturers?

In the national development of education, which is an effort to improve the intellectual life of the nation and the quality of Indonesian people, teachers and lecturers has a strategic function, role and position. This has been one of the considerations of enacting Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers. The following are two articles (translated for purposes of this paper), which recognize teachers and lecturers as professionals

Teachers are professional educators whose main tasks are to educate, teach, guide, direct, train, and evaluate learners at the formal early childhood education, basic education, and secondary education (Law No. 14/2005, Article 1:1)

Lecturers are professional educators and scientists whose main tasks are to transform, develop, and disseminate knowledge, technology, and arts through education, research and community service (Law No. 14/2005, Article 1:2)

A profession is a job or an activity carried out by someone for an income which requires expertise, ability, or skills which meet certain quality standards or norms and professional education. (Law No. 14/2005, Article 1:4)

From Article 1, Verses 1 and 2 translated above, the distinction between teachers and lecturers is obvious, especially seen from their specified duties and the place of work. Teachers' duties are concerned more with learners' development through educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training and evaluating them, while lecturers' with the transformation, development of knowledge, technology and arts through the three missions of higher education. So teachers should pay more attention to the subjects of learning, while lecturers to the products of learning. Meanwhile, there is also a similarity between teachers and lectures; both have a profession, which is stipulated by Article 1, verse 4 as "an activity which requires expertise, ability, or skills which meet certain quality standards or norms and professional education." All of this has important implications for the educational qualification and competencies required of teachers and lecturers.

B. Education Qualification and competencies required of teachers and lecturers

It is stipulated in Article 8 of Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers that a teacher must possess an academic qualification, competencies, an educator certificate, a sound body and mind, and ability to realize the goal of national education. It is further stated in Article 9 that "Academic qualification is an academic higher education certificate required of a teacher or lecturer in

accordance with the type, levels and formal education unit at their posts of assignments." The competencies required of teachers consist of pedagogical competency, personality competencies, social competencies, and professional competencies (Article 10). These competencies will be further elaborated in a Government Regulation. But for purposes of this paper, it seems worthwhile to refer to Brown (2001) who has identified good characteristics of a good language teacher, as quoted in Table 1 below. An educator certificate is a formal evidence of recognition given to teachers and lecturers as professional persons (Law No. 14/2005, Article 1:12). The academic qualification required of teachers is a higher education first degree or a four-year higher education diploma. (Law No. 14/2005, Article 9).

National education is aimed at "developing learners' potentials so that they become persons imbued with human values who are faithful and pious to one and only God; who possess morals and noble character; who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent; and as citizens, are democratic and responsible" (Article 3, Law No. 20/2003, on National Education System).

A lecturer is required to possess an academic qualification, competency, educator certificate, sound mind and body, and fulfill other qualifications required by a higher education

unit employing him/her, as well as ability to realize the national educational goal (Article 45). A lecturer's academic qualification is to be obtained from an accredited higher learning institution in a relevant major of study (Article 46). It is a Master's Degree for the Bachelor's program and a doctor/Ph.D. for the Master and Doctoral Programmes (Art 46: 2). A person with extraordinary expertise, for example, a nationally/internationally renowned painter, dancer, or businessman, can be appointed as a lecturer.

Table 1: Characteristics of a Good Language Teacher

Characteristics of a Good Teacher
<p>Technical Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands the linguistic systems of English phonology, grammar, and discourse. 2. Comprehensively grasps basic principles of language learning and teaching. 3. Has fluent competence in speaking, writing, listening to, and reading English. 4. Knows through experience what it is like to learn a foreign language. 5. Understands the close connection between language and culture. 6. Keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference/workshop attendance.
<p>Pedagogical Skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Has a well-thought-out, informed approach to language teaching. 8. Understands and uses a wide variety of techniques. 9. Efficiently designs and executes lesson plans. 10. Monitors lessons as they unfold and makes effective mid-lesson alternatives. 11. Effectively perceives students' linguistic needs. 12. Gives optimal feedback to students. 13. Stimulates interaction, cooperation, and teamwork in the classroom. 14. Uses appropriate principles of classroom management. 15. Uses effective, clear presentation skills. 16. Creatively adapts textbook/material and other audio, visual, and mechanical aids. 17. Innovatively creates brand-new materials when needed. 18. Uses interactive, intrinsically motivating techniques to create effective tests.
<p>Interpersonal Skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Is aware of cross-cultural differences and is sensitive to students' cultural traditions. 20. Enjoys people; shows enthusiasm, warmth, rapport, and appropriate humour. 21. Values the opinions and abilities of students.

22. Is patient in working with students of lesser ability.
23. Offers challenges to students of exceptionally high ability.
24. Cooperates harmoniously and candidly with colleagues (fellow teachers).
25. Seeks opportunities to share thoughts, ideas, and techniques with colleagues.

Personal Skills

26. Is well-organized, conscientious in meeting commitments, and dependable.
27. Is flexible when things go awry.
28. Maintains an inquisitive mind in trying out new ways of teaching.
29. Sets short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth.
30. Maintains and exemplifies high ethical and moral standards.

Source: Brown (2001: 430).

c. The Development of teachers and lecturers competencies

According to Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, Unabridged (2nd edition), of the meanings of the word 'competency' is "capacity, equal to requirement". The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (6th edition), it is defined as "the ability to do something well" and "a skill that you need in a particular job or for a particular task". In our legal basis, a competency is defined as "a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviours which should be possessed, internalized, and mastered by teachers or lecturers for carrying out their professional tasks" (Law No. 14/2005, Article 1:10). The competencies required of teachers and lecturers can be developed through pre-service teacher education and later through in-service teacher education. As stated in the third principle of providing education for all citizens, education is conducted as a lifelong process of enculturation and empowerment of learners (the 2003 Education Act, Article 4). The lifelong development of teacher competencies should therefore be ensured.

Pre-service teacher education can take two plans: the concurrent plan and the consecutive plan. The former integrates the development of student teachers' whole competencies from the very beginning, while the latter has the students learn to master the subject matter first and the pedagogical competencies afterwards, in many cases through two different programmes. In Indonesia, the teacher education programs at the *ex- IKIP* universities (e.g. UNJ, UNY, UM, Unes, UPI), have the concurrent plan, while the consecutive one is represented by the *Akta* programme for those already possess the undergraduate diploma from universities.

To be recognized as professionals, the existing teachers and lecturers are supposed to take a certification program. In my opinion, there should be a different treatment for those graduated from the existing teacher education programmes and those from the non-teacher education programmes. The former might be required to do more on the subject matters, while the latter on the professional matters. The final decision, however, should be based on the teaching and educational performances of whoever will enter the teaching profession.

2. Teacher/lecturer Certification

a. Its Definition and Target

Certification is a process of providing certificates for teachers or lecturers (Law No. 14/2005, Article 1:11). An educator certificate is granted to teachers who have met the requirements (Article 11: 1). An educator certificate is granted to lecturers who (a) have at least two years' teaching experience at a higher learning institutions, (b) hold an academic position of minimally a assistant expert, and (b) pass the certification conducted by the higher learning institution running the accredited teacher education programmes as determined by the Government. (Article 47)

b. Certification and Educational Quality Improvement

Teacher/lecturer certification is meant to bring about educational improvement. Teachers and lecturers as part of the input component will contribute to the quality of learning/education. Educator certificates can only be obtained by teachers/lecturers who have met the requirements. Those who already have certificates will possess the required competencies and receive a professional allowance. With their economic condition and competencies being improved, they will be able to perform better and better in carrying out their duties and all of this will result in better learning achievements in all aspects of student potential development.

c. Institutions eligible for conducting certification

Educator certification is conducted by higher learning institutions which run accredited teacher education programmes and are decided by the Government. It is conducted objectively transparently, and accountably. Further rules on education certification will be stipulated by a Government Regulation. (Law No. 14/2005; Article 11, Verses 1-4)

d. The Aim and Benefits of Teacher Certification

Teacher certification is aimed at determining whether a teacher, as an agent of learning, is eligible to teach, and this is stated in the form of a professional certificate. There are at least three benefits of teacher certification: (1) protecting the teaching profession against professional abuses; (2) protecting the communities against unprofessional teaching services; (3) serving as the quality assurance and quality control for teacher education; and (4) protecting teacher education institutions against both internal and external irrelevant pressure.

E. Principles for Teacher and Lecturer Profession

Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers stipulates that the teaching profession at school and higher learning institutions shall be carried out based on the following principles (Article 7): (a) possess a talent, interest, dedicating will, and idealism; (b) possess a commitment to improving education quality, belief, piety, and noble character; (c) possess a relevant academic qualification and educational background; (d) possess competencies required by the teaching duties; (e) possess responsibility for carrying professional tasks; (f) receive an income determined according to working achievements; (g) have opportunities to carry a sustainable professional development and lifelong learning; (h) have a legal protection in carrying out professional tasks; and (i) have a professional organization authorized to organize things related to teachers' professional tasks.

F. Rights and Obligations of Teachers and Lecturers

In carrying out their tasks, professional teachers, as mentioned in Article 14, are entitled to: follows: an adequate income, promotion and appreciation, professional protection,

opportunity to develop themselves, equipment and facilities, freedom in carrying evaluation and being involved in making decisions on students' success or failure, safety and safety assurance, freedom to form a professional organization, opportunity to be involved in policy making; opportunities to develop and improve academic qualifications and competencies, and/or relevant training and professional development. The adequate income includes (Article 15): a principal salary, an allowance adhered to the salary, and other allowances (functional, specific). Such an income is received by a teacher who possesses an educator certificate. With such rights, a teacher has the following obligations (Article 20):

In carrying out their duties, lecturers are entitled to: (a) an adequate income and social security (salary, professional allowance, functional allowance, special allowance for those in special situations); (b) achievement-based promotion and reward; (c) professional protection and intellectual property; (d) opportunities to improve competencies; access to learning resources and information, learning facilities and equipment, and research and community services; (e) academic freedom, academic platform, and scientific autonomy; (f) freedom to assess student learning and determine the students' success or failure; and (g) freedom to join in a professional Organization/scientific profession organization. Meanwhile, lecturers have the following obligations: (a) carry out education, research, and community services; (b) plan and carry out learning processes, assess and evaluate student learning; (c) continuously improve and develop academic qualification and competencies to keep abreast with the developments in science, technology and arts; (d) be objective and non-discriminatory on considerations of sexes, religions, tribes, races, and specific physical conditions, or family and social-economic background of students in learning; (e) obey all legal provisions, laws, codes of teacher conducts, and religious and ethical values; and (f) maintain and improve the national unity.

B. The Implications of Certification for EFL Staff Development

1. Teachers in the School-Based Management

Under the school-based management with the school level curriculum to be implemented, teachers are expected to be involved in making professional decisions. They should therefore be equipped with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes, which will change with the existing developments. Related to this is the ability and skills in observing what is going on and analyze the data to support their decision-making. In this context, continuous staff development becomes a necessity. Continuous staff development can take a number of forms: (1) a continuing/further education programme to obtain a higher education qualification; (2) an upgrading course; (3) teachers' forum in the form of regular meetings; and (4) virtual professional sharing. When this goes well, teachers are ready to take a certification test any time.

2. The Lecturers in the Autonomous Higher Education Institutions

As has been mentioned above, lecturers, like teachers, are also required to possess certain competencies related to their main duties mentioned above. Teaching their students is only one of the three main duties they have. The characteristics of a good EFL teacher mentioned above might be referred to in considering the level of their teaching competencies. The other two duties are conducting research and carrying out community service. More research on TEFL in Indonesia needs to be conducted and action research is one type of research directly aimed at improving TEFL practices. Community services can be conducted with the principle of mutual

benefit. Teacher educators may enlighten teachers with their theoretical knowledge, while teachers may help them improve their practical insights.

3. The needs for Relevant EFL Teacher Education

For prospective teachers, the certification may have a significant implication. The existing teacher education programme might need a special review to see whether it has given due attention to the development of prospective teachers' competencies as required by the 2003 Education Act. The EFL teacher education curriculum might have contained all of the subjects related to the required competencies. In practice, however, the required competencies cannot be developed properly due to the low quality of the teacher education processes, especially the processes concerned with the development of classroom performance.

4. What to Do then?

In the context of recognizing teachers as professionals with all their rights and obligations, all teachers and lecturers should ask themselves whether they are already in the right circle, or whether they still have to do something to be able to fulfill the requirements. A self-assessment effort can be conducted to provide data on what needs doing. A sample of a self-assessment format has been developed for the workshop in conjunction to this seminar. Having self-assessed, a teacher or a lecturer will be able to determine what to do next: to further study for a first degree; to join in the certification process; to find adequate references, to increase necessary knowledge etc. etc. etc.

C. Concluding Remarks

Certification for teachers and lecturers is only one effort to improve the quality of education services. It is to protect the teaching profession against any professional abuses and also the communities against unprofessional education services. Therefore, it can be conducted by those higher institutions running accredited teacher education programmes. With it in place, the existing teachers and lecturers may do a sort of self-assessment to find out whether they already fulfilled the requirements for professional teachers and lecturers as required by Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers.

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