STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHING SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MENTORING PROCESS

By

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ABSTRACT

This study is about student teachers' basic teaching skills especially in delivering gaining attention, presenting stimulus materials, and assessing performance. The purposes of this study is to find out whether or not student teachers' skill in gaining attention, presenting stimulus materials, and assessing performance was developed during their teaching practice period. To achieve the first purpose, the data were collected through observations and interviews. The observation was conducted during student teachers' teaching-learning sessions. The interviews was conducted to support the data from interview. The source for interview was student teachers' mentor teachers. The result of this study was that two of four student teachers had developed their teaching skills in gaining attention while the other two did not develop their skills. This study has showed that besides students' ability, willingness and support from mentor teachers and peers are needed to develop their teaching skills.

Key words: basic teaching skills, student teacher, teaching practice, gaining attention, presenting stimulus materials, and assessing performance.

1. Introduction

A pre-service teaching program is one of the requirements for students who are studying in education department at their university. This program is commonly for third or fourth year students. In this program, the student teachers will have their hand-on experiences on teaching. They will face the real teaching situation with real students. In other words Fan and Le (2007), quoted from Han (2005) believe that the student teachers need to face the challenge of “metamorphosis” in their identity from a student teachers becoming a professional teachers. Therefore, this program is important part is EFL student teachers' study of becoming professional teachers and developing their own identity through teaching in classrooms (Fan and Le; 2007).

However, Fethersyton (2007) noted that it is in pre-service teaching program the student teachers will likely to face 'sink or swim' condition. This condition can be understood since the student teachers will
have the first teaching experience in this program. As cited in Valli (1992), Musthafa identifies four common problems faced by beginning teachers. The problems discussed here are the problem of imitation, the problem of isolation, the problem of transfer, and the problem of technique.

The problem of imitation is defined by Musthafa (1995) as imitating instructional behaviors of their cooperating teachers. This is in line with what the researcher found when she was appointed becoming a supervisor from the university. She found that most of student teachers only copied the lesson plan from their cooperating teacher because they cannot explain the instructional design that they have chosen. They did not have a clear understanding to what they have decided.

The second problem is the problem of isolation. In a pre-service teaching program, student teachers are required to teach in a real school environment. It means they have to be able to interact with the whole component of the schools including students, other teachers, school administrator, and principal. Valli (1992, in Musthafa: 1995) notes that the isolation occurs because the student teachers knew only a few teacher including their cooperating teachers. Moreover, they are not always incorporated into the social organization of the school.

The third problem is the problem of transfer. The problem of transfer, as noted by Musthafa (1995) from Schaffer et.al. (1992), is when the student teachers struggle to control the student behavior instead of fostering student learning. This is one of the commonest problems in pre-service teaching. Having studied four student teachers' 2008 and 2009 reflective journal, the researcher found that they had similar problem during their pre-service teaching, namely classroom management. Since they were still struggling to control the classroom, they often failed to transfer their knowledge to the students (Valli: 1992 in Musthafa: 1995).

The fourth problem is the problem of technique. One of pre-service teaching program function according to Richard and Crookes (1988) as cited by Gebhard (2009) is apply theory and teaching idea from previous work. However, very often what the student teachers learned from their course is not compatible with the nature of teaching (Musthafa: 1995). The researcher has conducted an initial interview with five student teachers who were in their pre-service teaching practice in 2010. Based on the interview, they said that most of the theory from the previous course did not work in the classroom. They stated that there were many differences of what they have learned and what they found in the real teaching situation.

Despite all of the problem that have been mentioned previously, student teachers also need to learn how to give classroom instruction. Gagne (1992) defined instruction as the set of events that act upon and involve students where there is a progress from one moment to the next during a lesson. Basically, every instructional event consists of three phases, namely beginning, middle and end. However, what makes it interesting is that what happens in the classroom in each of the phase (Fetherston, 2006). These instructional events can also be named as basic teaching skills.

Fetherston (2006) claimed that Gagne's
nine events of instruction provide a handful and useful conceptual guide not only to the event of instruction but also as a guide to planning the lesson. The nine events that Gagne (1992) offers are gaining attention; informing the objective(s); stimulating recall of prerequisite learning; presenting stimulus materials; providing learning guidance; eliciting performance; and enhancing retention and transfer. This research only investigate three out of nine skills that have been offered by Gagne. They are gaining attention, presenting stimulus materials, and assessing performance. These skills are chosen because they are considered having the closest activity as in Indonesia's process standard.

2. Methods

Research design. This study is qualitative because it was aimed to dig deeper mentoring process and how this process developed student teachers' basic teaching skills. This research is a case study because it investigated a process (mentoring process and student teacher's teaching skill development), therefore it was consistent with the case study characteristic that Merriam (1991) proposed. Another characteristic that this study had in common with case study was the result of this study was only interpreted at the school where this study was conducted not for the purpose of generalizing.

Site. This study was conducted in one high school in Cirebon. This high school is chosen purposively because in terms of passing grade, it is included as one of favorite schools in Cirebon. Therefore, the researcher assumed that student teachers who were placed in this school faced a lot of challenges. They needed to have high pedagogical knowledge. Another reason why this school was chosen was because of its accessibility.

Participants. There were two kinds of participants in this research. The first group of participants was cooperating teachers—two females and one male—who were assigned to become mentors for student teachers. The second group of participants was four student teachers—all females—from one of university in Cirebon who were practicing teaching at this school. Each female cooperating teacher handled one student teacher and the male student teacher handled two student teachers. Mentor teachers were chosen by the school and student teachers were assigned by the university.

Data collection technique. In order to avoid information bias during the research, triangulation was used in this study. Triangulation is basically the use of two or more data collection techniques (Wiersema, 1991; Cohen and Manion, 1994). The data collection techniques used in this study were observation and interview.

Observation. The observation that was conducted in this study was non-participant observation since the researcher's rule was purely as an observer; she did not involve directly to the event that was being observed (Thomas, 2003).

The observation was focused on student teachers' basic teaching skills. The instrument used to investigate student teachers' basic teaching skills were based on Gagne's (1992)
nine events classroom instructions. These classroom instructions are the teaching phases where student teachers give different activities. They were used as instrument because it can be compatible with standard process. In standard process, teaching phases are divided into three major parts which are beginning, middle, and end. Each of the parts has its own activities.

Some of the activities in each standard process teaching phase are similar to Gagne's nine classroom instruction. In opening phase, teacher's task is to get students ready and review previous lesson, and tell students what they are going to learn. In Gagne's nine events, the events are called gaining attention, stimulating recall of previous learning, and informing the objective. The second part of teaching event in standard process is the middle phase or main activity. In the main activities, teachers' tasks are to deliver materials to students, facilitate students' learning, and give students chance to demonstrate their learning. In Gagne's events, these events are called presenting material, guiding learning, and eliciting performance. The last part is ending part. In ending part, teachers assess students, give feedback, and give independent assignments. In Gagne's events they were called providing informative feedback, assessing performance, and enhancing retention and transfer.

Another reason why Gagne's classroom instruction event was used was because it is the most equivalent classroom instructions with Vygotksy's constructivism. The first reason why Gagne's nine events is more relevant is because it has the characteristics of constructivism theory. In constructivism theory that Vygotksy has proposed, teachers need to guide students learning by giving concrete examples which are close to students' daily life (Hadegaard, 1990). By giving students concrete examples and evaluation, Hadegard (ibid.) claimed students will be able to master the material better than when they are left alone. Gagne's nine classroom events also use the same principal. Most of Gagne's events such as stimulating recall of prerequisite learning, presenting stimulus materials, providing leaning guidance, eliciting performance need teacher's skill on giving examples and modeling that are related to students' daily life. Another reason why Gagne's nine classroom instruction events is used in this study is that, according to Fetherston (2006), Gagne's nine events of instruction provide a robust and useful conceptual guide not only to the event of instruction but also as a guide to planning the lesson.

The observations were conducted in a classroom where student teachers were teaching. To avoid biases and gain reliability of the research, each student teacher's mentor was involved. Therefore, both researcher and mentor sat down together to observe the student teacher in the classroom and then compared the observation notes.

The observation was conducted as long as the student teachers practicing in the school for two months. However, because there were some school agendas, such as Ramadhan school and school camping, and led day holiday, the teaching and learning process was only effective for the last one month after student teachers were placed at the school. As a result, the observation for student teacher's
basic teaching skills development was conducted around sixteen times, four times for each participant.

**Data analysis procedure from observation.** Since there are two observations, the data analysis in this study was analyzed by using two frameworks. Data from observing mentoring was analyzed under the framework of Randall and Thornon (2001) model of mentoring. The data obtained by using this frameworks was around how mentors provided scaffolding to student teachers during mentoring process and whether student teachers developed their own knowledge during this process from time to time. The data from observation were categorized then interpreted (see appendix).

Data from observing student teachers' basic teaching skills in the classroom were analyzed under the framework of Gagne's nine events of instruction. Categorization in this observation is on how student teachers gain attention; present stimulus materials; elicit performance. The development of basic teaching skill were observed from time to time. Excerpts from the transcribed data were matched with Gagne's nine classroom instructions. It was analyzed whether student teachers conducted the events or not. If they conducted the events, the way they conducted the events was analyzed to find out how close they did to the events. If they missed the events, the probable cause was analyzed and interpreted by using the observation excerpts.

**Interview.** Interview was conducted to support data from observation. From three cooperating teachers, only two were interviewed. They were interviewed about how their student teachers performed in the classroom and whether they were satisfied with their student teachers' performance or not.

**Data analysis procedure from interview.** The data from the interview were recorded. After recording the interview, the data were transcribed, coded, and categorized. The coding and categorizing were based on the criteria of mentoring process under Gagne's framework about classroom instructions.

3. Result and Discussion

**Student teachers' teaching skill development.** This section discusses the development of student teachers' basic teaching skills. Basic teaching skills that are discussed in this section are taken from Gagne's nine events of instruction (1992). These skills covers gaining attention, informing lesson objective, stimulating recall of prior learning, presenting stimuli with distinctive feature, guiding learning, eliciting performance, providing feedback, assessing performance, and enhancing retention and learning transfer. Student teachers basic teaching skills development was observed based on Gagne's (1992) nine events of instruction.

**Gaining Attention**
This section presents student teachers' development on gaining attention. Each student teacher's progress during four teaching performances on this teaching skill is presented on following table.
Table 2 Progress in Gaining Attention

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In the first teaching performance, all student teachers had trouble in gaining students' attention. All of them used media that was too small so not all students could see it, as it is represented by excerpt from classroom observation below.

Excerpt 10:

[showing a small envelope]. Have you ever see this picture? (have you ever seen this picture?)
[Holding postcard and an envelope on each hand]. look at here! Look at! (Look!). This is a… (Student teacher B's teaching performance)

The excerpt above shows that student teacher B tried to gain students' attention by using an envelope and a postcard as media. Unfortunately, the media that she used were too small that not all students could see them. The purpose of gaining attention according to Fetherston (2006) is to get students concentrate to and help them to separate out relevant stimuli from less relevant input. Relevant stimuli refers to what students are going to learn that day and the less relevant one refers to something which is not related to the lesson. Gagne (1992) suggested gaining attention can start from asking students' interest or by displaying picture of writing that can change second by second.

What student teacher B did was showing students an envelope and a postcard and asked students whether they knew what she was holding. Even though she had called
students' attention by saying “look”, she did not check whether students were ready to study or not. As a result, what she did wasn't successful because most of students kept silent when she asked. What happened to student teacher B also happened to another three student teachers. On their first teaching performance, they struggled with the use of the media to gain students' attention.

On the last teaching performance, all student teachers were getting better in the use of media to gain students' attention. Student teacher A for instance, she used real object to gain students' attention as it is represented in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 11:
Do you know what kind of beverage? (Do you know what kind of beverages these are?)
This kind of beverage [while showing students real drinks in front of the classroom]... The first is a glass of tea. The second is a glass of coffee, and the third glass is milk. Now I want to demonstrate how to make a glass of tea. (Student teacher A's teaching performance).

The excerpt shows that student teacher A gave a demonstration how to make certain beverage. This demonstration was effective to gain students' attention because it was very contextual. According to Tudge (1990), modeling is necessary in social constructivist because by giving students contextual demonstration, students can relate to their real life which can help them learning. The improvement in gaining attention was not only happened to student teacher A, but also student teacher B. What student teacher B did was not different from student teacher A. She presented some slides about most of students' favorite juice and asked them how to make the juice.

What student teacher A and student teacher B had done to gain students' attention had consistency with constructivist's idea. According to Vrasidas (2000) one of characteristic of constructivist classroom is that teachers determine students' existing idea, concepts, and understanding. By using the media which is close to students life, student teacher A and student teacher B had apply this characteristic in their classroom.

However, student teacher C and student teacher D's development in gaining attention was not as good as student teacher A and B. Student teacher C had technical problem in her performance so it took a very long time to fix it. As Gagne (1992) stated, the aim of gaining students' attention is to separate out which information is more important. In process standard, gaining attention is included in the beginning phase. In this phase, teachers should make sure students are ready to study. In this case, student teacher C took a very long time to fix the technical failure so that students' attention was distracted. When she had handled the failure, she did not make sure that students were ready again to study.

Presenting Stimulus Material
This section presents student teachers' progress in presenting material. The progress is presented in the following table then interpreted.
Based on process standard, presenting stimuli is the main activity. In this activity, teachers present the material that students need to learn. In presenting the material, all student teachers had various styles. However, in the first performance, student teacher A and student teacher C made a big mistake for forgetting to deliver the main material that day. Student teacher A and C, in their first performance, were too busy to give examples to students so they forgot to explain the key concept of the material. Gagne (1992) emphasizes on the importance of explaining the key concept of the material learned by students because without explaining the material, students won't be able to comprehend the lesson.

In explaining the material to students, teachers need to be very careful because when teachers make mistake, they most likely will mislead students. This case happened to student teacher D as it is represented in excerpt below.

Excerpt 14:
Okay, let's see. For the positive sentence subject *dan* (and) verb 1 es/s plus object or adverb. Itu wajib ya, sudah aturannya begitu. (For affirmative form the pattern is subject plus present verb added by suffix s/-es plus object or adverb. It's a must and that is the rule). (Student teacher D's performance).

In the first teaching performance, student teacher D explained the pattern of simple present tense. Presenting stimulus material is important to introduce students to
new concepts in material (Fetherston, 2001). Unfortunately, what student teacher D explained about the concept of simple present tense was potentially caused misleading for students. In the excerpt above, she mentioned the pattern for positive simple present tense was subject plus present verb plus suffix -e or -es. She did not explain when they need to add suffix -es or -es on a verb. She generalized the subject-verb agreements from simple present tense. It was dangerous because it may mislead students’ understanding.

The probable causes of why it happened were student teacher D was still in an adaptation of how teaching should be and she did not consult to her mentor teacher first so no one reminded her that she made mistake. As Fetherston (2001) said, in the beginning of teaching practice, student teacher will face ‘sink or swim’ condition. In this condition, student teachers will struggle on how to control the classroom so they did not have control the material (Roberts, 1998). In this case, student teachers need their mentor teachers’ help. Mentor teachers’ role is to guide student teachers in adjusting what they have learned in their college to the real teaching practice. However, what happened to student teacher D was she was not lucky enough to have a mentor teacher who did not have time to mentor. As a result, as it can be seen in section 4.1, she never had routine mentoring process that no one told what she was supposed to do.

The only student teacher who was consistent in delivering material was student teacher B since the first performance until the last performance. She constantly gave material which was consistent, as it is represented in excerpt below.

Excerpt 15:
This is general structure of procedure text. The first (is), goal. In goal, you have to write the final purpose of instruction. 

\textit{tujuaannya apa, melakukan langkah-langkah itu untuk apa} (what is the purpose of following the steps?). And then material, include (including) equipment needed. 

\textit{Peralatan apa saja yang dibutuhkan} (what kinds of equipment is needed). The last is sequence, step. Sequence of step to achieve the goal. (Student teacher B’s teaching performance).

Gagne (1992) states what teachers should do in presenting stimuli with distinctive feature is to explain the concept included in material. It is written in process standard as the main activity in teaching and learning process. Excerpt above is evidence in which student teacher B had done what Gagne has suggested as well as what Process standard has written. It shows that the concept student teacher B delivered was the function and general structure of procedure text. From evidence that has been explained, student teacher B had done what teachers should do in presenting stimuli.

What should be noted in a constructivist classroom is that teachers have to provide material which related to students' experience (Merrill, 1992, and Gagne; 1992; Hadegaard, 1994). It is because of the nature of constructivist perspective that sees knowledge is constructed in society and that students bring their own background knowledge (Tudge, 1994). Student teacher D did not deliver the material which was related to students’ experience because she introduced
students to a mislead concept and did not provide examples for the concept. In the other hand, student teacher B related the material to students' experience. She presented a familiar text to students and introduced the concept so that students did not have any trouble in comprehending the concept.

Assessing Performance

This section presents student teachers' progress on assessing students' performance. During their performance, their skill on assessing performance was observed. The observation result is presented on the following table and it is interpreted afterwards.

<table>
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<th>Table 9 Progress in Assessing Performance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student teacher A</td>
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<td>1. Ask questions requiring answers related to the material</td>
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<td>2. Present the assessment which is in line with the concepts that has been presented</td>
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<td>3. Set the assessment which is in line with the objective</td>
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<td>Student teacher B</td>
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<td>Student teacher D</td>
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<td>1. Ask questions requiring answers related to the material</td>
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<td>3. Set the assessment which is in line with the objective</td>
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All student teachers in this study assessed their students' performance. However, student teacher B did not do this activity in her first performance. Based on observation data, student teacher B did not assess students' performance because she had difficulty in managing time. She was too busy to deliver the material so that when she had to assess students' performance, the time was up. Generally, all student teachers did almost the same thing in assessing students' performance as it is represented in excerpt below.

Excerpt 20:

Now work individually and then answer the following question. Just five minute. On (a) piece of paper [spread a piece of paper to students]. First (write) what have you made based on your group (has made). The first group was how (to make) a glass of coffee,(the second group is) how to make a glass of milk, (the third group is) how to make a glass of ginger, and (the last group is) how to make a glass of honey. Mention the ingredients and equipment. Write down the step correctly. Five minute from now. (Student teacher A’s teaching performance).
The excerpt above shows that student teacher A gave assessment to students. The assessment she gave was related to the material that she delivered. She asked her students to write down what they had done in the previous activity. Gagne (1992) suggests that to make sure what students' elicited performance is a result of their understanding. Teachers need to make students to do it one more time through assessment. In assessment, Gagne (1992) added, teachers need to present a new set of exercise about the concept. In the excerpt above, student teacher A only asked students to repeat what they had done in group performance individually. The reliability of this assessment is doubtful since it could not be used to make sure whether students' capability in elicited performance was because they understood the material or they were lucky. Therefore, to make sure students understood the material she supposed to design assessment different from what she had given in eliciting performance.

Giving assessment was one of the most difficult skills that student teachers need to master. As it has been mentioned by Gagne (1992), teachers have to make sure that students really understand the material by giving a new set of exercise related to the material. They have to make sure that students are able to do the assessment because they understand instead of getting lucky.

Student teachers in this study had difficulty in developing giving assessment skill. Student teacher B for instance, she did not assess students' performance in her first teaching performance because she was not able to manage time and even though she assessed students' performance in her last teaching performance, she did not elicit students' performance so that it could not measure how far students comprehend the material. The same case happened to student teacher C and student teacher D. They assessed students' performance but the assessment was the same as when they elicited students' performance.

The assessment in constructivist classroom should be authentic and real (Hadegard, 1994 and Richardson, 2003). Fetherston (2007) defines real and authentic as "the learning is applied in the situation where knowledge is generated, usually from real life context." The only student teacher who had constructed a real and authentic assessment was student teacher A. She asked her students to reconstruct to make some drinks which are familiar to their life. By constructing real and authentic assessment, students will be easier to comprehend the material because it is close to their daily life (Tudge, 1994).

4. Conclusion
This study has investigated student teachers' development in basic teaching skills, especially in gaining attention, presenting stimulus material, and assessing performance. This study found that every student teacher had various development. Some student teachers eventually did every aspects of classroom instruction. On the other hand, other student teachers sometimes forget doing one or more aspects of classroom instruction.

For the first performance, all student teachers missed one or more elements in classroom instruction. They got better in the next performance. However two of four student teachers had better development.
Their performances tended to get more consistent. If it was seen in term of mentoring process, the most possible cause of why it happened was because they had undergone a structured mentoring process.

This study found that mentoring process in this study has big influence for student teachers' development. Student teachers who underwent routine mentoring stages from the beginning until the end of teaching practice had positive outcome. Their teaching skills and competences got better in every performance. On the other side, student teachers who did not undergo routine mentoring stages from the beginning until the end of teaching practice did not have positive outcome. They tended to have inconsistent performance. In one performance they seemed better than the first time they taught but in the other time, their teaching performance was worse than the previous performance. Therefore, it can be said that student teachers who did not have frequent mentoring process did not develop their teaching skill and competence.

Another factor that influence student teachers' consistency in developing their teaching skill was their readiness. Every student teacher will undergo different level of anxiety in his/her teaching practicum (Celik, 2008). It is because they have different readiness level. Hersey and Blanchard (1928) in Bailey (2006) defined readiness as ability and willingness to take responsibility for their own behavior. They proposed two kinds of readiness namely job readiness and psychological readiness. Job readiness is the knowledge, ability, and experience to perform certain task without direction from others while psychological readiness is the confidence and commitment or willingness to do something. During observation student teacher who

REFERENCES


