

# **A Training Program Based on Strategic Planning for Developing the In-Service EFL Teachers' Shared Regulation Skills**

**By**

**Mohammad Shehata Yusuf Mohammad\***

**Abstract:** The aim of the present research was to investigate the effect of a training program based on strategic planning for developing shared regulation skills of in-service EFL teachers. The sample of this research included 15 in-service EFL teachers. The instrument of the research included a shared regulation skills questionnaire. The research was quasi- experimental and adopted the pre-post one group design. The shared regulation skills questionnaire was administered to the sample pre and post implementing the training program. Having collected data, they were analyzed statistically using SPSS. The research findings revealed that there were statistically significant differences between pre-testing and post testing in favor of the post testing. Therefore, it can be concluded that the training program based on strategic planning is effective in enhancing the shared regulation skills among the in-service EFL teachers.

**Key words:** strategic planning, shared regulation skills, in- service EFL teachers

## **Introduction**

Strategic planning stems from two words. They are strategy and planning. The word "strategy" has its origin from the Greek word "strategos" which means the general art. The term "strategy" is historically associated with military operations. It is the science of planning and directing large-scale military operations, of forces into the most advantageous position. Theorists have considered the term planning as "a process of preparing ways to use resources more economically and efficiently so that the purpose of the company is achieved". (Mohamed et al., 2010, p. 28). More recently, the use of strategic planning has spread to other fields such as policy, economy, management and education.

According to Hadwin et al. (2017), regulated learning is the criticized skill in collaborative learning. Working together means

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\*A Senior Teacher of English Language

constructing shared criticized task representations, goals, and strategies. Shared regulation leads to higher talk about essential aspects of the task, such as relevant knowledge which could not lead to higher learning. The term co-regulation from perspective of shared regulation learning. It focuses on individuals' internalization processes of social and cultural influences. It is theoretically grounded in the Vygotsky's view.

Furthermore, Jarvela and Hadwin (2013) proposed a theoretical framework for three different levels of regulation that can occur while working as a group on a collaborative task. First, there is the individual level. Even when working within a group, individuals still need to activate their own personal strategies and will go their own personal goals that may or may not be aligned with or the same as the goals of the group (e.g., the group might want to get for task done as quickly as possible while a member of that group might want to deliver the best completion of the task). Second co-regulated learning occurs at the group level when one group member promotes influences another group member's regulation.

### **Context of the problem**

Most of the in-service EFL teachers have entered the teaching service without giving themselves opportunities to practice shared regulation. Moreover, the existing professional development programs promotes only the trainer-based training or use the one-way direction method (sit and get). Therefore, it has a lack in presenting the trainees real opportunities to practice shared regulation (Järvelä and Hadwin, 2013). Instead, they are subjected of some stereotyped training programs topics which can't fulfill the teachers' factual needs (Mikayilova, 2015).

Being a professional development trainer, the researcher participated at various training programs (e.g., the National Teacher Training Program "NTTP", Teachers First and Teach, Engage, Aspire program "TEA"). These opportunities have provided the researcher with various assumptions regarding the training of in-service EFL teachers. These assumptions are as follows:

- \*They lack the opportunities to practice (self, co and shared) regulation.
- \*The existing training programs did not provide them with real opportunities to identify or improve their shared regulation skills.

In an attempt to make sure that the researcher's observations were correct, he surveyed a number of studies that investigated those previous remarks "e.g. Iiaskala et al. (2011), Järvelä and Hadwin

(2013), Rogat and Linnenbrink (2011)....etc."

### **The Pilot study**

To verify these problems, the researcher conducted a pilot study (open semi-structured interviews) with (N=20) EFL trainers and (N=40) in-service EFL teachers.

(a) The researcher asked (N=20) EFL trainers questions regarding their difficulties that hinder them to provide real opportunities to the trainees in order to develop their own points of strength or even remedy their points of weakness. The findings indicated the following:

- 70% of the interviewees asserted that most of the in-service EFL teachers have deep beliefs and conceptions that hinder them to practice shared regulation.
- 75% of them mentioned that they lack the ability of implementing SWOTAnalysis.
- 80% of them have difficulties in applying shared regulation skills.

(b) Forty in-service EFL teachers were asked questions regarding their real training needs. The findings indicated the following:

- 75% of the interviewees asserted that they lack the techniques and procedures of implementing shared regulation.
- 90% of them mentioned that the current training program technique is a one-way direction. It is based on the lecture method. Therefore, they are only passive listeners.
- 75% of them added that the existing training programs neglect their real opportunities to improve their points of strength and remedy their points of weakness.

### **Statement of the problem**

In light of the researcher's experience, the pilot study (open interviews) conducted by the researcher and the previous literature, the existing training program could not provide real opportunities to improve shared regulation skills of the in-service EFL teachers. Thus, they lack the mastery of implementing shared regulation skills. Based on what has been mentioned, a training program based on strategic planning attempted to enhance the in-service EFL teachers' shared regulation skills.

Therefore, the research tried to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the shared regulation skills required for in-service EFL teachers?
2. What are the features of the training program based on the strategic

planning to enhance the in-service EFL teachers' shared regulation skills?

3. To what extent is the training program based on the strategic planning effective in enhancing in-service EFL teachers' shared regulation skills?

### **Aims of the research**

The current research aimed at measuring the effectiveness of the training program based on strategic planning in enhancing in-service EFL teachers' shared regulation skills.

### **Significance of the research**

The present research may be significant in a number of ways:

1. Providing a new training program applicable for in-service EFL teachers.
2. Helping in-service EFL teachers to be aware of their own points of strength and weakness via using SWOT analysis.
3. Introducing a new type of marriage between the types of regulation skills (self, co and shared).
4. Adopting SWOT analysis tool as a base for conducting the treatment.

### **Delimitations of the research**

This research participants included (15) in-service EFL teachers forming a purposeful group from Al-Salhyia Al-Jadeeda Directorate, Sharqia Governorate. They were currently teaching the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the primary stage pupils (*grade 1, 2, 3*). They taught the new curriculum textbooks *connect 1, 2 and 3*. They were trained on applying the shared regulation skills adopting the proposed training program based on strategic planning during the end of scholastic year 2020-2021.

### **Definition of terms**

#### **Strategic planning**

Okwukweka and Obiageli (2015, p. 32) refer to strategic planning as "an approach which incorporates concepts, procedures, tools, and practices that help envision the future positioning of an organization and move the organization towards the direction in which it can achieve its future state by coalescing people around a shared vision and balancing their expectations".

In the current research, strategic planning can be defined as the in-service EFL teachers shared explicit vision using SWOT analysis as a foundation for the training program to deal with the gap between their present practice in the desired performance.

### **Shared regulation skills**

According to (Rogat, 2011, p. 17), shared regulation is described as "an active process in which learners plan, monitor, and/or adapt cognitive, behavioral, motivational in emotional processes towards individually or socially set learning goals to attain optimal learning".

In the current research, shared regulation can be defined as a collaborative process in which the in-service EFL teachers gradually form special interest groups (SIGs) to improve their points of strength and remediate their points of weakness

The current training program can be defined as a suggested training program in which the in-service EFL primary teachers use SWOT Analysis tool to develop both of their shared regulation skills to improve their points of strength and remediate their points of weakness.

### **Review of literature**

Strategic planning consumes resources and time. It helps in taking away from handling the pressures of the moment to make educational production more meaningful. It enhances a shared vision of the organization's future that can foster successful communication and building teamwork among organization members.

According to Latorre and Blanco (2013), strategic planning process can be planned through correlation of strengths, weaknesses, current opportunities and threats within and outside the institution. Additionally, Moli and Aghashahi (2016) highlight that SWOT analysis is a simple framework for generating them alternatives from situation analysis. It is applicable to either the all corporate level or business unit level and frequently appears in marketing plans. SWOT (sometimes referred to as TOWS) stands for these Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities or Threats. Strengths or weaknesses are viewed as internal factors, while opportunities and threats are usually seen as external factors.

In the same line of thought, Chira and Hellenic (2016) assert that strategic planning process can be planned through correlation of strengths, weaknesses, current opportunities and threats within and outside the institution. Connecting the desired situation and existing needs explain the main educational needs associated with product, output, and interim results.

Motta and Gurtner (2017) declare that regulation has three models. They are self, co or shared regulation. Self-regulation occurs when the learner mainly regulates himself/herself, with no apparent intentions.

Thus, learner can influence other learners' cognitions, emotions and behaviors. Co-regulation takes the form of these asymmetrical situations whereby one member of a group who has more knowledge or skills provides scaffolding support for another. Shared regulation includes symmetrical situations where members of a group collectively set goals, track their progress, use strategies, or consider their effectiveness in these service of a shared outcome.

Panadero and Andrade (2018) are also of the same view that there is a clear integrated relation between the three modes of regulation. They are in collaborative settings. First, there is self-regulated learning. This is when the learners or the individuals regulate themselves individually. Even when working within a group, individuals still need to activate their own personal strategies and will have their own personal goals that may or may not be aligned with the goals of the group.

In the same line of thought, Järvelä and Hadwin (2013) reveal that regulation enhances its benefits through increasing the group's perceptions and negotiation processes. The group members as an individual regulate himself with multiple perspectives. Second, co-regulated learning occurs at the group level when one group member promotes and/or influences another group member's regulation (e.g., when one group member has to plan and coordinate what the others should do). Third, shared regulation also occurs at the group level when group members jointly negotiate and determine the group actions (e.g., when the group works to arrive at a consensus with respect to its goals, strategies, processes, etc.).

Notably, for the purpose of the current research, the participants were classified into special interested groups (SIGs) according to their ways of interests "e.g. Content Language Integrated Learning group and teaching strategies group". The suggested training program was based on trainees centered training. The in-service EFL teachers help each other to remediate their points of weaknesses and improve their points of strengths.

## **Methods**

This research adopted the one group pre-posttest design. It includes (15) in-service EFL teachers representing a purposeful group from Al-Salhyia Al-Jadeeda Directorate, Sharqia Governorate. They were currently teaching the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the primary stage pupils (grade 1, 2 and 3). They taught the new curriculum textbooks *connect 1, 2 and 3*. Moreover, the participants represented the total number of English Language staff members who already teach in the primary schools of

AL-Salhyia Al-Jadeedah town. They were trained on applying the shared regulation skills adopting the proposed training program based on strategic planning during the end of the scholastic year 2020- 2021.

There were two reasons behind choosing this sample. Firstly, they had the desire to enhance their shared regulation skills. Secondly, it was designed and applied to the in-service teachers as they face difficulties in dealing with the new philosophy of the education system 2.0.

#### **Description of The Training-Based Strategic Planning (TBSP)**

The current research aimed at manipulating the training program based strategic planning to help the in-service EFL primary stage teachers develop their shared regulation skills. It aimed at:

- Providing an opportunity to understand the philosophy of the new Education system 2.0.
- examining the participants' hidden beliefs formed during their long experience.
- validating the long taken for granted.
- bridging the gap between what is already known and what is expected to be performed.

The training program based strategic planning (TPBSP) enhanced the trainees centered training. As, They were the key stone of the current treatment sessions. In which, the participants were responsible for their learning. SWOT Analysis, shared scaffolding and Special Interested Groups (SIGs) techniques were used. SWOT Analysis was used as a tool of strategic planning. It helped in identifying the participants' points of strength and weaknesses.

The participants were divided according to their areas of interest in a so-called Special Interested Groups (SIGs). Special Interested Groups (SIGs) were a kind of learning communities. In which, the group members could visit it in case of seeking scaffolding for a specific area of knowledge concerning their teaching performance. In such a case, each group member had his/her opportunity to join a preferred special group of interest. The members of the same points of strength regulated together to provide scaffolding to the other peers.

During the treatment sessions, the trainees collectively could observe, discuss, tracked their progress. They could assess their progress, present their positive reinforcement and immediate feedback. Additionally, the trainer role was to arrange the training time and location, encourage, monitor the trainees' progress, give feedback when necessary. He was careful to provide opportunities to trainees to view

problems from multiple perspectives and provide explanations for what was taken for granted.

The TPBSP included a trainee's manual. It included the framework of the strategy, the training timetable and location, the lesson plans for each session and some handouts which dealt with the target of the research variables.

Some aids and materials were used such as student's book *connect 1, 2 and 3*, teacher's guide, Egyptian Knowledge Bank (EKB) site, authentic materials and Whiteboard. They are supported with PowerPoint presentation, diaries, visuals and audio to present and develop the targeted skills.

After identifying the shared regulation skills prescribed for the in-service EFL teachers and the development of the questionnaire for assessing the shared regulation skills, the following procedures were taken.

1. Official permission for conducting the fieldwork was obtained.
2. The shared regulation skills pre-application was applied in May 2021 on the participants (17) in-service EF teachers who were teaching the 1st phase of the primary stage from Al-Salhyia Al-Jadeeda Directorate. The (15) in-service EFL teachers were subjected to the reflective thinking pre- test. The participants' responses of the shared regulation questionnaire were scored.
3. The training-based strategic planning (TBSP) consisted of eight sessions. The actual intervention began in June 2021 by an orientation session in which the proposed learning materials were introduced. This included an idea about strategic planning, shared regulation and the role of trainer and trainees. After that, teaching the (8) sessions began and continued for (8) weeks at a rate of one sessions a week. Every session lasted for 90 minutes.
4. Each session ended with a formative evaluation to evaluate the participants' mastery of the intended skill. During the treatment sessions, the participants were divided according to their Special Interested Groups (SIGs) in which, they had the opportunity to share ideas and information about the philosophy of education system 2.0. They were total physical response (TPR) group and content language integrated learning (CLIL) group. The participants of the same points of strength were in the same SIG. They provide scaffolding, monitor, assess and appraise their special interest group members' progress. The participants had real opportunities for on-line searching skills (e.g. EKB and university library sites..).



5. At the end of training sessions, the post-application of the questionnaire was administered. The data obtained were statistically analyzed, and interpreted.

### **Instruments**

Two instruments were developed, validated and used in the research. They were a shared regulation skills checklist and a shared regulation skills questionnaire. The following is a description of the instruments.

#### **The shared regulation skills checklist**

In order to identify the shared regulation skills that may be relevant and needed for the in-service EFL teachers, a checklist including 14 items was initially developed in order to identify the required skills for the research participants.

#### **Validity of the checklist**

The checklist was designed to a jury committee of fifteen curriculum and EFL instruction staff members, training designers and supervisors to check its validity. The purpose of the checklist was to select the related shared regulation skills needed for the in-service EFL teachers. The following table displays the obtained data in light of the jury members' views.

Consequently, the jury members' feedback reveals that the following skills are required for the in-service EFL teachers. Table 1. displays the final jury members' views.

**Table 1. The final shared regulation skills checklist recommended by the jury members**

| No. | Items  |
|-----|--|
|     | Within the Special Interest Groups (SIGs), I can..       |
| 1.  | Identify my points of strength                           |
| 2.  | Identify my points of weakness.                          |
| 3.  | Seek scaffolding from my special interest group members. |
| 4.  | Provide scaffolding to my special interest group members |
| 5.  | Monitor my special interest group members' progress      |
| 6.  | Assess my special interest group members' progress.      |
| 7.  | Appraise my special interest group members' scaffolding. |

Table 1. displays the final shared regulation skills checklist recommended by the jury members' views for the in-service EFL teachers. Thus, these shared regulation skills will be developed via the proposed training program based on strategic planning.

### **The Shared regulation skills questionnaire**

The tool of the current research was a questionnaire for measuring the mastery of the in-service EFL teachers of shared regulation skills.

This questionnaire was administered to the target group before and after applying the training program based on strategic planning.

### **Validating the questionnaire**

After developing the questionnaire, it was submitted to a jury committee including fifteen members of curriculum and EFL instruction staff members and supervisors. The purpose of this step was to verify the test items' representation of the shared regulation skills. This questionnaire description checklist presented the intended learning outcomes accompanied by their related test items, and a 3 levels scale of consistency (inconsistent, consistent and very consistent) between each of the intended learning outcomes and their questionnaire items. Finally, the jury members suggested some modifications to do with:

- a. removing the redundant words.
- b. rephrasing some skills.
- c. adding significant skills.

In light of the suggestions of the jury members, the final format of the shared regulation skills included seven skills. Finally, the questionnaire validity was approved.

### **Reliability of the questionnaire**

After establishing the validity of the questionnaire, it was applied to a pilot testing group of (20) in-service teachers from Faqous Directorate. It is worth mentioning that those teachers were excluded from the treatment. Pilot testing of this tool was in the mid-term vacation of the scholastic year 2020-2021. Then, the questionnaire was re-administered after two weeks to the same sample. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha. The questionnaire consisted of seven items.

### **Results of the Main Hypothesis**

The main hypothesis stated that there would be statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre and post applications of the questionnaire items measuring shared regulation skills in favor of the post application. t- test was used to measure the difference in the mean scores of the research group between pretest and posttest and found out if any significant shift in the dependent variable had occurred. See Table 2. for the difference in the mean scores of the research group between the pretest and posttest of research skills.

**Table 2.Means, Standard Deviation, t value and effect size of the participants'shared regulation skills pre and post testing**

| Overall Regulation Skills | Shared | Measures | N  | Means | STD  | T-value | df. | Effect size |
|---------------------------|--------|----------|----|-------|------|---------|-----|-------------|
|                           |        | Post     | 15 | 17.73 | 1.16 | 34.04   | 14  | .889        |
|                           |        | Pre      | 15 | 6.76  | .72  |         |     | High        |

As indicated in table 2., there is a difference between the mean scores of the post application of the questionnaire items (17.07) and that of the pretest (6.67). The t-value (34.04) shows that the difference is statistically significant. The effect size is (.889). Therefore, it can be concluded that training the in-service EFL teachers in shared regulation was effective. Thus, the main hypothesis is verified. This finding supported the findings of Järvelä and Hadwin (2013) which attributed to the fact shared regulation is successful in associating higher performance and learning outcomes during the collaborative sessions.

This finding supported the findings of Rogat and Linnenbrink (2011) who asserted that using special interest groups (SIGs) is a key player in the community of practice. It increases the shared interest in advancing a specific area of knowledge, learning and technology. Members cooperate to produce solutions within their particular field. They have the ability to communicate, meet, and organize conferences.

This finding supports the findings of Panadero and Andrade (2018). Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are valuable to the experienced and the inexperienced teachers who may struggle with the relatively loose. Collaborative learning may be somewhat difficult for teachers who have firmed and unfixd beliefs. Thus, they may benefit from being placed in groups according to their interest based on relevant criteria (e.g., experience, facility in reading, spoken or written language, and disciplinary interests.

### **Discussion of the Results**

The main hypothesis of the present research stated that there would be statistically significant difference at level (0.05) in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre and post applications of the questionnaire items measuring shared regulation in favor of the post application. In order to test this hypothesis, the experimental group pre and posttest mean scores were compared using t- test which revealed a statistically significant difference.

Additionally, an effect-size of (.889) was found using Cohen's (1988). This indicates that the effect of a training based strategic planning for

enhancing shared regulation has a large practical significance. Thus, one can say that the in-service EFL teachers of the experimental group achieved significant improvements in shared regulation during the period of the experiment. A possible explanation of this finding is that negotiating socio-emotional interaction during collaboration. In this context, Volet, Vauras, and Salonen (2009) reveal that shared regulation is considered the most profoundly social mode of regulation, because it refers to individuals' metacognitive processes that operate as a genuine social entity, aimed at a single direction, that are, fully shared goal for the activity. Shared in regulation of learning emerges when individuals negotiate shared task perceptions, goals and plans, and strategies. It maintains positive socio emotional interaction during collaboration by listening and by taking each other's opinions into consideration.

Findings in the present research are consistent with the findings of AL-Hadi and Jahin (2014) who indicated the mutual respect-led discussion might have functioned as a stimulus or a hands democratic practice acquiring new skills and generating critical exploration of new areas in experience. Also, the relational these interactive discussion in which personal opinions were expressed in public participation could have developed through view exchange with participation.

Findings of the present research are consistent with the findings of DiDonato (2013). The present research can jointly build a common awareness about the goals, supporting a collaborative task. SWOT analysis in which regulation of the group or team, associated with the coordination in collaboration among the trainees. Formulating questions, providing authentic references and clarifying new pedagogical terms, are examples of actions related to this shared regulation. Meanwhile those interactions related to the organization and management of the groups, such as agreeing the turns for participation and establishing agreements at the time of negotiation in the examples of shared regulation.

The previously mentioned findings indicate that the implementing of training program based strategic planning (TPBSP) developed the participants' shared regulation skills. This indicates that the effect of a training based strategic planning for enhancing shared regulation skills has a large practical significance. Thus, one can say that the in- service EFL teachers of the experimental group achieved significant improvements in shared regulation skills during the period of the experiment.

## **Conclusions**

The researcher has concluded that

- 1. TPBSP is effective in developing participants' shared regulation skills.**
- 2. TPBSP gives the participants real opportunity to practice their activities in a safe and supportive environment.**
- 3. Participants' ability to effectively use SWOT analysis is a good predictor of academic success and teaching process. It also helps them to be for their self and lifelong- learners.**

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the current research, it is recommended that:

- 1. Training syllabus designers and material developers should consider strategic planning activities to involve teachers in identifying their points of strength and weakness.**
- 2. Professional development trainers should engage the trainees to share in the process of suggesting the training vision and mission.**
- 3. Trainers should begin to reconsider classifying trainees according to their Special Interested Groups (SIGs).**
- 4. A training program based on strategic planning should be a component of the in-service teachers' training programs.**

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المستخلص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من فاعلية برنامج تدريبي قائم على التخطيط الاستراتيجي لتنمية مهارات التنظيم التشاركي لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أثناء الخدمة. واقتصرت عينة هذه الدراسة على (١٥) معلماً من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بإدارة الصالحية الجديدة التعليمية، وتضمنت أدوات الدراسة على اختبار مهارات التنظيم التشاركي، واستخدم الباحث المنهج شبه التجريبي للمجموعة الواحدة ذات الاختبار القبلي والبعدي، وقد قام الباحث بإجراء الاختبار على عينة الدراسة وبعد ذلك تم تطبيق البرنامج التدريبي القائم على التخطيط الاستراتيجي على أفراد العينة ثم تم تطبيق الاختبار على عينة الدراسة، وقد تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام اختبار "ت"، وتوصلت الدراسة إلى وجود فرق ذي دلالة إحصائية بين التطبيق القبلي والبعدي لصالح التطبيق البعدي؛ ويمكن الاستنتاج أن البرنامج التدريبي القائم على التخطيط الاستراتيجي ذو فاعلية في تنمية مهارات التنظيم التشاركي لدى معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أثناء الخدمة.

الكلمات الأساسية: التخطيط الاستراتيجي، مهارات التنظيم التشاركي، معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أثناء الخدمة