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# Measuring Teacher Professional Development Learning Activities in Post Covid-19

Page | 168

## Alsuna: Journal of Arabic and English Language

### Abstract

**Purpose** - To fill the void, this study comes with the aim of finding out perception which underpins the extent to which activities have fulfilled the teachers' need of their development through Teachers' Forum (MGMP) or not, amid post-Covid-19 at this moment.

**Design/methodology/approach** - This study employed a qualitative approach by using an open-ended questionnaire and recruiting 25 in-service teachers.

**Findings** - The finding of this study revealed that most the in-service teachers have their positive view to excel their professional development especially with regard to making clear of learning aims, widening up the horizon to provide sufficient materials many resources, adding knowledge and skills in pedagogical strategies, and strengthening ability in selecting appropriate assessment in the activities conducted by MGMP.

**Originality/value** - The implication of this study calls for the inclusion of in-service teachers to always be open-minded, self-reflected, and willing to learn a new thing to ensure effective instructional practices

**Paper type** – Research Paper

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## Introduction

Covid-19 Pandemic has forced schools in all levels of educations to change in a way that information is transmitted (Iivari, Sharma, and Ventä-Olkkonen 2020). (Rosalina, Nasrullah, and Elyani 2020) also extend that the instructional landscape in different parts of the world has transformed from face-to-face learning to online learning. In other words, all educators, students, academic staffs have to adjust their routine to a new condition where

interaction is connected digitally by using various digital platforms (Khadija Alhumaid 2020). In a similar vein, the process of acquiring, enhancing, and updating professional development for teachers also needs adjustment so that the process will always continually happen for the sake of upholding the quality of education (Latifah and Thirumeni 2016). Covid-19 changes not only the education system but also changes all of the important sectors in the world. This condition has also severely impacted human life in the future. In the education sector, the teachers and the students must adapt to new conditions like there is no real interaction between teacher and students, no discussion in the classroom, and no affective climate that the teacher can feel. The two-way interactions can be done by the teacher and students just by using applications like Zoom, Google Meet, etc. The newest condition wants the teachers to have a new idea to change their teaching way, starting with how to deliver the material, the best pedagogical approach they want to apply for their class, assess it, and determine concisely the purpose of online and offline learning.

It is interesting to note that professional development needs to be acquired through formal education and very often through real experiences and series of practice. (Nazari et al. 2019) emphasized that professional teachers can be formed through the dynamic integration of knowledge and practice of teaching. In this respect, by getting the professional knowledge into practice, teachers should exercise it in their daily routine to better transmit teaching aims. Teachers are increasingly required to implement reforms, keep up with rapidly developing fields of knowledge and technologies, and cater to an ever-increasing range of students in their classrooms with diverse interests, aptitudes, and abilities ((Yates 2007). Based on the theories, it means that professional development is significant for teachers to develop their knowledge and technology so that the teachers can make suitable their teaching style with the newest learning condition. Professional development opportunities for teachers are organized by educational leaders on the premise that professional development experiences

improve teachers' knowledge and skills and motivate teachers to translate new ideas into their classroom practice, resulting in positive changes in student outcomes (Dunn and Kennedy 2019); (Lee, Yoon, and Lee 2009);(Osman and Warner 2020)).

Page | 170

In relation to further discussion on TPD, (Margolis, Durbin, and Doring 2017) elaborated that the form of TPD may be various aligned with determined standards(teaching association) of practices from workshops, seminars, and classroom modeling. Since the vast availability of TPD activities, More importantly, teachers can determine which can contribute directly to the improvement of classroom practice. This attitude is better possessed by teachers because (Cajkler et al. 2013) warned that even though TPD is generally meant to fix educational practices, it sometimes does not focus on teaching and learning. This statement explicitly reminds all parties that the activities of TPD should be materialized so that it can address the real issues encountered by teachers in the field.

The active involvement of in-service teachers in professional development programs should align with the pedagogical state's improvement. In this case, (Abad 2013) highlighted that those pedagogical aspects should always be a considerable concern to consider in constituting teachers' professional development. To that end, he argued that teacher could revise their beliefs and adjust the practices in ensuring high-quality teaching/effective teaching (Mohammadi and Moradi 2017); (Aljuhaish, Senom, and Othman 2021);(Ibrahim and Kavlu 2020).

Pedagogical competency has been primary attention while doing professional development programs. In this way, in-service teachers will not overlook the other prominent aspects in teaching comprising instructional goal (Avila Fernandez 2016), knowledge of content (Anugerahwati and Saukah 2010), content presentation (Nurkolis, Warastuty, and Yuliejantiningasih 2020), pedagogical knowledge (Bayram and Bikmaz 2021), and also assessment skills (Nakata et al. 2018)(Ibrahim and Kavlu 2020). In a nutshell, professional

development activities should emphasize these factors on the main agenda so that the suitability and practicality of programs can be assured. Improvements in teacher quality and student learning have been linked in several studies (Ingvarson, Meiers, and Beavis 2005); (Yates 2007), with teacher PD identified as the single most important means of improving teaching quality and thus student learning outcomes.

In many situations, teacher professional development programs are run by government institutions or other formal and non-formal institutions. They are conducted, as (Zellermayer and Tabak 2006) stated, to bridge the interest of collaborative teachers in gaining professional knowledge, becoming agents of change, and critical friends for each other. He also stressed out that the community of inquiry can facilitate a group of people who work together on a consistent basis to enable the iterative and transformative process. In the Indonesian context, a professional community under auspices of the district level of education is called subject teachers' working group or MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran). It is a professional forum mandated by Government regulation No. 14 in 2005. It is created to improve competence, career, educational insight, quality of learning, organize workshops, improve routine practice by discussing various problems and find out alternative solutions related to the learning process and teachers' tasks ((Nurkolis, Warastuty, and Yuliejantiningasih 2020);(Safitri and Gafur 2020a);(Edwar et al. 2020) (Rodhi 2015; Nissa, Sanapiah, and Yuntawati 2018; Helmy 2018)). Furthermore, Evers et al., (2016) stated that informal learning by teachers in the workplace is important for professional development and career advancement.

MGMP as a teachers' forum is inevitably expected to help teachers mitigate their hurdles in conducting the teaching and learning process daily. It is expected because (Iskandar, Darmanto, and Suryani 2020) revealed that teachers get difficulties transforming their [teaching] experience into [sound] practice and confront the gap between teachers'

common belief and new pedagogical procedure suggested by new curriculum. In addition, it is noticeably seen that even though teachers have experienced series of teaching practices, their informed knowledge over instructional aims, updated material resources needed, and suitable assessments are still questioned and do not meet learners learning progress in pursuing the expected knowledge and skills. In other words, the existence of MGMP is challenged to tap these needs. By concept, Abad (2013) defines Professional Development as an original commitment between teachers and the academic, professional, and social communities they serve comprising an intentional, systematic and continuous process. It expects the improvement of teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and skills in connection with routine practice. Likewise, (Ibrahim and Kavlu 2020) commented that the training of teachers is not limited to degree courses but a continuous educational process. Continuous professional developments aimed at improving teachers' content knowledge, understanding of how students learn, and pedagogy linked to improvements in teacher practice and student achievement (Carpenter and Sherretz 2012). Much of a teacher's deeper learning about applying information learned during a professional development session occurs after the session has ended, during informal learning experiences. Teachers may engage in daily work-related activities during these times, such as planning or experimenting with new techniques in their classrooms (Henze, Van Driel, and Verloop 2009); (Dunn and Kennedy 2019). Professional learning activities must encourage teachers to be reflective and require them to communicate openly with one another about pedagogical issues to be effective (Yates 2007).

It is interesting to highlight what has been stated by (Mohammadi and Moradi 2017) about the basic notion of Teachers' Professional Development. It urges teachers to become learners, supporters, facilitators, and researchers. In addition, they can reflect on their teaching practice reasonably, fix professionals' standards, and enact continuous professional quality (Jiang 2017). The effort of having this sustainable quality really needs to be prepared

by teachers, especially in their mentality to change and transform (Akbari and Tajik 2012). Therefore, (Chu, Liu, and Fang 2021) added that teachers' professional qualities need to move from teacher cognition and teacher knowledge to an ecological perspective. In other words, having Teachers' Professional Development is mandatory for every educator in upholding the instructional process. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) in (Soine and Lumpe 2014) defined four interrelated design principles for effective learning environments: learner-centered, assessment-centered, knowledge-centered, and community-centered environments.

### **State of The Arts and Distinguish**

Previous studies have been investigated in assessing the role of MGMP in giving significant aid to teachers. The first study was conducted by (Nurkolis, Warastuty, and Yuliejantiningih 2020), which was conducted quantitatively on whether MGMP supervision and activities can increase teachers' performance. The results showed that there is a positive and significant influence in teachers' performance upon the attendance toward the MGMP activities. Second study was done by (Iskandar, Darmanto, and Suryani 2020). They examined if MGMP can enhance teachers' professional competence. The findings of this study showed that MGMP works effectively in boosting their competence. And the third study was conducted by (Hanung and Atmoko 2021), who investigated whether there is a role of MGMP toward teacher professional development. This finding demonstrated that MGMP gives a lot of benefits to the TPD and gives recommendations over teachers' training needs, post-training supervision, and providing systems for school administrations.

The previous studies paid attention to teacher professional development activities such as work performance, general professional competence, and administration. However, the discussion on specific matters of teacher professional development reveals the clear vision

of instructional aims, and the knowledge over EFL assessment are less investigated. Therefore, to add the horizon over the mentioned matter, this study aims to investigate English foreign language in-service teachers' perception, which underpins the extent to which activities have been fulfilled the teachers' need for their development through the Teachers' Forum (MGMP).

## Method

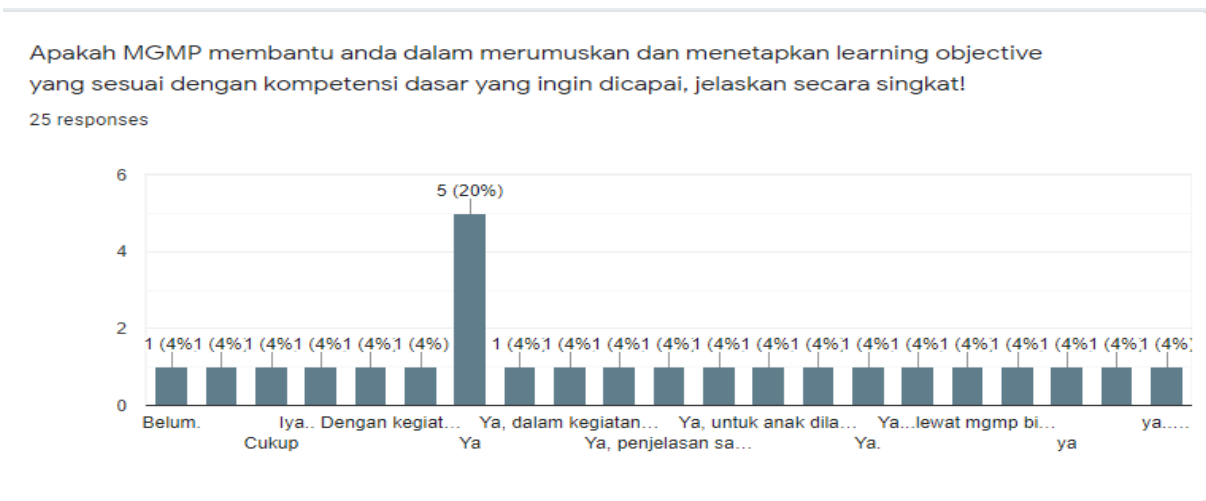
This study employed a mixed-method design (Creswell and Tashakkori 2007). The quantitative data were obtained through 15 close-ended questions, and the qualitative data were gained through 5 open-ended questions. With regard to quantitative data descriptive analysis were used, by so doing, the mean or percentages of the total subjects who determined their positions or voices was obtained. Whereas qualitative data were obtained by using thematic analysis. In this analysis the themes were classified based on the research questions in which four themes have emerged (Robson and McCartan 2016). This study recruited 25 in-service teachers by distributing 15 closed ended questions and 5 open ended questions. Before taking the data, researchers were given consent forms for their acceptance to participate in this research.

Upon the completion of the data arrived, it was then sorted out, and afterward, the categorization of data was done to match information within the research questions of this study. The last step was analyzing and presenting the data to discuss plausible findings which can give information to address the main problem raised in this research.

## Findings and Discussion

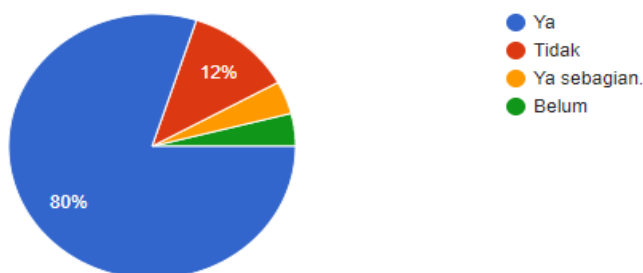
To answer the four research questions, which also represent the categories, those are presented below:

**RQ1. Do the activities of MGMP contribute to the Learning objectives?**



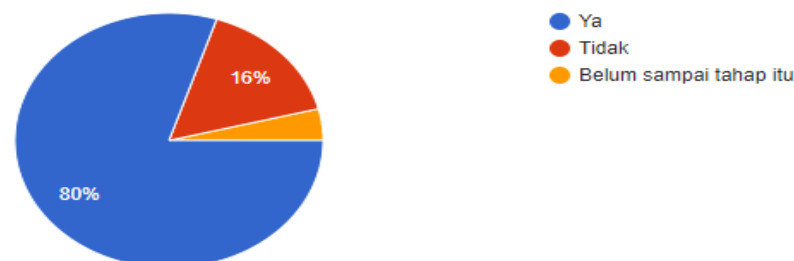
Of the graph, it is noticeable that despite very few of them (two out of twenty-five) who had view that MGMP activities did not work for defining teaching goals, mostly in-service teachers deemed that the activities in MGMP are quite helpful in how to make it clear in determining the aim of instruction. It occurred when they had room to discuss the teaching objectives. In that respect, SJP in her comment, stated that “we are in the advantageous niche because we are able to discuss much further with experienced teachers”. In addition, AAK added that “we can decide our shared ideas over learning goals with regard to different students’ ability, environment as well as each social condition in the classroom.” In order words, the voices support the sustainability of activities in MGMP for their in professional development in the area of making instructional goals.

**RQ 2. Do the activities of MGMP share information on the appropriate resourceful material for learning?**



This chart elaborates that around 80% of in-service teachers experienced that the activities in MGMP contribute to the exposure of material selection used in the classroom. They believed that the materials given had been based on the students' needs and learning syllabus. In spite of that, around 12% of them stated that MGMP activities had no effect to material enrichment. At the same time, 4 percent for the each of the rest felt that part of activities was helpful for them and other half were still no yet given a considerable effect. Based on the description and elaboration above, it can be summarised that most of the in-service teachers agreed that MGMP's activities shared information on the appropriate resourceful material for learning. Most of them also believed that the materials informed and shared during the workshop meeting were suitable for the students to be used in the real instructional process as well as relevant with the used syllabus.

### R3. Do the activities of MGMP give inspiration for pedagogical strategy used by the teacher?



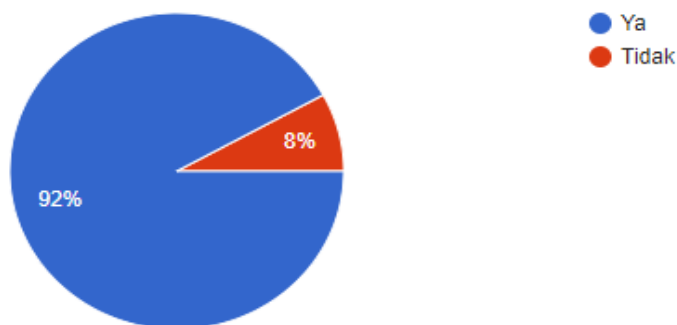
This chart demonstrates that even though 16% in service teachers the MGMP activities still could not support their pedagogical horizon, 80% of them agreed that knowledge of professional development obtained from MGMP activities. It is highlighted that the praxis development gained from MGMP can be a rich resource for them in running their routine profession although there were still 4 % felt that the impact was still not in that level.

This chart presents a finding that 80% of in-service teachers had been inspired from



the activities of TPD in MGMP while doing teaching in the class especially as it is related to applying various strategies of teaching facing their students. While 8% felt that it did not have effect on the upholding of classroom teaching practice. Interestingly, in-service teachers agreed that the impact was just a part, less in giving contributions, and sometimes was about 4% each. In this matter, even though they did not justify the significance of the involvement, they still hoped for a positive belief toward the impact on their pedagogical practice.

**R4.Do the activities of MGMP give information for creating and selecting assessments used by teachers?**



This chart reveals the finding of the initial act of in-service teachers that activities programmed in MGMP can directly impact them to plan a good learning evaluation for the instructional process. It could be seen that 92% of teachers approve that MGMP activities can enhance the ability to evaluate the learning process, while 8% said that activities had nothing to do with keeping up the teachers' evaluation skills.

Still in the evaluation process, in this chart, it could be seen that MGMP activities can be a bridge and a niche to socialize and distribute learning assessments set by government officials. In other words, the MGMP community could be the best place to interpret the contextual assessment, be it formative or summative format for teachers. In this setup, the need for quick information can be addressed soon. The chart supported that 92% of teachers agreed to the function and only 8% did not agree that MGMP has such a real impact.

### **Discussion**

The discussion is categorized through 4 themes in the Teachers' Professional Development whether the teacher forum can give an impact to form good learning objectives, give a moment of sharing information about materials needed, give a good insight for pedagogical practices and also to set the good evaluation for learning assessment used in instructional design.

Formulating learning aims is the first thing to do by teachers when they would like to get the class more realistic in getting the expected knowledge and skills. It is like a head that drives the body to execute the whole activities in a programmed plan. Even though the learning objective is commonly aligned with the instructional syllabus, teachers need to interpret it and then break it down into several units that learners should attain. (Ni 2013) argued that there is a dynamic interaction or even intensive discussion between instructor and learners until the ideas can be formed and the meaning can be met to get the learning objective eventually.

It becomes an issue if, in online learning, teachers are incapable of conveying their intention to share the understandable learning objective (Kearns 2012). Although during face-to-face learning, it is customary that teachers explicitly state the aims, in online learning, being able to pursue learning goals needs serious efforts because the emergence of supported media and facilities (technological supports) has become prevalent (Arinto 2016). That is to say that the solution toward the difficulties in formulating learning aims to pursue the aim needs a

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strategy that usually can be tapped from discussion and ideas sharing of teachers in the particular community (teachers' forum).

Regarding the issue above, this study reveals that teachers' forum, MGMP community, can be used to provide ideas to address encountered problems found in both face-to-face or online instruction. Not only do the matters related to putting general learning aims from curriculum into practice, but also as it relates to specific objective such as integrating online discussion into students' learning environment and social condition in the classroom (Cornelius, Bain, and Alebaikan 2015). Teachers' forums also facilitate teachers to improve their teaching skills and cover the lack of their teaching way. Teacher as a leader in the process of teaching and learning. Thus, successful teaching and learning depend on how the teacher leads the class. In MGMP forum, as informal education for teachers, teachers are expected to do myriad activities to improve their pedagogy, create the material, and create a suitable form for assessing every skill in language learning to achieve the goal of teaching and learning itself.

Regarding the provision of learning materials supply at the onset of teachers' beliefs, many of them rely on books provided by schools (Nasrullah, Mu'in, and Rosalina 2021). By so doing, the instant process of giving the students input of language can be done. Depending on this way of practice will usually confront the students with insufficient exposure to real language use since the books have limitations in providing updated and engaging activities. In other words, it is better if the materials can provide enough experience on its content and also instructions that meet the students' needs (Harper and Widodo 2020). Hence, this finding elucidates that instructional design must involve materials from books and external fabricated materials such as websites that continually update their contents, especially concerning language learning topics. Well-prepared material also helps to support the successful teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, though MGMP activities are held routinely, reflection over the material used at schools brings teachers to see how relevant materials are used, whether it consists mostly to focus on form (Ellis 2009) or the material is likely to attract the students' attention (Tomlinson 2012). In a similar vein, the finding extends that activities in material resources must highlight the handed syllabus and students' needs of experiencing language. In other words, the finding has shown that mostly in-service teachers agree that the discussion over material developments used in class needs to be exposed. If some of them lack literacy about it, the others will always give the needed info or even share material.

With regard to pedagogical strategy development, most of the teachers perceived that MGMP forum is a good place to get insight because in that community, the moment to meet the experts in supporting teachers' knowledge on pedagogical competence can be fulfilled even in this new normal condition. It is in line with the statement of (Emiliasari 2018) and (Purwoko et al. 2017) who commented that through workshops and mentoring in PPG, teachers can communicate with many invited experts about teaching practice so in that moment they are able to improve their pedagogical competence. In a similar vein, (Prasetia 2021) pinpointed that teachers' forums provide opportunities to learn each other based on factual practice by reflecting and analyzing cases in learning practice.

In addition to providing the moment of reflection for improving teachers' pedagogical practice, MGMP program also can make teachers adapt their existing technological knowledge with pedagogical strategies. Through the sharing moment among teachers, the inspiration and information about the current technological applications or devices are transmitted ((Safitri and Gafur 2020b)(Haliza, Nor, and Hizriani 2021)(Ulfatin, Hadi, and Arifin 2020). Even though (Nasrullah 2021) examined that having been exposed by abundant technology in their environment, many teachers are still reluctant to use it in classroom activities. Even when they use tools to teach, the practicality of technological products' maximum utility still does not

make them savvy to use them for instructional purposes. Therefore, through teachers' forums, with a gradual process, teachers try to encourage each other to adapt themselves to match technology with their pedagogical style and strategy to meet the demand in learning (Hanung and Atmoko 2021).

In the globalization era, the teacher must switch the pedagogical style from teacher-centered to student-centered. MGMP as a forum to develop skills expected to do this activity in the forum. Professional learning is viewed as a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote professional growth (Wells 2014). It means that teacher professionalism is one of the skills that cannot get in one step. It needs a process. Supported by Soine & Lumpe (2014) statement, contemporary definitions of professional development underscore the ongoing nature of teacher growth or improvement; Professional development is not an event but a process. To grow professional development, the teacher needs many processes and MGMP as a forum to create the learning atmosphere to the teacher. One of the purposes of this development activity is to give an impact on the form of learning objectives. MGMP is expected to give the teacher knowledge to create form of learning objectives. Darling-Hammond and Richardson's (2009) in Wells (2014) identified the importance of active learning, collaboration, participation in sustained communities of learning, the embedding of learning in teacher practice, the development of a collaborative approach that encompasses individual and collective responsibility, and making professional learning an ongoing process.

The purposes of the mode of delivery in a new normal, whether online or offline, are important to discuss in MGMP activities. The findings showed that 80% of the participants did not find the purpose of online and offline learning in MGMP Activities. In addition, these pandemic situations' activities should highlight the purpose of the different learning styles. Online and offline learning is the main part for the teacher to design classroom learning

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activities like what pedagogical approach, strategies for teaching, and the assessment are used for teaching. Those findings showed that MGMP's activities help the teacher know the appropriate approach for conducting online and offline learning, creating suitable material for the current learning situation, and creating the assessment form.

Lastly, in a macro lens, it is through MGMP that assessment format distributed by the government can be disseminated because MGMP is one of the official apparatus mandated to convey information about whatever the possible evaluation locally applied to every school. In this respect, as with the finding of the assessment practicality, teachers can benefit mostly via this forum. Furthermore, in the sharing or discussion moment in a micro perspective, teachers have a niche to collaborate in making evaluation items together based on the characteristics of places where they are affiliated. Besides, through this forum, they can share knowledge of how to assess the students' learning of subject matter in this case is English subject (Afroz 2015). (Afroz 2015) also emphasized that with the increasing knowledge of evaluation skills of teachers, they can apply appropriate assessment strategies that can maximize learners' experiences in learning.

It is interesting to note that teachers can possess the ability to determine appropriate assessment if they can apply holistic assessment toward the learners' learning progress (Engelbrecht and Ankiewicz 2016). Furthermore, He uttered that teachers first need to know better in making good formative and summative assessments by having a holistic assessment. For example, he elaborates that in formative strategies such as teaching analysis, diaries, discussion groups can be enacted then followed by summative assessments such as tests and examinations. (Banegas 2020) also added that formative feedback as one of the assessment methods could also be used to maximize the learning process experienced by students. Likewise, (Munadi and Alwiyah 2016) also put forward that one of the teachers' roles is providing formative and summative assessment to support the learning process and not only

indicate the learning result. In other words, teachers are obligated to identify students' progress time by time, and the final result can reflect competence achievement. To this end, through this MGMP as teachers' forum, teachers can use of retrospective experience and do reflection to be shared towards others to feel the advantageous interaction and mutual collaboration among them.

## Conclusion

It can be summarized that teacher professional development (TPD) learning activities in Post-COVID 19 measured four activities. They were as follows: 1) the forum of shaping the learning objectives, the community for improving Pedagogical knowledge and competence for teaching, 3) Designing and providing the suitable materials for students in both normal or emergency situations, and 4) selecting and creating the assessment form for the students to nurture their learning progress and language competence. In addition, more importantly, that the teachers can get more knowledge from teacher professional development learning activities in MGMP because the members of this community always do the activity for upgrading and improving their instructional practices to fit the newest condition of education.

## Implications of Findings

The researchers hope after reading this article, the readers can explore the activities that conduct in MGMP as a community forum of teachers' learning activities and the role of the Teachers' forum in providing need for teacher professional development for the sake of carrying their professional carrier amid post Covid-19 or new normal situation at this current time. In addition, most importantly, it is expected that there is a considerable inclusion of in-service teachers to be always open-minded, self-reflected and willing to learn a new thing to ensure effective instructional practices.

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