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# TEACHER APPRAISAL IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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*Teachers as workers in school need to have effective appraisal so that their performances are well recorded for professional development purposes. However, it is not such an easy task to do for there are various aspects involved in improving teachers' teaching and learning performance. Multi-level purposes appraisal of education system, organization, professional facets and personal aspects are examined in this article to see whether participating teachers really perceive these macro and micro aspects leading to students' improved learning. By employing qualitative approach, this study involved six English teachers and four contributors purposively to reflect maximum variations. Interviews, document checks, observations and snowball techniques were employed to reveal the voice of participants and contributors. As the data were gathered, analysis through coding, constant comparison and categorization significantly shaped the findings. To ensure them, triangulation of time, methods and participants as well as snowballing were crucial in forming the final result. The result showed that the first level of education system allowed communication gap to happen among teacher appraisal bodies. However, when teachers are aware of the school's charter goals they tend to feel the school improvement. As professionals, teachers require supports from the school management for performance improvement (in teaching and learning). They eventually perceive the effect of appraisal in self-reflection and personal improvement as individuals.*

*Key words: Multi-level purposes appraisal, qualitative approach, performance improvement*

## Introduction

Every individual comes into an organization with his/her unique ways of determining needs, achieving goals, choosing preferences relevant with his/her personal satisfactions. One may be ambitious, dedicated to achieve high and develop quickly in the career path; another may not perform competently, look for individual satisfactions elsewhere, in ways unrelated with the workplace. Everyone in an organization should realize that s/he needs to contribute in the achievement of organization goals in such a way as also to satisfy his/her personal needs. It is the organization's problem to tie together the distinctive features of individuals' talents, needs, preferences and activities towards institutional goal achievement. The institutions can take different ways to manage and monitor the integration of their workers. These may take forms of: recruitment, training, assignment, promotion, appraisal and counseling.

Schools as forms education organizations should also employ such ways to ensure all staff perform well and achieve institutional goals eventually. A school

normally consists of a principal as a symbol of management leadership, teachers and administrative staff. This study is focusing on the teachers' appraisal relevant to their professional development. Reflecting on Middlewood and Cardno (2001: 6) who propose multi level purposes of teacher appraisal in micro to macro system of education, this mini-research tries to examine whether this model is already perceived by teachers and exploring issues relevant to teacher appraisal especially, students' learning.

Table 1 The multi-level purposes of appraisal system

Levels	Purposes	Goals
Education System	Accountability School review & Audit	Development Improving the quality of teaching
Organization	Charter goals	School improvement
Individual (Professional)	Management decisions	Performance improvement
Individual (Personal)	Professional responsibility	Self-reflection and improvement

Under-criticism education quality in general and particularly teacher quality need to be resolved in a comprehensible way. Teacher as a part of education elements is an interesting topic to be studied. Their manners which certainly vary from one to another can be understood well in a behavioral research. This study is an attempt to understand their choices, feelings and voices in the context of teacher appraisal to result in better teachers' performance and students' improved achievement.

**Teacher Appraisal** Murdoch (2000: 54-56) notes some aspects of progressive teacher appraisal which will inform selections of teacher-evaluation procedures and the ways in which they are implemented. The first, to encourage reflective practice, problem solving and teaching-based evaluation is required so that teacher can focus on their classroom practices and try out new ideas. Secondly, the appraisal involves teachers' participation in the making to develop a full understanding of a teacher's wider program work and personal development. The next is that it should cover all teacher professional activities to provide a fair judgment among teachers as they have strengths and weaknesses in different areas. The fourth suggestion is to take accounts of students' views because the ultimate goal of teaching process is students' achievement besides they are the ones who spend most time with teachers in the classroom. Promoting collaboration is the last suggestion for teachers who need to dialogue the teaching process with other parties like coordinators, supervisors, colleagues and principals.

Below is a list reviewed literature in the field of teacher appraisal which contains pros and cons arguments related with the issue.

Table 2 A summary of the arguments for and against teacher appraisal as portrayed in the literature

Construct	pro teacher appraisal	against teacher appraisal
Accountability	The current system does not hold teachers accountable for their practice and performance. It is a bureaucratic meaningless exercise that needs change.	Designing a fair and accurate evaluation system for accountability purposes is vain because performance cannot be determined objectively and 'good teaching' can take several forms.

	Local authorities and parents have the 'right' to institute quality assurance mechanisms. Performance review increases political and public support for education systems.	Teaching needs a safe environment, far from political, social and business pressures.
	Evaluations allow the identification of good performers in a way similar to other markets.	Market mechanisms have no place in education.
Incentive mechanisms and links to recognition and rewards	Evaluations provide a basis for pay increments that depart from the single salary schedule solely based on experience. Essential to make the profession more attractive.	Teachers are not only motivated by financial rewards but by 'intrinsic' aspects (e.g. desire to teach, work with children) and favorable working conditions (e.g. flexible schedules). Some teachers can be discouraged as a result of evaluation procedures.
	There is a need to respond to ineffective teachers.	It is a patronizing policy which stigmatizes teachers.
Professional development	Evaluations allow teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to school goals and to assess professional development needs. Essential to keep teachers motivated by their work.	- The choice of professional development activities should not stem from evaluation results but be made by the teacher unilaterally. - Schools do not provide required professional development activities in appropriate areas
Cost	The current system wastes time, energy and money.	A comprehensive teacher evaluation scheme is expensive and time consuming.
Effects	Evaluations enhance teacher practice and improve student learning.	Evaluations produce a range of negative effects such as the narrowing of the curriculum and the neglect of some students.
	Teacher evaluations enhance co-operation between teachers – through professional discussions and a sharing of their practice – and between teachers and school leaders – from whom they expect feedback and coaching.	Teacher evaluations reduce teacher cooperation between teachers – because of competition effects – and between teachers and school leaders – because of hierarchical or 'appraiser-appraisee' relationships.

## Teacher Professional Development

Teacher's professional development is closely related to teachers' tasks and their professional roles. Glatthorn (1995: 41) defines it as *the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining experiences and examining his or her teaching systematically*. It is the growth that occurs as the teacher moves through the professional career cycle. This definition notes the importance of experiences a teacher obtains during his or her service period. It involves formal and informal experiences and they are processed to benefit for his/her improvement in performing the tasks. It is indeed a difficult task to define the construct of professional development because it might have impact on the subsequent process.

The difficulty of the defining process can be seen in the following definitions as quoted from Reimers (2003) who reviews related literature in professional development. It is: 'practicing educators continually learning to perform more effectively' Butler (1996: 265); 'a healthy growth state sustained by a professional which leads to change in practice and beliefs that improve education' Begg (1994: 9); 'improving the professional knowledge, skills and performance of an individual teacher; extending the experience of an individual teacher for career development or promotion purposes, developing the professional knowledge and understanding of an individual teacher, and extending the personal or general education of an individual teacher', Bolam (1988: 38); 'the sum of all the activities, both formal and informal, carried out by the individual or system to promote staff growth and renewal' Connors

(1991: 54). Most of the above definitions range from limiting it as process to activity conducted by teachers for their own sake. Other definitions found in related literature also mention its purpose of enhancing teacher's efficacy and students' learning outcome.

Though there are many definitions of professional development, one shared aim can be found within all: professional development is carried out to improve teacher performance and student achievement. Research shows the type of professional development in which a teacher participates does not only have impact on teacher quality, but it also has an influence on a teacher's motivation to grow professionally. When teachers are involved in quality professional development experiences, their motivation to further their involvement in such growth activities and continue to grow in their profession is increased. Teachers need to feel competent, skillful in their profession, and achieve confidence and respect in their workplace. When a teacher's professional growth needs are met, s/he has a boost in efficacy and competency in his/her teaching abilities. Such needs can be met through quality professional development opportunities.

These varying definitions entail that professional development is an educative process that motivates and encourages the ongoing learning of teachers with all the related complexity. As a complex process of learning, it must contain various activities and aspects that should be deeply scrutinized. This mini-inquiry aims at interpreting their stories on their experiences in teacher appraisal to understand its meaning making process. Thus, it is necessary to listen to their voices more comprehensively in the following sub-section.

## Method

Involving six teachers and four contributors, the mini-qualitative research sought to appreciate the value of appraisal perceived and experienced by the participants. They all taught English at schools but varied in terms of gender, type of school, length of service and status. This variation is aimed at obtaining wider perspective of teacher appraisal based on each individual's experiences so that a thicker description in the issue can be revealed.

Table 3. Participants

Participant Pseudo-Name	Sex	Institution	Status	Age
Mr. I	M	Private Senior High School	Civil Servant	46
Mrs. G	F	Vocational High school	Assistant Teacher	32
Mrs. R	F	Vocational High school	Civil Servant	36
Mr. H	M	State Senior high school	Civil Servant	41
Miss E	F	Private Senior high school	Non-government	32

An initial interview was carried out with each of the participants to verify whether they were really available for further involvement. They signed

information consent to ensure their agreement and provided me with opportunities to observe, to check relevant documents and to conduct deeper interviews.

Supports from the relevant schools' management were positive as I was allowed to triangulate and to snowball participants' further information. Access to relevant documents and other school stakeholders was facilitated as well. Practically, I found no difficulties in this qualitative inquiry. Even the schools principals were willing to give extra information when I needed to re-confirm emergent issues. In order to assist readers' comprehension, below is the table of research strategic steps in order to answer the issue.

Table 4 Strategic Steps

Step	Instrument/ Method	Purpose	Result	Analysis
1	preliminary interviews (non structured & open-ended)	1) to have the participants recall their stories (and histories) and experiences 2) to see the actual problems and to obtain early data as categories	Recorded verbatim data	Translated, transcribed and coded into a table
2	Observations	1) to see how the participants interact with students in classrooms 2) to ensure their statements are in line with their behaviors	Videotaped behaviors & field notes	Transcribed, confirmed, and put in table for analysis
3	Document checks	to check compliance with expressed statements and observed behaviors.	Photocopied/ scanned documents	Coded and compared to the other data sources
4	Re-interviews (guided based on emergent themes)	1) to focus on the research topic and sharpen the participants' voice 2) to confirm previous interviews 3) to serve as time & place triangulation	Recorded verbatim data	Translated, confirmed, transcribed and compared in a matrix/table
5	Snowball	1) to pursue more in-depth information 2) to see things from different angles	Recorded verbatim data	Transcribed, coded and compared

## Discussion and Findings

The basic analysis procedure in phenomenological research is interpretation to bring order and understanding and, thus, it requires creativity, discipline and a systematic approach. In this section, I try to highlight and present relevant chunks of data to see whether the multi-level purposes appraisal systems proposed by Middlewood and Cardno (2001: 6) matched the issue voiced by the participating teachers.

In reflection to the other English teachers she had met so far, the most informative participant, R, argued that they were lack of creativity in teaching and some civil servant teachers had no challenge because there was no appropriate appraisal system.

*They told me that some of the teachers seem to lack of creativity, they just let students listen and listen to the tape and do exercises. I teach them differently and give them tricks and strategies or clues based on the pictures in the problems. (A\_R\_12\_CREAT)*

*Hmm...I think the management should look closer to individual teacher's performance so that the teaching can be monitored well. (E\_R\_33\_APPRSL)*

She demanded a better appraisal system to ensure teachers' quality because she believed that there should be difference between quality and poor teachers. Such distinction, according to her, would create competition among teachers that motivated them to improve. Further she argued that good teacher appraisal “*should be sustainable and cannot be discrete on certain aspect or time*” (E\_R\_25\_APPRSL). It is in line with Hagger's (1993:3) integrated conception of competency that consists of several observable behaviors namely knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes displayed in the context of a carefully chosen set of realistic professional tasks.

According to R, development is a realization of her attempts to 'love' the profession. She never imagined of becoming a teacher but she realized that it was her path and destiny. She needs to learn from different sources and to build a professional network in order to develop and avoid similar mistakes in classroom practices. As a civil servant, she matches her professional development with her career trajectory so that she becomes an advanced teacher in the eyes of other English teachers and her students. *Table 5* below shows relevant findings for further discussions.

Table 5. The emerging issues

Main category	Sub category	Comments
CONTRL	APPRSL	All participants stated they needed fair, comprehensive and integrated appraisal for their development. The content of appraisal ranged from basic knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, communication knowledge, etc.
	REGLR	They also viewed the necessity for regular appraisal to maintain teachers' performance and development. The frequency of the appraisal differed from one another but their main reason was to maintain the quality.
	FREDOM	Civil servant teachers were seen to have loose pressure that made them less controlled. It is back to the individual commitment but the accountability system allowed that to occur.
	AUTONOMY	The participants demanded autonomy in their classroom practices. The vague definition of autonomy could be used by irresponsible teachers to free themselves without appraisal or control.
	SUPPORT	My participants stated the need for supportive environment to assist their development. The degree of support varied from one school to another.
	LEAD	Principal was believed to play an important role in creating supportive environment as they could enforce the school regulation. The style, character and the quality of the leader and relation with teachers were meaningful in the system.
	COLLEAGUE	Teachers shared their experiences with others formally and informally.
SYSTEM	STUDENTS	Teachers put their partnership relations with students; they believed their development would help the students' learning. They also learned from interaction with students' feedback and responses. Teacher participants regarded the students as partners, friends, who did not just need guidance and knowledge. They could provide important feedback for the teacher's improvement and reflection.
	GAP	Despite many programs of development, participants often found boring, repeated and asynchronous content compared to what they really experience in classroom. It often made reluctant to attend such programs. When asked deeper, participants mostly stated that they learned more from classroom practices and interactions with students. Such experiential learning helped them make reflection for betterment and improvement.
	CONTINUE	The follow ups of development programs were usually unstructured and supervisor had often checked administrative things only. Related program developers only coordinated with the district for invitations but not for follow ups and supervisions.

PROG	COORD	The process of the program design, implementation and evaluation never involves school (including head master). Schools and principals did not have full information on teachers' development activities held by developers. Invitation coordination was also poorly managed so that not all teachers had the opportunity to develop apart from their own reluctance.
	CHANGE	Teachers felt the programs could change them in terms of self-confidence, courage and creativity. They noticed day to day experience with the students in the classroom including feedback they got from their students.

The term control in the above table refers to aspects related to the management of teachers' appraisal scheme. What becomes my first finding is the freedom teachers have due to poor appraisal system and supervision. Such condition usually happen on civil servant teachers because they are accountable to the district but work under school principals while the development programmers are in poor coordination with the principals and the district.

Teachers as professionals require greater autonomy in their profession; in fact, at the same time they are workers who should be obedient to rules on the school (the authority). This intersection brings impact to the 'grey area' of freedom and autonomy. R, a civil servant teacher, said in our initial interview:

*Being a civil servant, as I told you before, sometimes makes a teacher lack of challenges. It's rather different from an English course with a strict rules and competition. (A\_R\_13\_FREDOM)*

Such feeling was also perceived by Ela who coordinated many English teachers under her foundation. She noticed two teachers under her coordination were lacked of spirit and enthusiasm because they are civil servant and their accountability was to the district. However, R and Ela as well as other participants agreed that it was very personal and depending on the individual. It happened due to the very loose supervision and poor appraisal system. It was even worse as the recruitment process of teachers (especially civil servant) did not reflect the needs of the school and not specific. Therefore it requires good appraisal system to ensure teachers develop in line with their function as professional educators.

DP 3 has been widely used as a teacher's appraisal base but unfortunately many of my participants commented negatively on it. G, for example, said that:

*In this document, there are points like loyalty, dedication, discipline and such kind of norms. It's usually posted by his administrative staff. I don't think it's really important. (A\_G\_18\_APPRSL)*

It is getting worse because she does not know how the school has assessed her so far, although she knows she has been assessed. She told me that the school clerical staff asked her to sign the form of her assessment but unfortunately it was not carried out regularly.

*I think I am assessed ....I am sure but I don't know how they assess me. (E\_G\_12\_APPRSL)*

G did not have any idea on the form of assessment carried in the school but she believed she had been assessed however.

I, a civil servant, thought that DP 3 only assessed teachers as employees not as professionals. He gave me a shocking fact:

*Nothing to do with that, DP3 is neither a teacher evaluation nor assessment. It only assesses teachers as employees, their loyalty or faithfulness and so on. It is not an assessment on their competencies. It is often only copied from last year's record..... There was a good phenomenon when local office of education department asked principals to decrease the scores in DP3 because the teachers' scores are higher than people in the local office. (A\_I\_19\_APPRSL)*

Teachers look to have seen DP 3 not as reflection of their competency or ability instead it is a report of how the school management look at them. Another participant H even said that as long as the teacher had good relation with the principal they would not have problems with it. There have also been growing criticisms among education experts and legislators related to the application of DP 3 as the only appraisal system because its inability to represent teachers' competencies as professionals.

A different condition happens in E's school where DP 3 is combined with self-assessment, followed with face-to-face interview with the school principal and supervision by supervisors from the foundation in classroom. I managed to conduct a snowball interview with her principal and he explained that such combination would see the overall ability of a teacher and the self-assessment would be fair because he believed:

*This is the DP 3 guidance, about loyalty and so on. I told them to make a kind of reflection before they score it themselves. Then they met me to discuss the score in each element. I would ask why the scored 89 for example, if I think it's too high then I will reduce it. But if it's too low, I also suggested them to increase it. I believe that everyone has fear to lie to themselves to certain extent. (F\_Antok\_13\_APPRSL)*

E said that he had been appraised regularly once in two years since she worked in the school. She believed that the self assessment was good as a means of reflection but she felt that the supervision session needed to be improved still.

Related to supervision, H, who is very critical on this appraisal issue even, declared:

*The supervisors belong to the district and they never coordinate with teacher trainers or LPMP.....this is the missing link in quality control. (E\_H\_38\_CONTRL/COORD)*

*And after the workshop there should be monitoring, this is the role of a supervisor to tell us what we should do. Some of the supervisors only focus on administrative preparation, not on the teaching process and how to handle the class. (A\_H\_26\_CONTRL)*

He wanted to emphasize the need for follow-up monitoring to see the improvement teachers had made. Yet, he criticized the willingness of supervisors from the district who only looked at administrative things in fact he

believed that what distinguished him from other teachers in terms of creativity in classroom practice. This is what he and other participants want to convey that there should be difference between quality and poor teachers. They wanted better appreciation after hard work and spending time in developing as professionals. In relation to this R and E suggested:

*We just get praised verbally and I feel that the award of being proud with our students' achievement. Related institutions, like LPMP should provide reward, like what we have now to continue to graduate program. (E\_R\_27\_REWARD)*

*There should be additional treatment. Reward on the other side can be anything; it doesn't have to be money, like further study or support for workshop and so on. (E\_E\_18\_REWARD)*

*There is an appreciation to teachers from stakeholders and then from the district. It will later lead to teacher's professionalism. It will reduce the spirit, if we have worked hard professionally for maximum results without appreciation from the stakeholders. It can function as control on teacher's professionalism. (E\_H\_8\_REWARD)*

The reward teachers wanted was not specific on certain things like money but some of them preferred to use the word 'appreciation' for improving teachers. This word sounds softer and may include various references such as further study, improved career or income. The idea is to stimulate teachers to develop but as quoted above there should also be further treatment for less developing teachers.

Participants also commonly agreed that appraisal on teachers should be better conducted regularly, despite the different frequency they argued. The reasons vary from one to another, such as: maintaining quality, quick help for less developing teachers and the very poor current teachers' quality.

Murdoch (2000: 54-56) notes some aspects of progressive teacher appraisal which will inform selections of teacher-evaluation procedures and the ways in which they are implemented. The first, to encourage reflective practice, problem solving and teaching-based evaluation is required so that teacher can focus on their classroom practices and try out new ideas. Secondly, the appraisal involves teachers' participation in the making to develop a full understanding of a teacher's wider program work and personal development. The next is that it should cover all teacher professional activities to provide a fair judgment among teachers as they have strengths and weaknesses in different areas. The fourth suggestion is to take accounts of students' views because the ultimate goal of teaching process is students' achievement besides they are the ones who spend most time with teachers in the classroom. Promoting collaboration is the last suggestion for teachers who need to dialogue the teaching process with other parties like coordinators, supervisors, colleagues and principals.

The control on teachers is not meant to limit their autonomy in the classroom but it is more to see their development as professionals. It is reflected in I's statement:

*I do what he asks me to do but the class is mine not the principal's or the school's .....I don't have a special term for that but the theory said that the teacher is the director of the class and the participant at the same time. There should be no intervention in the classroom from the system or from outside. (E\_I\_15\_AUTNMY)*

Participating teachers want to be seen as autonomous professionals but there should be control so that the term 'autonomy' does not mislead to too much freedom. The control can be carried out through good and regular appraisal systems which allow distinction of quality and poor teachers. Quality teachers must be awarded with reward or borrowing H's word 'appreciation' which can be in many forms. Participants believe that such a way will promote the development of teachers professionally and at the same time improve the quality of education. A fair appraisal system also promotes all teachers to develop personally and professionally as well as to drive the 'unchallenged' ones with a warning or constructive punishment.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

In the level of educational systems, the participants still felt the gap in terms of policy making, socialization of programs and their involvement in school accountability review and audit. They wondered if such would improve the quality of teaching. Voicing on the lack of coordination among educational parties such as LPMP (Education Quality Assurance Body), P4TK (Education Staff Empowerment and Development Center), School District and other relevant institutions, the participants criticized overlapping programs among those bodies.

At organizational level, participants believed that positive supports from the school management and leaders might make possible the attainment of charter goals ending in school improvement. Yet, maintaining good relationship with school management and leader will be crucial when current appraisal manual especially DP3 is still in the use. Thus, it is very important to have an attentive leader as well as to maintain close relationship with the leader due to the high dependency to principal's consideration.

The lower level of professional status showed self-belief improvement as a result of successful appraisal process. This would eventually result in, what so called as, performance improvement inside and outside of the classroom. It was reflected in the way they improved and always updated their teaching practices. All participants could feel higher confidence level when they were successfully appraised, resulting in feel of ease in teaching the students.

Finally, as individuals, they always tried to maintain the professional responsibility despite other diminishing factors which overshadowed teachers as social creatures. Such feeling would become self-reflection in order to improve them individually and professionally. They strongly believed when their skills improved school and students could get the benefit because the eventual results of all improvements would be the school, their teaching performance and the students' performance/learning.

Based on the findings and as concluded in the previous paragraphs, there are some suggestions for relevant parties to enhance the quality of English teachers

through effective appraisal system. In order to maintain teacher's motivation to keep developing, an external stimulation in forms of professional remuneration can be considered so that teachers feel challenged. A regular, fair and integrated appraisal system is also very crucial to ensure that teachers keep improving because it can function as a control in the profession and instrument of linking professional competencies and the remuneration. Related parties in teacher appraisal system development must take teachers' voice into account, so that the system becomes more effective for policy makers, teachers' teaching skills and eventually students learning.

Schools quality and students' learning are automatically improved when the teachers are aware that they are professionals who need to meet and maintain certain standards of performance. The awareness will bring about progress at micro to macro levels, namely: personal change, professional development, organizational (school) improvement and educational system advancement. When the teachers are aware that they need to learn in order to improve, this will eventually bring about changes in classroom practices and be perceived by the students as triggers and examples for better learning achievement.

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