



## MENTORING THROUGH LESSON STUDY: A COLLABORATIVE WAY TO SUPPORT EFL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN *MADRASAHS* (ISLAMIC SCHOOLS)

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### ABSTRACT

Recently, attending seminars or professional development programs for teachers is not sufficient to cope with today's teaching challenges. In addition, tight schedules and preparing teaching administration often refrain teachers to work and discuss together with their colleagues. Pointing out such problems, this study tries to investigate how mentoring program for EFL teachers in Indonesia was conducted collaboratively at schools through a lesson study approach and what teachers' competencies were improved during the program. Eight EFL teachers from three Islamic junior high schools (called *madrasahs*) and a university lecturer serving as a mentor were involved in the program. Data gathered from observations, questionnaires, and interviews were analyzed qualitatively through (1) iterative reading of the data, (2) reducing the data, (3) categorizing the data, (4) combining all data, and (5) concluding the data. The findings indicate that the lesson study cycle involved in this program covered two stages of PLAN, one stage of DO, and SEE. The participant teachers required more time during the planning due to several factors such as adjustment working with the revised Curriculum recently released by the government at the time of data collection, and challenges in aligning learning objectives, classroom activities, and evaluation. Upon their involvement in the program, the teachers reported that they gained benefits and strong improvements in four aspects of teachers' competencies, namely professional, pedagogical, social, and personal competencies from the collaboration with peer teachers and a university lecturer. For instance, they found their knowledge extending in terms of teaching techniques and methods, planning and implementing effective lessons, and their motivation to teach better and share resources with others increasing as well. In short, mentoring through lesson study is valuable to improve the teachers' competencies.

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History:

Received 19 Maret 2021

Revised 10 Aug 2022

Accepted 18 Aug 2022

Final proof 26 Aug 2022

Available online 28 Aug 2022

#### Keywords:

lesson study, mentoring, teacher competencies

#### To cite this paper (in APA style):

Ekawati, D., Damayanti, I., & Lengkanawati, N. (2022). Mentoring through lesson study: A collaborative way to supporting EFL teachers' professional development in *madrasahs* (Islamic schools). *International Journal of Education*, 15(2), 89-100. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ije.v15i2.32853>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In improving the quality of education, professional teachers are expected to enhance their competencies by participating in professional development programs, independent learning, or attending seminars. However, such activities are still not enough to cope with today's teaching challenges. Teachers today, including EFL teachers, need to work with other teachers to provide new insights into their profession and to develop an array of skills in teaching such as content knowledge, pedagogy, and other professional characteristics for teachers to support the learning of their students. Teachers are expected to have capacity building to develop their awareness level of such competencies. The awareness-level indicates 'the awareness of the competency though they may not yet be able to demonstrate its achievement'. One practical way to bring awareness-level competencies into the capacity building would be 'through induction and mentoring within the school, professional development courses, learning with more experienced teachers through professional learning communities' as explained by SingTeach in the research entitled *The Competent Teacher* in 2010 <http://singteach.nie.edu.sg/issue23-teachered/>

Teaching is a complex activity involving teachers' knowledge and beliefs about what should be taught, how students learn, and how to manage students' behavior and meet the external expectations as explained by Timperley in the book entitled *Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]* in 2008. Educational institutions, such as teacher training institutions and schools, have been considered to be places where teachers' and lecturers' professional learning communities can take place (Admiraal, et al., 2021; Bullough & Baugh, 2008) to support teaching activities. However, having tight schedules and preparing teaching administration often refrain teachers from having opportunities to work and discuss together with their colleagues. In such a situation, mentoring and lesson study programs are regarded to be a system that facilitates professional learning (Coenders & Verhoef, 2019; Goh & Fang, 2017; Næsheim-Bjørkvik, Helgevold, & Østrem, 2019).

Both mentoring and lesson study have the same characteristics, namely to enhance professional learning collaboratively which can take place at schools where the teachers teach without interfering with their teaching schedules. This study aimed to implement a mentoring program with a Lesson Study approach to support the development of teachers' competencies. The study was framed within these two research questions:

1. How is mentoring through a Lesson Study approach conducted among EFL teachers in *madrasahs*?
2. What competencies do EFL teachers perceive to improve from this program?

### 1.1 Mentoring and Professional Development

Mentoring is defined as a means by which teachers can break down their isolation and support professional learning in ways that focus on the daily work of teachers and teaching-learning situations (Cengiz, 2020). In terms of teacher education, mentoring can be understood 'as a collaborative effort between university supervisors, teacher educators, school administrators, supervising teachers, and preservice teachers (He, 2009). It is purposed to assist early career teachers or beginning teachers to adjust themselves to new schools (Kemmis, et al., 2014).

In the process of mentoring, there are two key participants involved: a mentor and a mentee. In the process of mentoring, a more experienced practitioner (mentor) helps and directs a novice or less experienced mentee (Aslan & Öcal, 2012; Kato, 2021) so that the novice teacher's confidence increases along with supportive feedback from his or her respective mentor as explained by Othman and Senom in the book entitled *Professional development through mentoring: Novice esl teachers' identity formation and professional practice* in 2019.

### 1.2 Lesson Study

Lesson Study (LS) or *jugyokenyuu* was originated in Japan and firstly introduced as explained by Yoshida in the research entitled *Lesson Study: a Case Study of a Japanese Approach To Improving Instruction Through School-Based Teacher Development* in 1999. Initially, lesson study involves a group of teachers working collaboratively to carefully craft a lesson (p. 6). Along with its implementation in other countries, some adaptations are globally made for the theory and practice of lesson study (Elliott, 2019; Stigler & Hiebert, 2016). Hence, it grows rapidly across the world in less than 10 years (János, 2019). Furthermore, in a lesson study program, teachers learn in collaborative groups (Dudley, 2013; János, 2019) to evaluate, discuss, and learn from their teaching practices (Ogegbo, et al., 2019; Saito & Atencio, 2013). They come together for a common purpose, prepare a detailed lesson plan together, implement this plan in selected classrooms and meet after the lessons to decide in collaboration how to better implement the lesson (Cengiz, 2020). Lesson Study can also be done in collaboration with teachers of different subjects at the same school or teachers from different schools who teach the same subjects. The teachers cooperate to have solutions for the problems found in the process, try out, and apply new strategies accompanied by an expert who is responsible for process guiding, leading, and sometimes opening up new horizons for teachers (Cengiz, 2020).

The general process of the Lesson Study is displayed in Figure 1.

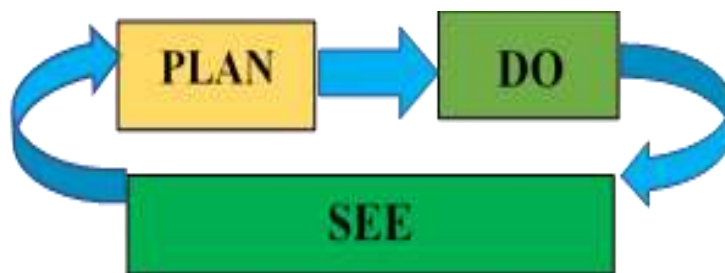


Fig. 1 – Model of Lesson Study

According to Marsigit et al. in the proceeding entitled *The Teacher professional development through Lesson Study in Indonesia: A success story from Yogyakarta in 2014*, Lesson Study consists of three main steps: Plan (preparation), Do (Implementation and observation), and See (reflection/review). The Plan stage covers the following activities: reviewing the syllabi, developing the lesson plan, developing student worksheets, developing the observation sheet, and preparing class management. Teachers typically do the planning through workshops. In the Do stage, one of the teachers in a group implemented the lesson plan, while other teachers observe. They observe what the teacher is doing, what the students are doing, the teacher-student, and student-student interaction patterns, and the students' activities either as they are being responsive to the teacher's tasks or as initiators. In the See stage, teachers are involved in a meeting attended by model teachers, supervisors, observers, and stakeholders.

A large number of studies have examined the implementation of Lesson Study (LS). (Achmad & Miolo, 2021; COŞKUN, 2017; Kincal, et al., 2019) investigated the practice LS in Turkey which involved 3 English instructors and 18 students. The research focused on a jointly-prepared research lesson to be presented by one of the instructors. After having a revision of the result of the survey in the first and second lessons, the findings show that LS led to the improvement of the research lesson and supported the instructors' professional development.

In line with COŞKUN (2017), Dudley (2013) research involving two groups of urban school teachers in the UK who engaged and interacted in LS demonstrated that teachers used discussion in LS sessions to share their knowledge and evidence to overcome problems. From video recording analysis and observation, it was evident that such discussions stimulated new ideas on other teachers' beliefs, practices, and pupils' learning.

In the Indonesian context, As explained by Cahyono in Widodo & Zacharias's book entitled *Quality of Indonesian EFL teachers: The implementation of lesson study to improve teacher pedagogical content competence in 2014* investigated the implementation of a LS based on the difficult items administered in the National Exam. EFL senior high school teachers from Southern East Java were selected to participate in teacher training programs and were trained to improve their pedagogical content competencies using the LS approach (Plan-Do-See cycle). Action research design was chosen to conduct the LS approach. There were 4 cycles of LS in which teachers designed the lessons in the PLAN stage, then implemented the lessons involving peer teaching practice in the DO stage, and they were observed in the SEE stage. This process was then repeated in the subsequent cycles. The findings showed that teachers' pedagogical content competencies were improved.

Likewise, as explained by Marsigit et al. in the proceeding entitled *The Teacher professional development through lesson study in Indonesia: A success story from Yogyakarta in 2014* researched Teacher Professional Development to improve the quality of Indonesian pre-service and in-service teacher education programs in Mathematics and Science education. Three universities in East Java collaborated with their partner schools and implemented Teachers' Association (MGMP)-based lesson study in 12 (PLAN-DO-SEE) cycles. The results of the study indicated that there were improvements in terms of teaching methodology, teacher competencies, students' achievements, alternative evaluation, teaching-learning resources, and syllabus.

These studies have implemented Lesson study with different approaches (jointly-prepared research lesson, discussion session) and programs (Teacher training, MGMP-based lesson study) and provided evidence that professional development which is done collaboratively through Lesson Study contributes to teacher professional development that potentially impacts the students' learning as the quality of teaching and learning process in the classroom tends to improve.

As Delaney (2012) suggests in her systemic review on mentoring for language teachers, a variety of mentoring approaches should be provided to elevate the teachers' professional growth. Therefore, this study presents another practice of collaborative professional development in Lesson Study with mentoring program for EFL *madrasah* teachers in Indonesia and examines its practice in improving the teachers' professional, pedagogical, social, and personal competencies.

### 1.3 Teachers' Competencies

To maintain educational quality, every educational system must make the necessary modifications for 'high-quality teachers in terms of what competencies are required, how these competencies may be identified and developed, and what policies can assist in this respect. (Dervenis, et al., 2022)

In the work of teaching, Shulman (1986) emphasizes the particular content knowledge for teachers covering (a) subject matter content knowledge, that is the amount and organization of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, defined as the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching,

and (c) curricular knowledge that is knowledge of programs or curriculum arranged for teaching, program materials and characteristics in certain contexts.

Regarding the teachers' competencies and government policies in Indonesia, Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers (Article 10) and the National Education Minister's decree of No. 17/2007 on Academic Qualification and Teacher Competency Standard mandate four competencies that teachers must master, namely pedagogical competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence. The indicators of each competence are explained as follows.

### 1.3.1 Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence is the teachers' ability in mastering pedagogical content knowledge, the knowledge that provides a basis for language teaching, consisting of (1) being able to understand learners' needs, (2) diagnose learning problems, (3) plan suitable instructional goals for the lesson, (4) select and design learning task, (5) evaluate and choose published materials (As explained by Richards's book chapter entitled Competence and performance in language teaching in 2012).

### 1.3.2 Personal Competence

Good teachers should provide learning support for the students by developing themselves so that they must keep 'high standards of personal and professional integrity when carrying out all duties and responsibilities' as explained by SingTeach in the research entitled *The Competent Teacher* in 2010 <http://singteach.nie.edu.sg/issue23-teachered/>. Therefore, the indicators of personal competence according to Indonesian Regulation No. 19/2005 concerning the National Standard of Education may refer to the following features:

- (1) being mature, stable, and wise;
- (2) having good deeds and motivation;
- (3) doing self-assessment;
- (4) doing self-development continuously.

### 1.3.3 Social Competence

Social competence is seen as whether one can socialize and cooperate with others such as colleagues and students. As explained by Gedvilienė in the book entitled *Social Competence Of Teachers And Students: The Case Study Of Belgium And Lithuania 2012* found that the concept of social competence is understood as communication (reciprocity) and cooperation (activity). In other words, the main indicators of social competence are (1) being able to communicate verbally and in writing, and (2) being able to cooperate with others.

### 1.3.4 Professional Competence

Professional competence is defined as teachers' ability in managing students' learning in the process of teaching and learning at schools. Some indicators of professional competence according to Indonesian Regulation No. 19/2005 are (1) knowing the students' characteristics, (2) mastering theories and principles of learning, (3) being able to develop the curriculum, (4) conducting positive learning, (5) developing the students' ability, (6) communicating with the students, and (7) Assessing and evaluating the students' learning.

In this study, a mentoring program using Lesson Study approach offers EFL teachers to improve their knowledge and gain the competencies such as the skills of using teaching strategies and formative assessment (Ustuk, 2019). By following the program, teachers will be responsive to enhance their competencies as well as the quality of students' learning.

## 2. METHOD

This action research was conducted under the collaboration of USAID Prioritas (The United States Agency for International Development - Prioritizing Reform, Innovation, and Opportunities for Reaching Indonesia's Teachers) and two universities in Indonesia as Teacher Training Institutions (TTI) and primary school partners. USAID Prioritas is a non-profit organization which builds partnerships with universities and schools in many areas in Indonesia to fund the mentoring program as one of their targeted activities to improve education in Indonesia.

There are two kinds of mentoring programs under USAID Prioritas: Students' Learning and School-Based Management whose aims are to:

- (1) create good practice schools;
- (2) improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

The Mentoring through Lesson Study approach implemented in this study was part of the Students' Learning program. The participants involved in this study were one facilitator from Islamic University in Bandung, who is the first author, and eight EFL teachers from Islamic junior high schools.

The investigation used qualitative instruments such as observation, questionnaire, and interviews to eight EFL teachers from three *madrasahs* (Islamic junior high schools), and one lecturer as the facilitator from State Islamic University (the first author).

Due to the time limitation and the emphasis on the process, the mentoring program was conducted in one cycle that lasted for two months. Observations were conducted four times during the Plan, Do, and See stages. The observation was conducted by videotaping and field notes. The focus was to investigate how the lesson study was conducted in each stage. In addition, field notes supplemented data on teachers' interactions in each stage.

Questionnaires were developed to obtain the participant teachers' learning experiences. Dörnyei states that questionnaires are 'any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to

which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers'. The questionnaire developed in this study consisted of 27 questions that included closed and open-ended questions. It explored the perceived improvement of teachers' competencies in a mentoring program through Lesson Study approach. The interview was done as a follow-up measure to confirm and supplement the data obtained from the observation and questionnaire.

The data were analyzed qualitatively and by triangulation method which means various data were collected to strengthen the logical conclusion reflected in the analysis as explained by Heigham and Croker in the book *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* in 2009. As explained by Creswell & Poth in the book entitled *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* in 2016 in the data analysis procedures included:

- (1) presenting the data;
- (2) reducing the data;
- (3) categorizing the data;
- (4) combining all data;
- (5) concluding the data.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the analysis responding to the research questions.

#### 3.1 Mentoring through Lesson Study approach conducted among EFL teachers

The mentoring through Lesson Study approach was conducted in one cycle of PLAN-DO-SEE (As explained by Marsigit et al. in the proceeding entitled *The Teacher professional development through lesson study in indonesia: A success story from Yogyakarta* in 2014). Data from the observations show that the PLAN stage was done in two events: PLAN 1 and PLAN 2, followed by DO and SEE stages. The detail of each stage's activities is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Mentoring through lesson study approach

Events	Cycles	Activities
Event 1	PLAN 1	Arranging the lesson plan, media, students' worksheet, and rubric.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finalizing the lesson plan, media, students' worksheet, and rubric;</li> </ul>
Event 2	PLAN 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Choosing a Model Teacher who is considered as an experienced teacher;</li> <li>● Simulating the classroom practice;</li> <li>● Giving feedback on the simulation.</li> </ul>
Event 3	DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Observing the actual teaching using the lesson plan which has been discussed in PLAN 1 and 2;</li> <li>● Doing a reflection addressing only the model teacher's feelings about her actual teaching.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Doing reflection on the actual teaching comprehensively;</li> </ul>
Event 4	SEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offering suggestions and recommendations for the next cycles;</li> <li>● Filling out the questionnaires.</li> </ul>

PLAN 1 was intended to provide all participants with what they were required to do in the subsequent activities throughout the mentoring program. Firstly, the facilitator opened the meeting and explained the program (mentoring through Lesson Study approach). Secondly, the facilitator asked the participants from each school to pick one topic which was regarded difficult to teach in grades 7, 8, and 9 of junior high school. The teachers reported that teaching descriptive texts about the animal to grade 7 students was considered difficult for them since they have limited vocabulary on specific features of the animal.

Following the selection of the topic, the participants and the facilitator discussed the components of the lesson plan covering Core Competence (*Kompetensi Inti*), Basic Competence (*Kompetensi Dasar*), Indicators, Learning Stages, Media, Students' worksheets, and Assessment (Rubric). In this activity, all participants shared their experiences and ideas in designing the lesson plan. They also shared examples of their lesson plan, students' worksheets, media, and evaluation. At this stage, the facilitator helped them to identify the different components in the Revised 2013 Curriculum, which was relatively new to the participant teachers.

Once the differences between the former and the revised Curriculum were apparent to the teachers, all participants continued sharing their experiences and ideas for designing the lesson plan. They also contributed examples of their lesson plan, students' worksheets, media, and evaluations. With their current knowledge of the revised Curriculum, the teachers felt the need for providing alternative media and an evaluation rubric relevant to the lesson. The teachers agreed to explore the media and design the evaluation rubric in the next meeting. Hence, the Do stage was postponed, and instead, the subsequent meeting was used for another planning, called as PLAN 2.

PLAN 2 aimed to finalize the draft of lesson plan developed in PLAN 1 in the previous session. The focus was on the exploration of alternative media and evaluation rubric to support the learning. In this meeting, the facilitator opened the discussion by inviting the teachers to show their media and explaining why it should be used in the lesson plan. Then after deciding on the media, the facilitator guided the teachers to construct a rubric to complete the evaluation section in the lesson plan. The discussion highly emphasized what components should be included in the rubric to make it align with the objectives of the learning.

After finalizing the lesson plan, a model teacher was chosen. Since the program was a mentoring program, it needed interactions and collaboration between those who were experienced or experts and those who needed improvement. The collaborative work between the expert and the novice is strengthened by (Cajkler & Wood, 2016; Larssen, et al., 2018) as an important feature of mentoring that the mentor can play the role as 'the experienced-other'. In this context, the lecturer as the facilitator and mentor, and the teachers were the mentees.

Ms. Anis (pseudonym), a teacher from one of the three Islamic junior high schools (*madrasahs*), agreed to be the model teacher. She seemed confident as she had some experience as a model teacher in the previous program. She was also regarded good in her teaching by her colleagues. During the planning, Ms. Anis and her colleagues simulated the lesson plan while the others observed and noted feedback to improve the plan before classroom implementation.

Based on the peer observation during the simulation, several aspects needed modification. The participant teachers commented that the teaching media (pictures) seemed too small and less colourful, some of the questions in the test had not matched the objective of the learning. Despite the required revision, the teacher's strategies in the class were considered sufficient and met the expectation.

In the DO stage, Ms. Anis taught Class 7A at her school. The observers for Ani's open lesson included her peer teachers, the facilitator, and also three lecturers from partner universities as invited observers. During the observation, the teacher's performance was evaluated by using an observation sheet to guide the observers focusing on the activities that occurred in the classroom and on students' participation in the lesson.

It was evident that Ms. Anis' teaching performance ran as planned, the students seemed enthusiastic and engaged in the lesson. Ms. Anis' teaching activities involved students' active participation, related language learning points with students' life experiences, opened space for discussion of motivation, and encouraged students to take personal responsibility for their learning. It was seen that the students were willing to answer the questions and do all instructions from the teacher both individually and in a group, and voluntarily come forward to present their task. The classroom activities implemented by Ms. Anis represented characteristics of learner-centered teaching that lead to more effective learning (as explained by Benson's book chapter entitled *The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching* in 2012).

Despite the strength of learner-centred activities, improvements needed for the lesson were noted by observers. Both lecturers and teacher observers mentioned the differences between PLAN and DO sessions. However, some teacher observers who stood at the back of the class commented on incidents towards the end of the lesson. It appeared to them that the students were confused with the teacher's instruction for completing a task. It was evident that the teacher did not provide sufficient scaffolding when asking the student to write paragraph of descriptive text. The teacher observers suggested that when the teacher gave instruction, she needed to make sure that everybody had understood and finished doing each step of the instruction before moving to another instruction.

In addition to the unclear instructions, the observers reported that the students require more exposure to the use of English in the classroom. They believed that having more exposure allowed the students to understand the instruction and write a descriptive text better. Students who have had more exposure to the target language are likely to be more familiar with it (Sheela & Ravikumar, 2016).

In this lesson study program, not only did the observers have the chance to comment on the lesson, but also did the teacher model. After the class, Ms. Anis expressed her feeling about the teaching. She admitted that even though she often became a model teacher, she felt nervous to be seen by observers. As far as classroom practice are concerned, she believed she achieved the intended objectives although the time was not enough for her to deliver all the lesson stages as planned.

In the SEE stage, or reflection session, all participants gave their analysis based on what they observed in the classroom. The teachers were encouraged not to criticize the model teacher but to focus on the students' learning and activities. In general, the teachers expressed similar opinions that even though it was the first time for Ms. Anis to teach in class 7A, she succeeded to manage the class and earn the students' attention. Based on the observation, the students were active to participate in the teaching activities, responsive to the tasks, and confident to speak in front of the class. The students also seemed motivated to learn as they enjoyed the lesson and laughed at the teacher's jokes.

However, the observers noted that because the time management was not effective, the pace of Ms. Anis' teaching was too fast to follow by some other students. As a result, some students did not receive enough support from the teacher, and some groups of students did not understand the teacher's instructions, which in turn, completed the task in an undesirable way. One teacher pointed out that while jokes can entertain students and create a warm atmosphere, too much cracking a joke with students may lead to ineffective time management. Instead, the observer teachers suggested that Ms. Anis could have used the time for giving feedback or elaborating on certain concepts to the students.

Based on the analysis of the implementation of mentoring through Lesson Study approach, it can be concluded that simulation session in the PLAN stage contributes to the successful actual teaching in the DO stage. In the simulation, the teachers can estimate the time for conducting the teaching and learning. Efficient time

management is important to ensure the lesson stages such as material delivery, task completion, instruction, stages of teaching, and closing time unfold as planned.

### 3.2 The Competencies of EFL Teachers Perceive to Improve from The Program

The data from questionnaires and interviews related to the teachers' competencies are presented in this section.

Based on Act No.14/2005 on the System of National Education, teachers are required to have competencies to reach the objectives of Indonesian national education (article 8). Article 10 further explains four core competencies teachers need to develop: pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies. The questionnaire was developed to elicit teachers' responses about competencies they perceived improving and their learning experiences during the program.

As expectedly, Hakim (2015) found that teachers' pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies simultaneously have a significant influence in enhancing students' learning performance.

#### 3.2.1 Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

The teachers' perceived improvement in the area of their pedagogical competencies is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' pedagogical competence

Point of Improvement (Perceived by Teachers)	Percentage of Answer	Detail Answer
Classroom management	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teaching technique (37.5%)</li> <li>● Methods (25%)</li> <li>● How to use English (25%)</li> </ul>
New Idea in Teaching	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How to control the students (12.5%)</li> </ul>

From the interview session, the teachers reported that their knowledge got improved in terms of classroom management, teaching techniques, methods, and the use of English as medium of instruction. This includes techniques in how to manage seat arrangement, questioning techniques, and the portion of English used in handling students who seemed to struggle to understand what the teacher said.

#### Excerpt 1

*"Setelah mengikuti proses LS, Saya merasa banyak hal yang saya ketahui dalam mempersiapkan dan melakukan praktik mengajar misalnya sistem pengaturan tempat duduk, metode pembelajaran yang menarik, dan kesadaran menambah porsi berbicara Bahasa Inggris di kelas"*

[After following the process of LS, I felt that I knew many things to prepare and teach, like the system of seat arrangement, interesting methods, and the awareness to speak English more often in the class.]

Furthermore, in this program, teachers commented that they gained 'inspiration' to be implemented in their classroom how to deal with 'ignorant' students (T#4), create an interesting classroom atmosphere, learn how to use PowerPoint and projector (T#5). Last but not least, they also expressed that they gained more ideas on how do grouping with gender differences (T#6). Having creative techniques in grouping students in Islamic schools is important as male and female students are not allowed to mingle without boundaries. The following are the excerpts of the interview.

#### Excerpt 2

*"Ketika simulasi mengajar, Saya belum melihat secara pasti bagaimana respon siswa yang kurang memperhatikan guru selalu dipanggil namanya. Namun ketika dipraktikkan langsung di kelas, saya rasa itupun akan berhasil di kelas saya nanti"*

[When having a teaching simulation, I was not really sure how the response of the student who ignores the teacher is after being called so many times. But when it was applied in the classroom, I was sure the technique (calling the 'ignorant' students) will work in my class].

#### Excerpt 3

*"Saya menjadi lebih mengenal bagaimana menggunakan PPT terutama saat mengoperasikan dan mengatur proyektor dan ternyata membuat PPT dan memasukkan gambar ke dalamnya itu tidak sesulit yang saya bayangkan. Pembelajaran tadi cukup jadi menarik. Saya mau coba di kelas saya."*

[I got more familiar to operate and set the projector. In fact, making PPT and adding the picture to it are not as difficult as I thought.]

#### Excerpt 4

*"Kenapa dulu tidak terpikirkan cara mengelompokan siswa laki dan perempuan. Alhamdulillah sekarang makin jelas."*

[“Why I didn't think the way of grouping the same male and female students?” Thank God, it became clearer now.”]

Referring to Richards's book chapter entitled Competence and performance in language teaching in 2012, teachers' pedagogical knowledge as included in pedagogical content knowledge can prepare the teachers to recognize learners' needs, identify learning problems, plan a suitable lesson to achieve teaching goals, select and design learning tasks, and evaluate the materials. In this mentoring program, the teachers found their knowledge improving. For instance, they now had a better understanding of learners' differences and needs, how to plan a creative and interesting lesson plan, and to implement varied teaching techniques and strategies.

### 3.2.2 The Perceived Improvement of EFL Teachers' Personal Competence

Teachers perceived that their personal competencies improved in certain areas as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' personal competence

Point of improvement	Percentage of answers	Detail answer
Having good deeds	50%	Being responsible and confident
Having good Motivation	50%	Motivation to teach well, to develop themselves, and support other teachers' confidence

The teachers reported that through a series of activities, they got a new motivation to teach well, and felt more responsible and confident in their teaching, and in their efforts to develop themselves (T#4). They could also reflect on the teaching activity process and adjust to their teaching and personalities (T#7).

#### Excerpt 5

*"Melihat keberhasilan Bu Anis, Saya menjadi termotivasi untuk mencoba RPP tadi dan mengajar lebih baik lagi: persiapannya harus lebih matang, jadi saat mengajar akan lebih percaya diri. Tanggung jawab menjadi guru sangat besar jadi harus lebih siap dan harus terus belajar nenperbaiki diri.*

[Seeing Ms. Anis was successful in teaching Class 7, I got motivated to try the prepared lesson plan and teach better: more preparation before teaching. So, I will be more confident. Teachers' responsibility is very huge so I should get ready and keep doing self-improvement.]"

#### Excerpt 6

*"Saya berusaha merefleksikan hasil LS kepada apa yang telah saya lakukan. Saya akan coba terapkan di sekolah saya dan menyesuaikan dengan keadaan sekolah."*

["I tried to reflect the results of LS to what I have done so far."I would apply and adjust it in my school by considering the school condition."]

It can be concluded that the mentoring using Lesson Study approach has contributed to the participant teachers' awareness of the importance of personal and professional integrity when carrying out all duties and responsibilities as explained by SingTeach in the research entitled *The Competent Teacher* in 2010 <http://singteach.nie.edu.sg/issue23-teachered/>

### 3.2.3 Teachers' Social Competence

The data in Table 4 shows the teachers' perception of their social competence upon their involvement in the mentoring program through Lesson Study approach.

Table 4. Teachers' social competence

Point of improvements	Percentage of answers	Detail answer
Having Collegiality	50%	• Building good relationship
Communication	25%	• Discussing teaching materials
Cooperation	25%	• Sharing ideas on teaching practice, helping each other

From the data above, through the program, teachers found that they benefit from working with their colleagues collaboratively (all teachers). They appreciated the opportunities to discuss and share ideas on materials, media, rubrics, or even the solution to teaching problems (T#6, T#8). By having a sense of collegiality, they built a good relationship with others (T#3, T#6, T#7), which in turn, could lead to the agreement to have Lesson Study program independently without sponsorship from USAID Prioritas. The following excerpts show what the teachers mention.

#### Excerpt 7



*“Banyak sekali manfaat yang Saya peroleh dalam proses mentoring dengan LS ini. Menyiapkan segala sesuai dengan cara bekerja sama membuat segalanya terasa ringan dan tidak menegangkan.”*

[“I gained more benefits in the process of mentoring with Lesson Study approach. Preparing everything collaboratively makes the research work easier and unstressful.”]

Excerpt 8

*“Dengan terlibat dalam program ini, Saya menjadi lebih mengenal guru-guru dari sekolah lain sehingga memperkuat hubungan baik dan mungkin suatu saat nanti bisa kolaborasi melakukan program ini lagi karena banyak sekali manfaatnya.”*

[“Being involved in this program, I easily got familiar with other school teachers, so it can strengthen our good relationship and maybe in the future, we could collaborate to have the same program because it gave us more benefits”]

### 3.2.4 Teachers’ Professional Competence

Table 5 displays the data concerning teachers’ professional competencies. These include teachers’ ability in determining a topic for a lesson plan, designing a lesson plan, choosing a media, designing the assessment, and choosing teaching strategies.

Table 5. Teachers’ professional competencies

Point of improvements	Percentage of answers	Detail Answers
Determining a topic for a lesson plan	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The objectives (25%)</li> <li>● Choice of topics (75%)</li> <li>● Design of teaching activities (12.5%)</li> </ul>
Designing a lesson plan	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson plan which fits Revised 2013 Curriculum (37.5%)</li> <li>● Rubric (12.5%), objective and indicators (37.5%)</li> <li>● Method (12.5%).</li> </ul>
Choosing a media	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Determining the media used (75%), relevant media (12.5%), and various media (12.5%).</li> </ul>
Designing the assessment	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Designing a rubric (37.5%)</li> <li>● Evaluation used (50%)</li> <li>● Scoring (12.5%)</li> </ul>
Choosing teaching strategy	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Group-work (12.5%) teaching steps (37.5%)</li> <li>● Time-management (12.5%),</li> <li>● Suitable strategy (12.5%)</li> <li>● Suitable technique (25%)</li> </ul>

From the data, we can see that through the program, teachers gain the knowledge to improve their professional competence in the aspect of (1) mastering theories and principles of learning i.e. choosing teaching strategy, (2) being able to develop the curriculum i.e. designing a lesson plan and the topic of it, (3) conducting positive learning, i.e. choosing a media and teaching steps, (4) developing the students’ ability, and (5) Assessing and evaluating the students’ learning i.e. designing the assessment. From the improved knowledge and competencies above, the most improved one was a topic selection for the lesson plan which might be different from one school to another. By sharing information, the teachers concluded that descriptive text related to the animal was a difficult lesson for all (T#2, T#4, T#6). Besides, they also shared tips to select the topic i.e. close topics to the students’ experiences, or popular topics among teenagers which sometimes were hard for them to recognize.

The following excerpts of the interviews may also strengthen the findings from the questionnaires.

Excerpt 9

*“Saya senang dengan pembahasan topik hari ini. Ternyata semua guru merasakan apa yang rasakan selama ini. Kami bisa berdiskusi topik mana saja yang sulit untuk siswa dan bagaimana cara mengatasinya. Sangat berguna”*

[“I gained more advantages in the process of mentoring with Lesson Study approach. Preparing everything collaboratively makes the research work easier and unstressful.”]

### 3.3 Discussion

The study reveals that the practice of mentoring program through Lesson Study approach was implemented in one cycle: PLAN-DO-SEE whose activities are PLAN 1-PLAN 2-DO-SEE. The teachers discussed and worked together in each step assisted by a university lecturer as a facilitator and mentor. The PLAN stage mostly discussed a preparation to design a lesson plan (session 1), finalize the lesson plan and its evaluation, and choose a model teacher (session 2). This stage was conducted twice because the teachers had a strong discussion on the difficult topic to choose based on their teaching experiences, so it spent much time to discuss the rest. DO stage focused on the teaching simulation based on the designed lesson plan. It was found that a model teacher needed to make some improvements in technical matters in teaching practice such as giving clear and step-by-step instruction. Finally, in the SEE stage, it was a debriefing and reflection session for all participants: finding the strengths and weaknesses of the DO session which was highly influenced by the PLAN session. The teachers and lecturers reported their observations and notes, the model teacher shared her experiences in practising the designed lesson plan, and all participants put forward their opinion and suggestion to make better preparation and teaching performance. At this step, all teachers experienced and learned how to prepare and develop a lesson plan, how to teach in effective way, and how to do self-assessment on their teaching performance. In short, the practice of LS cycle as explained by Marsigit et al. in the proceeding entitled *The Teacher professional development through Lesson Study in Indonesia: A success story from Yogyakarta in 2014* and as explained by Yoshida in the research entitled *Lesson Study: a Case Study of a Japanese Approach To Improving Instruction Through School-Based Teacher Development in 1999* was completely implemented and accompanied by a mentor which functions to help, direct, and give supportive feedback to the teachers (Aslan & Öcal, 2012) in each stage.

After being involved in the process of mentoring through LS approach, both questionnaires and interviews show the same positive findings in the improvement of teachers' competencies, namely pedagogical competence, personal competence, social competence, and professional competence. The teachers perceived that their pedagogical competence improved in terms of classroom management (seat arrangement, methods, and the portion of English use in the class). By seeing the model teacher, they also got new ideas in teaching such as treating ignorant student, dealing with the projector and PPTs, and selecting the same gender in a group which is the challenging issue in *madrasah* context. In personal competence, the teachers became aware of their teaching responsibilities and got confident as well as motivated in teaching well. Similar improvement occurs to social competence. The teachers showed strong collaboration in preparing the lesson plan, good communication in sharing experiences, and put forward their opinion and suggestions leading to future cooperation among them. Finally, as a result of doing overall activities of Lesson Study stages collaboratively, the teachers felt they had improved in their professional competence specifically in designing the lesson plan for a revised Curriculum 2013. The discussions and additional elaboration from the mentor helped their understanding of a new curriculum (a revised one) and its evaluation. They also had some new strategies and methods for teaching descriptive text in Grade 7 to be implemented in their schools by adapting of what they experienced from the discussions, simulation, and reflection.

From the findings, the teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies have more improvement rather than personal and social ones. Shulman (1986) believed that teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (the dimension of subject matter knowledge for teaching) is the core of teaching expertise. The teachers will imitate the steps and activities seen in Lesson Study stages which they assume conducive to and support the students' learning outcomes (Karimi & Norouzi, 2017).

However, it appears that time plays an important role not only in the unfolding lesson stages but also in participating in a teacher professional development program itself. The participant teachers in the study found it hard to make time for attending each stage of Lesson Study as they had tight teaching schedules. Negotiation is therefore important to be made among the teachers and facilitators to ensure that Lesson Study activities do not interfere with the teachers' responsibilities at school.

### 4. CONCLUSION

The mentoring program through Lesson Study approach in this study, which unfolded through stages of PLAN, DO, and SEE, was perceived positively by the participant teachers. These teachers reported their increased motivation, cooperation, and competencies in designing teaching and learning activities relevant to their current teaching situation. It can be concluded that the teachers' participation in the mentoring program through Lesson Study can contribute to the potential benefits of their teaching as follows. The participant teachers were more aware of how to make a lesson plan conforming to the Revised 2013 Curriculum, and how to make time management more efficient. The teachers worked together in aligning indicators of learning outcomes, learning activities, and evaluation. The teachers had opportunities to share resources and strategies for engaging students in the lessons by relating the language learning and topics to students' life and experiences. The teachers explored how to make grouping and pair work more productive. Based on the promising results of this study, a mentoring program using a Lesson Study approach can be considered as an alternative way to support teachers' professional development that may impact the quality of students' learning.

### 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thank USAID Prioritas as a sponsor to facilitate the mentoring program implemented in this study.

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