A DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW

OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMMES
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Introduction

The term 'teacher development' means different
things to different people. To some it means no more
than improving methodological techniques, interpreting
a syllabus creatively, finding or developing better
learning materials, or simply getting through the teach-
ing day without the customary exhaustion. To others it
means getting work-related academic qualifications or
gaining experience in various types of institutions or
teaching situations (Ellis, M. 1987).

However, according to Celce-Murcia (1986), if we view
language teaching as a profession, like medicine, for
example, then it is clear that professional development
for teachers must be a life-long process. Given this
perspective, no one ever attains perfection or can say
there nothing more to learn. The learning process must
continue for as long as one practises or teaches in a
truly professional manner.

In Egypt adult EFL instruction is rapidaly expanding.
One reason for this is the perception that English has
a crucial role to play in both degree and non-degree
vocational training. However, the supply of qualified
teachers in this field barely keeps pace with current
demand

This leads to the problem of training. Many in-service training centres, are organizing in-service training programmes for English language teachers. Although there have been significant advances in such training programmes, a serious gap still remains. In these centres, programmes are imposed upon teachers regardless of their needs or opinions. In other words, the top-down approach is followed when designing in-service and professional development programmes. The top-down approach is characterized by curriculum plans, syllabus outlines, and methodological procedures which are designed by 'experts' and delivered as a package to the teacher. According to Nunan, M. (1987), top-down methods are fairly easily recognized. Despite their diversity, they have one thing in common: they assume that there is one best way of learning a second or foreign language, and they all provide a set of principles and procedures, which must be more or less faithfully followed by the classroom practioner.

This is what happens in training centres in Egypt. For example, in Zagazig (where this study is carried out) English language teachers are required to attend these courses only because these programmes are a pre-requisite for teachers' promotions.

In an informal interview with some English teachers who were attending a training programme held in the summer of 1991, they expressed their dissatisfaction with current courses. The reasons of their dissatisfaction as expressed by the teachers themselves can be summarized as follows:-

- The training course did not provide them with the language forms they needed.

- The course did not enable them to teach their students the language forms they needed.

- They did not develop in them confidence in using English in class.

- They did not raise the academic level of teachers.

- Finally, these courses did not enable teachers to develop teaching skills in the areas of stragetles, planning, and evaluation.

The Problem

In the light of the above discussion and the informal interview with some of the English teachers, the present study is an attempt to answer the following question:-

How can we develop in-service training programmes so as to add to the professional development of English language teachers?

Review of Literature

In this section the researcher gives a summary of his readings concerning the topic under investigation. This brief summary will include the following:-

1- The role of observation in teacher development :

According to Ellis(1987), many teachers think of class observation as something of an ordeal. It is usually associated with assessment or judgement and carried out by someone in an authoritative role.

Kwo, W, Y. (1988) claims that although teacher trainers, school inspectors, and school principals have to supervise classroom teachers, the conventional model suffers from major weaknesses. The following are,in Kwo's opinion, the shortcomings of traditional observation:-

a- In the confentional observation, an observed lesson is a source of information about a teacher's competence. During the observed lesson, the teacher is often so conscious of the observer's presence that the lesson becomes a sort of variety show. The needs of the learners are sacrificed for the sake of the show.

b- Another problem arises from the purpose of observation. In most cases they are required for certification and/or promation. Knowing that their future depends on

receiving favorable reports, most teachers behave pass-
ively during post-observation discussions. They assume
that their supervisors do not like to be challenged, and
they act accordingly (p. 9).

On the other hand, Williams,M.(1989) has a develop-
mental view of classroom observation.He lists the princ-
iples that he ideally likes to see embodied in a class-
room. He came up with seven:

1- Development: The visit should aim to develop the
teachers'own judgements about what is going on in their
own classroom.

2- Limited and focused content: We should not tackle too
much in one visit, but rather focus on one or two items,
depending on the teacher's needs.

3- Course-Link: We should try to link the visits to the
course, so that the teacher's attention in the classroom
is focused on items being discussed on the course.

4- Teacher-centredness: We should try to allow the
teacher to take much of the responsibility for the
observations. The purpose of the visits should also be
discussed with the teachers, so that they are involved
in the rationale behind them.

5- Future development: We should try to leave the teacher
with an instrument for self-development after the course.

6- Positiveness: The visit should be helpful, not destructive. We should stress the positive aspects of the lesson, what went well, and build on these.

7- Flexibility: The tutor should be able to be flexible and respond to the teacher in the post-observation discussion.

In short, observation can play an important role in teacher development if the observer discusses with the teacher the purpose of his visit in order to understand what goes on during the visit, and if the teacher knows that the visit is not a test, but a mutual problem-solving experience.

2- The role of textbook in teacher development

According to Bates, M.(1988), where trainees are all following the same syllabus, the textbook can provide a useful focus for in-service training. It enables the training to concentrate on practical questions such as - what and how are we going to teach?, how do we present and manage the practice of dialogues, reading etc? It also provides material for finding out the answers to questions in a lively way through demon-strations and peer-teaching (p. 107).

As for different approaches to textbook-based training, there are two approaches. The first deals with the whole book. The training course is designed to treat the question of language and the question of method. Trainers work in pairs: one discussing the language of each unit, the other how to teach it, following the book unit by unit. The second approach selects a limited amount of material from the textbook for which teachers are being trained, and of focussing on specific aspects of the book. (ibid, 107)

However, in-service training centre in Zagazig never provides training in new textbooks although nearly every year new courses in English are introduced. What happens is that a TEFL specialist gives one or two lectures about the new textbooks, talking about the auther, how the material is arranged etc,.

3-Principles for teacher development

To Finocchiaro, N. (1988). teacher development is a continuous process. To quote her:

"What is really meant by teacher development? Several multificated, major concepts are emerging in the literature related to the proposition that teachers should grow throught their life time in (1) the awareness of their own strengths and perhaps weaknesses, (2) more positive attitude toward themselves, their students, their colleagues and supervisors, their communities, the needs of their country and of other countries, (3) their deeper knowledge of the social and personality factors of their students that can influence learning.......(4) the enhancement of skills needed to present, practice, and appreciate the language system, literature, and culture of the target language......." (p. 2)

According to Nunan (1989), the National Curriculum Resource Centre in Adelaide, South Australia has attempted to build a number of principles for teacher development. These principles can be summarized as follows:-

1- Theory should be derived from practice. In other words, teachers should be encouraged to derive theoretical principles, rather than being exposed to a set of principles and being required to 'apply' these. These practices need not be exemplary. Rather they should represent a range, including good, mediocre, and bad teaching. One can learn as much from instances of poor practice as one can from instances of successful practice.

2- Teachers should be involved in the structuring of the professional development programme.

3- Professional development programmes should provide a model for teachers of the practices they wish to encourage, i.e. they should practise what they preach.

4- The approach should be bottom-up rather than top-down.

5- The content and methodology of workshops should be perceived as being personally relevant to participants. Following the principle that adults value their own experience as a resource for further learning and they learn best when they have a personal investment in the programme, workshop content should, as far as possible, be derived from the participants themselves.

6- Finally, teachers should be encouraged to observe, analyse, and evaluate their own teaching.

Seaton (1982) has referred to three categories of teacher qualifications:

- Subject matter competence.

- Professional competence.

- Personal attitudes.(p. 107, cited in Salem,1988,p.125)

Ezzat (1987) claims that "in teaching English as a foreign language, the teacher should pay as much attention to the formal properties of language as a system as to the operation of language as a means of communication"(p.2).

EI Naggar (1987) states that teachers should have pedagogic competence. The following four areas comprise the components of pedagogic competence: (1) class management, (2) lesson planning, (3) teaching skills, and (4) evaluation. (p. 4)

To summarize, teacher development is a continuous process. In-service training programmes should stress the developmental aspect of the teacher in a sense that we have teachers who are capable of dealing with different situations creatively and imaginatively.

Now, it is possible to discuss the experimental design of the research.

Method

Subjects: A total of 30 teachers (including 5 inspectors) served as subjects in this study. They were receiving in-service training in Zagazig Training Centre. They were from different towns and villages in Sharquia Governorate. They attend the training for the first time because it is

a pre-requisite for their promation as senior teachers. The reason for including inspectors in the sample of this study was to elicit information from experienced people concerning developing training courses so as to be more effective and more developmental.

Instruments:

(1) 20-item questionnaire was developed and administered to subjects at the beginning of their training. Subjects were given five alternatives (unimportant, optional, important to some extent, very important, and essential) to choose the one that best shows their opinion. The last item was left open so that teachers might add what felt necessary for them in class.

(2) Based on the assessment of teachers'needs, the researcher will suggest a framework for in-service training programme.

Results:

The findings of this study revealed the following:-

(A) The majority of subjects agreed to the following
to be their essential needs:

	No.	%
-enable learners to teach the pres-cribed textbooks properly and sucessfully.	26	87
-enable learners to use recent approaches to language teaching.	25	83
-enable learners to teach ESP.	24	80
-enable learners to devise mean-ingful exercises.	24	80
-enable learners to teach grammar in a communicative way.	23	77
-upgrade learners'proficiency in the four language skills.	22	73
-upgrade learners'proficiency in linguistics.	21	70

(B) The following needs are found to be very important
as seen by the majority of subjects in this study:-

	No.	%
-enable learners to use teaching aids effectively.	28	93
-enable learners to teach English through English.	26	87
-enable learners how to devise and correct different types of tests.	24	80
-enable learners to derive theor-etical principles from classroom practices.	23	77

(C) Items 16, 17, 5, 19, 15, and 6 in the questionn-
aire were found to be reasonably important. The
percentages for them were 73%, 70%, 63%, 57%, 53%, and
50% respectively.

(D) The majority of the subjects regarded items 8,
and 18 to be optional needs as 83%, and 77% of the
sample indicated so.(See Appendix   )

Discussion

By actively encouraging teachers to take more
responsibility for their own development , the last
item of the questionnaire was left open so as to enable
teachers to add what they think helpful for their cont-
inuous development as language teachers.This produces
not only more practical ideas for facilitating develop-
ment, but also creats a greater sense of purpose and
an atmosphere of mutual support within teachers. The
researcher summarizes teachers'additions as follows:-

1- The training programme should deal with one task or
need at a time (one session).

2- The lecture approach should be dispensed with.
Instead, the trainees are divided into small groups of
five or six. Each group has a trainer.

3- Teachers also added that they need training in how to
set up pair and group work, how to teach literature and
how to make use of classroom interaction techniques.

Suggested Framework

In-service training programmes should be based
on the specialized needs of the teachers. They should be
as flexible as possible and should be used in conjunction
with the English textbooks currently in use in our
schools. Teachers should be advised to bring with them
the prescribed textbooks and visuals they use in class.
The following guidelines might help in designing such
programmes:-

A) The training programmes might be divided between
language and methodology. The language part covers the
use of social, personal and organizational language in
typical classroom situations and helps teachers to see
how these situations can be used for presenting, pract-
ising and reinforcing target language. The methodology
section deals with the main areas of methodology and ·
teaching skills needed for each unit.

B) Setting up regular meetings or sessions every month
or so in one of the schools from the local zone to
discuss specific pedagogical issues, to exchange ideas
on the use of classroom materials or to deal with
specific class or student problems.

C) Setting up projects within the school, for example peer observation or team teaching schemes.That is because many teachers think of class observation as something of an ordeal. It is usually associated with assessment or judgement and carried out by someone in an authoritative role. Observation is more likely to be sucessful if teachers are allowed to observe their peers and discuss together what goes on in the class.

D) Teachers with experience in one particular area (e.g. examination or classroom interaction) can make tapes to present their thoughts, experience, insights and problems.

E) Book reviews to give teachers an opportunity to examine material in depth, to provide feedback and to keep up-to-date with developments in publishing.

F) The atmosphere of each session should be positive and open, unthreatening and co-operative.

G) Whatever the format and content of the sessions, they should be regarded as an integral part of teacher development and not merely a vehicle for reaching conclusions.

H) There should be variety of format. Some sessions will be conducted as plenary discussions, others, depending on the subject, may be more suited to small activities.

Conclusion

In this research an attempt was made for the adoption of a teacher-centered approach to teacher training programmes. One way of doing this is to use input from teachers themselves. The teachers'needs were determined by a means of a questionnaire.

In the light of needs'specification, the researcher suggested a framework for in- service training programmes. This framework consists of separate units. Each unit is dealt with in one session.

The suggested framework permits regular meetings to be held in one of the local schools. One of the most important initial aims of teacher staff meetings is to discuss the nature of teacher development and to explore the views of colleagues.

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Teachers'Questionnaire

Dear Teachers,

Please fill in this questionnaire in order to provide us with information about what you need from in-service training programmes. Circle the appropriate number following each of the criteria below according to the following scale:

0 - This is not an important need.

1 - This need may be present, but it is optional.

2 - This need is important to some extent.

3 - This need is extremely important.

4 - This need is essential.

Please be frank in your replies and do not write your name.

The researcher

APPENDIX

TEACHERS'QUESTIONNAIRE

I think that in-service training programme should cater for the following needs:-

                                                        0 1 2 3 4

1- enable learners to teach English

through English.

2-enable learners to use teaching aids

effectively.

3-enable learners to to use recent

approaches to language teaching in

class.

4- enable learners how to devise

and correct different types of

tests.

5- enable learners how to deal with

large classes.

6- enable learners how to deal with

mixed ability classes.

7- enable learners to teach E S P.

8- involve learners in risk-taking.

9- enable learners to teach the

prescribed textbooks properly and

successfully.

10-enable learners to devise meaning-

ful exercises.

11- enable learners to derive

theoretical principles from class-

room practices.

12- enable learners to teach

grammar in a communicative way.

13- upgrade learners'proficiency

in the four language skills.

14- upgrade learners'proficiency

in linguistics.

15- enable learners to activate

psychological/psycholinguistic

process of learning.

16- enable learnes to use different

techniques such as problem-solving,

role-play, real conversation etc.,

in class

17- show teachers how to exploit

genuine situations that occur in

the classroom.

18- help learners to become fluent

and accurate in the use of the

specialized and idiomatic forms of

English when teaching English.

O 1 2 3 4

19- give learners practice in

linguistic analysis necessary

for lesson planning and material

writing.

20- Anything you want to add,

please specify................

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Abstract

This research is an attempt to answer the
following question: "How can we develop in-service
training programmes so as to add the professional
development of English language teachers?

The aims of the research are : (1) To identify
the needs of English language teachers concerning their
professional development. (2) To propose a framework for
in-service training programmes based on input from
teachers themselves.

In order to answer the research question, the
researcher designed a questionnaire to be administered
to a sample of (30) teachers to identify their require-
ments and needs concerning such programmes.

Based on needs'specification the researcher
suggested a framework for in--service training programmes.