



Culturally responsive self directed learning strategies of teachers in remote areas in Indonesia

Susane Ikawati*, Bambang Budi Wiyono†, Umi Dayati, Sri Wahyuni

Major of Non Formal Education, Department of Non Formal Education, Faculty of Educational Science, State University of Malang, East Java 65145, Indonesia

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Abstract

The needs for equity in education in remote areas in Indonesia have urged various parties to engage in the endeavor. However, teachers who are assigned or choose to serve them come from places of different cultures. This poses challenges to adaption and even wears down their resilience to the point of giving up. The research is aimed at analyzing strategies that teachers serving in areas of diverse cultures used in developing culturally responsive self-directed learning skills. The research applied phenomenology design using primary and secondary data that explored the lived experienced of teachers who are serving in the remote areas through observations, interviews, and document studies. The research findings showed that humility, priority to learn native languages, a high degree of initiative, and ability to evaluate and reflect were key to developing culturally-responsive self-directed learning skills. Whereas, a cultural preparation stage, cultural orientation period and opportunity to get confirmation and feedback, and a break from cross-cultural situation afforded opportunities for the development of culturally responsive self-directed learning skills. This research also described the importance of each key factor in developing culturally responsive self-directed learning for teachers who have to face new culture where they serve.

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* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: susane.ikawati.2101419@students.um.ac.id (S. Ikawati).

† Co-first authors.

E-mail address: bambang.budi.fip@um.ac.id (B. B. Wiyono).

Introduction and Literature Review

Indonesia is an archipelagic country of thousands of ethnicities and diverse cultures. Geographically speaking, there are still many hard-to-reach places that pose challenges of some sort to ensure equity in education throughout Indonesia. The legal system in Indonesia mandates the provision of adequate education that can reach all Indonesian people (Lubis et al., 2022). Through its fourth sustainable development goal, Indonesia aims to ensure the availability of quality education that is both inclusive and equitable. The government also hopes to increase lifelong learning opportunities for the community. Expanding and ensuring equal learning opportunities is one of the focuses of national development (Lubis et al., 2022).

The need for equal educational opportunities in remote areas prompts the involvement of various parties, both governmental and non-governmental organizations, to be in support of the very endeavor. However, one of the challenges that arise is the low quality of teachers. Besides, the teachers who are assigned or decide to serve in remote areas mostly come from different places that results in significant cultural differences. To face cultural differences they need to develop skills to gain culture insights and make adjustment to respond to the existing aspects of the culture and cater learning experiences to the context that it can be received by both the community and students (Gilliard & Moore, 2007).

Teachers' failure to understand cultural differences results in the possible societal rejection of their presence as well as the educational program offered directly and indirectly. The difficulty in understanding a culture can hinder the teaching and learning process and thus inevitably wear them down and demoralize them to the point of giving up and abandoning their service in the remote places.

One of the research findings in terms of the culturally responsive teaching concept reveals that it is of a necessity that teachers pay heed to the issue of diversity, and the importance of maintaining commitment to appreciating diversity and incorporating their knowledge of cultural diversity into the program. Skills to engage with cultural diversity are necessary. The culturally responsive program can equip teachers to cope with the issue of diversity. Without these, teachers may barely be able to respond to cultural differences they encounter in places where they teach. Hence, teachers need an adequate amount of time to engage themselves and learn about cultural backgrounds, experiences, and

interests of students. This provides an important basis for the carrying out of culturally responsive teaching (Smith, 2023). The research suggests the importance of preparing teachers in pre-service teacher education for culturally responsive skills they need to be able to cater to students' learning needs and to respond to cultural differences before they are sent out to places of diverse cultures. It is especially true with teachers serving in remote places, who will have to develop their learning skills to respond to the prevailing culture there on their own. However, research has not unveiled how teachers can develop culturally responsive skills independently while at work.

Some studies state that culturally responsive self-directed learning skills entail the integration of cultural identity and beliefs into the learning environment. As far as the importance of culturally responsive education is concerned, Gist opines that culturally responsive pedagogy should be incorporated into the continuum of teacher education programs to prepare prospective teachers for structured learning that involves culturally diverse students. (Gist et al., 2019). Rhodes elucidates the importance of cultural identity of students that has been applied to various adult learning settings and the need for teachers to explore their own cultural identities (Rhodes, 2018). DeCapua emphasizes that understanding students' belief and mindset within the boundary of the formal education is crucial to make teaching and learning process reasonably effective. (DeCapua, 2016). Whereas, Hutchison provides instructional approach to higher education program to orchestrate a learning within a cultural context and culturally responsive learning (Hutchison & McAlister-Shields, 2020).

Educational research in the context of cultural difference has been capturing researchers' attention, particularly those in Indonesia who face challenges in terms of diversity, and this has an impact on the education. Research conducted on Boti tribal culture in 2018 sheds light on the education for the highly heterogeneous society and those who live in an archipelagic country. The results of the research conclude that education which voids a cultural understanding causes local wisdom values to slip through the cracks, and thus it will not bring about a lasting benefit (Sandiningtyas & Wiyono, 2018). The findings of the research conducted by Tanu (2016) reveal that culture-based education has benefited students in making sense of ideas and of the outcome of the learning process. This is because students gain contextual learning experiences and are subject to apperception in accordance with their local culture to understand

a concept. The research also unveils learning that deals with culture and through culture provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of new knowledge (Tanu, 2016) whilst Goldstein indicates that the cross-border strategy enables students to reflect on how to navigate the boundaries in their daily lives. This strategy affords students opportunities to tie the thread of their personal experiences in their own culture up with the fabric of their responsibility as educators who will be exposed to various cultures and backgrounds of students (Goldstein, 2016).

Some studies (Nayir et al., 2019; Santamaría, 2014) focusing on culturally responsive education have also been conducted in the light of the growing culturally responsive education which is viewed as a necessity in an increasingly heterogeneous world society. Santamaría divulged that leaders who are critical, reflective, have clear goals, and courage to find ways to bring about a change have afforded students at risk of dropping out opportunities for learning (Santamaría, 2014). As they think culturally responsively, they also adjust the teaching and learning process in such a way that it is catered to students' culture (Lopez, 2015). In the same vein, Genao (2021) touches on the importance of leaders' developing understanding of culturally responsive education. His findings present six things worth noticing in terms of culturally responsive school leadership (Genao, 2021). Magno (2010) indicated that culturally responsive leaders demonstrate a more effective leadership. Culturally responsive leaders show the ability to empathize with everyone and students who are different from themselves, while at the same time establishing a system of appreciating existing diversity (Magno & Schiff, 2010). Culturally responsive leaders ensure that different aspirations are worth equal attention and care for the needs of students of different backgrounds (Brown et al., 2021).

In his research on configurations, Orosco finds that culturally responsive teaching yields an innovation configuration matrix which serves as a reference point for teachers to carry out culturally responsive learning; an indicator of teachers' activities that they orchestrate culturally responsive learning (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). Teachers design the instruction on their own and take charge of the implementation of the learning at the same time.

Understanding a culturally responsive education is of paramount importance and worth the attention so that teacher skill development institutions are able to prepare the prospective teachers to face cultural diversity issue in places where they are assigned. More importantly,

self-directed learning skills are to be developed by every teacher wherever they are placed, particularly those in the remote areas that are far from information and personal development center. The self-directed learning results in enhanced performance because it is crucial to determine the effective application of self-directed learning skills. It is also said that self-directed cultural learning skills boost the self-confidence and enhance the abilities of students. Support in continuous development of skills encompasses mentoring, technology support, as well as learning materials and resources (Boyer et al., 2014). Self-directed learning skills are indispensable to develop. It takes both teachers and students to be accessible, approachable, and able to socialize, opened to new things and appreciative of self-directed learning (du Toit-Brits, 2020). As an archipelagic country of thousands of islands, ethnicities and diverse cultures, the needs for equity in education in remote areas in Indonesia have urged various parties to engage in the endeavor. The research conducted on teachers' readiness for self-directed learning in Indonesia unveils that prospective teachers demonstrate moderate level of readiness and a lack of self-directed learning skills that affect the achievement of specified outcomes (Kusmawan, 2016). No research, however, has been conducted on how teachers can develop culturally responsive independent learning skills due to the fact that many teachers are assigned to areas with different cultures without adequate cultural responsiveness skills. Further research therefore needs to be conducted on various strategies that teachers in Indonesia, who are in fact of racial and ethnic diversity, may use to develop self-directed learning skills in order to make culturally responsive approach.

This research is aimed at analyzing self-directed learning skill development strategies teachers resort to in serving students in places of a diverse culture. Moreover, it is intended to analyze the culturally responsive teaching and learning activities as a result of teacher culturally responsive self-directed learning skill development. Through this research, a complete picture is gained from the analysis of various strategies teachers develop to serve students in places of different culture where they are assigned.

Methodology

This research applied the qualitative phenomenology method, which is focused on understanding and characterizing individual subjective experiences in terms of one's lived experience of phenomena as

they occur on a daily basis. Phenomenological study assumes that everyone is capable of thinking about and articulating their subjective experiences, and these experiences are worth studying to discover the fundamental structure or meaning of a phenomenon experienced by individuals (Creswell, 1998).

In-depth interview with people who have witnessed interesting events firsthand was conducted to obtain a thorough description of students' experiences. Additionally, researchers also employed a number of strategies such as open-ended questions, a survey, and clarification. Information that was gleaned through the interviews was then investigated to find common themes and patterns among participants. The ultimate objective of research was to yield a rich and complete description of the phenomenon that captured the essence of experiences. The results of the research were then used to govern the development of theories and practical application in certain fields such as education.

In this research, the lives of some teachers who served students in Kosarek, one of the remote areas in Indonesia, were explored. The informed consent procedure has been conducted with all participants involved in this research study. Each participant has voluntarily agreed to participate in the study, demonstrating their understanding and willingness to be involved. The researchers looked into the experiences of teachers in PKBM (community center) and Sekolah Wana Walinge in Kosarek, Papua, Indonesia and found that they made great achievements in engaging the new culture through culturally responsive self-directed learning skills and developing instructions in response to the cultural context in Kosarek, and their achievement are well known - nationally and internationally. The researchers described the lives of the participants in terms of culturally responsive self-directed learning concept and phenomenon. Furthermore, as a support for the research, some teachers who serve in some different remote areas in Indonesia also willingly consented to being involved as informants.

The researchers began to analyze data during and after the data collection. When the data collected did not come up to the expectation with the process of analysis, the researchers would continue gathering the data until they obtained a whole credible set. The researchers analyzed the findings and added new information to or modified the existing data collection based on those findings. The researchers carried on until they reached a theoretical saturation, or the data became saturated (Borg, 2014; Huberman et al., 2014). The analysis proceeded to the reduction of the data, presentation and conclusion making or data verification (Huberman et al., 2014):

The reduction of the data was conducted by summarizing the main and significant points, discovering patterns and disposing of the unnecessary to gain a clearer picture and facilitating the subsequent collection of the data. The presentation of the data came in the narrating or the formation of matrix that resulted in the organization of the relationships found among the data. The final stage would be verifying the data for making conclusion. Each initial conclusion that was found to be inconclusive was subject to revision when other evidence was refuted. However, the initial conclusion that was buttressed by other supportive data led to a valid conclusion.

Results and Discussion

The results are presented in the form of propositions based on certain relationship patterns found in the repeated data matching process. Furthermore, to reach reliable conclusions, all data are developed into concepts and then pattern construction serves as materials for developing a theory by considering patterns extracted from empirical data and performing constant comparisons between emerging theories and new data.

The teachers did different strategies to overcome the challenges they faced as they build the interaction with the community with such different culture. Furthermore, the research findings depicted the propositions of eight strategies that are developed by the teachers who are assigned to serve in a place of different cultures and used to develop self-directed learning skills.

Coming into a Learning Environment with Humility

Setting out on a learning journey into a new environment of cultural difference, teachers find that it is critical to humbly embrace and be determined to get out of their comfort zone (Mafuwane, 2015; Markey, 2021; Upshaw, 2020). Humility that teachers demonstrated in the process of developing self-directed learning skills when they began to interact with a new culture has positive impacts in some areas. Humility leads teachers to a realization that despite various experiences and training they have gone through, they should not assume that they have a complete knowledge about the different culture they engage with. This encourages them to be open-minded and willing to consider different viewpoints or even worldviews (Oddi, 1986).

The researcher encountered a teacher's reflections on the challenges of cultural transition. Symbolized by shared meals on the grass, this narrative explores

the practical and spiritual dimensions of adapting to a new cultural setting. The teacher's consideration of food choices reflects a deep awareness shaped by a perceived divine calling to serve the local community. The qualitative data unveil the intricate interplay between humility, adaptability, and spirituality in the context of navigating unfamiliar cultural landscapes.

"There's a feeling rising within, particularly when we have to eat food they put on the grass. We have to choose what to eat because we must be aware that we are called by God to serve the people. We've got to be aware. Enter the new culture there. We eat what they eat. Don't decline what they serve."

Based on the insights gained from the interviews, the teachers express hesitancy when confronted with customs distinct from their cultural background. However, their steadfast commitment to a strong vision empowers them to embrace and adjust to the unfamiliar culture. From the researcher's viewpoint, this adaptation necessitates humility, significantly shaping their decision-making process in various actions.

In the context of developing self-directed learning skills toward different cultures, humility enables one to recognize and understand the value of diverse perspectives and cultural practices or beliefs, and nurture curiosity to undertake personal exploration in order to understand a new culture. Humility also enables people to cultivate a self-reflective attitude, a critical consciousness of their own limitations, and be receptive to self-correction (Oddi, 1986; Yan, 2020). In terms of developing self-directed learning skills in the context of a new culture, humility empowers people to undertake a transformative journey with respect, empathy, and desire to gain a greater of understanding the life experiences and perspectives of other people that differ from theirs. Humility is a major contributor to the cultivation of a growth mindset (Han & Stieha, 2020), which is key to developing self-directed learning skills in a new culture. However, humility does not demand the displacement of the perceived values of their own culture, instead it serves as a strategy and asset to non-judgmentally approach the self-directed learning in a new culture with curiosity, respect and desire for being teachable and learn continuously from others.

Identifying Learning Needs

One's ability to identify the learning needs is essential and relevant to self-directed learning skills development

in the context of a new culture (Heeneman, 2017; Lim, 2021; Winarno, 2021). Skills to identify the learning needs have an effect on the area of cultural awareness. In terms of developing self-directed learning skills in a new culture, the essential ability to identify their learning needs encompasses identifying existing gaps and gaining insight into a culture.

In the interview the teachers shared the difficulties in comprehending each event and the information they received. They required time to contemplate and ponder before deciding on the next approach or subsequent actions. The interview data implied how the outcomes of this processing and reflection on events or information empowered them to consider what they need to learn and understand the culture more profoundly.

"I find two possible points that I can learn and apply because this culture differs from mine. So, the first point, I need to remind myself to not expect uneducated people to think in the same way as the educated. This could be the reason for why I feel upset as the people I talk to, have a way of thinking that I do not get. In terms of the common sense, what they did does not sound logical in some way as they might have done it because the grandmothers said it, and they also did not grasp what the grandmothers said. They are not to blame."

One of the teachers shared, when confronted with the irrational mindset of the local community, it took her some time to contemplate. According to the interview data, she elucidated her thought process to arrive at conclusions and identify the existing gaps. This process fosters cultural awareness and nurtures a deeper understanding of a culture.

Being aware of the need for developing self-directed learning skill in a new culture will exert an obvious effect on learning strategies and resources needed. When teachers become aware of the specific needs requiring the implementation of a certain approach, they can decide what subject matters they have to look into first, come up with priorities, methods that are well-suited for the purpose, and tailor learning experiences accordingly for the sake of effectiveness.

Using a Local Language (As a Learning Priority)

Prioritizing a local language acquisition is essential to developing self-directed learning skills within a context of a new culture as it has an influence on promoting cultural understanding. Acquiring the local language gives them

a greater access to the existing culture by laying hold of local literature, understanding expressions, and the media and engaging in conversations with local people in a daily interaction that conveys a more original cultural context compared to information rendered into their native language (Nambiar & bt Anawar, 2017). Language acquisition also reinforces the grasp of cultural values that are not readily conveyed in formal learning activities

As for the teachers, acquiring proficiency in the local language demands persistent effort. It is a challenging endeavor, though. They have chosen to persevere because it facilitates smoother interactions with the local community.

“.. Just get into a conversation. Sometimes they give us a cold shoulder. Sometimes we can get words in with them, but it is getting better over time. And now if we ask them they respond well. Actually, one of the hindrances why they don’t want to talk to us is because we don’t speak their language. Well, mostly people speak their dialect and do not get Indonesian. So they might feel reluctant or shy because they can’t speak Indonesian and their friends see it”

During the interview, a teacher expressed that achieving a higher level of fluency in the local language not only boosted their confidence but also invited a positive response from the local community. The community members felt more at ease interacting with the teachers as they perceived a greater sense of safety and understood each other. Consequently, individuals no longer felt embarrassed or hesitant to communicate with them, particularly since many of them were not proficient in speaking Indonesian.

(3) The process of learning a new language can simultaneously increase one’s ability to adapt to the culture and enhance one’s flexibility. In-service teachers assigned to work in an area of a new culture master the local language fluently. As such they might settle into the new culture, and feel less awkward socially as a foreigner. They can thus be better understood by the community (Ahmada & Majid, 2010).

Finding People Who are Capable of Bridging the Cultural Gap as a Learning Resource

Gaining an authentic cultural perspective is crucial. Building relationships in the context of a new culture will open the door to finding the right people who provide authentic perspectives that serve as great learning resources

(Bozorovich, 2021). The right people will be able to draw on their experiences to share culturally relevant perspectives and provide a more acceptable cultural context than that which is contained in books or in the digital learning resources available.

The researchers discovered that each teacher is actively seeking a key individual who can be a close and supportive ally in their journey of assimilating into a new culture. Teachers meticulously assess and select one whom they believe is worth their time to establish a meaningful relationship with.

“...because we didn’t have a place to stay yet, we intentionally renovated our house and at the same time asked our friend who is a great craftsman. He only has one hand, but he could help us. He’s also a Sunday school teacher. Well, we deliberately asked the male Sunday school teacher to help build the house so that I disciple him while asking about their culture and language. He sometimes brings his friends around to cook and eat together in our house”

The interview data revealed that they capitalized on the opportunity of having their house renovated to build a relationship with key individuals. Additionally, this person not only assisted in the house renovation but also initiated the teachers in understanding the local language and culture. Moreover, they serve as a liaison, facilitating the teachers’ interaction with the community, making the assimilation into local society a more seamless process.

Having someone who belongs to the very culture being studied constitutes a valuable learning source to help teachers gain better understanding of cultural practices, traditions and prevailing norms within the culture in the right context. Establishing relationships with people from local cultures aids teachers to be more sensitive that they may acquit themselves tactfully in cultural situations. Native speakers play an important role in the intercultural communication as they could advocate acceptable attitudes or behavioral cues, appropriate communication styles, and the ethics used in the culture. All of these things serve to prevent unnecessary misunderstandings from happening, and so that teachers may gain personal learning experiences.

Identifying Learning Opportunities That Present Themselves at Any Time and at Any Place throughout the Interaction

Opportunities for developing culturally responsive self-directed learning processes are not confined to

formal settings because non-formal interactional situations present lots of meaningful opportunities as well (Morris, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative that teachers be able to seize learning opportunities as they are engaged with people of the local culture. The opportunities can also open up possibilities for naturally seamless incorporation of learning into everyday life. Teachers may readily see learning opportunities in their daily interactions concerning societal norms, behaviors, and cultural nuances that are not particularly addressed in a structured learning.

The researcher observed that the teachers were engaged in daily activities outside of their school duties, such as planting crops, raising livestock, assisting with healthcare, participating in church events, and even playing football with young people in the community. These teachers actively sought involvement in diverse activities that foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local culture.

“Even though things are not easy, we try to find ways to integrate in the society. Yes, we can try our hand at approaching them through our hobbies such as playing soccer, to curry favor with them. Despite their being so.... by playing soccer, perhaps it seemed strange and might as well turn them off. We proceeded, but we were strangers. They joined in suddenly and played along. So, although it may be embarrassing, stick it out, that’s how to integrate into people’s culture.”

Derived from observational findings, the researchers noted that the teachers' commitment to actively engaging in local communal activities poses challenges, is time consuming and tiring alongside their teaching responsibilities they have to fulfil. Dealing with difficulties, the teachers persisted because they believed that informal interactions presented numerous opportunities for better understanding the community, gaining acceptance, and more smoothly blending in the local culture.

Embracing opportunities that each day presents offer relevant, authentic and practical learning experiences. Dynamic learning experiences involve a wide range of social, cultural, linguistic, and emotional experiences. Opportunities that emerge serendipitously can also create possibilities for the achievement of learning outcomes. This makes learning experiences more effective and undergirds newly acquired skills. The ability to instantly and quickly spot every opportunity constitutes a great asset for developing a continuous learning mindset which is vital in the self-directed learning process.

Seeking Feedback by Asking Questions and Confirming the Learning Outcome

By asking questions, teachers can derive from the perspectives of the local community a comprehensive understanding of situations they face in a new culture. Asking questions and getting feedback will go a long way to validate what teachers previously thought about the new culture. This can serve as a self-reflective practice to critically examine their current knowledge or belief about the culture and learn to see things from differing vantage points. During interviews, teachers emphasized the significance of actively posing questions to avoid making assumptions about newfound information. The researchers also observed that the teachers dedicated time to document and deliberate upon new or intriguing discoveries.

“For example, if I come across something interesting, I will ask how it works. So, it goes from asking questions to get them explaining, oh, this is this, this is that. That’s it. Then we will be able to see their point of view from there. So, that’s the way I elicit information from a group of men who understand more about the cultural context, and a group of moms if I want to know more about their thoughts on education.”

The interview data divulged a teacher frequently inquiring about topics that intrigued him. Asking questions serves as a catalyst for meaningful conversations. When interacting with fathers, the teachers tended to inquire more about culture and customs, while with mothers, they asked about their approaches to educating their children.

The right questions asked can goad teachers to learn about things more specifically, contextually and select topics according to the needs and be intentional about getting feedback. This makes the learning more effective as the learning outcome can immediately be confirmed preventing misunderstandings and confusion from occurring in the self-directed learning process (Hodkinson et al., 2008). Clarifying minimizes misinterpretation of the things learned (Embo, 2010).

Feedback that teachers receive during self-directed learning can help them adapt to a new culture adequately. The strategy selected can also be changed immediately whenever necessary in accordance with the feedback or confirmation received. This gives rise to adjusting attitude and actions that reinforce teachers' cultural competence.

Taking a Break from Cross-Cultural Situation

Taking a break from a cross-cultural situation is deemed necessary for teachers who undertake culturally responsive self-directed learning, so there is a time set aside for reflection during self-directed learning in terms of different cultures. It can be an opportunity to digest new information and thoughts that pop up during the learning period, and even to process positive and negative emotions that emerge during the learning process. Moreover, self-directed learning in a cross-cultural setting often requires mental strength. One gets emotionally drained when encountering a conflict that arises from cultural differences, different ways of thinking, and communication styles that lead to misunderstandings. Taking a break can offer an opportunity to collect one and put his or her mind at rest for a while, and consolidate information. Taking a break is expected to help mitigate excessive emotional pile-up and mental load, which in turn can engender a relaxed feeling to learn with clarity and composure (Joplin et al., 2003). Taking a break will allow one to process challenges they face to adapt and marshal strategies in accordance with their condition. It allows one to do a self-care for recharging, refocusing, and maintaining personal life, including health. Taking a break is key to making culturally responsive self-directed learning a sustainable endeavor. The teachers revealed that they needed respite from an environment that required adaptation to a distinct culture.

“My first two years here were very difficult.

Every once in a while, Mr. X invites me to go out into the city, or when I went shopping around in the city, even though it's a long and difficult journey, it's also a refreshing time.”

One teacher showed an appreciation when their mentor took them out of the remote service area on a trip to the city, either to attend an event or simply go shopping for school supplies in a nearby urban area. The travel becomes worthwhile for getting recharged and refreshed.

Getting a Mentor to Navigate the Process

It is a good thing to turn to a senior or influential colleague to guide you through self-directed learning for mentorship (Andersen, 2018). A mentor can provide direction on the approaches required in a cultural interaction as well as in an effective culturally responsive self-learning process. Mentors can offer advice concerning the use of available learning resources,

effective strategies, and point out learning opportunities that suit teachers' needs. The repertoire of experiences that mentors have is an invaluable asset for providing insights that teachers need in learning. Mentors can share that which they have previously learned such as challenges they faced and ways to cope with them, and best practices they have undertaken that will help teachers avoid the potential pitfalls. Mentors can impart insightful knowledge regarding the local culture.

The research data revealed that teachers had a sense of isolation during their service in remote areas and amidst a new culture. The availability of a mentor, whether physically present or only accessible through online communication, serves as a source of strength for them in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

“Yes, we are here alone but there is a priest at the church who helps us. If a team comes here, it will also really help and strengthen us. We always try to take part in the monthly coaching class even though the signals are weak because we need inspiration.”

Teachers considered meeting with mentors as a precious opportunity, eagerly anticipating a visit from their team or engaging in online mentoring programs. The meetings with these mentors also provide them with valuable input and advice to navigate challenges in their work.

Having a mentor also means having an accountable person to aid teachers to stay committed. Being accountable, a mentor can help ensure the attainment of learning targets and check in on teachers' progression through the process at a certain time. Regular encounters with a mentor can also provide ongoing motivation and support throughout the self-directed learning period. A mentor can be a sounding board that provides honest feedback rather than that of other people they don't know. The values that mentors cherish infect and become a guide for carrying out self-directed learning process. It is therefore very important to seek and find the right mentor.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Culturally responsive self-directed learning skills that in-service teachers developed in some remote areas in Indonesia show some strategies as described and explained above. There are several steps that the teachers assigned to places of a different culture go through to

develop culturally responsive self-directed learning skills, encompassing preparation, which is key to laying the groundwork for developing culturally responsive self-directed learning skill, live – in experience that provides an orientation before embarking on the journey of engaging with a culture in a new learning environment, building a relationship that affords an opportunity to identify needs and learning resources, building learning readiness, and getting confirmation and feedback.

These strategies are highly recommended for in-service teachers who are assigned to serve people of diverse cultures. Capitalizing on the strategies will enable them to manage to develop culturally responsive learning skills including conveying an educational vision for local residents, tailoring learning experiences to the cultural needs in a culturally responsive manner while keeping up the educational quality standards, and choosing strategies to tailor culturally-responsive instructions to students' needs for better engagement.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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