

# The contribution of online inservice teacher education program (PPG Dalam Jabatan) on teachers' changes

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history

Received 16 June 2023  
Revised 12 August 2023  
Accepted 25 August 2023

### Keywords

Teacher change  
Teacher professionalism  
Teacher Professional Development

## ABSTRACT

Teacher professional development (TPD) programs have been considered an important aspect in teacher development and quality improvement. They are believed to be able to improve teachers' knowledge and skills which in turn improve students' learning and improvement. This study examined the contribution of a TPD program for English teachers, PPG in Indonesia on the teacher professionalism, particularly on their beliefs about good English teaching, knowledge and skills in English teaching, and practices in the classroom teaching. Data were collected through an open-ended survey, observation, and reflective interviews with online-inservice PPG teacher alumni. Findings suggested that although teacher participants reported that PPG contributed to changes in their beliefs about better English teaching and knowledge and skills in teaching English, such changes were not reflected in their teaching practices. Such findings implied an improvement of the PPG program structure to include support provided to teachers when they implement the knowledge and skills in the classrooms.



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**How to Cite:** Basikin. (2023). The contribution of online inservice teacher education program (PPG Dalam Jabatan) on teachers' changes. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 6 (2), 124-136. <https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v6i2.10076>

## 1. Introduction

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) has been considered a critical factor in enhancing educational quality and teacher effectiveness (Arifani et al., 2019; Gore et al., 2017). It has been recognized for its vital role for enhancing teacher competencies (Situmorang et al., 2022); addressing the evolving needs of students (Goodwyn et al., 2022); preparing teachers for the changing technological landscape and educational systems (Haug & Mork, 2021; Meniado, 2023; Sadeghi & Thomas, 2023). Given such implications, Guskey (2002) posited that for a TPD program to be successful, it should be able to alter both teachers' practices and their beliefs – a concept termed as teacher change. Guskey further emphasized that a change in teachers' beliefs is dependent on the new practices improving student achievement – i.e., teachers' beliefs of a novel practice is dependent on whether such practice has a tangible effect on student achievement.

Coldwell's (2017) defines TPD as both formal and informal methods and initiatives aiming at fostering the growth of teachers in their professional capacities. In addition, Sancar et al. (2021) have defined TPD as a long-term process that begins with a teacher education program, during which teacher candidates learn theories on how to be teachers in pre-service TPD through classroom sessions and practice the knowledge through micro-teaching and internships at schools (Goodwyn et al., 2022). At this stage, the roles of teacher educators are crucial since they are expected to assist the student teachers in connecting theories and practices (Kalloor et al., 2020). TPD does not end once student teachers complete their education, instead it continues throughout the teachers' career when they are

involved in daily teaching and learning activities. This continuous learning, especially of the formal methods are termed in-service TPD.

Researchers in TPD shared the beliefs that the sole main evidence of a success of a TPD is the ability for the TPD to encourage changes in teachers. It is a failure and a waste of time, energy, and money when teachers did not change after attending a TPD program. In the context of professional development, changes refer to the process by which teachers alter their instructional practices, beliefs, and attitudes as a result of their learning and experiences in professional training activities (Guskey, 2002b; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). This change, according to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), stems from training initiatives, adaptation processes, personal development, local form, systemic restructuring, and or learning. However, it should also be noted that changes following a TPD could be affected by multifaceted parameters (Ahadi et al., 2024).

In terms of teacher change, Guskey (2002a, 2002b) has proposed a model of professional development and teacher change (Figure 1). In his model Guskey identified three changes that were potentially to happen in relation to teacher attendance in a TPD. Those changes were 1) changes in teacher classroom practices, 2) changes in students' learning outcome, and 3) changes in teachers' beliefs and attitudes. Although it was proposed in quite some time, the model has been adopted by many researchers when looking at the effectiveness of a TPD in relation to teachers changes. However, critiques have also arose and put forward by researchers. Critiques towards Guskey's model centered on the simplistic nature of the linear order of the changes (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). It is such critiques that triggered the need for a study to see a more intricate, rather than linear impact of TPD on teachers.



Figure 1. Guskey's Model of TPD and Teacher Changes

However, research has shown different findings in the effectiveness of TPD activities in improving teachers' knowledge and skills. Their effectiveness depends on specific characteristics that include active learning, coherence, and duration of the activity (Bryk, 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2017; 2021; Mukrim et al., 2023), whether or not they prompt teachers to question their professional routines and learn new approaches to their teaching practices (Sims et al., 2021). Some research shows the positive impact of TPD related to changes in teacher beliefs about teaching (Klassen et al., 2023; Meyer et al., 2023; Sancar et al., 2021), teacher practices (Ehlert & Souvignier, 2023; Ho et al., 2023; Mukrim et al., 2023). Little however is known about the impact of TPD on improvement in student achievement. Especially in the Indonesian context, there has been little evaluation on PD program that extent to the time where teachers had to implement the new instruction in the classroom.

This research was situated in the context of a TPD to certify teachers to become professional teachers in Indonesia, called the Teacher Professional Education Program, or to PPG or *Program Pendidikan Profesi Guru*. PPG is designed so that teachers have literacy in information and communication technology, innovation, and language skills to manage problem-based and project-based learning (GTK, 2022). In addition, they also have the skills of the industrial revolution era 4.0 which prioritizes critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity. There are two types of PPG in the context of Indonesian teacher development. The first PPG is a one-year preservice teacher professional education preparing Bachelors' degree graduate to become teachers. This PPG is conducted offline. The second PPG is an online inservice program to certify teachers to become professional teachers.

The online PPG for in-service teachers aims at preparing teachers as professional educators who have good character, are knowledgeable, adaptive, creative, innovative, and competitive with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, and assessing and evaluating students. Participants are required to finish the programs and earns 38 credits or equals

to two semesters' credits. The program covers three parts of 1) upgrading teachers' knowledge, 2) developing learning kits, and 3) teaching practicum. The program is also to address improvement in the four Indonesian teacher professional competences covering the interpersonal competences, social competence, professional competence, and pedagogic competence. Because PPG is a high stake TPD program where the results is very importance, it is very important to evaluate its effectiveness. This research, therefore, will seek for answers the questions of 1) whether PPG contributes to changes in teachers' beliefs about teaching English, and 2) whether the changes in the beliefs are manifested in the classroom teaching practices.

This research is important firstly because research on PPG has not been measuring comprehensively among changes in the beliefs, perceived knowledge and skills, and classroom practices (Averina & Kuswando, 2023; Mukrim et al., 2023). In addition, there has been no agreement on the effectiveness of TPD related to whether they can result on sustained changes. Secondly, past research has focused mostly on investigating the characteristics of effective PD in traditional face-to-face formats (Daud et al., 2020). To date, there is little evidence on the quality of formal online PD activities, or how formal online PD contribute to improving teachers' professional practices. It is therefore necessary to get evidence on the contribution of online TPD. This is crucial such as a TPD in the Indonesian context when PPG has significant impact on teacher profession, for example to certify teachers to be considered being professional.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research Design

This research was qualitative research aiming at exploring the impacts of an online in-service Teacher Professional Development (PPG) program on teacher professionalism. In achieving the objective, a purposive sampling method was used to select participants, targeting PPG alumni who registered into the PPG program in 2022. An open-ended survey was sent to 40 alumni, of whom 30 responded to the survey that was available in December 2022. The responding participants were teachers with experiences between 5 to 15 years from 8 provinces in Indonesia (presented in Table 1). As a follow up study, three participants who were observed when they were teaching and interviewed to reflect and confirm their practices. Observations and reflective interviews focus on two aspects of student-centered practices in the classroom and the amount of English spoken by teachers when teaching. Each participants taught twice.

### 2.2. Instrument and Data Collection Technique

Data collection for this study was conducted through an open-ended survey, which was designed based on the principles outlined in Guskey's Model of Teacher Change (Guskey, 2002). The survey was divided into two sections. The first section focused on gathering demographic information from the participants. This included details about their teaching experience, the districts where they are currently teaching, the type of schools (public or private) where they are employed, and their educational qualifications.

The second part of the survey was two open-ended questions asking 1) changes in the beliefs and 2) their teaching practices resulting from their participation the PPG program. These two questions were developed based on the syntheses of changes that were possible to happen among teachers after attending a TPD. This survey was given approximately two months after the participants finished their PPG.

In addition to these open-ended questions, the researcher also conducted class observations on three teachers twice each. The observations were done by watching video recorded of classrooms after the data from the questionnaire were analyzed. The observations were aimed at checking whether teachers taught as what they believed stated in the survey. They focused on looking at whether the teachings practiced by the participants were conducted based on learner-centered perspectives and whether teachers provided the students with adequate exposures of English to scaffold students English mastery. The results of the observation were followed up and checked with participants' reflection about their classroom practicing on their beliefs.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The collected data from the open ended questions, class observations, and reflective interview were analyzed using the descriptive qualitative data analyses following data coding proposed by Saldana in Leavy (2023). Coding was done by reflecting on the meaning of every qualitative datum, condensing the data, looking for categories and themes, and generating the bones for the analysis, and finally assembling the bones into the working skeleton (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz & Thornberg, 2021). This working skeleton is in the forms of core categories, key assertion, primary themes, and theories. Data credibility and trustworthiness in this analysis were gained by doing intercoder reliability and dialogical intersubjectivity. Intercoder reliability was conducted by having more than one coder of the data working on the data analysis process and comparing the results of the coding. Dialogical intersubjectivity was done by continuous communication and discussion between the coders throughout the process of data analysis. Every time coders finished with a category of data, for example data from open-ended questionnaire, they discussed what and how they did the analyses, and what trends emerged from the data. This was done with the data from classroom observations and the reflective interviews.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1 The Description of the Subject

There were 30 teachers participating in this study. The description and distribution of the subjects are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Subject Description and Distribution

Demographic Information	Categories	N	Cumulative
Educational qualification	Bachelor in English Education	28	30
	Others	2	
Teaching experiences	< 5 years	7	30
	6 - 10 years	19	
	11 - 15 years	4	
School types	Public Schools	24	30
	Private Schools	6	
Provinces	West Java	18	30
	Riau Islands	3	
	North Sulawesi	3	
	West Sulawesi	2	
	North Kalimantan	1	
	North Sumatra	1	
	South Sulawesi	1	
West Kalimantan	1		

### 3.2. Changes in the Beliefs about English Teaching

Findings from the present study reveals that the in-service teacher professional development contributed to changes in participants' beliefs about English teaching. Two major belief changes found

in the responses were related to teaching English that were reported by the participants. The first belief is the belief that teaching English must be learner-centered. Some emerging themes related to this belief were like focusing on learners, paying attention to students' needs, and paying attention to learners' differences. One participant for example stated, *"We have to understand the students' needs and the students are the center in the classroom."* (P.2) In addition, one participant said *"Before attending the TPD program, I felt that teaching English only focused on delivering the material. However, after participating in PPG ... I realized that teachers must understand the students' characteristics and [learning] needs..."* (P.3)

The second belief change reported by the most of participants about teaching English was related to the provision of adequate English exposures to the students. This belief was related to the amount of English the participants spoke when teaching. Before attending the PPG, most participants reported that they spoke English less than 30% in the classrooms. Most of the language they spoke was Indonesian – Bahasa Indonesia. Very few of them reported more than 50% of English spoken in the classrooms. Most of the reasons why they spoke little English were because their students did not understand English. This made the participants were fear for low students' understanding and not completing the materials they had planned.

The third beliefs change about language teaching was related to the beliefs that language classrooms should be fun. A participant suggested that *"From PPG, I understand more about teaching strategies, teaching methods, and I also know some platforms to make the teaching process more fun. I also learned how to make better PowerPoint slides, fun English games, and even create my own simple English games."* (P.23).

### 3.3. Changes in the Knowledge and Perceived Teaching Abilities

In terms of whether there were changes in the knowledge and ability to teach English, 29 participants reported that their knowledge changed. Changes in participants' knowledge included knowledge about better, more interesting, and more effective English learning. This was like what some participants said *"... now, now ... I know a lot of knowledge about that"* (P.2); *"... but after attending PPG classes I became aware of a lot of methods and media that can be used to make learning English more interesting (P.27)"; " ... "now I know what good media are like"* (P.16). Other participants also reported on their better understanding about how to understand the students and how to conduct specific teaching strategies, such as implementing differentiated learning.

Another finding identified from the participants' responses was related to the improvement in participants' perceived abilities. Various improvements were reported including improved ability to use innovative learning methods, better media, and assessments. One participant, for example, said:

*"Before participating in TPD, I taught using old methods. I did not use any media and my students were not interested in my lessons. After participating in TPD, I started using innovative learning methods and used more media. As a result, my students have become more interested in my lessons"* (P6).

Another participant reported the improved knowledge about media and media usage by saying that *"Before the program I just know a little bit about technology that can be used for media teaching learning, but after this program I know and can use many media technology that can use for teaching learning process"* (P.9). In addition, participants also reported better ability in writing lesson plans (P2, P4, and P5) and assessing students' learning (P2, P3, P6, P12, and P17).

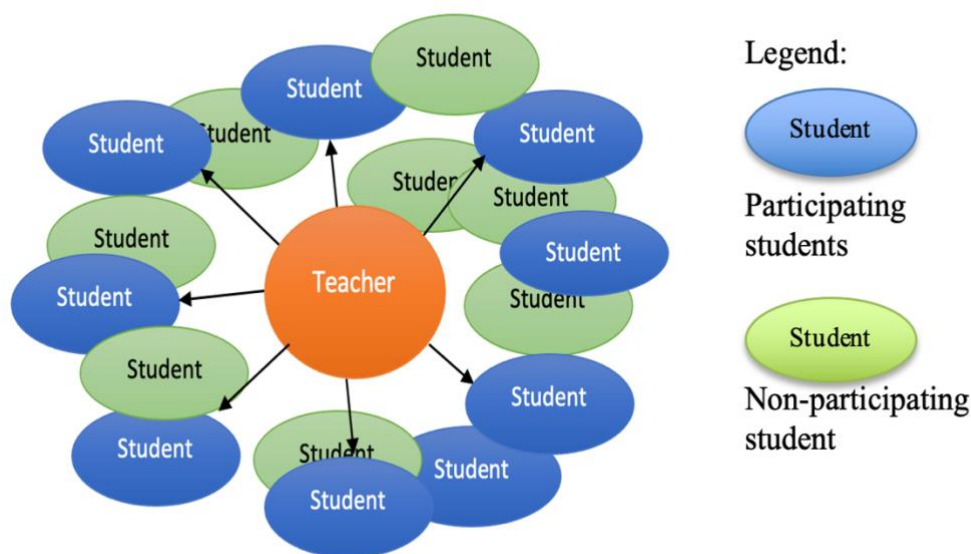
### 3.4. Changes in teachers' practices

Data about teachers' practices were collected through the observation on teachers teaching in the classrooms. They are about the learner-centered activities and the number of English teachers spoke during the teaching. They also functioned to check whether changes in the beliefs about teaching English that the participants reported in were practiced in the classrooms.

From the class observations, it was found that although participants reported changes in their beliefs toward the student-centered English learning, they did not successfully put the beliefs into practices. Most of the time, more than 75% of the class activities, teachers still dominated the class. On few occasions did teachers facilitated group works. Very few students did initiate conversations,



ask questions, or answer questions from the teachers. Interactions are mostly in the form teacher – student interaction (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Trends in classroom interaction practiced by teachers

Figure 2 shows that the teacher dominated the interactions. Although students were clustered in few group activities, their interactions were mostly guided by the teacher. Rather than engaging the students, the teacher functioned more in controlling the activities – and the students. Teachers very often broke their own commitments, for example commitment about time given to the groups to finish works. Teachers interfere group interaction by asking not necessary questions such asking whether groups had finished working while time was still available.

The second change in the belief about teaching English that was reported by the participants was related to the necessity of adequate English exposures provided to the students. Changes, however, were barely observed in the classrooms. Teachers still spoke English very little when teaching and interacting with the students. Most of the time, conversations were in Indonesian, or English accompanied with Indonesian translation. Teachers sometimes brought recordings or English videos as inputs of learning. However, when discussing the English recording – songs or recorded texts, or short videos, discussion were mostly in Indonesian. Even routines were mostly in Indonesian – classroom English were rarely used. Altogether, the amount of English spoken in the classrooms were still between 25% - 55%.

### 3.5. Data from the reflective interviews

Reflective interviews were done after data from the classroom observations were analyzed and trends were identified and discussed. These interviews aimed at revealing the underlying reasons motivating teachers' teaching in the classrooms. It was evident that although teachers believed that learning should be learner centered and that students need adequate supports in the forms of adequate exposures of English, their teaching were still far different from the beliefs. Important features emerging from the classroom observations was that teacher-centered learning was still clearly identified in the classrooms – negotiations about what, how to learn, and how learnings were assessed were still not evident, teaching was still dominated by the teachers, and among-student interactions were rare. Reasons why teachings were as such were revealed from the reflective interviews. The first reason was that practicing the beliefs was not very easy. Participant No. 4 (P4) for example says that 'It was difficult to ask students to be active in the classrooms. Their confidence in speaking English was very low'. This was confirmed by several other participants saying that they were tempted to dominate the class because students remained silent, even after they provided time and support for the

students. This was why teachers tended to speak less English and more Indonesian. Although they believed that English exposures were not enough and needed to be improved, they had not practiced the beliefs.

The second findings were related to the less post-program support at schools. Some participants stated that when they tried to practice their beliefs, they often got difficulties. They knew how they supposed to do in order that teaching was successful. However, they always faced problems in the implementation process. Unfortunately, support was often not available when they faced problems. In most schools, their senior teachers, those who finished PPG earlier did not practiced teaching as it was taught in the program. When they were struggling to implement their new knowledge about better English teaching, they did not get adequate support.

### 3.6. Discussion

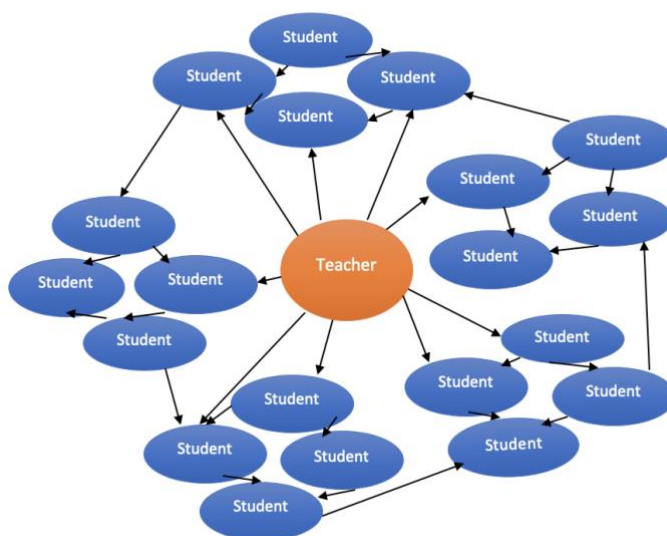
#### 1) *Changes in participants' perceived knowledge, skills, beliefs, and practices.*

Findings from the present study reported that there were changes in their knowledge and skills in their teaching English. Participants also reported their beliefs about how they supposed to teach English, particularly their beliefs in adequate exposure and learner-centered classrooms. Finding from classroom observation, however, did not support participants' claims. Changes in the belief and their improved knowledge about teaching English did not seem to manifest in their classroom teaching practices.

When compared to Guskey's model of teachers' change due to attendance to a PD program, the reported changes did not seem to in line with the model. This is in line with Germuth (2018) who found that although teachers very often reported the changes in their knowledge and skills of teaching, they rarely implement the knowledge about the new instruction in their classrooms. She further argued that this is because the limited access to support when they had been back at schools. Particularly when the PD was conducted online, perceived changes in teachers' knowledge and skills were not necessarily reflected in changes in their teaching practices (Ehlert & Souvignier, 2023; Meyer et al., 2023).

#### 2) *Mismatch in teachers' beliefs and practices in English learning*

Findings from this study revealed the differences in teachers' beliefs about English teaching and classroom practices. Changes in both the beliefs about learner-centered learning and the adequate English exposures were not observed in the classrooms. As it was described in the findings, teachers still dominated the interaction. Interaction (Figure 1) did not reflect the prescribed pattern of interaction in learner-centered learning, where interaction was richer not only between teacher and students with communication initiated and controlled by teachers (Sajidin & Ashadi, 2021). Interaction should be more dynamic reflecting more interaction among students in addition to interaction between teacher and students (Figure 2).



**Figure 3.** Hypothetical Interaction in Student-centered Learning

Findings have been identified in previous studies concluding that teachers' perceived beliefs are not necessarily congruent with their observed practices (Borg, 2011; Farrell & Ives, 2015). Especially when the time between the survey and the observation was relatively short. There were at least two explanations to answer this mismatch.

First explanation about the mismatch was related to the inadequate understanding that participants had about learner-centered learning. Learner-centered learning is a broad multifaceted concept that has been defined from several perspectives (Nunan, 2013; Starkey, 2017). This wide-ranging nature of the concept has made it difficult for teachers to operationalize it in the classroom (Neumann, 2013; Schweisfurth, 2015). First evidence observed from the classroom practices was related to the absence of negotiation learning with the students about what and how to learn as well as how learning was assessed. Negotiation was important because learner-centered learning promoted individualized learning experiences. It catered to diverse learner needs and preferences (Tomlinson, 2014) and fostered higher engagement and relevance. Negotiating learning would facilitate students to find personal meaningfulness in the learning content. Second, there was a suspicion that what was meant by centering to learners understood by the participants was merely related to active participation among the students (Sajidin & Ashadi, 2021). The teaching conducted by the participants failed to bring the more important ingredients of learner-centered learning such as the promotion of personalized learning experiences to address the unique needs and preferences (Tomlinson, 2014) and accommodating varying learning styles and proficiency levels (Gardner & Miller, 2013). Unsuccessful implementation of learner-centered learning due to lack of teachers understanding had long been put forward by researchers (Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Dyer, 1994; Todd & Mason, 2005).

This also applied with the remaining minimum exposures of English in the classrooms, despite the increasing perceived language skills reported by the participants. The reason that little use of English in the classrooms was related to the low ability of the students to understand English seemed to be questionable. A possible cause of the limited English exposure in the classroom was due to teachers' low proficiency and confidence to speak English. This was congruent with findings such as the cases of low proficiency among English teachers in Asia (Dudzik & Nguyen, 2015; Hamid & Nguyen, 2016), Indonesian English teachers had problems (Wulyani et al., 2021). They found that Indonesian English teachers had sub-standard vocabulary mastery, reading mastery than the expected baseline, and their writing ability was only slightly below the required baseline of 5.5. This was in line with earlier studies suggesting the low proficiency of English teachers in Indonesia (Anita et al., 2019; Renandya et al., 2018).

The second explanation was by looking at the differences not as a mismatch, but as developing skills among the participants. Researchers often looked at the non-congruent nature between teachers' beliefs and their practices as a developmental process, particularly when those teachers were made aware of these differences (Farrell & Ives, 2015). In addition, changes in teaching practices required much time and support. These were among the constraints of this study. There was not enough time between the participants' attendance to PPG and the observations on the classroom practices. Support to teachers' practices was so minimal as well. Because inservice PPG was conducted online, support needed to participants teaching practices was probably not enough.

When referring to Guskey's model of TPD and teacher change (Guskey, 2002), the beliefs changes reported by the teacher did not seem to reflect on the changes outlined in the model. While changes in the model refers more to the sustained change of beliefs because their new practices were proven to bring positive changes in the students' achievement, changes reported by the participants were more related to changes in their perceived beliefs. They, therefore, were potentially not reflected in their practices. This is in line what reported in Meyer's and Yang's findings (Meyer et al., 2023; Yang, 2023).

### 3.7. Limitation of the study

This study revealed changes in teachers' perceived beliefs about teaching English and knowledge and skills in teaching English. However, such belief changes do not manifest in the classroom practices of the participants. Such a deviation from the model of teacher change after attending a TPD program (Guskey, 2002; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015) perhaps was due to the limitation of this study where observations of the practices were conducted shortly after teachers' attendance in the TPD. This



is also perhaps because this study had no access towards whether support was available to participants when implementing the results of the TPD. Research has suggested that the availability of support is an essential aspects of successful PD programs (Aelterman et al., 2016; Kang, 2020; Sancar et al., 2021; Yang, 2023). When support is available, struggling teachers in the implementation of new instruction will keep on trying. When it is not, teachers will quit trying the new instruction and go back to their old ways of teaching. Future studies, therefore, would yield better and more comprehensive findings when they include the availability of support when teachers try the new instruction in their classrooms.

#### 4. Conclusion

Findings from this study revealed that PPG contribute to both the participants' beliefs about the better way to teaching English, that were by implementing student-centered learning and providing more English exposure to students. PPG also contributed to the improvement of their perceived knowledge and skills in teaching English. However, it failed to provide the evidence of the belief changes in participants practices in the classrooms. Improved perceived knowledge and skills in teaching English did not seem to support their teaching, either. Such discrepancy with a more widely model of change suggested by previous research might stem from the growing status of teachers' knowledge skills or the absence of adequate support available to participants.

An implication of the findings was related to the needs to provide support for teachers when they tried to practice their new knowledge. Support was necessary to assure that when teachers got difficulties in implementing the newly understood better practices, they go on trying, but not quitting. Support might be in the form of community learning at schools, teacher special group discussion, workshops on post training activities, or other collegial teacher forums. Without adequate support teachers would go back to their old practices when they face difficulties and drawbacks.

Based on the findings, this study recommends more comprehensive future research to involve more subjects and more comprehensive research designs, for example, involving quantitative data with more subjects and are conducted longitudinally. Longitudinal quantitative data will hopefully yield in more comprehensive and representative findings.

#### Acknowledgment

I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous participants who took parts and made contributions in this research.

#### Declarations

- Author contribution** : This paper is a single writer paper as a part of research on the online PPG. The writer prepared and drafted the manuscript, constructed the instruments, collected and analyzed the data.
- Funding statement** : The research is funded individually.
- Conflict of interest** : The author declares no conflicts of interest.
- Ethics declaration** : I as the author acknowledge that this work has been written based on ethical research that conforms with the regulations of my university and that I have obtained the permission from the relevant institute when collecting data.

I support English Language Teaching Educational Journal (*ELTEJ*) in maintaining high standards of personal conduct, practicing honesty in all our professional practices and endeavors.

- Additional information** : No additional information is available for this paper.

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