

THE USE OF FACEBOOK PAGES FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Some teachers find they have limited chance to do formal professional development program such as classroom observation, classroom research, and even training program to improve their knowledge and skill in teaching. However, teachers nowadays look for the information from the internet for their professional development, like Facebook pages for ELT. Teachers use it as an alternative source to improve their professionalism. This present study investigated about advantages of using Facebook pages for English teachers' professional development. Quantitative method was conducted by the researcher in this study. Moreover, 35 English teachers were selected purposively. They were given a questionnaire and some open-ended questions. The results show that English teachers got many advantages from Facebook pages, such as for their overall professional development as English teachers, their practice in classroom and their collaboration with others. That is why; teachers should be selective in choosing Facebook pages to be followed and filtered the material they adapt from this page.

Keywords: Professional development, English teachers, English language teaching, Facebook pages.

Introduction

Professional development is a must for every profession, including teachers. Teachers need to improve their knowledge and skill in teaching even their pedagogic skill. It is caused by students' need, growing knowledge and demanding from the government. There is no excuse for the teachers to deny professional development. They cannot fit students' need if they do not update their information about teaching. Students' need before 20th century must be different with the students in 20th century, because the knowledge is growing as the time passes by; students' need may be different from time to time. That is why teachers should renew their teaching skill with the new strategies, method and techniques in teaching their students. Teachers can use some ways to develop their professionalism in teaching, such as classroom research, classroom observation, training program, etc.

Teacher professional development is clearly an important thing in enhancing education through improving the quality and skill of teachers or educators. Teachers should engage in this program so that they can see themselves as life-long learners who maintain for developing professionalism and for making innovation and changes in their own classroom practices (Silvia, 2015). Besides, professional development program has newer, more innovative methods that focus on ongoing growth activities that may have a greater potential to affect positively teacher development (Hirsh, 2004). Professional development foresees improving teachers' professionalism based on mastering professional knowledge, forming professional awareness and attitudes, development of skills, and competency (Evans, 2008). In addition, teacher

professional development gives the effectiveness of various approaches for updating and up-skilling teachers in the years beyond their pre-service teacher education programs, not for its impact on the teaching profession and teacher careers (Bolam & Weindling, 2006).

Teachers have been demanded by the government to do some professional development programs that have been mentioned before. Teachers are expected to get the solution for every problem they face in their classroom and increase their practice in the classroom so that it also improves students' achievements. Those programs also help teachers to reflect their teaching performance by sharing each other with their colleague. Besides that, there are also some training programs for teachers that serve the competent tutors in teaching. Teachers can join the training programs and get some new information toward teaching and educational issues from the tutors. Teachers' professional development gives good influence to teachers' performance in classroom practice. Teachers improve their knowledge and skill about teaching to complete their professionalism as a teacher. That is why; this professional development is needed to be done by every teacher.

Teachers need opportunities to update their professional knowledge and skills, as a chance for professional development (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Professional development is all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career which are designed to be better in their work (Day & Sachs, 2004).

Teacher professional development is a process which requires cognitive and emotional involvement of the teachers individually and collectively, the capacity and willingness for improvement and change (Avalos, 2011). Professional development is essential for professionals to ensure that they stay up-to-date with current developments in their field, and they stay in touch with the practice of their career (Herrington & Herrington, 2006). Professional development should change the way teachers view student learning. By learning, teachers change their point of view, change school community, and most important, change their teaching (Sweeney, 2005)

On the other hand, some teachers cannot deal with those professional development programs. They get some problems that make them have limited chance to follow those programs. Few teachers do not want to follow the formal professional development such as have a tutor to observe their classrooms, because they think it evaluates their teaching skill. It is in line with a theory that explains observations tend to be identified as evaluation, and consequently it is often regarded as a threatening or negative experience for the teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2005). That is why their anxieties limit them to expand their professionalism.

The other teachers are left behind by the new information about teaching and learning English because of they have less awareness to the up-to-date information, as a result, they are not creative and innovative in teaching the students in classroom. Meanwhile, there are so many new methods and techniques that can be used to make their class more interesting and effective, so it can fulfill students' need which changes day by day. That is the point why teachers have to do ongoing learning or develop their professionalism. Based on the preliminary research that had been done by the researcher by interviewing some teachers, they said that they have limited time to do the professional development program. It is hard for them to deal with it with so many teaching schedule and others business they have outside teaching.

However, some teachers do not want to give up easily toward their professional development. They have alternative ways to develop their professionalism. One of them is using the internet. In spite of using it for searching some information, some teachers use it to communicate with their students in social

media, for instance they want to give some news to their students about school or tasks, other teachers use it for communication with their friends or their colleagues, and sometimes they use it for seeking information toward teaching itself. Teachers can find any material through internet, they are able to recognize some new teaching techniques from internet or they can read some articles about teaching and learning that can give influences to their teaching skill. They can access those things through some websites of teaching and learning and also social media, such as Facebook. Teachers use it as an alternative way or source for increase their skill in teaching that can help them to develop their professionalism. That is why the objective of this study is to investigate about the use of internet, especially Facebook as social media in the internet, for professional development as an English teacher.

Teachers can use social media such as Facebook to keep their professionalism develop day by day by renewing their information about learning and teaching. Teachers can access it as long as they connect to the internet, and then use it as medium of seeking for information about teaching and learning and sharing each other with their colleagues. It means that, besides the formal professional development programs such as classroom research, classroom observation and training program; teachers believe that Facebook can be used as another choice to enrich their pedagogic and educational information, especially about practical in the classroom.

Then there is a research about Facebook use in professional development, it says that Facebook provides teachers with an opportunity to engage in informal professional development that is participant driven, practical, collaborative, dynamic in nature and available 24 hours a day from any Internet connected location (Rutherford, 2010). Another study found that the organizations' communities on Facebook are not limited to those who want to join; the affordances of this social media enable teacher collaboration and growth through learning communities within online environments (Greenhow, C. et al., 2009). Social networks, such as Facebook can support teachers in their own professional development, where skills are developed through collaborative debate, discussion, and activities (Waller, 2013).

Unlike traditional teacher professional development, Facebook creates continuous connections which, depending on the social group, can be equal in participation and contribution (Bissessar, C. S., 2014). The previous studies conducted the research about how the use of internet even Facebook influence teachers' professional development and improve their knowledge and teaching skill in classroom practice (Alhabahba & Mahfoodh, 2016; Eynon & Malmberg, 2011; Rutherford, 2010). There is no study that specifically focuses on the advantages of Facebook for teachers' professional development. Besides the pervious researches that have been mentioned earlier, there are still some studies related to Facebook use for professional development. The first study found that Facebook has become a notable professional forum as well because it can be a powerful medium that teachers can visit to enhance their knowledge and teaching practice (Rutherford, 2010). The second study suggested Facebook as a potential media to support informal teachers' learning (Patahuddin and Logan, 2015). While the third research found that social network sites like Facebook could be seen as creating informal opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development that is ongoing, collaborative, easily accessible, and free (Barab, et al, 2001; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). In addition, the fourth study specifically highlighted Facebook as teacher professional development tool since teachers discuss about pedagogical issues (Bissessar, 2014).

There is also a research toward the use of this social media, the researcher found the professional use of social network sites for professional development,

particularly with reference to groups of teachers on Facebook (Ranieri, et al, 2012). Another study found that many educational organizations, with missions to improve teacher education, have developed profiles on Facebook and other social networks, for example, organizations such as the International Literacy Association (ILA) attract users through shared connections, and many educational organizations have adopted this practice either because it helps to improve teacher education (Bledsoe & Pilgrim, 2016).

Meanwhile, different with the previous studies, this present study investigated the advantages of using Facebook for teachers' professional development. Yet it focused on Facebook pages only, rather than the whole of Facebook use, like other studies. Therefore, the present research investigated the use of Facebook for language teachers' professional development, specially the advantages they get from it. This study was guided by research questions:

1. What are the advantages of Facebook page for language teachers' professional development?
2. Do they think that this Facebook page is reliable as a source of their professional development?

The significance of this study is giving the teachers information about a resource of professional development through internet. In case the teachers are confused about their crowded schedule to teach even others business they should do, so that they have limit chance to renew their information toward teaching. Meanwhile, teachers demand to keep their knowledge up-to-date about teaching and learning. Therefore, this study is expected to give more information about professional development source by using the internet, especially Facebook pages. It also gives a view to the teachers that they have a lot of place to get knowledge about their career and through this additional source they still get something to enhance their teaching performance become well.

In addition, the findings of this study that will be discussed more lately were obtained based on quantitative method in which survey research design was used. Since this study identified about opinion of English teachers toward the use of Facebook pages for professional development, thus it belongs to survey design. 35 English teachers who have Facebook account and have visited or use the Facebook pages for English teachers participated to fulfill the questionnaire and some open-ended questions as the instrument to get data from respondents. This questionnaire was adapted from a previous study about teachers' professional development (Alhabahba, M. M., & Mahfoodh, O. H., 2016).

Findings and Discussions

The collected data were analyzed to show the result of each research question in this study. The first reveals the advantages of Facebook pages for English teachers' professional development which are felt by the teachers. The second is opinion from the English teachers if the Facebook page is reliable for their professional development or not. Both findings are asserted below.

1. The advantages of Facebook pages for English teachers' professional development

This present study revealed the practical of professional development in three aspects; the advantages to overall professional development for English teachers, the advantages to their classroom practice and the advantages of collaborating with others. The result shows that Facebook pages give good advantages for English teachers' overall development. 57.1 % of participants followed the Facebook page for English teachers to improve their teaching skill. They also got motivation through these pages.

The English teachers felt that they learn new thing by accessing this Facebook pages, 68.6% of the participants agreed about it, 28.6% others really agreed about this advantages, yet few teachers felt that there was no new thing they get from this pages.

Learning new things through the Facebook pages made 74.3% participants feel that they got more innovative in teaching. As a result, it developed their pedagogic skill definitely and remained their interest in teaching language. However, the participants were not sure about the development in solid foundation for long-life learning through the Facebook page use (see table 1).

Table 1. The result of Facebook page's advantages to the overall professional development

| <i>Facebook page's advantages to the overall professional development</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Uncertain</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Improving teaching skill | 28.6 % | 57.1% | 20 % | 0 % | 0 % |
| getting motivation through this Facebook page | 5.7 % | 71.4% | 20 % | 2.9 % | 0 % |
| Learning new things about English Language Teaching from this page. | 28.6 % | 68.6% | 2.9 % | 2.9 % | 0 % |
| Getting innovation in teaching language. | 8.6 % | 74.3% | 11.4 % | 2.9 % | 2.9 % |
| Remaining interest in teaching | 20 % | 51.4% | 22.9 % | 2.9 % | 2.9 % |
| Development in a solid foundation for long-life learning | 2.9 % | 40 % | 51.4 % | 2.9 % | 2.9 % |
| Development in pedagogic skill. | 2.9 % | 65.7% | 25.7 % | 2.9 % | 2.9 % |

In addition, the result for the second aspect shows that English teachers got more advantages in the practice at classroom level (see table 2). The participants thought that they get information about teaching method and techniques from the Facebook pages; it can be seen from the findings that 60% participants agreed about it. Other advantages are about the material, exercise and lesson plans that could be got from the Facebook pages. Most participants agreed about those advantages. Besides, Facebook pages also served information about the latest development in ELT, although the participants were still doubt whether it comes from academic article or not.

Table 2. The result of Facebook page's advantages to the practice at classroom level

| <i>Facebook page's advantages to the practice at classroom level</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Uncertain</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
|--|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|

| | | | | | |
|--|--------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| I get new teaching method and techniques of TEFL from this page. | 14.3 % | 60% | 25.7% | 2.9% | 0% |
| It gives me new information of the latest development in ELT. | 22.9% | 57.1% | 17.1% | 0% | 2.9% |
| It serves me some academic articles from online journals. | 2.9% | 40% | 42.9% | 14.3% | 0% |
| It serves some materials. | 31.4% | 57.1% | 5.7% | 2.9% | 2.9% |
| This pages serves exercises | 20% | 54.3% | 17.1% | 8.6% | 0% |
| This page serves lesson plan from other teachers. | 2.9% | 22.9% | 51.4% | 22.9% | 0% |
| This page helps me to be more creative in teaching | 22.9% | 54.9% | 22.9% | 0% | 0% |
| This page improves my feeling of excitement about my job as teacher. | 8.6% | 68.6% | 20% | 2.9% | 0% |

Meanwhile, the advantages of collaborating with other teachers were not significantly got by the English teachers from the Facebook pages. Only some participants who agreed that Facebook pages enable teachers to discuss the ELT topics among the followers, 28.6 % agree and 5.7% strongly agree about it. However, they might have collaboration with the administrator of that page, since the participants felt that they got involved in educational information in the world. It made the impact for the participants toward facilitating their thinking ability toward the information (see table 3).

Table 3. The result of Facebook page's advantages in collaborating with others.

| <i>Facebook page's advantages in collaborating with others</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Uncertain</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly disagree</i> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Discussing the topic related to ELT with others followers. | 5.7% | 28.6% | 37.1% | 22.9% | 5.7% |
| Facilitate thinking ability | 8.6% | 82.9% | 2.9% | 5.7% | 0% |
| Giving professional support among teachers. | 5.7% | 51.4% | 37.1% | 2.9% | 2.9% |
| Getting involved in educational information in the world. | 11.4% | 62.9% | 22.9% | 2.9% | 0% |
| Helping to decrease stress in teaching when collaborating online with others. | 5.7% | 51.4% | 34.3% | 5.7% | 2.9% |

2. *Teachers' opinion about the reliability of Facebook pages as professional development source.*

The second research question was answered from the data that collected through open-ended questions. The result reveals that the participants think Facebook pages could be asserted as one of reliable source for English teachers' professional development depend on the content, information and the followed pages. However, the teachers should be selective to accept the information from the Facebook page, sometimes particular information or material cannot be applied or used in current country. Besides that, even though the teachers can access Facebook pages as an informal source and believed that this one is reliable enough for them, teachers still need the formal professional development program. They thought the combination of both formal and informal sources can give more positive impact for their professional development.

From the finding above, there are several things that are interesting to be discussed in this research. First, researcher found that the participants used Facebook pages for English teachers for their professional development as a teacher. As a result, they will improve their performance in classroom practice. Teachers first get training about what to do being a teacher in the beginning of their career, then they should seek by themselves to develop themselves and their teaching (Harmer, 2007a). It means teacher should not stop and feel confident enough with their knowledge and skill in teaching; they have to independently realize that learning to get improvement is also important for their career. That is why; Facebook page can be a source for teachers for their independent learning where the teachers can be a learner too in purpose of professional development. This kind of online professional development is often more dynamic in nature where teachers have the opportunity to take on the role of learner as well as teacher (Warren-Little, 2006).

Second, the theories suggest the principles of teachers' professional development should be on going, collaborating and give improvement to classroom practice which also gives improvement in students' achievement (Hirsh, 2004 in Rutherford, 2010). Facebook page has acquired these principles to be professional development source for the teachers. Teacher can use Facebook page as a place to learn about and share best practices, teaching strategies, or tips about teaching and learning in classroom practice (Phillips, L.F, et al. 2011).

Third, this research found that the advantage of Facebook page was mostly revealed from classroom practice for teachers. The participants of this research said that they got sharing material, exercises, even lesson plan from Facebook page. That is why teachers access this Facebook page as their source for professional development. They have got the source that suits the effective professional development. Teachers professional development should have the principles such as collaborative and involving the sharing of knowledge, practical and directly related to local classroom practice and student learning (Hirsh, 2004). As a result, the teachers become more innovative and creative in teaching performance in the classroom. They have varieties way to deliver the lesson so their students will have meaningful learning with those varieties method. As it is said that, professional development creates a learning environment in which teachers keep improving their practice to be better in completing the needs of their students (Sweeney, 2005).

However, this study found that teachers had the lack of discussion with others teachers in Facebook pages. It means they just used this source to get information and material for their teaching in the classroom and get the sharing method, techniques and strategies in teaching English from the administrators of Facebook pages. Whereas,

teachers can use Facebook pages for discussion place, they can find the other English teachers from anywhere in this world and talk about their experience in teaching, yet only few from the participants of this study have used the Facebook page for discussing ELT issues with other teachers.

Nevertheless, Facebook can be still used as a reliable source for English teachers' professional development. Facebook page enable teachers to be more creative and innovative in teaching, because it serves them with new teaching strategies, interesting activities and some material that can be applied in their classroom. Moreover, it can be accessed by the teachers anytime and anywhere as long as they are connected with the internet. Therefore, there is no way for the teachers making some reason to have no effort in their professional development. They might have a lot of time teaching for the whole day, so that it is hard for them to get training program, having observation or meeting with their colleague to discuss about ELT. They can try this way to have independent learning for their professional development, at least to renew and improve their knowledge and information toward ELT. However, formal professional development still must be done by the teachers because both are important for their improvement.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, Facebook pages are useful for English teachers' professional development as alternative source to improve their teaching in the classroom. There are some advantages of Facebook pages that are got by English teachers. They are getting innovative in their teaching, becoming more creative in teaching, getting the new strategies, techniques, method, and even learning material toward teaching English as a foreign language through Facebook pages. Besides that, English teachers also get some up to date information about educational issues in the world so that facilitate their critical thinking as a teacher. English teachers also think that Facebook pages can be a reliable source for their professional development because Facebook pages give impact to their improvement in teaching.

The researcher recommends the teachers to use this medium as professional development source besides getting the formal source. The combination of both sources is much better for teachers' improvement. They also must be selective in choosing the Facebook pages to be followed, so that they will get meaningful learning for their professional development. Teachers have to make sure that the Facebook page has a good content and it is reliable enough to be accessed. Then, if the teachers want to adapt the material, lesson plan even the exercise from the Facebook page, they should filter it first and make sure that it suits with their students and their classroom environment.

Moreover, for the administrators of English teaching Facebook pages, the researcher suggests them to share the useful material and content for the followers so that it is going to be meaningful for their professional development. Finally, for the school district, school principle, and government, instead of forbidding and blocking teachers from joining and access this kind of social media sites, they should encourage and support teachers to participate in this useful and helpful medium for their professional development opportunities, or they can create their own Facebook pages to be accessed by the teachers as professional development source. Then, for further researcher, it is better to investigate students' perception toward teachers' professional development after accessing the Facebook pages whether this site gives the meaningful improvement to their teachers or not.

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