

Implications for the Design of Teacher Education Courses

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Introduction

Teacher education is considered by different authors either as art, science or a combination of both. The following article examines the principles for in-service teacher education (INSET). The purpose of this review is to explore aspects of INSET with reference to the relevant literature in order to draw a proposal for the aspects to take into account when designing an INSET course.

Teacher Education

Learning is the goal of teaching, but how do teachers *learn* to teach? Teacher education embraces training and development. Both terms refer to the need for improvement in teachers, but the distinction is that training implies that somebody else is going to prepare teachers whereas development is considered to be a personal and individual process.

According to Freeman (1989, p.39), training "is based on an assumption that through mastery of discrete aspects of skills and knowledge, teachers will improve their effectiveness in the classroom". He argues that training is a strategy for teacher education that helps teachers achieve mastery in certain aspects of teaching. However, Freeman states that training has some limitations, the most relevant of which is the fragmented view of teaching it takes. He proposes a more holistic approach to teacher education that includes not only knowledge and mastery of skills, but also a need for teachers to become aware of their attitudes and beliefs about teaching. Head and Taylor (1997, p. 1) argue that teacher development draws on the teacher's inner resources for change; it is focused on personal awareness and is a self-reflective process. Wallace (1991) emphasizes that the distinction is that training is something that can be presented or managed by others, whereas development is something that can be done only by and for oneself. However, Woodward (p. 147-8) argues that the distinction between these two terms has created unnecessary confusion and has tended to label development as good, and training as bad. She emphasizes that both aspects should be seen as interdependent elements for teacher education. Head and Taylor (1997, p. 9) agree and state that,

Teacher development is concerned with the learning atmosphere which is created through the effect of the teacher on the learners, and their effect on the teacher. It has to do with 'presence' and 'people skills', and being aware of how your attitudes and behaviour affect these.

Freeman (2001, p. 76) argues that training and development fit within teacher education as complementary and integrated strategies. He specifies the characteristics of both strategies in the following chart:

	'what' content	↔	'how' process	'to what effect' impact/outcome
Teacher training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> defined externally usually determined beforehand providing access to knowledge base 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transmitting knowledge and skills organising access to new content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> externally assessed bounded often drawing on publicly demonstrated evidence
In common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> external process of presentation/articulation triggers internal process of incorporation 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use leads to usefulness
Teacher development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually generated through experience determined by/in relation to participants 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sensemaking, using articulated experience to construct new understandings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-assessed open-ended often using self-reported evidence

(Freeman, 2001, p. 77)

It is important to see these two strategies, training and development, as complementary. The priority for some teachers may be the need to master some skills, and awareness can be enhanced during the process. The two are important, and an equilibrium has to be created in order to provide teachers not only with space to practice and experiment with techniques, but also to make them aware of current teaching approaches and ways to improve their teaching practice.

In the teaching profession, the process through which knowledge of how to teach is conveyed has focused on the transmission of information from experienced people in the field to the novice. However, effective teaching is not only conducted through a set of practical techniques that can be mastered in a training course. There is no simple recipe for effective teaching. Due to the complexity of teaching, teachers all around the world engage in numerous courses in order to become better teachers. But there are discrepancies regarding effective teaching. What makes a good teacher is a complex issue and it involves not only being skilled in, and knowledgeable about, the subject. Good teaching qualities involve internal, personal and external factors that interrelate in order for someone to be regarded as an effective teacher.

Models of Teacher Education

Through the years, different models for teacher education have been proposed. However, no consensus on how best to accomplish effective teacher education have been reached. Freeman (1989, p. 27) states that "based on a kaleidoscope of elements from many disciplines, efforts to educate individuals as language teachers often lack a coherent, commonly accepted foundation". He argues that it is compulsory to define language teaching first in order to design ways to educate teachers. Using his definition as a base, he proposes a model for teacher education which includes four constituents: knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness. The two strategies that are the foundation of his model are: training and development. The first two constituents of his model are well-known elements of any teacher education course: knowledge about language teaching, and skills in how to transmit that knowledge to learners. The other two are attitudes and awareness. Freeman (1989, p.32) defines attitude as "the stance one adopts toward oneself, the activity of teaching, and the learners one engages in the teaching/learning process". He argues that attitude plays an important role in teacher education, since "It can begin to account for the differential successes, strengths, and weaknesses of individual teachers" (Freeman 1989, p. 32). He also states that due to its complexity attitudes are not easy to include in teacher education courses. The fourth constituent is awareness, which he considers as the super-ordinate within the model. Awareness, he argues, will determine how a teacher uses the other three constituents of his model. In other words, when a teacher is aware of a problem either of management, presentation of topics, or knowledge of the subject, they can then decide what to do using the knowledge and skills they possess through a change of attitude. Finally, he considers training and development as the two strategies through which change in teacher practice can be generated.

Now I would like to describe Wallace's (1991) three models of teacher education: the Craft Model, the Applied Science Model and the Reflective Model.

The Craft Model

Wallace (1991, p. 6-7) describes the Craft Model as a process of passing information and expertise from an "expert" in the practice of the "craft" to the novice. The information and skill transferred goes from generation to generation. It is supposed that experts, through the instruction and moulding of the trainee, will transfer all their knowledge and skills to the trainee. In this way, the trainee will acquire this set of knowledge and skills. Then, trainees will apply them to practice and thereby become professional.

The Applied Science Model

This model draws on the results of empirical science as a basis for the foundation of future actions in the teaching profession. Wallace (1991, p. 8-

10) argues that most teacher training courses are designed following this paradigm. It looks for answers to problems in the findings of studies done in the field. Wallace criticises this paradigm for making a distinction between experts and practitioners, which has caused a barrier in the teaching profession. He also argues that the mastery of scientific knowledge is not sufficient to be a competent teacher.

The Reflective Model

Drawing on the two models described above, Wallace (1991, p.12-14) claims that two kinds of knowledge should be included in teacher education courses: received and experiential knowledge. This model includes a reflective cycle in which trainees should be immersed while on teacher education courses. The cycle draws on trainees' previous experiential knowledge and received knowledge, then leads trainees to the practice of particular aspects of teaching in order to reflect on them. The reflection will make teachers aware of aspects that might not have been perceived until reflecting on them.

Freeman (1989) and Wallace (1991) emphasise the important role that teacher's beliefs and attitudes play in effective teaching. Both models include constituents which address the two main strategies for teacher education courses: training and development. Both are considered equally important and interdependent, which emphasizes the need to include both in teacher education courses.

I believe that the non-linear sequence of practice and reflection in the Reflective Model is the element that can make a difference in a teacher's attitudes towards teaching. In other words, the process of encouraging reflection and the practice of finding different solutions to a problem, discovered by a teacher through observation or awareness, are what can lead teachers to change their way of approaching a particular problem. As Bailey (1990, p. 225) states, in relation to diary studies, "In reworking, rethinking, and interpreting (their reflections), teachers can gain powerful insights into their own classroom behaviour and motivation".

Development can only be achieved through a permanent and personal desire for improvement from teachers and it is necessary for practicing teachers to realize that. Through teacher education courses, which encourage an awareness of language teaching as well as the need to reflect and seek solutions to particular problems, a step towards the development of teachers can be made.

Development of INSET Courses

I shall now explore some of the approaches to INSET design suggested in the literature. Recurrent aspects considered as relevant to INSET design are:

Approach INSET as a Process and Not as a Product

Hayes (1995) states that change is a slow process that should be addressed carefully because teachers might reject an innovation on the basis that their previous extensive use of different practices have worked well for them. So teachers' beliefs and attitudes need to be changed through normative-re-educative strategies, that is, teachers should be challenged to analyze their current teaching/learning beliefs and behaviors. The consideration of INSET as a long-term process is supported by many experts in the field (Fullan, 1991; Lamb, 1995; Roberts, 1998; Wallace, 1991).

Lamb (1995) describes the effects that an INSET course had on a particular group of trainees and emphasizes that in order for any INSET course to be really effective it needs to take into account a long-term process before a change in classroom practice can be achieved. Along the same lines, O'Brien (1981, p. 54) states that "the only ultimately valid evaluation of a teacher-training course is in terms of how it affects the teachers' performance in their classrooms and the learning that takes place there". It is necessary to stress the importance of an inner desire to change from teachers. This could be a very difficult issue to approach in any training course because changing attitudes and beliefs in teachers is a very complex task. However, through various activities, teachers can be made aware of the impact which their own beliefs and attitudes towards teaching are having on their students. Thus they may change their attitudes through a process of trial during their practice, but they need to be made aware first in order to reflect on them.

INSET Should Be Context-Sensitive

Bax (1997) stresses the importance of centering courses on participants. He argues that the dependence of trainers on ready-made recipes from different books tends to reinforce the prevalent transmission mode on teacher education courses. Bax (1997, p. 233) states that "a more context-sensitive approach would, by contrast, be more trainee-centered, involving trainees in ways which would ensure that the programme has as close a bearing as possible on their teaching concerns and contexts".

This is a feeling shared by Wolter (2000) who emphasizes that teachers are the 'experts' in the teaching/learning environment and they should be treated as such. He suggests that in the early stage of INSET, the transfer of information has to be followed by a two-way exchange of ideas between trainer and trainees, since the trainees are the ones who have to decide which is the best way to address the innovation in their particular contexts. He emphasizes that such an approach has the following advantages:

- It encourages a higher degree of fit as the programme progresses from theoretical toward more practical concerns
- It motivates participants to interpret the innovation as they try to apply theory into their day-to-day practice
- It promotes ownership

- It promotes the innovation through its application in the course methodology and content. (Wolter, 2000, p. 315-316)

Hayes (2000) emphasises that, in order for changes to happen, the people involved should be well-informed. From my experiences, they should also be trained to know what is expected of them under the new policies, and be given the experience of using different ways of attaining that goal. As Hayes (2000, p. 136) emphasises, "teachers are at the heart of any innovation within national education systems and, therefore, they and the contexts in which they work need to be studied to inform the innovation process".

The need to include the experience of the trainees in the design of teacher education courses seems to be a core aspect to consider (Bax, 1997; Hayes, 2000; Lamb, 1995; Nunan, 1989; Wolter, 2000). I believe also that it is an important motivational strategy to draw on teachers' expertise and resources in their environment and their objectives when taking training courses. An analysis should be made in order to discover aspects that need immediate attention in order to include them in the syllabus.

Hayes (1995) suggests that activities should be classroom-centered and that the trainees should be involved in the preparation of the course in order to design it with relevance to them. He also proposes that trainers should be teachers themselves. I consider that this could be motivating for trainees because they will see the trainer as their equal since they are teachers as well. He addresses the aspect of valuing participants' experience in order to make teachers aware of the rationale for the innovation; in this way, an opportunity for analysis will be given to participants. Hayes states that, through the encouragement of analysis and reflection, trainers can enable teachers to form conclusions about the topic. In order for participants to understand and implement the innovation, a space to apply it should be given. Besides having the opportunity to implement new practices, space should also be provided for the exchange of ideas, problems, concerns and suggestions in order for participants to develop collaborative practices.

Lamb (1995) agrees that the participants in teacher education courses are the ones who, through awareness of their own practices, specify the areas they want to explore in order to determine the content of development courses. In this way, practical ideas can find their counterpart in the theory of second language teaching.

Nunan (1989) suggests using a bottom-up approach to the design of teacher education courses. He argues that a 'client-centred approach' to teacher development can bridge the gap between theory and practice, and states that one way of doing this is through the inclusion of data from, and about, the workshop participants in the design of the workshop itself.

I believe that the use of participants' expertise and needs is a very important aspect to keep in mind when designing courses for teachers. Most of the time, teachers do not find any application of theory to their particular contexts because of many factors. By making an analysis of the current constraints and resources, teachers can arrive at a more realistic design. This is of particular relevance for theories developed in a different context which from which a course is taking place. Most of the time, theories are developed in contexts which are different from those in which teachers are actually working. In order to help teachers understand theory, space for practice and adaptation of it should be given during training. Through applicability teachers can understand theory better and adapt it to their particular situations.

Theory and Practice Should Be Integrated

Widdowson (1984, p. 86) argues that "fostering dependence on technique alone, without at the same time developing awareness of how technique relates to theoretical principles, militates against healthy development in the ELT profession". He suggests a consideration of the effect on teacher motivation from a recognition of the central role of theory in pedagogical practice. This is a central issue in teacher education courses where only knowledge and skills are addressed. I consider that a balance should be made between the two in order to give teachers an integrated course. No undue emphasis should be placed on either theory or practice, but, since both are important elements that need to be interrelated in order for the innovation to take place, the course design should aim for an appropriate balance.

Clarke (1994, p. 9), in relation to the theory/practice distinction, considers it an unhealthy categorization for the profession. He argues that teachers' experience is a valid source of theory that should be borne in mind. He does not imply that experts' theories should not be considered, but instead advocates a more bottom-up approach to theory. He suggests 'experience-based theory building', placing teachers first and 'experts' after them. The need for experience-based building is in tune with the need to be context-sensitive. Theory should be integrated with practice in order for teachers to experience the innovation and act upon implementing it, or not, according to their experience. Along the same lines, Nunan (1989, p. 112) argues that theory should be derived from practice and that teachers should be the ones creating this, rather than being exposed to a set of principles derived from experts. Markee (1997, p. 9) explains in detail the different reasons why an innovation may be rejected. She considers that linguistic and cultural disadvantage plays an important role in the implementation of any innovation. Thus, the task of inducing teachers to adopt new theories is a very complex one that is not always successful, and the need for a link between theory and practice emerges again. One way to encourage teachers to innovate is through the applicability of new practice within the course itself. Only through trial and error can teachers realize the improvements, if any, which any particular innovation might make to their particular contexts.

Diversity of Methods and Activities

Teachers as learners possess different styles of learning, and, in order to cater to these different styles, a diversity of activities has to be used. Different procedures, methods, tasks and activities have been suggested for teacher education courses:

Hayes (2000, p. 143) proposes a checklist for teacher education courses:

Does the training/development session provide/enable:

- active involvement/participation by the teachers ?
- opportunity for thinking/reflection?
- opportunity to make use of teachers' own experience?
- opportunity to experience ideas/activities first hand?
- opportunity to apply ideas?
- opportunity for practice of skills in a non-threatening environment?
- constructive feedback on practice/application?
- an emphasis on why: the reasons for doing something in a particular way?
- a variety of methods/tasks used on the course?

I consider this to be a helpful checklist since it includes procedures and tasks. The two need to be carefully planned to achieve the expected results, and by making a thorough analysis before putting them into practice, we can see the impact they have on teachers.

Ellis (1986) divides training practices into experiential and awareness raising. Both are important to the development of teachers because they are not just expected to practise a particular technique or strategy, but they are also encouraged to develop an understanding of theoretical principles behind the practical techniques in use.

Roberts (1998, p. 46) suggests activities such as:

- Access to new information (by reading, lectures and models)
- Activities to raise the learners'-teachers' self-awareness of past experiences, and current beliefs, practice and knowledge
- Direct personal experience, in language learning, micro-teaching and teaching-practice
- Indirect experience of teaching, for example by structured observation
- Opportunities to reflect privately on these inputs and experiences, for example by means of reflective writing
- Opportunities for dialogue with fellow teachers and others, addressing one's practice, beliefs and the social pressures affecting one's work
- Development of skills and attitudes, which enable teachers to get the most from the above activities: study skills, observation skills, and team skills

The different and varied ways to develop current knowledge in teachers is vast. Trainers should make use of as many such strategies as possible in order not only to introduce trainees to new theoretical aspects but also to demonstrate techniques and activities that student teachers can adapt to their classes. In this way, teachers will be receiving practical ideas while at the same time being exposed to new theories. Teachers should be encouraged to implement new techniques in their classes, emphasising that only through trial and error can they decide whether the innovation is appropriate for their particular contexts.

Participants' Development Through Reflection

Development through reflection is agreed to be a necessary part of any education course (Freeman, 1989; Hayes, 1995; Roberts, 1998; Wolter, 2000) and reflection has become an important INSET principle. Head and Taylor (1997) present a view of development which is centred on teachers' own awareness of themselves as people as well as teachers. They state that this kind of development involves the teacher in a process of reflection on experience, exploration of the different options available for change and taking the decision of setting goals and finding the best ways to achieve them. Hayes (2000, p. 43) reinforces this by stating that "teachers, whether actively or passively, determine what is appropriate for their own classrooms". Roberts (1998) sees reflection as conscious self-assessment, which can range from using formal criteria of evaluation, to the exploration of teaching practices. He argues that reflection means many things to different people, but what cannot be neglected is the effect which context plays on 'reflective' practices. However, making teachers reflect may be a difficult task. Wallace (1991, p.165) argues that the process of reflection should not be taken for granted and it ought not to be assumed that all teachers are naturally reflective or that they automatically develop in their practice through this process. He advises that the teachers' 'powers of reflection' need to be 'facilitated and developed through the training process' and at all levels of training and development.

Observation as a Developmental Tool

One of the tools considered most effective to develop teacher reflection is observation (Cosh, 1999; Scrivener, 1994; Wajnryb, 1992). Wajnryb believes that observations can develop teachers' ability to observe, interpret and analyse and this will help them to improve. Often observation has been used as a way to evaluate or judge teachers' performance, it can also provide a range of experiences for teachers to grow professionally. Richards (1998, p. 143) points out three aspects to bear in mind when designing observation tasks: observation should have a focus, observers should use specific procedures and the observer should remain as an observer. Observation also enhances collaboration because teachers can agree to observe one another in order to focus on particular concerns and offer, or experiment with, solutions for it. The process of engaging trainees in observing each other is a way to help them to reflect on and consider their classroom practices. This is an essential stage in the development of

teachers because what they may think is successful may not be, and only through analysis, collaboration and reflection can this become clear.

Cosh (1999, p. 24) states that "good teachers need not only knowledge but enthusiasm, confidence, self-value, and a desire to question, experiment, and grow professionally". Trainers can motivate trainees but the emphasis of self-direction must begin with teachers. It is important to make teachers aware of changes that can be effected by them in order to improve results of students on their courses, but it is an aspect that can be initiated and trainees will have to continue it.

Conclusion

Literature on teacher education emphasises the need to create courses which address the problems and reality of their participants. I consider this to be a relevant factor for the effective design of INSET programs. When a course focuses on the particular concerns of trainees, it can have positive effects on trainees' day-to-day practice. By enabling teachers to reflect on what they are doing, and to experiment with different strategies to improve, or find solutions to their particular concerns, teachers become engaged in an on-going process of reflection. Thus, professional development can be enhanced in teacher training courses through different procedures. However, it is important to note that development is a long and personal process that teachers themselves are responsible for continuing. It is important to give teachers space for the promotion of awareness and self-reflection because the development of teachers will lead to the development of students, which is the goal of teaching.

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