SYSTEMIZING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH COURSE OF INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS (ILP)

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Abstract: Questions about the English courses' learning and teachers' qualities have risen along with the increasing business competition among them. Teacher professional development is a crucial aspect to be implemented in every education institution for better educational outcomes. The focus of this study is to evaluate the professional development programs in branch offices of ILP English course using CPD cycle of four stages. This research is qualitative based with data collection from interview, observation, document analysis and questionnaire. The research recommended the following actions to be done by ILP to improve the impact of professional development programs. First, further socialization on the importance of teachers' participation in the CPD programs should be conducted for both personal and career development purposes. Second, opportunities for taking part in institution's CPD programs' planning stage should be provided continuously. Third, teachers (through course principals) should be encouraged to have initiative in organizing their own personal CPD program by making Personal Development Record (PDR) and Development Action Plan (DAP). Lastly, ILP should develop online CPD programs where teachers can access their CPD account and run their own personal CPD program.

Keywords: professional development program, professional development, English course, non-formal education, CPD

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, language courses have significantly increased in numbers due to students' interests in learning foreign languages, which led to the tendency of recruiting new teachers without proper criteria. Pre-service course has been a solution which is most often taken to close the skills and knowledge gap. Nevertheless, no matter how good pre-service training course for teachers is, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. Education systems therefore seek to provide teachers with opportunities for in-service professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce (OECD, 2009).

Teachers with high standard of teaching skills and knowledge will ensure students to receive better education quality. It could ensure students to remain enrolled as well, since keeping student retention rate has also become highly important responsibility for teachers in non-formal educational institutions. So, fun and engaging learning experiences have to be provided in order to arise students' interests to study so that they can extend their study period. This is also in line with Article 40 of the National Education System Law, paragraph 2 part 2, which mentions 'fun' term in conditioning learning environment of all education institutions. Moreover, a stable or even an increasing student retention rate in a non-formal institution means good for business. If a non-formal institution is considered unprofessional in providing its main services to consumers,

then it will certainly be unable to survive in competition with other advancing institutions. To be able to guarantee its continuity in the business competition, a course institution needs to maintain or even improve its quality. This can be done, among others, by maintaining while improving the quality of teachers employed. From this perspective, the conventionally divided in-service and pre-service activities should be viewed as seamless components of the same process (NCERT, 2011).

Continuing professional development (CPD) has been acknowledged its importance in maintaining and improving the quality of learning and teaching in both formal and non-formal educational institutions (Harland & Kinder, 1997). Padwad and Krishna (2011) define CPD as a planned and sustainable process for teachers to develop both personal and professional skills, as well as to improve their knowledge, expertise and practice. All will lead to efforts of empowering teachers, improving the quality of education institutions where they work, and developing their learners which will be benefited for all parties. Article from NCSET (Reitz, 2002) further explains the Professional Development as an advanced study done in the period of employment by someone who works in a particular profession in the form of voluntary presence at conferences/workshop, or postgraduate study. A research conducted by Michael Garet (2001) discovered that teachers who participated in CPD program, which is linked with their day-to-day teaching experiences or assessment standards implemented by their educational institutions, will be able to adapt their teaching style based on students' characteristics, acquire more related knowledge of the field of study being taught, and improve the quality of teaching skills.

Studies about CPD have been conducted with different focuses of research, such as CPD for librarian and teachers of non-English subjects. However, only few researches were conducted with the topic of non-formal institutions. Research on teacher's quality was conducted to improve the quality of recruitment and teaching standards at three language centers in Salatiga (Sari, 2011). Although it was intended to help managers creating effective procedures for teacher recruitment, the findings helped us to understand what really happened during the process. Some important findings were: (1) there was no standardized recruitment process of new teachers; (2) senior teachers failed to perform their supervisory function towards new teachers; and (3) teachers' needs of improvement and self-evaluation were low due to the absence of performance assessment. Furthermore, a research of supervisory functions in EFL development programs within the Indonesian non-formal education sector (Trikartikaningsih, 1999) was conducted in SEAFLI. The result showed that supervisory conferences could be categorized as CPD program, since its function is to give support and guidance for teachers through discussion, sharing session, observation and evaluation among themselves for better teaching performance.

ILP has been in the business of English language course for more than 30 years by maintaining the quality of English learning services provided to their consumers. For ILP, learning quality depends heavily on the quality of the teachers, who also depends on the quality of professional development programs provided before and especially when the teacher works. Sustainable professional development can be successful if it is carried out by both parties, teacher and institution. Teachers who are passionate towards their work could easily lose interest in developing their professionalism if the institution does not accommodate it well. As for the institutions, they cannot rely solely on their teachers' skills and knowledge since they will gradually become obsolete. ILP is aware of the importance of professional development for teachers to support their professionalism, but the facilities provided will also become useless if teachers do not utilize them well. Thus, this study was conducted to answer questions of:

(1) Have ILP professional development programs been systematically planned and implemented?
(2) What can be done to improve the quality of CPD programs implementation in ILP?

METHOD

This study used qualitative approach with interview and observation to collect data. In addition, questionnaire was arranged to obtain complementary data, as well as to triangulate all data. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the content analysis method. Thus, conclusions were drawn to answer the research questions. Furthermore, this research was conducted at ILP head office and the 4 branches in Jakarta. Interview sessions were carried out with 4 informants from Training Division (2 facilitators, managers, and academic consultant) and 12 informants (8 full-time and 4 part-time teachers). The number of respondents for the questionnaire were 43 people. The duration of the study was between February to October 2013. There are 7 activities of CPD programs that have been implemented in ILP, such as training, observation, "Guardian Angel", Joint-branch workshop, end-of-term talk, language upgrading classes, and student questionnaire.

CPD Cycle

This study used the basic cycle of CPD to evaluate 7 Professional Development programs in ILP.

Figure 1. Core CPD cycle (from the page of http://www.bcs.org)

According to the graphic above, there are four stages considered when implementing CPD programs in an institution, such as:

A. **Stage 1 (Planning):** This stage is conducted by referring to SMART concept (Doran, 1998), which are *Specific* (identify the focus and goals of the programs)*, Measurable* (identify all criteria to measure the progress)*, Achievable* (target the results to achieve with existing resources and capable individuals)*, Realistic* (state what results can realistically be achieved, given the available resources and objectives) and *Timely* (set the completion date).

B. **Stage 2 (Implementation):** Implementing the programs which are previously planned with continuous monitoring, recording and evaluation on daily/monthly basis.

C. **Stage 3 (Evaluation):** Evaluation and assessment report making on the results achieved after the CPD programs completed. The report on teachers' progress should be made for both the individual teacher and institution.

D. **Stage 4 (Reflection):** Reflection on the CPD programs implementation is done by collecting feedback from participants, which will be used for the next CPD programs' planning.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There is a career ladder in ILP, ranging from Probations, Junior 1, Junior 2, Regular and Principal. Each teacher climbs the career ladder by taking part in series of assessment for promotion, with CPD programs participation holds the biggest point.

Training Division Manager stated that each teacher's performance is seen from his development in making and implementing the teaching plan (through observation results), and obtaining good evaluation scores from students through student questionnaire. One's development is also supported by participating in trainings and upgrading classes to improve their skills and language proficiency. Thus, the awareness of self-development and one's strengths and weaknesses will be shown in end-of-term talk by discussing the teacher's progress towards a period of one's working.

The assessment results are then put in individual's *Teacher Files* for certain purposes. Below is the analysis of ILP's Development Programs using CPD cycle.

Planning:

Specific: Equip teachers with knowledge and teaching skills to be able to conduct effective classroom learning.

Measurable: The use of evaluation sheet, discovery task, and observation report.

Achievable: to facilitate teachers with CPD programs.

Realistic: active participation in institution's CPD programs.

Timely: During teacher's employment time.

Implementation:

- Institution facilitate CPD programs, like observation, training, GA, end-of-term talk, language upgrading classes, workshop, student questionnaires.
- Follow-up the results.
- Observe teachers' development when doing *business review*.

Evaluation:

- Teachers enable to develop the knowledge and skill by participating in the CPD programs.
- Principals hold the key to the successfulness of CPD programs' implementation.
- Institution (through Principals) can acknowledge each teacher's improvement in teaching quality.
- A *reward* (promotion) and *punishment* (class reduction) method can be implemented according to information obtained.

Reflection:

- Most teachers still consider CPD programs as work obligations.
- Training Division need to socialize the importance of this CPD programs towards teachers' development.

Figure 2. CPD cycle of Teacher's Development Programs in ILP

In-service Training Program

In ILP, in-service training is usually carried out at ILP head office. The Training Division starts its planning in November by distributing questionnaires to principals regarding their teachers' professional development needs or identifying the latest trends in education at that time. After having some adjustments, the fixed training schedule is distributed to all branches and outlets. The schedule is described in 2 or 4 sessions every month. Notification is also sent a few days before each training is conducted. Below is the analysis of ILP's In-service Training Programs using CPD cycle.

Figure 3. CPD cycle of In-service Training Programs in ILP

Observation

Class observation conducted in ILP aimed to regularly evaluate teachers' performance by the Principal or senior teachers using assessment tools. It is completely different from the concept of observation program proposed by Richards and Farrell (2005), which is done by fellow teachers and for professional development purposes. Williams (1989, in Richards & Farrell, 2005) also summarized some problems arose from classroom observation, such as teachers' dislikes towards observation activities due to inconvenient feeling, and teachers' initial perception of having observation as career continuity evaluation. The discussion made after observation includes the results of observations, reasoning of teacher actions in class, aspects which need to be improved, and providing input for improvement. Below is the analysis of ILP's Class Observation Program using CPD cycle.
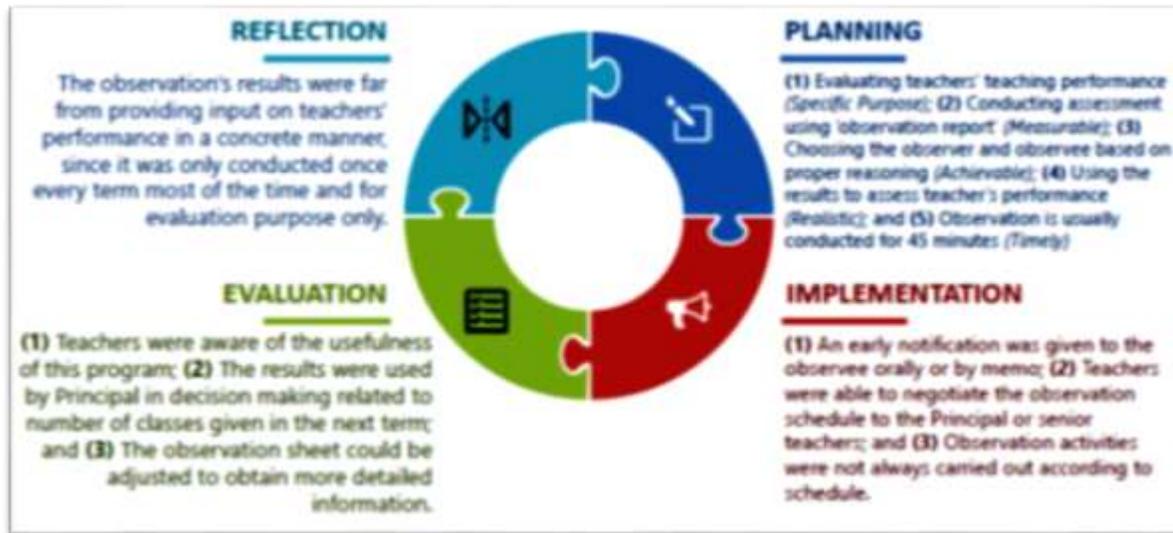
REFLECTION

The observation's results were far from providing input on teachers' performance in a concrete manner, since it was only conducted once every term most of the time and for evaluation purpose only.

EVALUATION

(1) Teachers were aware of the usefulness of this program; (2) The results were used by Principal in decision making related to number of classes given in the next term; and (3) The observation sheet could be adjusted to obtain more detailed information.

PLANNING

(1) Evaluating teachers' teaching performance (Specific Purpose); (2) Conducting assessment using 'observation report' (Measurable); (3) Choosing the observer and observee based on proper reasoning (Achievable); (4) Using the results to assess teacher's performance (Realistic); and (5) Observation is usually conducted for 45 minutes (Timely)

IMPLEMENTATION

(1) An early notification was given to the observee orally or by memo; (2) Teachers were able to negotiate the observation schedule to the Principal or senior teachers; and (3) Observation activities were not always carried out according to schedule.

Figure 4. CPD cycle of Observation Program in ILP

Guardian Angel (GA)

The GA (teaching consultation) concept is to guide teachers, especially probationers and teachers teaching new level, to make ILP's lesson plan before teaching. Below is the analysis of ILP's GA Program using CPD cycle.

REFLECTION

Principal should encourage all teachers to keep on doing the GA when they have already taught the level to explore possibilities of delivering lessons using different teaching style.

EVALUATION

The program was proven to be an effective CPD program for teachers to develop their teaching mastery because most of the respondents stated that they could give better delivery of the topics after doing the GA

PLANNING

(1) The identified purpose was for teachers to apply ILP's teaching method standard and (2) It was measured through GA session form by undergoing lesson plan's consultations for minimum 10 sessions.

IMPLEMENTATION

The types of consultation were different between Senior Regular-Junior 2 (oral consultation in informal situation) and Senior Regular-Probation teachers (by-the-book style of consultation in formal situation).
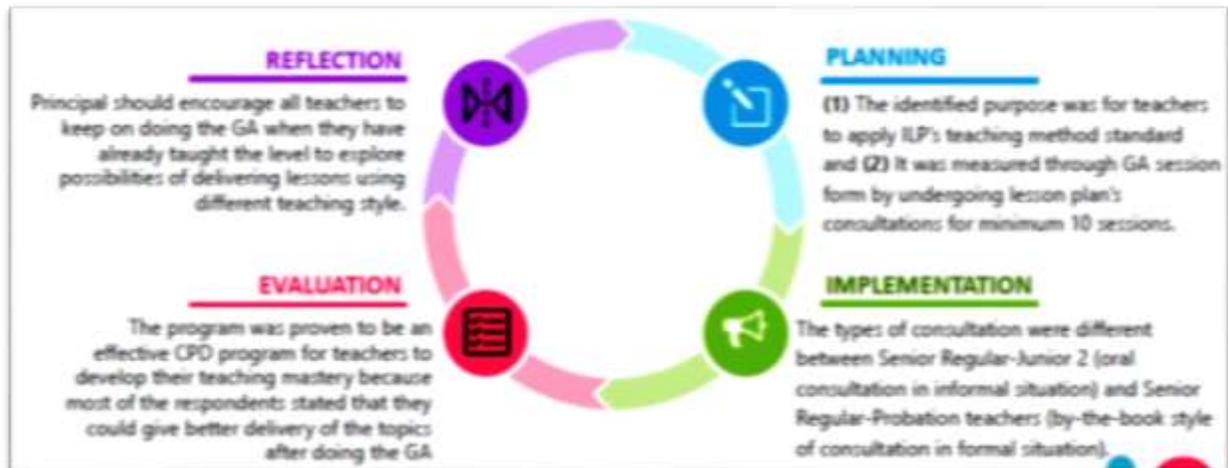
Figure 5. CPD cycle of GA Program in ILP

Main benefit obtained from implementing GA program for ILP is that ILP (through the principals) can evaluate whether teachers are still following the teaching standard applied in ILP even when they do not do GA program regularly. If the teacher assessed still follows the standard, then the principal will provide recommendations and positive score that will be useful for the promotion. The benefit obtained by the teacher is having feedback from other parties that can be useful to improve his teaching skills. When the teacher does not appear to have made some changes suggested earlier, then the principal will include the information into his evaluation sheet (in the 'Cooperation' column), which will have a negative impact on the promotion opportunity.

Joint-Branch and National Workshop

Joint-Branch workshop is conducted annually and attended by all ILP branches, which are Pancoran, KS Tubun, Panglima Polim and Ciputat. As for national workshop, all attendees and facilitators are either from ILP or other education institutions. Richards, Gallo, & Renandya (2001) (cited in Richards & Farrell 2005) argues that workshop is one of the most effective and useful CPD activity for teachers since they could learn practical skills to be applied in the classroom. Below is the analysis of ILP's Joint-Branch and National workshop Program using CPD cycle.
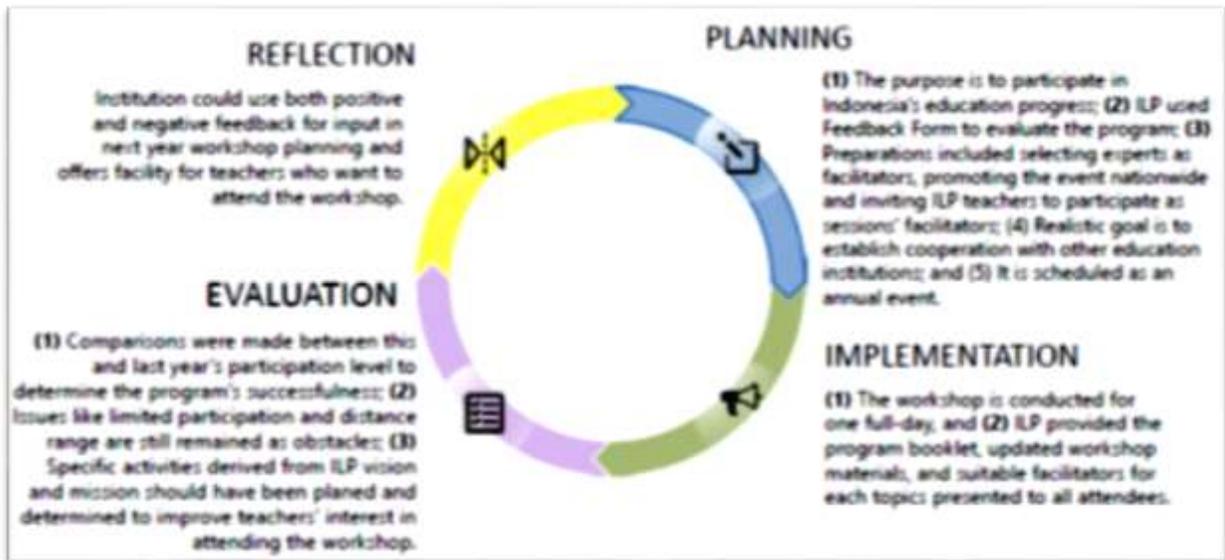

Figure 6. CPD cycle of Joint-Branch and National Workshop Program in ILP

End-of-term Talk

This program is basically a 'one-on-one' conversation between Principal and teachers to further discuss performance evaluation every three months. If it is conducted regularly, it functions not only for assessing teacher's performance in teaching and conducting CPD programs facilitated by institutions but also for assessing whether those CPD programs have been carried out properly or else. However, the success of this program relied heavily on principal's availability. Below is the analysis of ILP's End-of-term Talk Program using CPD cycle.
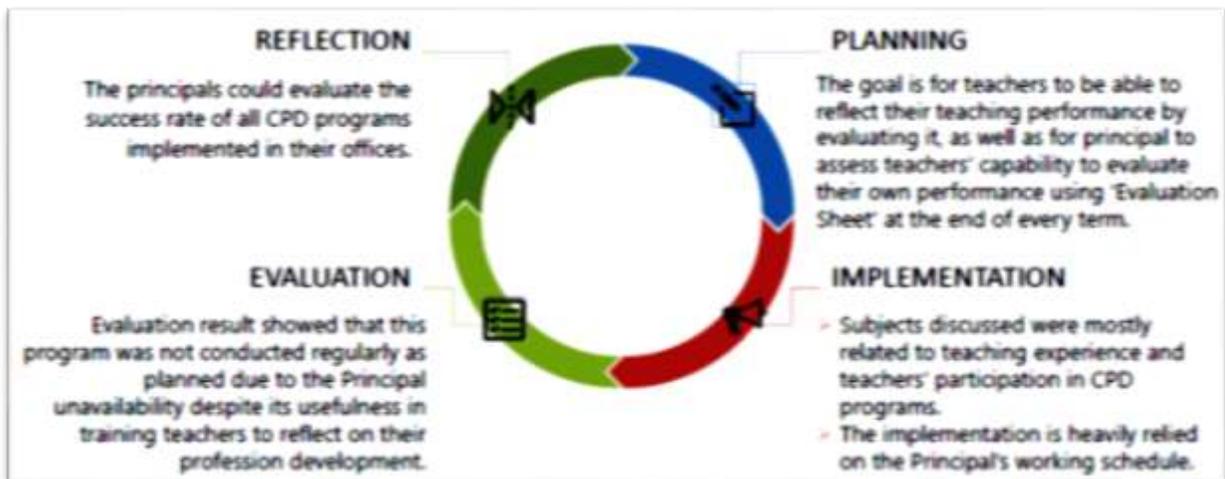
Figure 7. CPD cycle of End-of-term Talk Program in ILP

Language Upgrading Classes

There are two upgrading classes in ILP, FCE and CAE. After passing the probation status, teachers needed to attend these classes and pass in order to teach higher levels. Below is the analysis of ILP's Language Upgrading Program using CPD cycle.
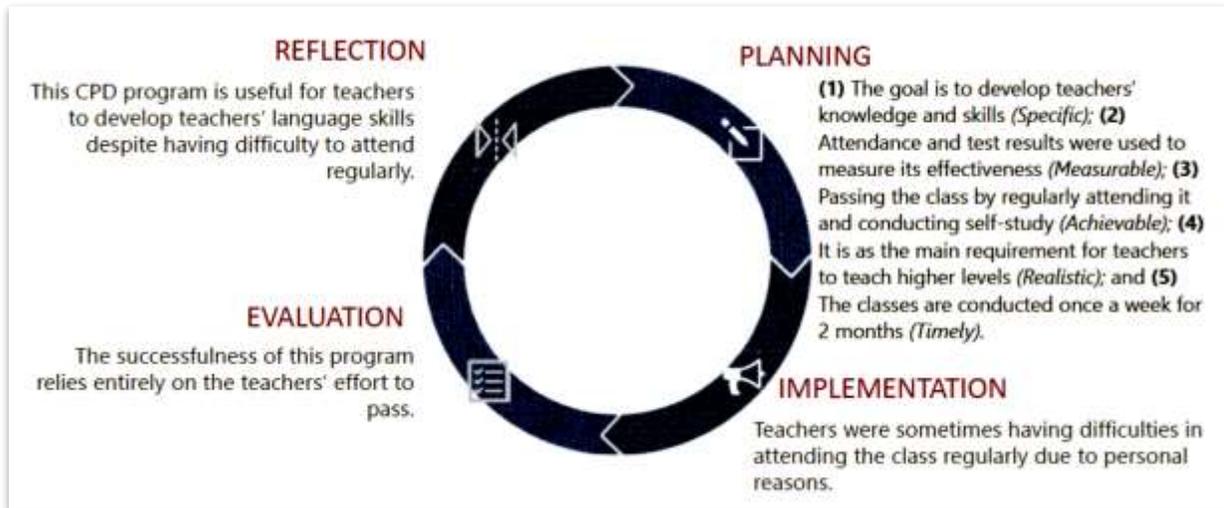
REFLECTION
This CPD program is useful for teachers to develop teachers' language skills despite having difficulty to attend regularly.

PLANNING
(1) The goal is to develop teachers' knowledge and skills *(Specific);* (2) Attendance and test results were used to measure its effectiveness *(Measurable);* (3) Passing the class by regularly attending it and conducting self-study *(Achievable);* (4) It is as the main requirement for teachers to teach higher levels *(Realistic);* and (5) The classes are conducted once a week for 2 months *(Timely).*

EVALUATION
The successfulness of this program relies entirely on the teachers' effort to pass.

IMPLEMENTATION
Teachers were sometimes having difficulties in attending the class regularly due to personal reasons.

Figure 8. CPD cycle of Language Upgrading Program in ILP

The successfulness of this program relies entirely on the teachers' effort to pass. However, this study did not verify the relation between having full attendance and possibility to pass the test.

Student questionnaire

Student questionnaire is usually given at the end of term. ILP gathers feedback to evaluate teachers' performance in the classroom. The assessment aspects are teaching methodology used, the language fluency, the frequency of giving homework, teacher's readiness to teach and teachers' personality. Below is the analysis of ILP's student questionnaire program using CPD cycle.

REFLECTION
➤ If the purpose is to assess teachers' teaching performances, then consistency is needed from its implementation.
➤ Institution could conduct questionnaire program every term for all classes, which results can be used to assess teachers performances in every classes.

PLANNING
➤ Student questionnaire was purposely given to evaluate students' satisfaction towards teachers' teaching style and classroom learning process.
➤ Given at the end of every classes *(Timely).*

EVALUATION
Student questionnaire was analyzed together with GA and observation form for thorough assessments on teachers' performance.

IMPLEMENTATION
The program is conducted in the new classes or in classes where the teacher taught them for the first time with a notification given to the teacher himself a week before the questionnaire is given.
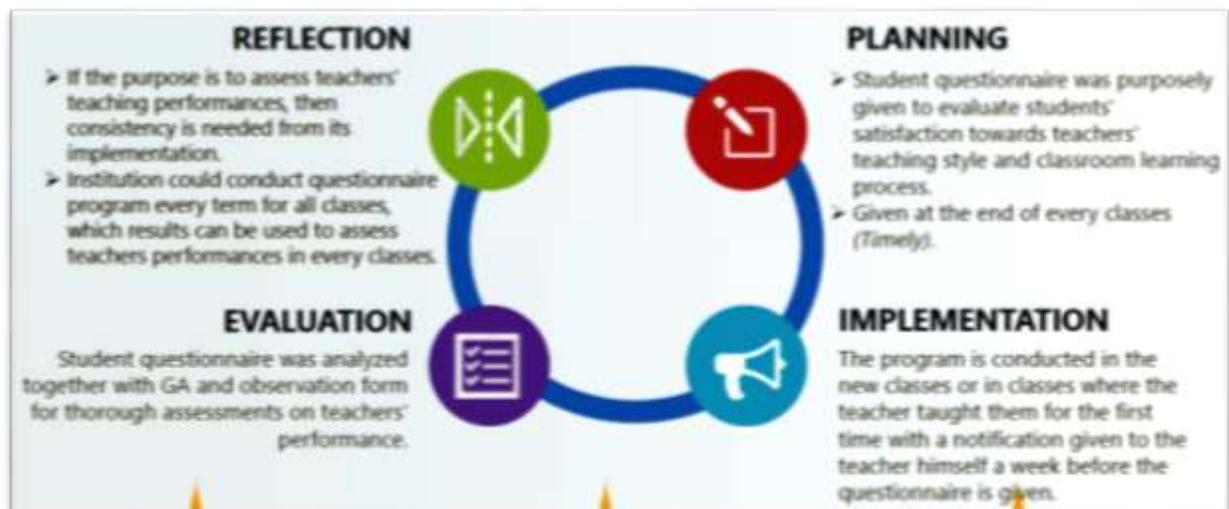
Figure 9. CPD cycle of Student Questionnaire Program in ILP

CONCLUSIONS

The CPD programs in ILP are systematically planned and implemented with procedures and purposes. ILP also has connection between teachers' career ladder, promotion system and participation in CPD programs. However, some improvements are needed to generate significant impacts and benefits. First, ILP, through Training Division, need to socialize the importance of CPD programs and, if possible, encourage teachers to participate in all programs. This was based on the finding that most teachers still considered trainings as employment obligations.

Moreover, Training Division could include teachers in planning topics for training and principals could encourage them to choose which training sessions they wanted to attend. This could increase teachers' enthusiasm in attending the trainings when the topics were relevant to what they experienced in the classroom. Second, ILP should take advantage of technology development and make its own online-based CPD internal network platform, so that teachers could access their CPD accounts and run their CPD programs using Personal Development Record and Development Action Plan. Third, with the implementation of online CPD platform, ILP (through Training Division and Principal) could monitor and evaluate each teacher's development. Lastly, this CPD cycle can be used to evaluate all CPD programs implemented in ILP in order to improve the quality of those programs for the benefits of institution, teachers and students.

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