Does Our English Teacher Education Need Re-Designing?

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Abstract: Change has been regarded as inherent in any living organization for quite a long time, for its own development and to keep up its external relevance as part of the development. Individual or random responses to external sources for change, however, tend to cause internal inconsistency and inefficiency. On this occasion a number of current issues, potential to be sources for change, such as diversified outcomes, the school-based management, and the competence-based curriculum will be looked over in terms of its relevance to our English-teacher education. There are obviously other sources of change, and they will keep coming in, but when we feel they become too many, and they come too often, it is time to read between the lines, to grab their underlying spirit. Perhaps the time is here for us to get our English-teacher education re-orientated, and subsequently re-designed.

Key words: outcome oriented, output oriented, school based management

Now and then we, the teaching staff of our English-teacher education, get together to streamline our curriculum: identified gaps and overlaps are adjusted, few courses are rearranged or regrouped, new resources are introduced, and so on. However, sources for change keep streaming in, causing some of us to become disoriented. Discussing contextually may help us identify their constructs, for more comprehensive change.

The current issues to be discussed in terms of our English-teacher education include: output and outcome orientation (to cater for diversified outcomes), the school-based management, the competence-based curriculum, open-competition, prevalent violence, and accreditation portfolio. Should our English-teacher education need reorientation and redesigning, as facilitated by our autonomy, it can be done more comprehensively.

OUTPUT AND OUTCOME ORIENTATION

In industrial CBT (competence-based training), the *output* may be the same as the *outcome*, as opposed to the *input* (ANTA, in Urlwin, 2002). In the English teacher education, however, they are often different. When strictly *output oriented* in organizing the English-teacher education, we base our program on the pre-determined job of our student, as set out in the official mission of the institution, that is, the English teacher; to be more specific, for the S1 Program, it is the Senior High School English teacher. The activities are supposed to be highly focused. The essential competence to acquire would be the English mastery and how to teach it. This is in fact, the training part of the English teacher, where the effective English teaching, at a particular educational level, is what it is all about. In this, anything else which does not directly contributive to the English mastery and how to teach it will function as complement, enrichment, or, even deviation. But, in formal education context, the training is educational training, which has to include more than mere effective teaching.

When strictly *outcome oriented*, we base our programs on what the graduates really do, on the inventory of work areas graduates are doing, and not on what they are supposed to do. Such is suggested by one of our graduates. When asked to give input, he wrote " ... to identify all those work areas and learn as much as possible what they are really doing, ... PBI (the English Education Department) creates courses which help students learn how to do what alumni are doing". In other words, he suggested that we make an inventory of jobs they are actually doing, and organize our programs accordingly. Such a suggestion sounds logical indeed, particularly when you mean *quality* stakeholders' satisfaction. Operationally this may be a problem, nevertheless it does have some bearing on how we organize our study program, particularly on how to cater for more diversified outcomes.

My suspicion is that many of our English-teacher education programs are more output oriented, though not strictly so. To adopt output-outcome orientation at face value may easily invite problems. First, re-

source-wise: Who would teach the "Employment Recruitment" course? (The graduate who suggested the idea happens to work as recruiting officer for the navy of an advanced country); or, "Export-Import Management", "Foreign-Exchange Business Consulting", or, "Rent-a-car Management"? And many others. Secondly, offering highly diversified courses may risk losing a focus, jeopardizing the institutional mission of the English-teacher education. The predicted result would be learning many things, but only superficially, therefore, hardly useful for any purpose. Even when resources were available, it would be simply ridiculous to offer such courses as part of the English-teacher education. Yet, they are what graduates are actually doing. On one hand, the English Education Department (EED) obviously cannot offer the "Foreign-Exchange Business Consulting" or "Rent-a-car Management" course, on the other, it would not be happy to let the graduate foreign-exchange business consultant and rent-a-car owner manager claim "I did not learn anything useful from the EED."

Outcome orientation shows that in order to cater for the professional diversity of graduates the EED does not have to lose a focus, but the question is whether it provides some general competence, integrated in courses already offered or as separate courses, which is useful for both the English teacher and for other professions. Consider the following employment history of some graduates: (1) the rent-a-car manager, a 1985 graduate, started with teaching at a refugee camp; (2) a 1988 graduate started with teaching at a high school, now project director at a provincial office of education, (3) a 1998 graduate started with teaching at a community-run school, to end up an HRD specialist, (4) a 1999 graduate started with private teaching, then an import-export supervisor at a foreign company, now logistic supervisor of another foreign company, (5) another 1999 graduate started with teaching at a community-run school, now a teacher of an elite primary school, (6) some started with teaching at high school, and remain so until retirement. The outputs are the same: a qualified, Senior High School English teacher, but the outcomes are varied indeed. Employment hardly stays put. Many graduates assume different types of jobs for their career. The problem is: What common competence do they need to have in order to succeed, and which the EED might help provide?

Whether the orientation is output, outcome, or some of their combi-

nation most graduates will eventually continue their education or training for a degree or otherwise. The EED is obliged to cater for this purpose, too. On top of this the EED is to keep its relevance and decide its direction in line with current and future demands, many of which are contained in current issues as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Output and Outcome Orientation and Current Issues in the English-Teacher Education

OFFICIAL OUTPUT	OUTCOME			DIRECTION
A qualified, Senior High School English Teacher	Continuing Education/ Training Participant	Teacher-related worker: SHS, PS, JHS, College, Community-run school, Business/ Industry	Non-teacher related worker: HRD, NGO, public/foreign relations, journalism, survival training program	?
Required competence: English teaching	Scholastic	Learning management	Organizational management	
Courses: Personality Development, Science and Skill, Employment Skill, Employment Behavior, Living Together	Ability: Analogy, Classification, Evaluation, Communication	Ability: planning, organizing, leading, controlling, program design, evaluation	Ability: polc, communication, program design, entrepreneurship	
school-based management, competence-based curriculum, post-colonialism, ICT, open-competition, prevalent violence, accreditation portfolio				

School-Based Management (Autonomy)

Autonomy in higher learning has been officially reinforced since 1996, as one of the five pillars for sustainable development within the New Paradigm, the other four being *quality, accountability, evaluation*, and *accreditation* (KPPTJP, 1996-2005). Eventually, the national curriculum is replaced with the "core curriculum", which, so far, has given only very general guidelines. In other words, institutions of higher learning have become more and more autonomous (and are expected to become

more accountable in achieving sustainable quality development, as shown in their self-evaluation and accreditation).

Schools are to follow suit, if more gradually. Teachers and the Principal, together with the school board are themselves responsible for what is considered high quality of education and how to achieve it. The English teacher used to wait for the central government's decision about what to do, through the national curriculum, supervised by the local office of education. Now he/she is free (autonomous) to decide what and how to teach, after considering: the core curriculum, the school-board's expressed needs, the local/regional English needs of the learners, the school potentials, colleagues' views and experience, and other external learning facilities. In other words, there is more urgency for the teacher's competence in SWOT analysis and program design.

Competence-Based Curriculum

I have the impression that *competence* or *competency* is often operationally understood as action, as opposed to knowledge. So, as long as goals are stated in action words, the education program is already competence based. *Knowing the past tense* is cognition based, *able to answer past tense questions* is already competence based. In this way the substance remains the same, but with a different label, the latter becoming more acceptable both academically and officially.

It is indeed not easy to find a working definition of *competence* or *competency*. The Core Curriculum of Higher Learning (SK 045/U/2002), for example, states "*Kompetensi adalah seperangkat tindakan cerdas, penuh tanggungjawab yang dimiliki seseorang sebagai syarat untuk dianggap mampu oleh masyarakat dalam melaksanakan tugas-tugas di bidang pekerjaan tertentu*" (Competence is a set of intelligent actions, with full responsibility, which someone has as pre conditions society considers him/her able to accomplish tasks of a specific job). There are many other definitions, but I find Wolf's and Debling's (in Hasan Hamid, 2002) most helpful, i.e. that the essence of competence is *the ability to perform in a function or an occupational area*. A competency is indeed action or performance, but which is related to a function or occupation, it is not random action. So, even *identifying the meaning of minimal pairs* or *completing a short paragraph* (*Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi, SLTP* draft-6) is

action or performance, but not a competency in the sense just described.

One significant consequence of the competence-based curriculum is, for the English teacher education, the probability of the program becoming more functional in many ways. In this context, it is perfectly legal to question any program activity or component in terms of its function, its contribution to the targeted graduate competence. The structural approach will become much less accountable and learning interaction tends to be more integrative.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Part of an ideal ICT-based English teacher education scenario might look like the following: (1) a *stadium general* on the nature of the program, including graduate profile and how to accomplish it, (2) course introduction, classical or on line, including the expected competence and how to acquire it, (3a) the teacher monitor the student's skill acquisition progress in the lab or on line, (3b1) the teacher provides fundamental concepts and their interrelations of a content course with sketchy support information classically or on line, (3b2) the teacher gives progress tests of a content course classically or on line, and so forth.

If such were true, some implications were: (1) the student became well aware about the competencies he/she were to acquire, and put maximum efforts to accomplish them, (2) the knowledge and skill transfer from the teacher would be kept to the minimum, because most would be acquired by the student from the virtual world, (3) there would be a genuine two-way learning process: the student learned fundamental concepts and skills from the teacher, the teacher, during the learning interaction, would very probably learn about most recent information from the student. At present these consequences are still rare in general, for different reasons: (1) many students do not seem eager enough to know in detail about the competence they are expected to acquire when graduated; they tend to wait for the teacher to tell them what to do; (2) most students do not have easy access to the virtual world for economic and other reasons, (3) some teachers might find it uncomfortable not to give out maximum information they have laboriously accumulated for years or to show off their acquired skills. Despite all this, however, changes are evidently ongoing, and it is generally unproductive not to comply.

Open Competition

I am for the belief that the essence of open market and free competition is the availability of sustainable, excellent goods and services for society, regardless of who provides them. Any protective measures, be they regional, national, provincial, racial, religious, or political are illegal, except for the deprived: war refugees, street children, the handicapped, and minority groups. Goods and services in open market need be openly described: its origin, input, process, output, and outcome to ensure quality, and that in the process they are not destructive to the environment and human dignity.

There appear two implications for the English-teacher education. First, some kind of standardization and certification is inevitable, though gradual. Secondly, since excellence is generally multi-facets, synergized efforts are a virtue.

Post-Colonialism

How good is good English? Would the Indonesian English be recognized as an English dialect? How much can we express Indonesian values (read: Papuans, Timorese, Balinese, Javanese etc.) in Indonesian ways? Such questions are complicated to answer, and I should like to leave them to be taken care of by sociolinguists. I would simplify them as I normally do, that is "the purpose of us learning English is not that we speak and behave like Australians, Britons, or Americans, but that we speak it like educated Indonesians." Trivial like *Going home, Sir?* or even *Where are you going, Atsuko?* might still be acceptable (with appropriate gestures), but ending a letter with *I think it's enough* should probably be corrected.

Sometimes it is good to know that even some New Yorkers continue speaking *axed English* (Forget the spelling, never forget the question.): "I axed her the question this morning" (From TESL-L, a few months ago).

Prevalent Violence

Once in a while it may be worth reflecting not only on our teaching and the student learning, but our studying as well. I believe most of us, language teachers, are doing language learning less and less, but studying

it all the time. Why do we study language, and not agriculture, history, or economics? Surely, there are practical answers, such as, "This is the way I earn my life.", but upon reflection there may be more profound answers, such as, "Language is instrumentally pivotal to humanization, without which there would be no human progress." Thus, language is closely related with humanity, with the preservation, protection, and promotion of human dignity, of human values.

In May (2002) I tried at random to scan through several printed media for violent incidents, among these were: shop torching and burning in India; bloody shooting in the Middle East; deaths from student fighting in Jakarta; burnt, blackened bodies in Ambon; a son hacking his mother to death; two gangsters burnt to death in Brebes.

Analyses on why such things happen are abundant, and numerous good-hearted individuals or groups have given their shares in trying to prevent further incidents or to help relieve those who are victimized. Is there room for language students?

Yes, indeed. Even business and industrial companies have been trying. The TQC has been generally replaced with TQM, for example, where *to respect people* becomes one of its important pillars. Goods or services in the process of which people are enslaved or environments destroyed will likely be rejected by many. Now since language is instrumentally pivotal in humanization, there is a potential that language learning contributes significantly to the promotion of universal human values, in its random interaction or systematically. One of the systematic approaches could be through the introduction of value contents, along with specific contents, i.e. those relevant to a given age group, profession, or interest, and general contents, i.e. those relevant to communication across age groups, professions or interests. Would there be time for language-learning course books which do not promote peace, advocate human rights, and celebrate diversity not to get recommended?

Accreditation Portfolio

When the accreditation of study programs was first introduced it was essentially checkpoint, with binary scoring. If under the *laboratory* item you check *Yes* you get one point, if you check *No* you get nil. Whether your laboratory is only a few crude tape recorders or a state-of-the-art

unit, it does not make much difference. Now it is different. You have to start with a self-evaluation report (some version of SWOT analysis), followed by a portfolio and all documented evidence.

One important implication is for teachers, students, and administrators alike, that each needs to be aware of what they are doing, and to make sure they contribute to the accomplishment of the stated mission. If it is the graduate competence, predicted or real, which is to be accomplished, most activities are to be integrated.

Before drawing a conclusion, Table 2 shows the summary of the implications of the current issues just discussed. Some competencies may be achieved through courses, others through non courses, such as maximizing the learning transfer. Some learning instruments are already offered, others may still need devising.

Table 2. Implications of the Current Issues to the English-Teacher Education

EXTERNAL RELEVANCE	IMPLIED LEARNING INSTRUMENT: COURSE/NON-COURSE	STATUS
Diversified Outcomes		
SHS teacher	CO: English-related CO: SHS teaching-related	fully offered fully offered
professional: teaching-related	CO: general, teaching-related NC: learning transfer	offered feasible
professional: language related	CO: language	offered
professional: non-teaching, non-language related	CO: specific content CO: organizational management, organizational behavior	not feasible feasible and relevant to official mission
graduate student: language/education	CO: language CO: education	offered offered
graduate student: non education/language	CO: specific content NC: learning process/transfer	not feasible feasible

School-Based Management		
program designer	CO: program design	feasibly integrated
Competence-Based Curriculum		
Functionalist	CO: functional approach NC: learning process	feasibly integrated feasible
Post-Colonialism		
post colonial advocate	CO: corpus-based grammar NC: culture integration	feasibly integrated feasible
Information and Communication Technology		
facilitator for: easier, faster, better learning	CO: learning media NC: virtual learning process	feasibly integrated gradually probable
Open-Competition		
excellent service provider	NC: standardization and synergy	Gradually probable
Prevalent Violence		
promoter of human values	NC: content-value language learning	Gradually probable
Accreditation Portfolio		
accountable program manager	NC: integrated activities and Components: curricular, cocurricular, extra-curricular	Gradually operational

CONCLUSION

The autonomous institution of higher learning, and subsequently the autonomous study program, while retaining the focused specific professional goal, may cater for more diversified outcomes. The targeted core professional competence remains the Senior High School English teacher (for the S-1 Program), but with due, feasible efforts and concentrated interest the graduate will find it equally fitting to teach at a different level of

formal and non-formal education, to work at a government, business, and an industrial organization, to be self-employed, or to change jobs. This can be done through the integration of relevant course contents to maximize its achieved competence transfer, and through the introduction of contents courses which will support diversified employment areas. Courses like *Instructional Design* can be replaced with, or integrated into, *Program Design*, and *Language Testing* into *Achievement and Program Evaluation*, for example. Courses like *Organizational Management* and *Organizational Behavior*, which are relevant for almost every professional, a teacher being no exception, may be introduced in place of less relevant courses.

Directly or otherwise such a scheme may accommodate current issues, and, accordingly, our English-teacher education seems to have to lead itself towards: (1) helping the student *to be*, i.e. equipped with qualified Senior High School English competence, but to become what he/she is endowed to become, successfully, (2) adopting more functional, integrative contents and activities, (3) adopting standardized goals, procedures, and performances, (4) adopting more independent learning interaction, and advocating indigenous and universal human values. Do we need to redesign?

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