

INNOVATIONS SERIES

Innovations in
**the continuing professional
development of English language teachers**

Edited by David Hayes

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Foreword

Tim Phillips

This volume offers a global view of innovations in the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers. The papers reflect the nature of teacher development as a lifelong experience extending from initial training to throughout the whole teacher's career, and represent the wide range of needs and contexts to which continuing professional development programmes respond. There is valuable information here about how continuing professional development programmes are designed and how they impact on the different stakeholders involved.

In recent years developments in technology have expanded the horizons for teachers to learn, share and network. The British Council's Teaching English website has been a leader in this, providing training through webinars and guided study, sharing video of classrooms and resources, and encouraging sharing among teachers across the globe through its Facebook and Twitter communities. The papers in this volume provide insight into particular ways in which technology can benefit teachers in their development.

Evidence suggests that the quality of teaching in the school has the most influence on learner achievement. If that is the case, then the effort to improve teaching is crucial for sustained improvement in learner achievement. It is therefore essential to understand and to share examples of practice in continuing professional development. Systems need to be in place to ensure that such development programmes have a measurable impact on teacher and learner performance in the classroom. Moreover, continuing professional development is not only a matter of providing training; it is also essential to have in place effective support and mentoring in school to ensure the teacher's learning is put into practice in the classroom. It is also true that informal aspects of continuing professional development, such as professional reading, discussion and networking, can have a strong role in helping teachers develop. The papers published here present many ways in which effective continuing professional development can be achieved.

It is intended that this volume will also help to stimulate debate around the world on the importance of effective continuing professional development to education systems. Continuing professional development should be relevant to individual teachers' needs, but it should also meet the needs of the school in which the teacher works, and of the teacher's wider role in achieving the educational objectives of the school system and country. As teachers continue through their careers they will need guidance on new skills and professional understanding. It is important that the systems are in place to provide these programmes and to support the teachers' implementation of them in the classroom.

The British Council is therefore delighted to be publishing this volume and is looking forward to engaging further with ministries of education, school leaders, training organisations and teacher bodies in assisting their work in continuing professional development, in collaboration with the UK.

I would like to express our thanks to David Hayes, the editor of this volume, and all those who have contributed the papers published here.

Tim Phillips, Head, Teacher Development, English and Exams
British Council

Overview – Innovations in continuing professional development: sector-wide, institutional and personal perspectives

David Hayes

For this overview I begin by reflecting on what is meant by the two key terms in the volume's title: 'innovation' and 'continuing professional development'. Cambridge Dictionaries Online (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>) tells us that an innovation is '(the use of) a new idea or method' while the Oxford dictionary tells us that to innovate is to 'make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods, ideas, or products' (www.oxforddictionaries.com). At the heart of innovation, then, will be a change of some kind but this does not necessarily mean that the change always has to be radical and wholesale. Small-scale, incremental changes can also be innovative. The fact that we are making changes to 'something established' tells us too that innovation is context-specific, because what is 'established' differs from place to place. What is innovative in a school system with good resources, where teachers are well trained and have classes of 20–30 students will not be the same as what is innovative in a resource-poor system where teachers may not have adequate training and are faced with classes of 50–60 students. In one context, innovation could be the introduction of a technology such as interactive whiteboards or a methodology such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); while in another, it could be the introduction of pair and group work into classes which have previously been entirely teacher-centred. However, whatever the change, innovation will offer new ways to approach some aspect of teaching-learning for teachers and the prospect of improved outcomes for learners in that specific context.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is, as all the chapters in this volume attest, a multi-faceted, lifelong experience, which can take place inside or outside the workplace and which often moves beyond the professional and into the realm of a teacher's personal life too. The definition of professional development articulated some years ago by Christopher Day encapsulates the range of experiences that come under the purview of CPD:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence essential to good professional

thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives. (Day, 1999: 4)

Consistent with this definition, a very broad view of CPD is taken for this volume, encompassing activities ranging from formal, ministry-sponsored in-service teacher training and development programmes for many thousands of teachers, to small-scale individual initiatives focusing on personal development. The scope of CPD thus runs from the structured to the unstructured, from the sector-wide to the personal. It responds to different needs at different phases of a teacher's career, and is undertaken for different reasons and purposes at different times. CPD is truly lifelong learning.

CPD assumes increasing importance as demands on teachers continue to increase in most school systems, in what Hargreaves (1994) called 'the intensification of teaching', a phenomenon in which 'rapid shifts in the nature of work ensue from, among other factors, government-driven waves of 'reform' and 'restructuring.' (Zipin, 2002: 2). This intensification has not lessened in the 20 years since Hargreaves named the phenomenon and it has inevitably resulted in constraints on professional development, as Day et al. (2006: 123) found in a study of teacher effectiveness in England:

Teachers across all professional life phases felt that heavy workload, a lack of time and financial constraints were important inhibitors in their pursuit of professional development.

These 'inhibitors' are commonplace, as are the demands on teachers for constant professional renewal, which argue for more rather than less opportunity for professional development in their working lives. The OECD (2011: 17) notes that 'those who are now teaching [are required to] adapt to constantly changing demands in order to prepare students to play their part in societies which seem to be evolving at a faster rate than ever before in human history'. From a policy perspective, CPD is seen as central to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in schools worldwide (Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis, 2005; Muijs and Lindsay, 2008). From a personal perspective, as papers in this volume will show, CPD is critical in providing teachers with the means to cope with the increasing demands placed upon them by external forces while maintaining their individual capacity to take control of their own learning and to transform their educational practice.

The challenge of providing opportunities for CPD in a country as vast as India is the focus of the first chapter. Emma-Sue Prince and Alison Barrett describe how British Council India has been working collaboratively with a number of state governments (Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Punjab) to support CPD for teacher educators as well as teachers in both their language teaching skills and their English language proficiency. Whether large-scale, state-wide cascade programmes or more restricted direct trainer and teacher development programmes with limited numbers of participants, all of the initiatives have dual aims of practical development of immediate relevance for those involved and long-term capacity building within the system so that states are better able to

handle decentralised CPD in the future. Prince and Barrett also highlight the need for the reach of CPD to extend beyond the traditional 'recipients' of formal in-service training – the teachers and, to a lesser extent, teacher-trainers – to encompass development for all stakeholders in the system: 'education officers, senior academic staff involved in project design, principals and senior officials responsible for designing and managing implementation'. This is important not least because these groups can inhibit as well as promote CPD for teachers. Or, to cite the metaphor used by Amol Padwad at the launch of a book of case studies of CPD in India (see also Chapter 11): 'when you're on your CPD journey you still need to buy your ticket.' Prince and Barrett explain that: 'In an Indian teacher's case, the school principal, the block or district education officer, the state machinery or even national policy might man the travel desk'. CPD thus needs to be seen as holistic, for the system as well as for individuals. If senior officials understand the nature of change at the individual level and see CPD as intrinsic to the system, perhaps the problem of innovation identified by Havelock and Huberman some 40 years ago, and which unfortunately remains common in so many contexts, may be avoided:

It is important to understand that innovations are not adopted by people on the basis of intrinsic value of the innovation, but rather on the basis of the adopters' perception of the changes they personally will be required to make. Those designing, administering and advising on projects do not generally have to make very many changes themselves. Their task remains the same. It is others who will have to modify their behaviours and very often to modify them rapidly in fairly significant ways, and with little previous or even gradual preparation. These are typically the kind of rapid and massive changes which planners or administrators or advisers would never plan, administer or advise for themselves. (Havelock and Huberman, 1977; cited in Bishop, 1986: 5; original emphasis)

Chapter 2, by Jamilya Gulyamova, Saida Irgasheva and Rod Bolitho, discusses experience in Uzbekistan of just such an innovation requiring significant change in established practice. In this case, educational reform after the end of the Soviet era presented an opportunity to radically change the curriculum for the pre-service training and education of teachers of English, which had previously focused on study of linguistics and language systems with methodology taught as a theoretical rather than practical discipline. However, rather than leading to rejection and failure, the curriculum reform project provided the stimulus for CPD for a variety of project participants, teachers and other stakeholders. In part, the project has been successful because change, though significant, was incremental and organic rather than rapid and imposed. In part, success has been due to a recognition that it was important to understand and to deal with vested interests that favoured the maintenance of the *status quo* – change is threatening to those who have risen in the hierarchy under the established order. But above all, success has been due to the opportunities the project provided 'for individuals to stretch themselves professionally beyond their comfort zones and into areas they had not previously explored', within a supportive framework characterised by collaborative teamwork, intensive discussion and the freedom to evaluate new ideas from their own perspectives. The benefits of such an approach, which was endorsed by the Ministry of Higher and Specialised

Secondary Education in Uzbekistan, are amply demonstrated in another notable feature of Gulyamova, Irgasheva and Bolitho's chapter, that is the space it gives to project participants to speak for themselves. Their narratives bring the project to life, providing vivid illustrations of their varied experiences, their successes as well as the struggles they went through over time. Chapter 2 offers, then, many learning opportunities (though, of course, not the only ones) for those who wish to initiate and sustain large-scale, sector-wide reform programmes.

The following two chapters take us from the state to the private sector. Anne Burns and Emily Edwards (Chapter 3) recount a sector-wide initiative by English Australia to promote high levels of professional practice among the 2,500 teachers working in the English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sector. This was achieved through an Action Research (AR) project (for which Burns provided professional guidance), with teachers from across the sector invited to develop outline research projects that they wished to conduct in their institutions. A number of these were selected for support. Among these in 2012 was one by Edwards, who provides an account of professional development from a personal perspective through her participation in the AR project. AR was chosen because of its 'transformative power' and Edwards' account demonstrates clearly its potential to act as a catalyst for CPD and career progression. Just as significant, though, is the impact participation in the AR project had on her students' learning. Edwards became more connected to her students' needs, helping them to improve their writing abilities, while her decision to negotiate with them in the development of self-directed learning materials led to an increase in their self-study skills, essential for their university studies beyond the English programme. Burns' and Edwards' conclusion that 'Providing teachers with opportunities to conduct action research as a form of CPD is an investment in teacher quality; and ultimately teacher quality leads to enhanced student learning' is clearly established here. Though at its inception this was a top-down project, its success relied on the active engagement of teachers in the innovation, demonstrating a similar synergy between top-down and bottom-up approaches to that we saw in India. Here it was English Australia that was manning the CPD 'travel desk'.

In Chapter 4 Isabela Villas Boas examines the experience of her own institution, Casa Thomas Jefferson, in Brazil, in developing multiple opportunities for its teachers to access professional development, differentiated according to their needs and linked to their career stages. In an organic process over a number of years, her institution has moved towards 'Visionary Professional Development', which is professional development centred on the needs of the teachers and which contributes to a true learning institution rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach, with managers deciding on topics for one-off workshops attended by all teachers at pre-specified times throughout the year. Teachers were always 'recognised as the lifeblood of an effective institution' but now their own agency is seen as central to the development of the learning institution. Teachers are not just offered choice among a range of CPD alternatives proposed by the institution, but are encouraged to propose projects which they feel are important to their own development. The end result is that Casa Thomas Jefferson has developed a learning community in which all teachers,

whatever their level of experience, feel valued and respected, are encouraged to develop professionally in ways appropriate to their needs within the institution and are enabled to connect to the wider ELT community beyond its walls.

What both of these chapters make clear is that the private sector, which is often characterised, as Burns and Edwards put it, 'as being concerned more with income generation than CPD', is far from being consumed by the profit motive. Private sector employers recognise that investing in teacher quality is an investment in the strength of their business: more professionally skilled and personally satisfied teachers leads to improved teaching and learning in the classroom, which, in turn, enhances the reputation of the institution, which then leads to increased demand for its classes.

The next chapter by Smith, Connelly and Rebolledo extends the concept of teacher-research as a catalyst for CPD from the generally well-resourced private sector, which we see in Burns and Edwards' chapter, to the extremely challenging conditions of state secondary schools in Chile. They paint a picture of a school system which has been blighted by under-investment and historical associations of teaching as a 'subversive' profession, where teachers have low incomes and low status and teach on average 38 hours a week in classes with 40 or more students. Little wonder that teachers suffer from demoralisation and are reluctant to engage in professional development programmes. This does not seem fertile ground for a project which would involve teachers in additional work by engaging them in research. Nevertheless, Smith and his colleagues decided that they needed to move away from the traditional one-off, top-down, INSET courses which had been the staple of ineffective CPD in Chile for so long, and to attempt to involve teachers in their own professional development through voluntary teacher action research. They also felt that Chilean teachers' sense of vocation and commitment to their students' learning, despite the conditions of their work, which had been found by Avalos and Sotomayor (2012), gave them cause for optimism.

Their description of the difficulties they faced provides important lessons for anyone designing similar programmes. They discovered that decisions on such things as the choice of online platform and even when to begin the project had important implications for teachers' capacity to become involved. However, what is striking is that, in spite of the difficulties, the project showed that even in conditions which seem hostile to CPD there will always be teachers whose sense of vocation and whose desire for self-improvement will push them to overcome obstacles in their path. Yet they also found that teachers' commitment needs to be complemented by enabling conditions that take account of contextual constraints and provide forms of engagement which fit the pattern of their everyday lives. A significant enabling condition was an official Ministry of Education letter approving teachers' participation in the project, another example of the importance of top-down/bottom-up synergy for effective CPD evident in other chapters in this volume. Ultimately, the project succeeded in demonstrating the capacity of teachers to engage in research as a form of CPD, despite their difficult working conditions. Teachers' own narratives exemplify the professional learning that took place, their capacity to analyse their own practice, and its impact on their

relationships with their students. Above all, teachers felt empowered by the experience, or in the words of one teacher: *'You realise that you can make a change and that it is in your hands'*.

Challenging conditions are also faced by Andy Keedwell (Chapter 6) in his account of the introduction of self-access centres within the Peacekeeping English project in Ethiopia and, particularly, the English for Security and Defence project in Afghanistan. These range from the polar opposites in Ethiopia of neglect of self-access resources (non-functioning computers, dilapidated buildings) to their over-zealous protection (unwillingness to allow users to borrow books, a single key-holder for the centre often called away on other duties) and the physical dangers of the security situation in Afghanistan. However, it is not these conditions that Keedwell identifies as the biggest threat to the establishment of effective self-access systems; but, rather, the prevailing beliefs at all levels about what constitutes teaching and learning, which failed to acknowledge the very concept of autonomous learning. In this situation a systematic CPD programme was critical to changing attitudes of key stakeholders to autonomous learning and to ensuring that resources were effectively utilised. Keedwell found that it seemed to be easiest to influence the attitudes of those closest to the chalk face – not surprisingly, as the centre teacher-coordinators had the most direct experience of teaching-learning. Yet, consistent with experience discussed in other chapters of this volume, it was other gatekeepers – in this case senior military administrators – whose understanding of autonomy and choice for language learners was most needed if the project was to succeed. There is an unfortunate tendency among project managers to focus on the disbursement of resources as indicators of success in establishing self-access systems, but the central lesson of Keedwell's chapter is that 'innovation depends on people and not things'. There is little point in providing sophisticated infrastructure for self-access centres if the concept of autonomous learning is not understood by those responsible for managing and running the centres. As the chapter illustrates, CPD can be instrumental in shifting the focus from things to people.

Beyond self-access centres, information and communication technology (ICT), in its various guises, is increasingly being regarded as an essential 'thing' for education and, concomitantly, e-learning is nowadays seen as a central element in continuing professional development for teachers in many systems. Four of the chapters in this volume showcase the potential of ICT for CPD in a variety of contexts. The first of these, by Russell Stannard and Savraj Matharu (Chapter 7), discusses the development of Stannard's award-winning, innovative site www.teachertrainingvideos.com (TTV.com), which was designed to help teachers use technology in their teaching, as well as another site www.multimediatrainingvideos.com, which supported a 'flipped' MSc in Multimedia course, providing training in the use of software through online videos and thus freeing classroom time for more engagement with students in tutorials. Key to the success of TTV.com is its flexibility and ease of access – allied to the fact that there is no cost to users. Individual users can work at their own pace, can stop, start and review videos as they wish, when they wish. In this way teachers are truly in charge of their own CPD, choosing not just the topic they wish to learn about, but also controlling how they proceed through the materials, bolstering their confidence before they use the technology in their own classes. Both sites demonstrate

the value of screen capture as a means to deliver training to viewers who can personalise their own use of the materials. TTV.com continues to be updated in response to user feedback, which in itself provides a CPD opportunity for the site's creator as he assesses the ideas and suggestions for improvement while striving to keep the original objectives in sight. As Stannard and Matharu note, in the world of technology it is all too easy to be beguiled by the newest piece of software but that does not necessarily mean it will provide an improved user experience.

The second of the chapters concerned with ICT, by Evdokia Karavas and Smaragda Papadopoulou, explains how online communities of practice evolved as a means of providing CPD to Greek primary school teachers in the context of a policy decision to teach English from Grade 1 rather than from Grade 3. Feedback on the first phase of a training programme confirmed that teachers were heavily in favour of reflection on practice and collaboration with colleagues as preferred modes of CPD. Online communities of practice were seen as the way to capitalise on teachers' preferences, enabling greater individual control in a highly centralised system in which adherence to system norms usually takes precedence over individual expression. Karavas and Papadopoulou describe the features of the platform and how its various components motivated teachers to share knowledge, facilitated the incorporation of new understandings of teaching into teachers' daily practice and helped them to build new networks of supportive colleagues. All of this was done within a user-friendly social platform and a structure which also provided a place for school advisers as facilitators of groups. School advisers have their own group, through which they share knowledge and ideas, and keep abreast of developments in Communities of Practice (CoPs) in other areas of the country. Thus their roles are changed from traditional providers of top-down, one-off INSET seminars, but their place in the system is re-validated in more effective ways.

Chapter 9 also deals with a specific country context, in this case Oman. Sarah Rich, Stephen Monteith, Salima Al-Sinani, Maryam Al-Jardani and Hilal Al-Amri were all involved in designing and running an online CPD course for teachers across the country, many of them in remote geographical locations. A collaborative venture between the Ministry of Education and the British Council, the course was the first of its kind in Oman. Instead of creating something completely new, however, they decided to utilise an existing course and work towards an external qualification, the Cambridge *Teaching Knowledge Test* (TKT), while ensuring that the course took account of the socio-cultural and educational realities of teaching in Oman. This decision was based on the lack of experience in developing online courses in the country, while careful scrutiny of the content led them to conclude the course was appropriate to the needs of the target group of teachers and offered opportunities to develop locally appropriate understandings of classroom practices. Though there were a number of logistical challenges, principally deriving from multi-site/multi-country support mechanisms for the teachers, feedback from participating teachers was overwhelmingly positive and they have requested more courses of this kind. In interviews and focus groups, teachers said their principal challenge had no relation to the course itself but was the difficulty more than half of them had in accessing the internet at home. Another issue, common to all kinds of online learning, was balancing their everyday workload with the additional demands

of the course. In this respect, the motivator of the TKT may have provided incentives for teachers to continue by providing the prospect of international professional certification and validation. As the authors acknowledge, in the pilot project discussed here, they have not been able to determine the extent to which the CPD courses have affected classroom practice, nor investigate the development of online collaborative communities of practice (which are important for sustainability), but they are actively seeking to do so in future iterations.

The last of the ICT-focused chapters, by Clare Woodward, Malcolm Griffiths and Mike Solly, shows that CPD through ICT is no longer the preserve of wealthier countries. Indeed, the explosion of mobile phone usage in countries in Asia has provided the opportunity for far greater outreach than more traditional online forms of development dependent on access to computers with reliable internet connections and fast download speeds (we have noted the problems with this in Oman). In India, for example, Prince and Barrett (Chapter 1) note how using text messaging was a popular and effective way to support teachers in schools. Working in Bangladesh, with a long history of ELT development projects, some more successful than others but none with any significant, lasting impact, the issue became one of how to provide CPD opportunities that could reach the huge number of teachers in the 100,000 schools requiring support but which would also be sustainable in the long term. The approach adopted was to take the training to teachers with video on mobile phones, providing a 'view anywhere, view anytime' package. Even though in the pilot stages the project has provided phones to teachers, this is unsustainable in the long term, and probably unnecessary given the rapid expansion in phone usage. Rising from 36 million users in 2008 to 116 million users in 2014, it is clearly feasible to reach the entire target group through this approach provided that the training material is in a format compatible with most phones. Experience from pilot phases has shown that the human element in technology-facilitated training remains important. The video materials on SD cards are mediated by a guide who becomes personally known to teachers, who feel that she is speaking directly to them as individuals. Further, peer support is integrated into the programme design: two teachers from each school engage with the project and these teachers meet other pairs from ten to 12 nearby schools every six to eight weeks to share experiences rather than to be 'trained'. Here, communities of practice are crucial in enabling teachers to collaborate and make the best of professional development opportunities offered in another form. And, resonating with experience in other chapters in this volume, the need to engage with and secure the support of other stakeholders in the education system – head teachers and other local and national-level administrators – is also important in developing facilitative, positive attitudes to innovative CPD for teachers.

Engaging stakeholders across the education system was critical in the genesis of India's *'Continuing Professional Development Policy Think Tank'*, discussed in Chapter 11. Amol Padwad and Krishna Dixit explain how the *Think Tank* contributed to a change in perception about the role of CPD from something initiated by the state for teachers to a more complex understanding in which teacher agency took centre stage. Providing the stimulus for a shift in perceptions of CPD in India from a peripheral issue to a central concern, as the *Think Tank* did, was a major achievement

in a country of such immense size and diversity. India has 1.3 million schools, 227 million students and 7.2 million teachers (not including tertiary institutions), providing significant logistical challenges for any programme of teacher and school improvement. Even a single state is the size of many other countries. Karnataka, for example, has roughly the same population as Italy, though only the same GDP as Croatia; while Rajasthan has the same population as Thailand and GDP equivalent to that of the Dominican Republic (see www.economist.com/content/indian-summary).

Even though, for the *Think Tank*, CPD came to be seen as a teacher's responsibility, they recognised that it was something that could not be done alone. Padwad and Dixit note that 'support in the form of policy provisions, resources, incentives, freedom and opportunities was crucial for CPD' and it was here that the state took responsibility. For CPD to be successful, then, the education system as a whole has to provide the enabling conditions and offer adequate scope and opportunities within a framework that allows teachers to personalise their professional development choices. The *Think Tank* provided just such an opportunity for 'the evolution of the members themselves in the course of the work.' Padwad and Dixit note that 'There were remarkable changes in perceptions, perspectives, concerns and understanding' for *Think Tank* members, thus illustrating the basic truth that professional development is lifelong, no matter how 'senior' one may be in an organisation.

Chapter 12 in this volume focuses specifically on CPD for teacher educators – university teachers and educational officials responsible for the pre-service training and in-school support of teachers in South Korea. Kyungsuk Chang, Youngjoo Jeon and Heeseong Ahn conducted research with 64 university professors and 56 officials from the 17 local offices of education in the country to establish their engagement in CPD and how this related to government-mandated performance evaluation. These two groups are now under pressure as a result of continual government-initiated education reforms, which are designed to improve the 'competitiveness' of education at all levels. In the research, Chang and her colleagues, using questionnaires and follow-up interviews to collect data, found that CPD opportunities for teacher educators in both groups were constrained by the formal evaluation systems that had been developed in response to government policies. While both groups of teacher educators were very aware of the need for self-development to help them to cope with the needs of a rapidly changing society, very often the evaluation system was inimical to that development, pushing them (in the case of professors) to focus, for example, on quantitative measures of how many publications they had in a given year rather than how they had developed their teaching; and, in the case of education officials, to attend as many courses themselves as possible as these are a major criterion in evaluation, irrespective of whether they were relevant to their own needs. Professors themselves are aware of the dichotomy between research and practice, as one commented: *'They should not be separated but, shamefully, we very often see research results are not fed back into practice or vice versa.'* Meanwhile, local education officials see their jobs more as office work than supporting teachers in schools: as one said: *'I'm very often sceptical about whether I was selected as an education professional or as an administration assistant'*. The lessons from this study are that, no matter how well meaning in theory, government policies which fail to take account of the contextual realities of individuals' working

lives and which constrain their opportunities rather than support their choices, stand little chance of bringing about the desired 'improvement'. Teacher educator/teacher agency is critical to effective professional development.

Last, but very far from least, in her chapter Anne Wiseman revisits a project in Bulgaria a dozen years after its formal end-date. Her evaluation is innovative, not just because of this time dimension, rare in any project evaluation, but also in that it focuses not on the usual quantifiable outputs of traditional evaluations, but on the impact of the experience of the project on the individuals centrally concerned, told through their narratives. As we saw in Chapter 2 by Gulyamova and her colleagues in Uzbekistan, narratives can bring a project to life, providing vivid illustrations of participants' experiences over time; and in Wiseman's chapter we are able to see in particular the long-term impact on the people involved. Impact came not just in the intended outcomes – improved skills as trainers, for example – but also in the unintended outcomes. These were both personal and professional. Yet again, the notion of a community of practice comes to the fore. The participants in the original project have a lifelong bond, built on shared experiences and shared understandings of practice, as one said: *'The thing is that I say something, just two or three words, with Elena and she understands. With other people, even university people who haven't been part of this group, I have to explain myself.'* Beyond the professional, the personal impact was often transformative too, creating a new sense of possibilities for project participants (*'I learnt to swim at 40, I learnt to drive and now I am learning Turkish'*) and those around them (*'This changed my life. So when my husband, for example, got involved in new things, it was thanks again to the fact that I encouraged him to do this'*). Of course, change may not be without tensions, an 'inside struggle', reinforcing the lesson that one cannot underestimate the time needed for significant shifts in practice to be assimilated into an individual's professional frame of reference; and, as the narratives in this chapter show, for impact of an innovation to be felt in other parts of the education system.

The chapters in this volume cover a wide range of geographical areas, educational contexts and examples of how CPD enriches teachers' professional lives, which, in turn, contributes to student learning and overall improvement in the quality of school systems. They have not glossed over difficulties encountered, learning from these as well as their successes. In the current educational climate, where 'accountability' is often a synonym for bureaucratic control, and when international comparisons such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) are taken as measures of a country's educational 'success' or 'failure' (Meyer and Benavot, 2013), it seems to be increasingly difficult for teachers to focus on their own long-term development to offset the myriad short-term demands on their time. However, in the final analysis, all the contributors to this volume show that there is scope for teachers' – and teacher educators' – continuing professional development even within the most initially unpromising frameworks. Furthermore, whatever the conditions, the narratives that illuminate many of the chapters provide ample evidence of the value to individuals of finding the space, either alone or (preferably) in a community of practice, to make use of the CPD opportunities that can be found in their contexts.

To conclude, I hope that as a reader you will find in each chapter something that resonates with your own experience and which you can use to inform your own continuing professional development in some way. May this book act as a travel clock for your own CPD journey.

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The editor

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Continuing professional development in action: an Indian experience

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Continuing professional development in action: an Indian experience

Emma-Sue Prince and Alison Barrett

Part 1: Defining CPD in India

English partnerships between the British Council and state governments

Everyone wants quality education for his or her children. The key to unlocking this quality depends primarily on teachers. Teachers need to be supported and motivated to enable children to achieve their potential. For this to happen, teachers need to have the opportunity to refresh and enhance their skills throughout their professional lives. A lifetime of teaching requires knowledge, skills and behaviours that continuously develop and evolve. This is encompassed in the concept of CPD – continuing professional development.

With an estimated 3.2 million English language teachers working in government and private schools across India, the challenge of providing all of them with access to high quality and relevant professional development opportunities is immense. Teachers' needs are often basic and fundamental; they work in low-resourced classrooms using linguistically challenging textbooks and often do not speak English themselves. Professional development offered by the central and state government tends to focus on mass training-based solutions, often through large scale cascade models which provide limited scope for need-based and flexible inputs. The skills and experience of the teacher educators is variable and the lecture method tends to dominate, but, more critically, follow-up and school-based support is rare (NCTE, 2010).

Since 2008 the British Council has been working in partnership with a number of state governments in India to design and implement in-service English language teacher education projects aimed at building teacher-educator and teacher capacity. They also aim to increase capability to improve language teaching and English language confidence, and to support ongoing professional development for teacher educators and teachers. Initially, the British Council was requested to provide short in-service trainer and teacher-training courses for existing government teacher educators, or master trainers, who then trained teachers. Although state government partners, educators and teachers were satisfied with the quality and impact of these courses, they recognised that one-off training programmes would not bring about sustainable classroom change in the medium

to long term. Subsequently, state governments started to commit to longer periods and current British Council projects with the state governments of Bihar, Assam, Maharashtra, Punjab and Karnataka now run from two to five years.

Each project¹ differs in scale and focus: some are large-scale cascade in-service programmes (Maharashtra English Language Initiative for Primary Schools (ELIPS), Maharashtra English Language Initiative for Secondary Schools (ELISS), Karnataka English Language Teacher Education Programme, Punjab English Enhancement Programme); others are small-scale in-service programmes based on a day release model of direct trainer and teacher training (Maharashtra English for All, New Delhi Municipal Corporation, Bihar Language Initiative for Secondary Schools (BLISS)); and one supported the government of West Bengal in the development of a primary curriculum and textbooks. Generally though, the projects share the following design features:

1. **Collaborative planning** and implementation with state agencies and/or core teams of representatives from government, based on a comprehensive needs analysis. An example of a typical needs analysis report can be found here: www.mpsp.maharashtra.gov.in/upload/News/Needs_Analysis_Report_-_ELISS_2013.pdf
2. **Selection of master trainers/teacher educators**² conducted by the British Council against four parameters of language ability, motivation, skills and knowledge.
3. **Core training for trainers** and teachers using course materials linked to national and state curricula and textbooks, and using films of local teachers in typical classrooms, usually conducted in a split training model (phases of face-to-face training conducted in blocks over an extended period of time). Training is conducted by Indian teacher trainers who are recruited, trained and managed by the British Council.
4. **Teacher training** is generally conducted by pairs of government master trainers/teacher educators with individuals and/or cohorts monitored and evaluated for progress and impact against performance indicators (separate indicators for trainers and teachers) as well as learning assessments and, where appropriate, language assessments.
5. **Orientation sessions** and access to professional development opportunities, such as workshops in managing change in ELT, for principals and education officers.
6. **Follow-up activities** (between phases of face-to-face training). These include, for example:
 - learning assignments
 - action research projects

¹ Details of the individual projects can be found on the British Council India website at www.britishcouncil.in/englishpartnerships

² Master trainers: teachers who are temporarily appointed to train other teachers; teacher educators: full-time educators who train and support teachers at school level.

- access to TeachingEnglish Radio India programmes and teacher development films with supplementary self-access study worksheets
- SMS training and teaching tips
- access to teacher support networks (Facebook, call centre, email groups, teacher association branches)
- professional development competitions
- regular use of journals and portfolios.

The aim is to strengthen the cascade model typically used by the state governments through the introduction of additional CPD activities, while building capacity within the system so that states may move to more decentralised models of training in the future. Working with institutions such as State Councils of Educational Research and Training, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Universalisation of Primary Education) and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan³ (Universalisation of Secondary Education), we have trained over 8,070 master trainers or teacher educators, who have directly impacted over 836,190 teachers to date through these projects.

This chapter will highlight the ways that the British Council India has worked and is working with both internal and external stakeholders to deepen their understanding of the meaning of CPD in the Indian context. It will also identify contextually appropriate systems, process and tools which can realistically be integrated into in-service training programmes to promote, activate and support CPD at the grassroots level.

Why is CPD important?

Chapter 11 in this volume, written by Amol Padwad and Krishna Dixit, discusses the British Council's CPD Policy Think Tank, an initiative which ran from 2010 to 2012 and culminated in a publication, *Continuing Professional Development: Lessons from India* (2012), edited by Rod Bolitho and Amol Padwad. Throughout this chapter, we use the working definition of CPD agreed as part of the CPD Policy Think Tank initiative as our framing definition:

CPD is a planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organisation and their pupils. (Padwad and Dixit, 2011: 10)

It must be noted that this definition does not subscribe to the 'narrow' view of CPD prevalent in India and indeed many countries (Padwad and Bolitho, 2012), which tends to focus on face-to-face training courses as the primary path to improving teacher performance. Rather, this definition caters to a broader view of CPD which embraces a number of activities, such as mentoring, self-evaluation, action research, peer coaching and learning, as legitimate and effective forms of CPD.

Training is just one stop on the CPD journey towards quality teaching and learning, as the poster in Figure 1 illustrates.

³Schemes launched by the government of India with the objective of enhancing access to primary and secondary education and improving its quality. (see www.mhrd.gov.in/secondary_madhyamik_shiksha_abhiyan and <http://ssa.nic.in/>)

Figure 1: CPD poster designed by Professor Kirti Kapur, NCERT, as part of the British Council's CPD Policy Think Tank Initiative



CPD is an autonomous activity, undertaken by the individual, but the most effective CPD happens through collaboration and sharing of learning and experiences. All of this, as well as critical self-reflection, helps to build a stronger sense of self-awareness and accountability. British Council projects are designed with these principles in mind, as well as the following beliefs about teaching and learning:

1. English is best acquired through communication and students should be given as much opportunity to use it in the classroom as possible.
2. Collaboration through task-based group and pair work has a very positive effect on learning.
3. Teachers and students become motivated and develop a positive attitude to learning when it is engaging and fun and relates directly to their needs and context.
4. Change can only be achieved if teachers are encouraged to reflect on their current teaching practice and their personal beliefs about teaching.
5. Through experiential teacher education and development activities such as peer teaching and lesson planning, teachers can practise and develop their teaching skills and knowledge more effectively.
6. Teacher education and development programmes should provide a mix of teaching skills and subject matter knowledge.
7. The relationship between the teacher and student or the teacher and learner is fundamentally important and should be based on mutual respect and understanding.⁴

Why is CPD important in India at this time?

One of India's priorities, now that levels of school enrolment are starting to approach 100 per cent, is to improve the learning outcomes of over 280 million learners studying in the 1.41 million schools across the country. For this to happen the quality of teaching is paramount and much work is being done on raising teaching standards across the country. While it is important to know how much money is being spent on such inputs as teacher education and physical facilities, policy makers recognise that it is equally important to know what children are learning in the classroom. What kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes does the education system develop? How do assessed learning outcomes reflect the stated goals and objectives of national education systems? What factors are associated with student achievement? Policy makers argue that students will need higher levels of knowledge and skills if they are to participate meaningfully in the world of work, or to access further or higher education. English language is key here too; not only as a requirement for the workplace, or perceived to be, but also for access to education at the higher levels where the medium of instruction is largely in English.

Learning outcomes are defined as what a student knows, understands and is able to do as a result of a learning activity. The key word here is 'do', particularly in the context of English language teaching and learning where using the language is central to success. Rukmini Banerjee, Director ASER Centre, citing evidence from the annual Status of Education Report (ASER) published by India's largest educational think tank, Pratham, suggests that current learning outcomes of basic reading in English are poor. She states that 'about half of all rural children in Class 8 can read a set of simple sentences and of those who can read about three-fourths can explain the meaning of what they have read.' (See www.hindustantimes.com/comment/when-and-how-english-should-be-taught-in-schools/article1-1166370.aspx) The percentages vary across the 35 states and union territories, but it is clear that children are not learning as well as they should. Improving the quality of teaching itself plays a huge part in improving outcomes. CPD is, in turn, a key component of raising standards and of improving the quality of teaching.

It is worth noting here how critical it is that the partner organisation has strong buy-in with and buy-in to CPD. As Amol Padwad stated at the launch of *CPD: Lessons from India*, when you're on your CPD journey you still need to buy your ticket. In an Indian teacher's case, the school principal, the block or district education officer, the state machinery or even national policy might manage the travel arrangements so it is essential that there is a shared understanding of what CPD is, so that teachers may be permitted to buy their own ticket and follow their own CPD journey. Even though CPD opportunities are now available online and internet usage is increasing fast – 238 million internet users were recorded at the end of 2013 (FAI, 2014) – few government school teachers have or can afford regular access. Not only this, but the extent to which they use the internet is heavily influenced by barriers ranging from their own levels of English to lack of awareness of resources and how to access and use them. Online access to CPD also needs support from institutions, as well as guidance on what to access, where to go and how to access it.

Enabling teachers in India to buy their own CPD ticket relies both on institutional and government engagement, as well as the individuals' own awareness. Effective CPD has to involve buy-in from local institutions and their administrators, and government bodies at national, state and local level, because these organisations have the power to implement and support CPD in a consistent and systematic way. However, it is very complex because of the lack of any connection seen between professional development and reward, be that financial or in status. This means that teachers are unlikely to be given time to devote to their professional development and, even if they do undertake self-orientated CPD activities, they are unlikely to receive any recognition for their efforts. However, as teachers gain more autonomy and awareness, there is a growing understanding of the intrinsic value of CPD and its link to personal development. Many teachers who have been exposed to CPD opportunities through British Council projects have reported strong fulfilment and personal satisfaction from undertaking activities such as journal writing, small-scale classroom research, trying out new approaches and seeing the impact of that in their learners.

It is the teacher who decides to undertake the CPD journey. Policies, research material and a supportive environment only support an individual's choice. The central stakeholder in all CPD is, therefore, always going to be the teacher. In a country where teacher motivation levels are extremely low, and where the concept of critical reflection is weak, this is a significant challenge.

Understanding the barriers

Successfully implementing CPD in India in the longer term requires a strong understanding of external and internal barriers. Any commitment to change has to acknowledge, embrace and be continuously solutions-focused. Pre-service training at the moment is very theory-based and teachers come out ill-equipped to handle day to day classroom reality and receive no encouragement to personally invest in their own development. Add to this the scale involved and the lack of time and incentives for teachers to take it up, and CPD can seem like an insurmountable mountain. As if that wasn't enough, internal barriers include a constantly changing environment, in terms of policy changes and government interventions; the overall notion of good practice not being sufficiently understood, or understandably varying across the diverse contexts within India; and the need to constantly maintain a strong understanding of policy, which changes very fast.

School teachers within the government system are often not qualified. Over the last decade, as English has been introduced at lower and lower levels within the system, more and more teachers have been required to start teaching English, a subject they may not have been trained to teach and, more importantly, a language they may not know or speak. This means teachers must have the language ability as well as the subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and decision-making ability to teach English effectively. The language ability of all teachers, at all school levels, and English teachers in particular, needs to develop dramatically in order to ensure that the quality of learning can improve in the classroom. We believe strongly that this long-term goal and vision can, for the most part, be achieved through adopting CPD. This complex backdrop means that it is essential to work

with many different stakeholders at national and regional level to change, as well as challenge, perceptions of CPD. It also means working practically on the ground, finding ways to support and nurture CPD.

Part 2: Innovations in CPD practice and policy

The large-scale educational projects with which the British Council has been involved since 2008 bring numerous opportunities to introduce relatively basic CPD concepts during face-to-face training. This can start simply with general awareness raising and reflection and creating the opportunities and space in which to do this. In many projects it is the first time that stakeholders have been offered any kind of training, or the first time that they have attended needs-based and activity-based training, and their response to such intervention is positive. They are generally motivated to develop, to learn and to try out new things. And is this not what is at the very heart of CPD?

However, such interventions could be regarded as piecemeal. What happens when teachers return to their schools and classrooms? Sustaining their enthusiasm after they return to their schools and classrooms, and getting the need for CPD recognised and understood at a deeper level is another matter entirely. There are three main challenges the British Council is seeking to address through its work in India; the first two relate to practice and the last one relates to policy:

1. **Poor quality of in-service teacher training courses**, largely delivered through the cascade model, and their limited reach and scope with respect to the key stakeholders listed above, which impacts on the immediate effectiveness of an intervention.
2. **Lack of non-training CPD offered as part of in-service training programmes**, which prevents a change in attitudes and behaviours and therefore impacts on the medium- to long-term ‘irreversibility’ (Barber, 2012) of an intervention.
3. **Lack of any kind of mandated framework for continuing professional development** that could be adopted at the institutional, district or state level to aid educational planners and administrators in planning, recognising or supporting CPD in the long term.

Over the last few years, a number of micro-innovations have been adopted, some emerging organically from the local context, some from partners’ experiences and some as the result of implementing activities based on research findings and best practice. The British Council’s experience of working with state governments, and of debating issues and potential solutions with members of the CPD Policy Think Tank initiative, led to the decision that a CPD framework could provide appropriate focus for practitioners and policy makers to initiate both bottom-up and top-down sustainable classroom change. It is for this reason that the first two sections of this chapter focus on practice and how this experience led to the development of the framework. The potential policy solution is currently being piloted and is analysed in the third section.

Let's take a closer look at the three main challenges and how the British Council is addressing these.

1. Poor quality of in-service training courses

Participatory planning

Research and experience indicates the need for stakeholder buy-in and ownership, as well as a shared understanding of an innovation (O'Donahue, 2010; Fullan, 2007; Wedell, 2005, 2009). ELT projects are all too often planned by academics who may not have a comprehensive grasp of the challenges of implementation, or by administrators who do not necessarily understand the pedagogical implications of planning decisions. Neglecting the role of the administrator is a common error (Wedell, 2005), and experience has shown us that both academics and implementers need to understand the concepts and rationale underpinning project planning. This in turn provides a forum for solutions to be found and motivation to be built collaboratively.

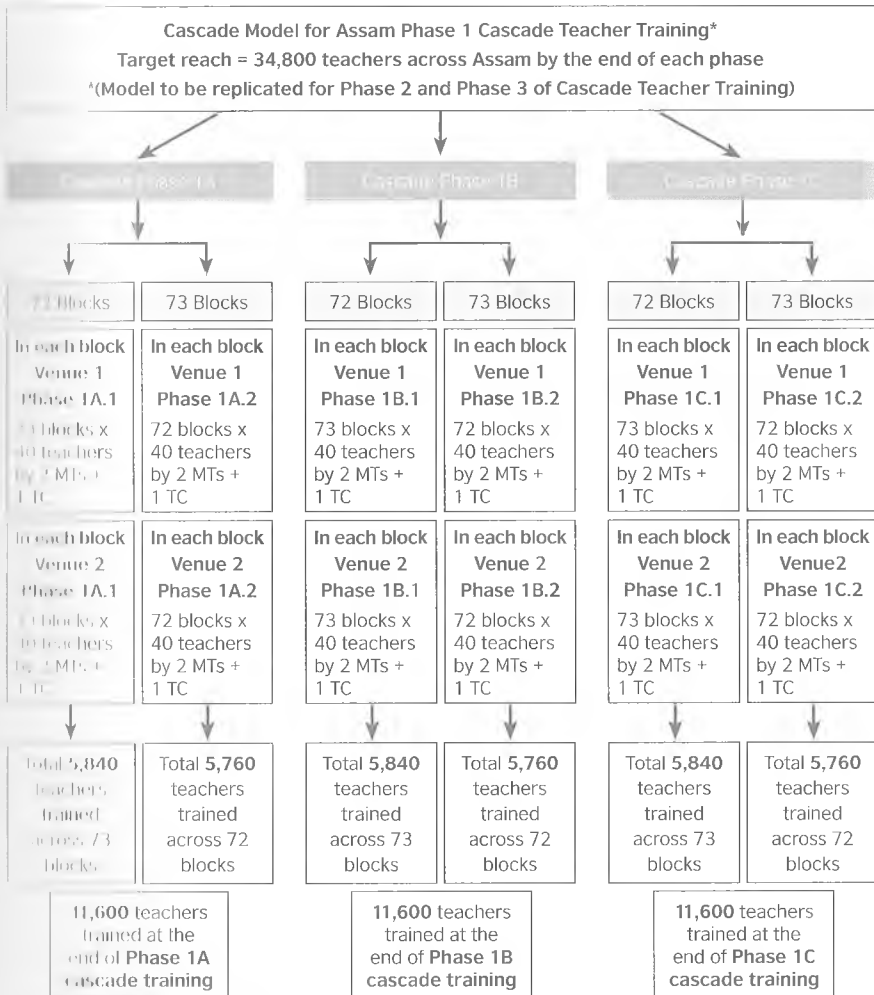
Two activities have proved invaluable: a) joint planning with experienced state government counterparts from other states and b) pre-cascade planning workshops for master trainers and education officers. We will discuss examples of these.

- a. The state government of Assam had limited experience of planning and managing in-service training programmes for their teachers. The British Council was requested to work with the State Council for Educational Research and Training and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to train master trainers and support them in training approximately 34,800 teachers. When a large-scale training programme is delivered, the impact on the students can be significant if all the teachers are required to attend the training during term time at the same time. The state government of Tamil Nadu had had several years' experience of planning and providing in-service training for teachers, implementing a new methodology across the state in the mid-2000s. The British Council had worked with the Tamil Nadu government in 2008–10 (O'Donahue, 2010), and so a knowledge-sharing workshop was arranged for a small group of planning officials from both states as well as representatives from the British Council. At this workshop a cascade model for reaching over 11,000 teachers was devised that was considered likely to cause the least disruption to regular teaching and learning across the state. Figure 2 illustrates the final cascade model that was agreed at that workshop.

The design ensured that:

- Training could happen in local blocks (sub-district) rather than at the central state or district level
- Training could be staggered and conducted in two streams to ensure not all teachers were taken out of service at the same time
- British Council Training Consultants (TCs) could be attached to each set of master trainers (MTs).

Figure 2: Cascade model for the Aim Higher in Assam (AHA) project



Key: MTs = Master Trainers TCs = British Council Training Consultants

- b. Providing master trainers/teacher educators with the freedom and flexibility to select the materials they use when they train their teachers so that they can ensure it meets teachers' needs within the context and, therefore, makes the training more effective, is our ultimate goal. However, in the Indian context, where trainers and teachers in the government sector are on the whole unfamiliar with how interactive pedagogical approaches look and feel in practice, having had little or no practical training, and where the concept of autonomous or experiential learning is relatively new, we have found it better to start with relatively prescriptive approaches that focus on building trainers' and teachers' techniques first. In parallel, they are provided with plenty of opportunities to discuss and reflect upon real problems and solutions. This scaffolding builds confidence and engagement in the early stages and prepares them for the increasing level of challenge as the project progresses.
- c. The master trainer or teacher educator is provided with a number of resources to use in their own training programmes for teachers: a teachers' workbook, a set of training notes, a teachers' journal, a portfolio and supplementary resources such as a grammar self-study book or a DVD of teachers teaching English in India. However, because the reconstruction of knowledge is important in ensuring deeper understanding, we encourage master trainers and teacher educators to work together to plan their training sessions and ensure they are confident that the activities are relevant and meaningful for their teachers. In Tamil Nadu, groups of teacher educators were brought together by the state government for several days in advance of the training to do this. In Assam, groups of master trainers piloted the materials with a sample group of teachers first, and then recommended changes and improvements to both the materials and the notes before the wider roll out of courses across the state. In Bihar, initial training included co-conducting of the first day of training for teachers with British Council Training Consultants, and, depending on their confidence and aptitude as trainers, the British Council trainer would withdraw into a monitoring role or continue more direct support over the course of a three-day programme. As new resources were developed specifically tailored to the local context, teacher educators were actively involved in initial generation of ideas for content, delivery of pilot materials and in-the-field feedback on their applicability to the local teaching context, as well as their suitability in terms of their own ability to use the content effectively with teachers.
- d. In all projects, we endeavour to provide time for master trainers/teacher educators to practise newly gained teaching techniques and skills in the classroom with their students before they train other teachers. We have found these approaches to be successful in helping trainers to internalise key training messages, which enhances their own confidence and credibility in the training room, and enables them to reflect upon and share their experiences when responding to teachers' problems.

selection of master trainers

The government of India's flagship educational initiative, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), was established in 2002 to meet the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education. Teacher quality was identified as a crucial input and provision was made to provide every primary school teacher with a mandatory 20 days in-service training per year. District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres were already in existence, having been created under the District Primary Education Programme the decade before, but the system sorely needed, and still does to this day, experienced, credible and skilled teacher educators able to provide training and school-based support for the large numbers of teachers in the system. The cascade model became the model of necessity, and training was delivered by small numbers of trainers at the state level, who trained a further layer of trainers at district level, block level and then cluster level before teachers were trained in the final layer. Dilution of quality, misappropriation of core pedagogical messages and the lack of flexible and need-based content are just some of the well-documented ills associated with such models (Gilpin, 1997; Hayes, 2000; Wedell 2005).

The British Council India, in collaboration with state government partners, identified a limited layer cascade model, which relied on the identification of a large number of master trainers' to directly train teachers, thereby limiting the number of training layers. To be successful, the initial selection of these master trainers was identified as critical, both in the literature (Wedell, 2005; NCTE, 2010) and in our own and our partners' experience. A master trainer with limited or no experience of teaching or training, with weak language skills (both in English and the vernacular) and lack of pedagogical knowledge or understanding of the local context or credibility, would be unlikely to impact on teacher learning and behaviour change. However, the appointment of master trainers is often based on seniority, convenience and/or patronage, and can be subject to scrutiny from teacher unions, parents and teachers alike. The political economy, including structural and cultural hierarchies, as well as economic realities, can dictate the recruitment and selection process to be followed.

Our intention was to seek a way of identifying and recruiting master trainers acceptable to both decision makers and teachers, thereby increasing the chances of the in-service training programme's quality, relevance and acceptance. Since 2008 this has been implemented in a number of different ways depending on the needs and constraints of each state partnership project, and has built on our experiences and the experiences of our partners. Below are some examples of the processes we have initiated:

- a. One state partner was concerned that the teacher unions would not accept teachers being assessed as part of a selection procedure. Instead, teachers were asked to volunteer to be master trainers and they went through training, during which their skills and competencies were evaluated and they were recommended to cascade to teachers depending on whether they met certain pre-defined criteria.
- b. In another state, a large and motivated team of Block Resource Teacher Educators (BRTEs) already existed and so they, along with a group of practising teachers, were interviewed by phone to assess their language proficiency and general motivation, and selected to work together in pairs.

- c. In another state, there were concerns that the required numbers of experienced and credible master trainers did not exist within the government system and so advertisements were placed in local newspapers, and teachers from both private and public sectors were invited to apply. A written application was submitted and assessed, and shortlisted teachers were interviewed to assess their language proficiency and general availability and motivation.
- d. In another state, the state government provided a list of several thousand potential names of master trainers. All were invited to attend a one-day assessment centre⁵, which comprised a formal language assessment using the British Council's Aptis test, a task observed by an assessor and conducted by a British Council trainer, and a group interview, again observed by an assessor and conducted by a British Council trainer.

Selecting master trainers through a pre-training assessment process provides significant benefits. Not only are master trainers who meet minimum standards in language proficiency, qualifications, skills, knowledge and aptitude appointed, but they also gain an opportunity, through the interaction, to fully understand the commitment required from the training and the objectives of the programme. This is significant in the context where master trainers are often provided with information about training sometimes as late as the day before, and often arrive at a training venue with little or no information about what training is to take place (NCTE, 2010). The logistical and financial implications of the one-day pre-assessment are immense, but worth the investment of time and energy, not only in the implementation, but, more importantly, during the project design phase with partners. Support from partners in identifying motivated master trainers and teacher educators with the right skills, attitudes and credibility can only be achieved if partners are convinced early on in the project of the potential positive impact of such a process in achieving a quality outcome.

At the same time, it is important to highlight that over the last five years, the significance of the role of the teacher educator has come to the fore, and the recently published Twelfth Five-Year Plan (NUEPA, 2012) explicitly recommends that state governments appoint full-time teacher educators and stop relying on master trainers. Policy shifts such as this have provided an impetus and appetite for change; the discourse is now not about the number of training days or programmes, but about the impact the programmes will generate. Impact cannot be achieved through a short one-off interaction and so governments are more open to committing to a more stringent selection policy.

2. Lack of non-training CPD offered as part of in-service training programmes *Awareness raising*

Raising multiple external stakeholders' awareness of CPD's central role in enhancing teacher quality and subsequently improving learning outcomes is a crucial element in ensuring the right level of resource and support is provided to trainers and teachers during an in-service training programme and beyond. The British Council has

⁵ Thanks to UK Consultant Mike Scholey for the academic design of the process and related tools.

introduced the concept of CPD through both explicit and implicit approaches, with varying results. Explicit approaches have been more successful with academics working within government agencies or bodies. For example, a half-day orientation workshop on CPD was conducted in the early stages of a project for the academic core team working with the British Council. The workshop was designed to stimulate reflection on their own professional development pathways, and to help them identify that much of their professional development actually took place outside of a classroom or training room. This helped the stakeholders to appreciate the importance of triggering non-training forms of CPD during their own training programmes for teachers which would continue beyond the face-to-face training. They also recognised that reviewing the training materials and working alongside the British Council to monitor the impact of the trainer training, the teacher training and, finally, the classroom teaching to learners were all critical activities in their own professional development, and this increased their motivation to be part of the core academic team. Several members of this group went on to win small research grants so they could further evaluate the impact of the project on the teachers and students.

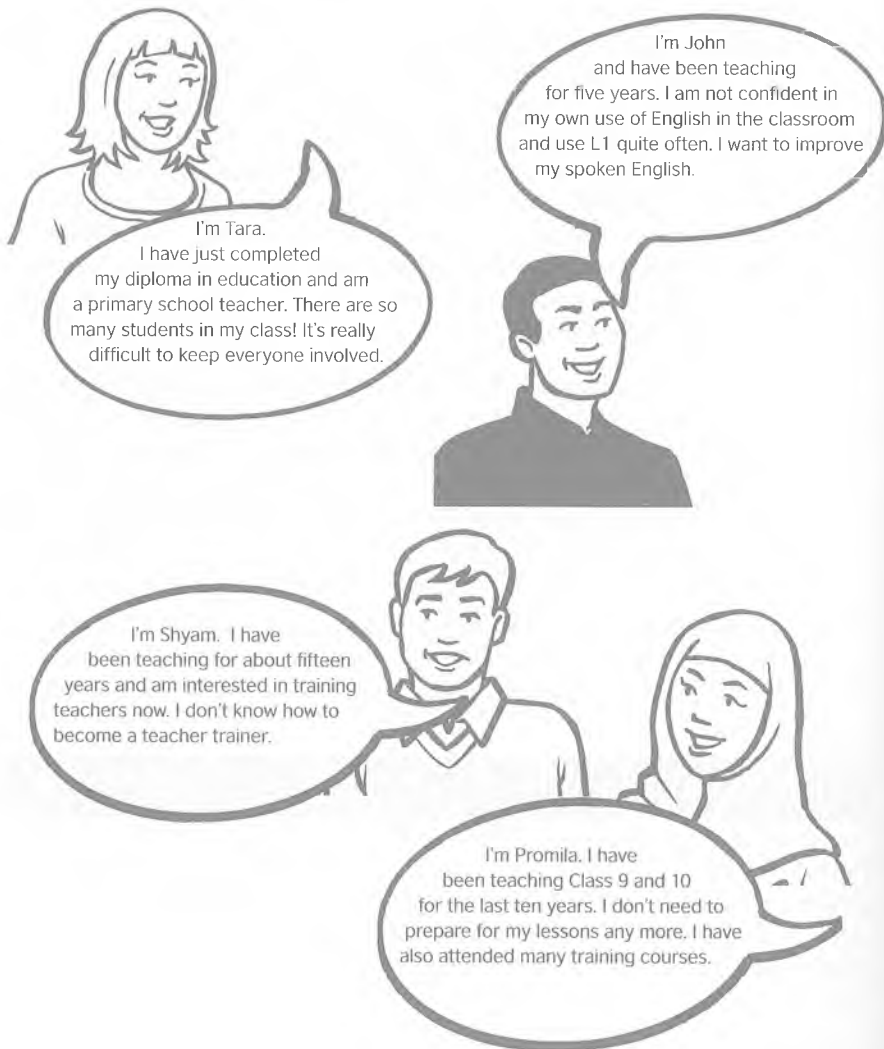
A series of CPD orientation workshops are also used with master trainers and teacher educators to help them appreciate the value of CPD, to become a role model and a 'CPD champion' for the teachers they train. Reference to CPD in national policy documents is highlighted so that the link between policy recommendations and what they are required to put into practice is made explicit, and example teacher profiles introduce them to what is possible in their own context. Figure 3 is an excerpt from one of the British Council's CPD orientation workshops.

1. Compare your list with the list of activities given below. Cross out the activities you have already done and '✓' what you would like to do from the list. Then discuss with your group and identify where you would find the resources to do the activities you are interested in.

CPD activities	Where will you find the resources to do the activities you are interested in?
Face-to-face training course	
Online training course	
Attending a conference	
Presenting at a conference	
Joining a teachers' club	
Reading	
Practice	
Action Research	
Reflection	
Peer observation	
Observation by head teacher	
Watching teaching videos	
Joining an online teacher forum	
Listening to teaching radio	
Recording your class, and watching that video	

1. Below are some of the participants you will find in your training room. Discuss with your partner and suggest the different activities they can do for their professional development.

Figure 3: Excerpt from CPD orientation workshop



With teachers, however, experience has conditioned us to introduce CPD by stealth. Rather than introducing them to the term CPD as an abstract concept at the beginning of a project, the British Council integrates a number of additional CPD activities into the face-to-face training by setting reading tasks for homework and discussion in groups, conducting small action research projects, lesson planning competitions and introducing reflective tasks and activities. Once teachers have actively participated in such activities, it becomes easier for them to bring them out back at their schools or at home and between phases of face-to-face training, and so the concept of CPD is slowly made more explicit. Subsequently, it is easier for academic project managers to evaluate which forms of CPD are more feasible or effective, and this can feed into plans for sustainable CPD initiatives.

Notably, when the British Council attempted to establish a system for CPD, including a mentoring strand, at the beginning of one project, stakeholders at all levels were alarmed by the pace and scale of the change required, and rejected it. A short training programme was demanded instead. Awareness raising with teachers can happen through discussions that focus on finding purpose and meaning in work, understanding what motivates teachers intrinsically and providing them with tools such as learning journals where they can reflect on their experiences. It is better to introduce CPD in practice first and then build the top-down support system once the concept and benefit are clear.

Monitoring and evaluation

Though seemingly simple, gaining acceptance and finding the route to implementation in a challenging operating context where non-training forms of CPD in particular are not always recognised as contributing to quality in the classroom, and are therefore not mandated or facilitated, requires the perseverance of internal and external stakeholders, the documentation of lessons learned and the sharing and dissemination of those lessons. Documenting the impact that CPD innovations can have is an essential way of raising awareness of their importance. In all cases, the monitoring and evaluation of the innovations has been crucial in ensuring acceptance, a shared understanding among stakeholders and the generation of data that can provide mid-course corrections, where appropriate.

Demonstrating a link between CPD and learning outcomes is complex: the relationship is not mono-causal. It depends – among other things – on the quality of the CPD activity, the duration, the ability of the teacher to understand the content and process of the tool and to work independently, their levels of language and motivation, the quality of the technical inputs, the access to those inputs and their relevance to needs and context. The British Council uses a set of performance indicators aligned to competences and project outcomes to assess progress of teacher educators and teachers throughout a project. Monitoring of the contextual constraints is also crucial; implementation may have been hampered not because of the lack of knowledge or ability of an individual, but – for example, because the government did not allow a teacher educator access to a school to provide the teachers with support, or the principal did not release the teacher for training or sanction their leave to attend a conference, or because the other teachers at a school may have mocked a motivated teacher for trying to start a teachers' club or imitate a system of peer observations.

Lack of follow-up

Face-to-face training is a one-off event held away from the classroom. Teachers are the main gatekeepers to classroom change and if they decide not to implement, or cannot implement, an officially mandated change, they simply won't. Reaching out to teachers between face-to-face training sessions has been identified as a critical success factor in sustaining the momentum, but doing this cost effectively and at scale is a challenge. Over the last two years, we have developed a series of radio programmes called TeachingEnglish Radio India.⁶ The programmes comprise interviews with teachers and teacher educators, recordings of classroom teaching and discussions on varying aspects of pedagogy. In Maharashtra, these radio programmes are broadcast between training phases and materials are distributed through the face-to-face training to the master trainers, and through them to the teachers. Self-access worksheets have been designed to focus the listener. Broadcast on state government radio on a weekly basis, the programmes provide the teachers with an opportunity to listen to Indian teachers discussing the same challenges they face, and finding solutions.

Using text messaging is also an effective way to support teachers and this method has proven to be popular. Below are some examples of key messages provided through SMS messaging:

Table 1: Training tips SMS examples

A good beginning is half a job done! Prepare your introductory activities carefully and thoroughly: impress your students!

Accept your learners' pace and go accordingly. Don't rush them; avoid short deadlines. Otherwise they will not learn effectively.

Always give CLEAR instructions. Use the board or refer to the workbook/textbook.

Don't carry out any activities without planning them first. If you do, your trainees will quickly notice and you'll lose their respect.

Don't be stubborn (dogmatic)! Be prepared to change your point of view or opinions about teaching and learning.

Are you READY to be a trainer? Train in a manner that you were trained yourself!

CPD tools

To support teachers and master trainers in the implementation of CPD in their contexts, a practical CPD Handbook that can be used in a flexible, needs-based way, was written for use in India. The Handbook can be used over a 12-month period or can be used as a resource and guidance tool that teachers and teacher educators can dip into. The Handbook covers motivation and what kinds of activity count as CPD, learning from others informally and formally, learning from workshops, conferences and ways to improve teaching practice. There is also a section on raising awareness, which can be used by teachers or with mentor/teacher educator support. This section focuses on discussion questions about teaching, motivation and understanding oneself to help guide reflection.

⁶ TeachingEnglish Radio India www.britishcouncil.in/Teach/TeachingEnglishRadioIndia

4 Lack of any kind of mandated framework for continuing professional development

CPD is slowly becoming recognised in India as a key motivator for teachers to develop their skills and knowledge and achieve more satisfaction in their teaching, which, in turn, has an impact on the learners they work with. Much work is being done to increase awareness and understanding at policy level. Indian teachers are trained (if at all) largely in a theoretical way and, once qualified, the perception is that there is no need for any further learning to take place. This is especially true in a context in which a teacher is traditionally expected to 'know everything'. However, for CPD to be truly effective teachers need to be committed and responsible for their own development, while at the same time the necessary enabling support must be in place on the ground. This is starting to happen in India and the British Council aims to support the agenda by identifying how a CPD framework can be integrated into local systems and processes to ensure that CPD is supported and sustainable.

Over a 12-month period one of the authors of this chapter supported the British Council in developing an India-specific CPD framework. She worked closely with British Council staff working on projects across India and with some members of the CPD Policy Think tank, as well as visiting projects and holding teacher focus groups. The framework is based on the British Council global framework and extensive stakeholder consultation, best practice research, lessons learned from British Council projects and on the real needs of teachers in India. The development work to create this framework was extensive and sought to understand in detail the CPD context in the country, the potential barriers to CPD and how the framework might need to be adapted to fit this context. A number of steps were taken to develop the final framework, and work is continuing in India as the team continues to pilot and review the work completed. Below is a summary of the development work conducted.

1. A typical profile of an Indian teacher was first mapped onto the global British Council framework. In India, many primary ELT teachers are either unqualified or have not received subject-specific English language teacher training. They teach all subjects and generally have very low levels of English themselves. Consequently, it is problematic to try and map language level to stage of career and a spiky profile of the typical English language primary school teacher in India emerged (see Table 2). We found that teachers in India tend to have a 'spiky profile' in the sense that they won't necessarily have followed a traditional trajectory in terms of career path, i.e. study, teaching degree, teaching practice, followed by a full- or part-time post. Therefore, the spiky profile is used to show that teachers in India might be working as teachers with a mixed range of experience and qualifications ranging from possibly none at all to limited access to professional development opportunities and training. On the global CPD framework, the role of a Master Trainer, in terms of developing and training other teachers, might be mapped to level 5 or 6, whereas in India that profile is likely to be closer to levels 3 or 4.

Table 2: 'Spiky' profile of teacher/master trainer

Stage	1 Starting	2 Newly qualified	3 Developing	4 Proficient	5 Advanced	6 Specialist
Brief profile	Trainee teacher of English involved in initial training Also unqualified teachers of English	Classroom teacher of English with a minimum of 1 year's experience in a school	Teacher involved in the newly qualified stage who needs to consolidate expertise skills and build further understanding of teaching and learning	Experienced qualified teacher with evidence of further training and all-round competence in their areas (primary, secondary, vocational, local and active in keeping professionally up to date)	Highly experienced English language teaching practitioner; some may also be preparing for or beginning to take on specialist roles in ELT in their educational contexts	Sector expert (primary, secondary, adults, ESP, testing, etc.) who advises on policy and practice; experienced teacher trainer; head of department or director of studies; coursebook writer; HE lecturer
Qualification	Studying for an initial qualification	Possessing an initial qualification recognised by the state system	Possessing an initial qualification recognised by the state system	Possessing an initial qualification recognised by the state system, and possibly a further diploma	Possessing an initial qualification recognised by the state system, and possibly a further diploma and/or a higher degree (masters, PhD)	Possessing an initial qualification recognised by the state system, and possibly a further diploma and/or a higher degree (masters, PhD)
Language level	Anywhere in the range A1–C2	A1/B1	B1/B2	B1–C2+	B2+	C1+

- The work then focused on examining the unique profile of an Indian English language teacher. The majority of these are still at the lower level of the CPD framework, and that includes qualified teachers. This is due to the fact that primary school teachers do not have subject-specific ELT training, or the fact that they have been asked to teach English at a later stage in their career due to the introduction of English at primary school (this trend started in 1998), as well as some teachers being unqualified or at undergraduate level. This will change in the future as teaching becomes recognised as a degree-level career, more teachers follow a degree pathway and more teacher development is in place. At the same time, a master trainer can be at a higher level in terms of the competences, but still have language needs that need to be addressed.

After this initial mapping, substantial work was undertaken to identify key competences, to create detailed descriptors of a teacher aligned to the Indian context and to define appropriate and accessible activities and resources for them.

The resulting framework created (Figure 4) does not follow the linear process within the global framework, but one that makes it possible for a teacher, or a teacher educator and all those with an interest in and responsibility for the professional development of teachers, to map their competence against knowledge according to a 5-point scale from Awareness to Leadership (Figure 5). The framework is currently being mapped to professional development resources and activities, and it will then enable teachers to identify learning opportunities that are appropriate to where they might be and to establish a professional and personal development pathway. It links to the global framework so that teachers in India will be able to access the bank of global professional development resources, thereby connecting them to the international teaching community.

Figure 4: CPD Framework: India

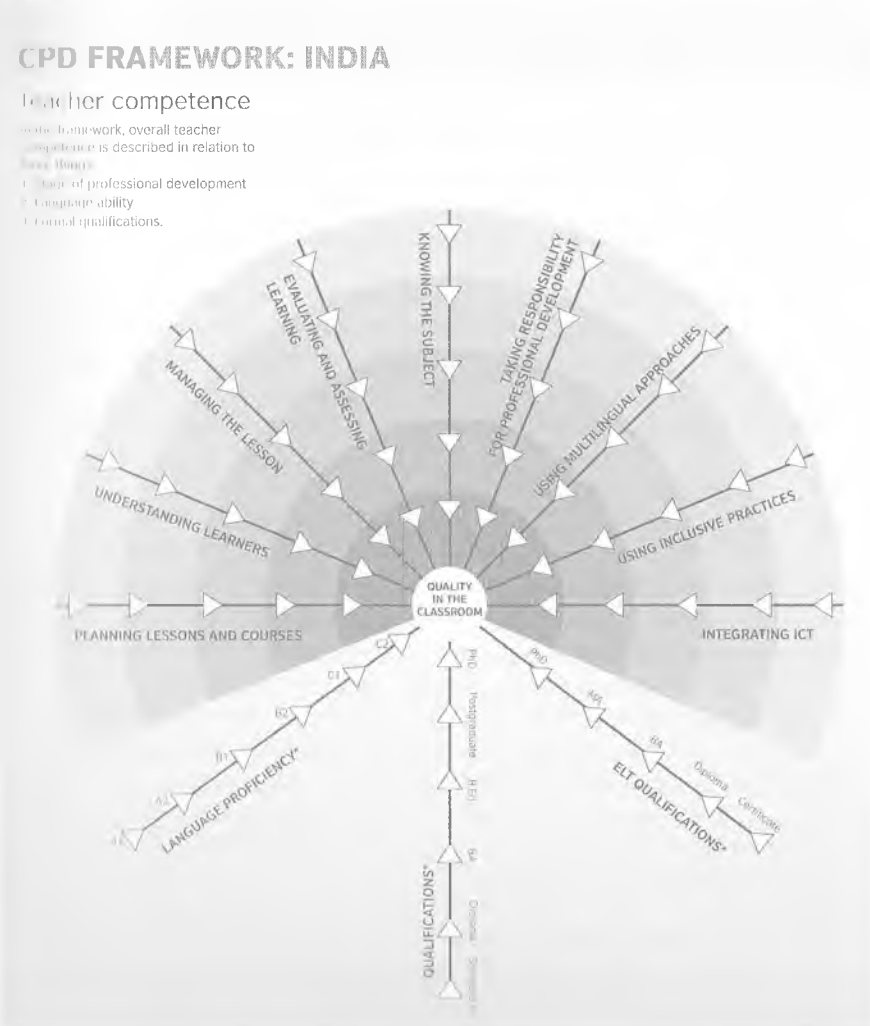


Figure 5: Assessment scale

Tap your teacher competence onto the framework, colour in the arrows for each behaviour at the appropriate level.



The areas of ELT qualifications, other academic qualifications and language proficiency are included in such a way as to make it possible for a teacher to map where they are and to take into account the spiky profile mentioned earlier. This is very important in India, especially as it is simply neither possible nor feasible to define stages by level of language proficiency or qualifications.

The second significant modification is to add the use of multilingual approaches and inclusive practices, as well as taking responsibility for professional development, as these are key areas of emphasis for Indian classrooms where linguistic diversity is prevalent, inclusion is a key area of focus and the professionalism of teachers is required.

Part 3: Lessons learned

The key lessons learned from our CPD work in India are as follows:

1. *Focus on the personal and the professional*

CPD must be addressed holistically and focus on the whole person, not just on their traditional professional career pathway. We have seen that by using CPD activities that focus on the individual (learning journals, discussions, self-initiated action research, personal portfolios and change stories), combined with quality training interventions and awareness raising, the impact can be significant. As long as CPD is seen purely as training or testing it will be difficult to make much progress. Change happens when we are able to demonstrate how CPD makes a tangible difference to student learning outcomes and links with current policy initiatives that see these as essential.

2. *Choose the right approach – implicit or explicit, top down and bottom up*

This is key and requires creativity and a solutions-focused mind set. There will never be a 'one size fits all' and what may have worked in one project or region may not necessarily work in another. The initiatives and processes that the

British Council has used have come about through a mix of strong teamwork and creativity and a shared understanding of key challenges and pressure points, as well as the 'sweet spots' where local policy dovetails with a project intervention.

3 *Make sure benefits of non-training forms of CPD are clear to all stakeholders*

If this does not happen at every stage of a project or CPD initiative it can be easy for something to be rejected, dismissed or halted at any point if a stakeholder or key gatekeeper sees the process or intervention as a barrier or threat.

4 *Keep CPD simple but well understood*

If CPD is seen as complex or difficult to put into practice, then teachers simply won't do it. It is essential, therefore, to keep CPD intervention simple and tailored to the project or programme. It is also important for impact to be visible and to keep linking success factors and improved classroom learning outcomes back to a CPD process (it usually can be!). Something as simple as using recycled materials to create an innovative new teaching and learning aid aimed at a specific learning 'hard spot' can be done creatively and easily with a strong outcome.

5 *Implementable*

CPD needs to be user friendly. Helping teachers and teacher educators find easy ways to incorporate CPD activities into what they are already doing is key. Whether that is through incorporating a learning journal and reflection component into training or sharing experiences or undertaking a formal qualification, CPD needs to fit the current context for the individual, institution or programme. We also need to make sure that the personal development side is aligned to where teachers are in both language levels and competence in teaching methodology, and is realistic in terms of what teachers are actually able to do.

6 *Empowerment of master trainers and teacher educators*

Recognise that for sustainable long-term change the master trainers and teacher educators need to be *enabled*⁷ to train and support teachers' individual needs in the same way that we expect a teacher to support his/her students' learning needs. But starting with the familiar, through equipping them to deal with the realities of the training room, builds confidence, ensures that teachers are exposed to a method of training that is practical and mirrors the desired methodology of the classroom. This, in turn, provides a foundation for them to theorise their practice and become the enablers of the future.

7 *CPD for all stakeholders*

CPD should not be confined to the trainers and teachers, but relevant support must be provided for education officers, senior academic staff involved in project design, and principals and senior officials responsible for designing and managing implementation. This builds a shared understanding of objectives, provides intrinsic motivation and is more likely to ensure a sustainable quality outcome.

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**Professional
development through
curriculum reform:
the Uzbekistan
experience**

2

Professional development through curriculum reform: the Uzbekistan experience

Jamilya Gulyamova, Saida Irgasheva and Rod Bolitho

Introduction

Change is mandatory; growth is optional. Michael Fullan

The change described in this chapter is the reform of the curriculum for the pre-service training of English teachers in 18 higher education institutions across Uzbekistan, carried out by a team supported by the British Council in close co-operation with, and with the full support of, the Ministry of Higher and Specialised Secondary Education. We draw on data from project participants and beneficiaries to give an account of ways in which the change process has led over time to significant continuing professional development opportunities for individuals and institutions, and how the differing responses to these opportunities have in their turn influenced the pace and effectiveness of the reform. The comments we have incorporated came to us in responses to questionnaires, in focus group meetings, in recorded and transcribed interviews with key stakeholders, in correspondence and in evaluation documents.

The context: Uzbekistan in the post-Soviet era

Uzbekistan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and the process of re-establishing a sense of nationhood has been complex and demanding. This has been particularly evident in the field of education which, in its organisation and traditions of teaching and learning, was for a long time largely reliant on the norms set during the Soviet era. One obvious reason for this was the tendency for the country's institutions to remain sealed off from foreign influences, particularly those from the West, a tendency exacerbated by the lack of opportunities for Uzbek education specialists to travel abroad. In language teaching at all levels, the result has been all too evident: young people graduating in English from universities still unable to speak fluently or write accurately. These deficiencies were passed on from generation to generation of Uzbek English teachers, all steeped in a Soviet-rooted version of the Grammar-Translation method, and reliant on outdated textbooks (Arakin, 1961 and Bonk, 1973, for instance) that were for many years the sole source of language input for university-level learners of English. In addition, the organisation of universities in Uzbekistan has meant a separation between faculties of Philology and Education. Future English teachers

have traditionally graduated through Philological faculties after a four-year programme including intensive study of language systems, literature and linguistics, without practical language classes and with methodology taught as a theoretical discipline, usually by means of lectures in Uzbek or Russian. The academic hierarchy in universities had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, as they had reached their positions and cemented their reputations under the existing order.

Initiating the reforms

It was against this background that the Ministry of Higher and Specialised Secondary Education began to work with the British Council, established in Uzbekistan in 1996, to provide professional development opportunities for university English teachers across Uzbekistan in the context of what became known as the English Reform Project. A package of in-service training materials was produced between 2006 and 2008 by a team of local trainers, a number of whom were returned Hornby scholars. This course, known as DUET (Development for University English Teachers), is based on two face-to-face modules separated by a distance module during which participants produce workplace-related assignments. It soon became so popular that the project team had to produce a trainer training course (TTT) to increase training capacity and meet the demand for DUET. DUET remains current, and it has been adapted to provide training for English teachers from other sectors of the educational system.

However, if anything was to change more radically, the medium-term target had to be reform of the curriculum for the training and education of future teachers of English. Coleman, in his 2005 Baseline Study report on English Language Teacher Education in Uzbekistan, came up with these recommendations (among many more):

5.9.3 English lecturers in pedagogical institutes and universities should be introduced as a matter of urgency to current thinking about the nature of language learning. They should then consider implications of these ideas for their own teaching, for the planning of programmes, and for testing and assessment.

5.9.4. Programmes of pre-service teacher education should incorporate substantial opportunities for students to examine current ideas about the nature of language learning and then to consider the implications of such ideas for the language teaching process.

5.9.5 Learner autonomy should be developed among student teachers through project work including mini-research, to reduce dependence on teacher input.

5.9.6 The methodology component of the pre-service English curriculum needs revisions as, at present, student teachers are not adequately prepared for their future roles as teachers, placing unnecessary burden on in-service teacher training; the new course should introduce up-to-date creative learner-centred teaching methodologies and should include teaching practice, with trainer and peer observation and feedback. (Coleman, 2005: 110)

Accordingly, in 2008 and with the Ministry's full backing, work was started on the design of a new PRESETT curriculum, with main strands in language and methodology. The aims of the project were:

- to develop a team of curriculum designers
- to revise the four-year Higher Education Institution (HEI) curriculum leading to a Bachelor's degree for future teachers of English
- to develop assessment profiles and assessment specifications for each course as well as exit tests of language proficiency
- to develop sample teaching materials to deliver the new courses
- to provide systematic and timely support for teachers on implementing the new curriculum
- to pilot the new curriculum in higher education institutions across Uzbekistan
- to provide a basic collection of teaching and learning materials for delivering the new curriculum.

The four-year curriculum was developed incrementally, year by year, by a team of practising and experienced teachers, mainly drawn from the University of World Languages in Tashkent, but also with a representative from Andijan State Pedagogical Institute (as it was then). The project team worked systematically under the guidance of the UK consultant and the Project Coordinator, Nodira Isamukhamedova, producing a modular curriculum with specifications for assessment and sample teaching materials. The approach to methodology was from the outset practical and language proficiency targets were set to achieve a fourth year exit level corresponding to C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference. The first year materials were piloted in five institutions and comparative results were collected from both experimental and control groups of students. The piloting was extended year on year until all the institutions involved in the preparation of English teachers were participating.

The British Council provided support in the form of print resources and also the financing and coordination of trips by the project team to conduct in-house training seminars around the country. These trips were necessarily multi-purpose: to familiarise teachers with the curriculum and to explain the principles underlying it, but also to collect data on student satisfaction and levels of achievement as well as to keep heads of department, deans and rectors informed about the project and its aims. Understanding and adoption of the new curriculum was initially patchy, and was seen by some institutional decision-makers as a nuisance and an added burden, so these forays by our team into their offices were absolutely essential to maintain momentum in the reform process. The first students to have graduated entirely through the new curriculum emerged in 2012, and many are now teaching in secondary and primary schools around the Republic.

The reform received an important boost in December 2012 through the issue of a Presidential Decree on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2012), prioritising the learning of English from primary right through to postgraduate level. The immediate result of this was a decision to introduce the new curriculum on a compulsory basis in all institutions, starting from September 2013. Over 250 teachers of English from all over the country participated in a major training and familiarisation seminar at the University of World Languages in August 2013 in order to prepare for the national launch of the new curriculum.

The CPD dimension

We hope that the brief account above gives sufficient information for readers to realise the immense potential for professional development that this reform project offered (and at the time of writing continues to offer) to all those involved. In this section we will outline some of these opportunities and will include the voices of project participants, teachers and other stakeholders, writing about what they gained through their involvement in the reform. We do this in the firm belief that personal statements of this kind act as primary data for the reader to engage with first hand, but we have also commented on and elucidated their contributions wherever we feel that this is beneficial.

Personal perspectives from the core project team

Throughout the life of the project to date, the team has had anywhere up to ten active members, with a very committed core group of five who have stuck with the process through thick and thin. All continued to practise as teachers while working on the new curriculum. In almost every way they have been beneficiaries as well as drivers of the project. All of them started out with little or no experience of curriculum design, but with a huge desire to learn and to strengthen themselves professionally. Their contribution has been immense and it is right that their perspectives on their own professional development should be included here.

We begin with a comment on subject skills, which demonstrates the kind of 360° openness to all those who might support the learning that characterises a developing professional.

I have learned a lot about curriculum design, testing and assessment, and methodology for TESOL through not only literature but through interaction with the project consultant, project managers, local authorities, team members and from pilot teachers. (Nodira Isamukhamedova, Local Project Co-ordinator 2008–12)

In the next comment, Nilufar articulates a change that might at first seem like nothing very significant, but her experience of taking responsibility for interpreting the syllabus and choosing materials is replicated by literally hundreds of teachers across Uzbekistan.

One belief about teaching I came to was that teachers should teach according to the syllabus not the coursebook. As a result of that belief I developed my IT skills in order to look for materials and, if possible, to produce my own teaching materials for teaching the course. (Nilufar Muhamedova, Project Team Member)

In another important area – assessment – Kamola's insights are also representative of what many teachers have had to come to terms with – the move from subjective, individually designed and graded assessments to principled criterion referencing in all areas of the curriculum. This is not an easy transition!

My involvement in the project changed my views and beliefs about assessment particularly. While working on assessment profiles and specifications I realised that I was on a wrong track in assessing my students' performance [...]. I discovered many possible alternative ways of assessment and even changed my views on error correction. Furthermore, I found out that learning outcomes need

to be clearly stated and they should be assessed accordingly. Before, I was not aware of the fact that I was mainly assessing declarative knowledge, and procedural knowledge, which is of paramount importance in language teaching, was to a great extent ignored in my assessment profiles. When I look through the tests and tasks which I designed before being involved in the project, I realise that in most cases my assessment was either knowledge based, or focused on isolated chunks of language. What's more, it was rather subjective and criteria for assessment were not clearly stated. I learned that not only teachers, but students also need to be familiar with the assessment criteria. Also, I was deeply impressed by our benchmarking sessions organised within the framework of the PRESETT meetings. I learned many useful things about the importance of discussing assessment criteria and encouraging collaboration among teachers. (Kamola Alimova, Project Team Member)

In the next comment, Olga brings together some of the cognitive (professional) and affective (personal) dimensions of development, usefully emphasising the importance of feeling good about oneself as well as knowing more and expanding one's range of teaching skills.

The course on Intercultural Competence is one of quite new courses in the university curriculum. Developing the course was challenging but very interesting and cognitive at the same time. From the very beginning it was difficult as we did not know what to start with. Then while I was learning more about intercultural awareness, its elements, focuses, intercultural competence and the ways it can be developed, it became even more challenging as there was so much to include in the syllabus, to teach students, but the course was limited in classroom hours. We had to select the topics and think how some of them could be combined and discussed during the lessons.

As for me personally, this new course changed my vision of myself and those who surround me. It became easier for me to communicate with people, my students in particular, as now I try to understand them from the viewpoint of their cultural background and think of the ways I can help them. The course has also helped me to know more about my own culture and become more critical about what made me be more judgemental and critical before. In terms of professional development, I never knew earlier how creative and inspiring teaching can be. (Olga Kim, Project Team Member)

From the very beginning, members of the project team have used the time available to sit together, to work with the project consultant, to explore new ideas and to evaluate them from their own perspectives. Regular meetings, discussions and consultations were built into the project activity plan and appropriate channels of communication were used to keep people informed. The processes of the project have been allowed to develop organically, with only a minimum of time pressure, and this has been enormously helpful, as the kind of deep understanding of principle that is required to implement curriculum change with conviction simply doesn't happen overnight. It is worth contrasting this with the kind of project model that predominated in the 1990s, where the timescale was always set by the donor without any real sensitivity to the pace of change that could be tolerated in any given context.

This dimension of the project has had a beneficial effect in allowing for professional development on a human and acceptable basis. This meant that everyone, very much including the project consultant, has been on a learning journey, which continues right up to the present. The Ministry has helped this process along by allowing it to develop at a reasonable pace and trusting the project team to deliver. At all stages we were ready to replan and redesign elements of the project and the curriculum, taking into account the comments we received from partner institutions and, of course, also the critical peer feedback, which was a constant feature of the team's way of working together. The nature of the learning journey is aptly illustrated in Jamilya's remarks:

This has been a long process of learning to co-create a programme that is relevant and responsive to the needs of all stakeholders – ministries of education, universities, teachers, learners, schools, parents in Uzbekistan and that is in line with modern thinking and international best practice. It required a lot of discussion at all levels, thinking together, ongoing reflection, identifying challenges and blockages, trying things out, re-visiting approaches and strategies and doing things differently as a result. This has been a huge learning and development experience. It allowed us to look at the big picture but also to break things down into manageable parts and to prioritise. The fact that we did it together with all parties gave us a holistic view of things and gave me and my colleagues the confidence to make such large-scale and complex reform possible. (Jamilya Gulyamova, Project Manager)

Similarly, Nodira describes how she learned some important lessons beyond her original comfort zone as a teacher and academic. Her awareness of the opportunities she was presented with and her eagerness to seize them are palpable and might serve as a model for others asked to take on a similar role.

It was my first experience of managing a nationwide project, which demanded multi-tasking. Through it I have developed skills needed to manage a project: facilitating team meetings, communicating with stakeholders, making decisions, time management, strategic and tactical planning, etc. (Nodira Isamukhamedova, Project Coordinator 2008–12)

The comments below by Saida Irgasheva, the current Project Coordinator and a long-time project member, give abundant food for thought:

Seven to eight years ago I thought that CPD was a simple task, when teachers just submit their teaching folder to their heads of department and from time to time they should add to it new documents, lesson plans with a new date on them. After a year as a trainer I begin to realise that developing professionally means reading a lot, sharing experience as a teacher, as a learner, as a trainer, improving technical skills by allowing people to observe your lessons and to provide feedback. This kind of development had seemed possible for me as a trainer and for teacher-participants only during training events. In other words, when we have training we develop professionally but when we go back to our usual institutions to teach and have our routine work we don't have any opportunity. However, through my involvement in the curriculum reform project I began to recognise that continuous professional development is whole person development from inside and outside, and can occur formally during training or planned activities or informally in our daily reflection, thinking, while setting new action plans or goals, etc. | IAs project

members we thought that we would improve our knowledge about syllabus writing, but in reality we have been developing a lot of other professional skills such as researching skills, observation skills, evaluating different teaching methods, coursebooks and materials, setting goals, designing syllabus and curriculum, selecting materials, assessment tools and methods appropriate to a local context or target audience, developing materials, training sessions [...]. Together with the development of professional skills, the project has helped to maintain, develop or increase our general knowledge and transferable skills such as problem solving, working in a team, thinking practically, being a leader, managing projects, learning from experience, organising assistance and information, and communication skills. It seems a long journey from simply thinking about CPD as documenting a portfolio to being a reflective and competent teacher who always thinks about her own self-development. Now I am more confident and certain about many things and can transfer my broad experience in PRESETT to other new experience such as development of national standards for foreign languages, curriculum design for new subjects and educational management.

Recently I worked with teachers of other languages such as German and French, and started sharing my experience of PRESETT curriculum development. I feel more confident but at the same time I am ready to learn more. Together we explore new understandings of certain terms like module, outcome, curriculum, development, and how these terms may be interpreted differently in different languages. That is the beginning of a new development and this journey is endless. I am ready for this journey. (Saida Irgasheva, Core Project Team Member and Project Coordinator since 2012)

Here are several important points to highlight here:

- Most members of the team at the early stage joined the project because of the opportunity to have regular training from the UK consultant. In 2008 the team members were very new to this kind of work and expected to simply be led and told what to do. Very soon though, through project team meetings, ten-day, two-week regular trainings and ongoing e-consultancy for team members, it became clear that decisions about what to change in the existing curriculum should be made by the team and by teachers themselves. The same situation was observed in 17 local universities, when at the beginning teachers and the authorities were always waiting for instructions from the team and from the Ministry. Starting from the second year of the project, the team members, along with regular training seminars, began to organise site visits, talks at local and national conferences, and shared their reflections on PRESETT newsletters. Soon afterwards, in every new gathering, new leaders from participating universities emerged, ready to organise cascade training, to share how the new curriculum of language and methodology modules has been implemented in their institutions and to voice their opinions in the PRESETT Yahoo group.
- Although CPD needs to be relevant to, based on, and to some extent driven by, everyday workplace experience, it is only when we have an opportunity to step back from it and to view it with objective distance that we are able to understand what we need to work on and change. This project has given the project team repeated opportunities to do this.

- In this project, team members' views of what constitutes development have been constantly expanded. Perhaps the most significant change has been from a view of development as imposed by, and accountable to, external authorities, to a realisation that it is an internal process over which each individual professional can have a decisive degree of control.
- Being able to articulate new learning and insights to colleagues beyond one's own immediate workplace context, either as here through interaction with other language teachers or by making presentations at conferences, is a valuable step in development. In late 2013, the project team hosted a fact-finding visit from a team of curriculum designers from Ukraine, and they found it enormously beneficial to talk about the PRESETT project to professionals from another context. This kind of event is a stimulus to reflect on achievements and setbacks, and to organise key ideas and concepts in a form which is accessible to others.

The project team has survived numerous changes of personnel brought about by life issues such as childbirth, marriage, emigration or job movement, but the strong basis of core values which has underpinned the reform work from the outset has allowed us to maintain a sense of purpose and momentum. The continuity provided by the project consultant has been a factor, but even more important has been the positive and committed leadership that the management team has provided. Despite other pressures, the team has consistently managed to meet deadlines, to overcome differences of opinion through dialogue and compromise, and to deal with problems, obstacles and crises along the way. This has paid off in terms of the individual development of team members as well as in the results they have worked so hard to achieve. They have made presentations at national and international conferences (including at IATEFL Liverpool in 2013) and have had articles published in journals such as *The Teacher Trainer* and *Folio*. Significantly, too, there has been interest from other countries in the region and, in late 2013, the project management team hosted a fact-finding visit from Ukraine, where a PRESETT reform project was about to be launched. Being able to describe the project, articulate its working principles and report confidently on the practices related to the new curriculum has strengthened the team both professionally and personally.

Perspectives from teachers around Uzbekistan on implementing the curriculum

The organisation of both the language and the methodology strands in the curriculum was innovative for teachers in participating institutions. The previous exclusive focus on language systems was replaced by a skills orientation, in line with level descriptors in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). We asked teachers to deal with phonology in the Listening and Speaking classes, and to work on vocabulary and grammar in context and practically, instead of in isolation. We also provided a syllabus for a two-semester course in Integrated Skills, based around project work, and for a course in Discourse Analysis, requiring teachers and students to work holistically with texts. All this was challenging at first, but we were also heartened by the eagerness with which many teachers took up the challenge of re-thinking their views of language and approaches to teaching, and by the enthusiasm which was kindled in students for using English communicatively instead of studying it in a knowledge-based, academic way.

The following comments from teachers from around Uzbekistan illustrate how they coped with the new demands made by curriculum change.

It opened the new world and changed my understanding of teaching completely. Every year when I attend the next seminar I find something new and it pushes me to self-development. (Anonymous comment by a teacher to Project Evaluator Richard West, included in his report)

I have shifted to a more constructive style of feedback rather than judgmental, and I observe for my and my observee's professional development. (Durdona Karimova, Jizzakh State Pedagogical University)

Teachers themselves begin to actively participate in their own development. (Dilrabo Akhmadalieva, Andijan State University)

The next remark, from a committed teacher, illustrates one more aspect of professional and personal development which has been a by-product of the project.

One of the important roles of the PRESETT curriculum and project is that it helps to develop not only language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking, but transferable skills as well! Our teachers and students involved in this project are now able to deal with different challenges and problems, not only in their learning and teaching but in life in general. (Dina Mamurbaeva, teacher, Nukus State University)

This new-found confidence is at least in part a result of the trust placed in teachers by the project managers, based on a belief that they were the right people to bear the important responsibility. Very importantly, this growing confidence among teachers has encouraged them to take ownership of the innovation and, hence, also of their own professional development and that of the students in their care.

The impact of the new curriculum on institutions, students and other stakeholders

Inevitably, a project of these dimensions and scope affects a wide circle of stakeholders, all of whom have their own perspectives to offer on the substance and impact of the reform. For each of them, there is potential for development, and this is captured in the quotes that follow.

There was a need for a modern and consistent approach to teacher education to encourage teachers to think constantly about their professional growth and to plan their professional development long term for the whole of their teaching career journey. (Abbas Iriskulov, Director of the Republican Language Centre, University of World Languages, Tashkent)

There are some particularly valuable insights in the comments contributed by key members of the project team.

Frankly speaking, during the first years of the project my enthusiasm was alternated by disappointment and disbelief that the traditional practice will ever change when on training events we again and again heard teachers demanding one coursebook for the whole programme, or querying why reading aloud is not good for developing reading skills, despite all the discussions that we had been through. However, slowly but surely we noticed that we received fewer and fewer complaints that things do not work, or the university authorities are resistant, and more and more

positive feedback from teachers, students and managers. Especially the latter started expressing their concern that most of the students want (or parents want their children) to study in the pilot groups. That was I think a great indicator of the project's success. (Nodira Isamukhamedova, Project Coordinator 2008–12)

Nodira's contribution highlights the difference between the expectations of the project team and the reactions of teachers on early acquaintance with the new curriculum. The patience needed to deal with this was in itself a symptom of the development opportunity it offered her and other members of the team.

The impact on students was also noteworthy. Kamola and Durdona show here their excitement at discovering previously untapped potential among their students, seeing them in a new light.

It is worth mentioning that the PRESETT project was first of all of great benefit for students. Students, tired and bored of traditional methods, are taking part in projects, debates, role plays and discussions with great pleasure and enthusiasm. I was surprised while reading some of the journal entries written by the 2nd year students in Language Learning, as they demonstrated not only good command of English or the knowledge of major concepts in Language Learning, but also good signs of critical thinking and elements of autonomous learning. (Kamola Alimova, Project Team Member)

I truly feel excited seeing my student portfolios with intelligent design and thorough task entries. (Durdona Karimova, Jizzakh State Pedagogical University)

Nodira sums up the impact on teaching in institutions across the country:

Now, looking back, one can see a huge impact on teaching in the University of World Languages and other institutions across Uzbekistan. Let me name some of them:

- Now most teachers are aware of communicative methods of teaching (e.g. project work, portfolio, round table discussion, etc.) and are using them in their practice.*
- Most teachers are aware of the CEFR, basic principles of test design, criterion-based assessment and are applying this in practice.*
- Most teachers know how to find, adapt and even design their own materials to suit their students' needs and are happy with the opening up of choices.*
- Most teachers are aware of the need for CPD and have become more active in individual as well as collaborative developmental activities such as lesson observations, presentations at different conferences, writing articles, etc.*

Taking into account all the above-mentioned skills, most teachers have become more autonomous, they have been liberated from 'the coursebook', from the authorities, as now they are regarded as experts in the innovations. And, most importantly, most teachers, once again or for the first time, fell in love with their profession and gained confidence in what they are doing. This is very important in the given context of pre-service teacher training, as these teacher educators not only teach their students how to be a good teacher but serve as a good model for them and source of inspiration. (Nodira Isamukhamedova, Project Coordinator 2008–12)

When Nodira refers to the opening up of choices for teachers, she is focusing on the move from the traditional mode of teaching with the prescribed textbook, with a strong orientation towards tests and examinations, to a situation in which, in the new curriculum, objectives are specified and resources suggested, but teachers are free to work towards these objectives in whatever way seems appropriate. This was destabilising at first for many teachers, but ultimately most have found it liberating. She also emphasises the move that many teachers have made towards taking more initiative in all aspects of their teaching, not always wanting to be told what to do or how to teach. Finally, she alludes to what has become a virtuous circle in the context of the project: teachers find that their new approach to their learners has gone down well, and they receive positive feedback. This sign of learners' approval gives them confidence, which in turn inspires them to find new ways to motivate and support their learners. This affective dimension of development is hugely important.

Furthermore, the impact of the project, the immense benefits of the new curriculum both for an institution and for its students, is readily apparent to senior administrators, as this contribution by the Rector of the lead linguistic university demonstrates:

Introducing PRESETT presents university management with a lot of challenges as it requires revisiting national standards, re-designing the curriculum to name a few, but it all pays back and is compensated by the ease of applying new and effective approaches to teaching and learning, and as a result we will have highly qualified graduates.

For heads of departments and teachers, PRESETT means moving away from 'known and comfortable' methods of teaching, makes them re-consider the roles of a teacher and a student, it means collaborative work of teachers and students, active participation of both sides in the learning process, which allows for faster and more effective approaches to learning and productive interaction between teachers and students in the classroom.

PRESETT makes our students active participants in the education process, creates conditions for them to enjoy and benefit from the flexibility of the programme, which is responsive to the needs of both teachers and students.
(Shukhrat Kayumov, Rector, University of World Languages, Tashkent)

The Rector's recognition of the importance of the project's work also provides another form of validation for the project team and for teachers throughout the country who have worked so hard to improve the teaching of English.

From many of these comments, it must be clear to the reader that the change process has opened up a number of pathways to professional development that were previously blocked by conservative management attitudes, old-fashioned beliefs about teaching, vested interests in the status quo, financial constraints or sheer unwillingness to break out of traditional routines and comfort zones. It is also plain to see that the concerns raised by Coleman (2005) in his Baseline Study have been comprehensively addressed through the design and implementation of the new curriculum. Although the project started out as a top-down initiative, the overwhelming majority of work in the development and dissemination of the new curriculum has been carried out by talented and committed teachers, rather than by experts from academia. The

example of these teachers has inspired others around the country to take more control of their teaching programmes and, significantly, of their own professional development. Nearly all the participating institutions now have teachers who have mastered some or all of the professional skills listed below, all previously exercised randomly if at all, rather than shared between colleagues. In a very real sense, these can be seen as the main CPD-related achievements of the project:

- **Working from the curriculum document to produce relevant learning materials for their students.** This represents a huge step forward for teachers who were previously entirely dependent on outdated textbooks.
- **Evaluating and selecting materials on a principled basis.** Where textbooks were prescribed there was no point in evaluating them. Now, teachers know how to use the curriculum as a basis for evaluating the relevance of any published materials to their teaching and their students' learning.
- **Action research skills.** Designing the third and fourth years of the curriculum involved the team in rethinking the approach to research that future English teachers might usefully take. Instead of persisting with the longstanding tradition of knowledge-oriented research into literary and linguistic topics, we agreed to incorporate courses in classroom investigation, thereby encouraging students to look into aspects of their teaching during their school-based teaching experience in Year 4. This, in turn, kick-started the process of reflection on practice. The result has been a different kind of final research paper, which teachers and students in all participating institutions have now bought into.
- **Skills in testing and assessment, tuned to international standards.** The adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference as an international benchmark for the standard of English that future teachers need to achieve has been both eye-opening and groundbreaking. An exit level of C1 at the end of Year 4 has been, and still is, a tough target to aspire to, in a context where many graduates had been sent to teach in schools with a great deal of knowledge about English but largely unable to function communicatively. Training in testing and assessment remain a priority for many PRESETT teachers, but considerable progress has been made and there are now some teachers in each institution with a basic working knowledge in the area.
- **Training skills (preparing workshops and activities).** This has been a significant growth area. Making the transition from teaching to training is not always a smooth process, and not all good teachers have it in them to work effectively as trainers. However, taking this step is almost inevitably a developmental experience, and the pool of proficient trainers continues to grow.
- **Classroom observation and supervision with a developmental rather than a judgmental focus.** Traditional approaches to observation have tended to involve judgment and a top-down perspective by the observer. Trainers involved in the project have embraced and implemented the notion of observation for development, and in many institutions there are instances of teachers pairing up reciprocally to learn by observing each other. There are also signs that this developmental approach is taking root in the observation of Year 4 students on teaching practice.

However, the list doesn't stop there. In every one of the 18 participating institutions there has been a need for the PRESETT liaison tutors to acquire and deploy skills of a different order, all of them rich in developmental potential, such as:

- **Team building and working in teams.** This has involved a culture change in many institutions where the prevailing culture has been individual or 'balkanised' rather than truly collaborative.
- **Managing innovation.** This has necessarily involved dealing sensitively and patiently with the doubts, insecurities and resistance to change that inevitably arise in the face of a radical reform of this nature. Liaison tutors have had to work 'horizontally' with peers as well as 'vertically' with (often sceptical) deans, heads of department and even rectors and vice-rectors. They have also had to work with students and even their parents to understand the changes that the curriculum has brought to their studies.
- **Leadership skills.** It is a tribute to many of these tutors that they have gained positive recognition as leaders in the innovation process. In order to achieve this, they have had to familiarise themselves with all aspects of the new curriculum and to think through and put into action a strategy for introducing it.
- In some cases, **preparing presentations for regional and national conferences** as well as articles for newsletters and journals.

In all of these instances, teachers have had to learn how to articulate ideas, to be able to explain the principles behind the new curriculum to peers, students and superiors, and at the same time to understand that they and their institutions are involved in a process that requires time and patience, and that inevitably involves setbacks as well as progress. Learning to work together and to learn through the exchange of ideas and experiences has been a challenge in a previously individualistic academic culture. Working towards international standards has required an understanding of levels and their descriptors in the CEFR, and also a break with the custom that institutions set their own standards without reference to external norms. This change has meant a loss of power and influence for those previously in charge of assessment in each institution, and PRESETT liaison tutors have had to deal with it in a sensitive and principled way. This in itself has been a developmental experience.

However, the seeds of a 'CPD attitude' and a commitment to career-long professional development are sown in students during pre-service training, and the PRESETT curriculum has a built-in progression, designed to move students from the teacher dependency they bring with them into the first year of study to the high level of autonomy they will need by the end of the fourth year when they are ready to face the challenges of full-time teaching. Assessment tasks include a requirement for reflective writing, and for students to show individually how they are making sense of their learning on the programme, moving from a preoccupation with knowledge to a realisation that becoming a teacher is essentially a long-term developmental process. Students in the early experimental groups were quick to realise the change, as evidenced in comments like these:

This curriculum changed my ideas about study. Studying for me became a very important experience

I became more autonomous.

I found the new way of assessment very interesting and useful for me.

I'm much more fluent and confident in English than ever before.

But these changes were noticed by teachers and heads of department too:

*Students gain new skills, such as how to analyse, correct, make a distinction...
(a PRESETT teacher)*

Students become active participants in different programmes and become active members of different events. (a head of department)

These comments all remind us of where the real focus of the project has always lain. The professional development of university teachers is an absolute priority if the seeds of career-long CPD are to be sown in PRESETT graduates during their studies.

Sustaining the momentum for CPD

English teachers in Uzbekistan have, partly thanks to the new curriculum but also because of the drive towards acceptance of international standards in all sectors of education, started to look outwards towards the wider world rather than sticking to the old way of remaining impervious to outside influences. To that extent, the genie is out of the bottle, and there is no going back. University students intending to become English teachers are now being exposed to modern methods of teaching and learning and are being better prepared for their future careers. The reform project has in this sense initiated a virtuous cycle of improvement, the results of which will be seen more clearly as more and more graduates from the new curriculum go into schools and teach more effectively, thereby raising standards from the very beginning of schoolchildren's experience of learning English. The cycle can be represented thus:

Figure 1: The cycle of improvement



This cycle of improvement will only be maintained if all the stakeholders in the project remain committed to the establishment of a strong and principled teacher education route within the existing university structure alongside or, in some cases, instead of the previous emphasis on Philology as a dominant academic discipline. The chances of sustaining change are bound to increase if there is a corresponding commitment to CPD among all stakeholders. As indicated by this next quotation, there are signs that sustainability is beginning to take root and that long term institutional development is the key to maintaining impetus for development at the individual level, and vice versa:

INSLET has a great impact on people; they begin to think more critically and practically. Their attitude towards teaching and assessment has been changed and that attitude transported to their students. Through this programme, people know better what language levels are, what standards are and about the links between curriculum, syllabus, materials and classroom teaching.

This programme helped to build strong links between universities and the ministry, educational authorities and teachers. I observed how some teachers became readers. I am happy to see now how people from the ministry use terms like INSLET, INSLET and I think they begin to think in a more goal-oriented way.

Abdusirikulov, Director of the Republican Language Centre, University of World Languages, Tashkent

At the time of writing, there is energy and enthusiasm for professional development through involvement in the reform, not only through the training seminars associated with it but also through the realisation among teachers that they are now able to take a much more active part in devising materials and activities for the implementation of the new curriculum. There has been a paradigm shift in the role of university English teachers, from simply being 'deliverers' of a predetermined, course book-dependent programme to being co-creators of a programme tuned to the needs and interests of their students. It is too early to say whether this shift will be sustained beyond the current period of hectic innovation-related activity, and one concern is that some teachers and administrators are still thinking in terms of writing new textbooks for each strand of the curriculum. However, the establishment of Professional Development Centres (PDCs) in almost all the participating universities has been a vital move towards sustainability. These centres vary in size and scope of activity, but they do provide access to print and electronic resources for teachers, a focal point for teachers to meet and talk about teaching and, in some cases, also a venue for training seminars and other development-oriented events. Another important innovation is the regular series of video conferences, hosted by the State University of World Languages and linking all 18 participating institutions. These video conferences take place on the third Friday of every month and each deals with a topic of direct relevance to the implementation of the new curriculum. They are enthusiastically attended and provide welcome opportunities for shared dialogue for the many teachers and administrators involved in PRESETT. Additional updates are provided by the PRESETT Newsletter, edited by the project team at the British Council and carrying articles and news items about the project, and there is also a mail group which teachers can use to exchange ideas and experience and also to raise queries and problems.

Understanding of the principles of the new curriculum is still patchy among managers in participating institutions, but the impact on the professional development, competence and confidence of English teachers is everywhere palpable, and this in itself is a key plank in sustainability. This perspective will be further strengthened if managers in each PRESETT university are able to see evidence of developmental benefits for themselves and for their faculties and institutions. Put another way, sustaining this reform to the curriculum will require joined-up thinking and a continuous commitment by all the main stakeholders.

Conclusion

Continuing professional development differs from in-service training in that it is often unplanned, and it takes place unconsciously as well as consciously. It has an institutional as well as a personal dimension. It can be triggered by both top-down and bottom-up forces but it seems to flourish when there is joined-up thinking at all levels and among all stakeholders within a system. The PRESETT project in Uzbekistan has provided, and continues to provide, opportunities for individuals to stretch themselves professionally beyond their comfort zones and into areas they had not previously explored. As can be seen from the evidence cited in this chapter, the project has brought important developmental benefits to the following groups:

- Teachers involved in designing the curriculum and the accompanying sample materials (in terms of acquiring new skills, raising their professional profiles and gaining respect from their peers and superiors)
- Teachers implementing the curriculum in their own institutions (in terms of rethinking their priorities, ways of preparing and assessing future teachers, mentoring and training colleagues as more and more become involved in the new curriculum)
- Students graduating through the new curriculum (they are already aware of the need for career-long professional development and have identified opportunities for this once they start teaching)
- Heads of department and other administrators in participating institutions, who have been involved in awareness-raising seminars throughout the project, and who have started to see benefits in terms of the motivation of their teachers and the achievements of their students, as well as in the enrichment and diversification of resources available to support the teaching of English.

None of this would have been possible if the curriculum reform had been rushed through, or imposed in an exclusively top-down way. The reform strategy has been built on a solid foundation of research, with careful attention to detail, and with incremental involvement of institutions and teachers over an extended period of time. The CPD dimension has understandably been a positive by-product of the reform, but it has been noticed and supported by decision-makers throughout the system, and this gives those of us who have been responsible for steering the project reason to hope that it will now take root in the ELT community within Uzbekistan and provide learning opportunities for those involved in large-scale reform programmes in other contexts.

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**Introducing innovation
through action
research in an
Australian national
programme:
experiences
and insights**



3

Introducing innovation through action research in an Australian national programme: experiences and insights

Anne Burns and Emily Edwards

Introduction

Action research (AR) is seen by its advocates as a means of empowering teachers and enabling them to acquire deeper insights and understanding about their practices. At the heart of these claims is the notion of educational change and innovation occurring through a systematic approach that integrates classroom action, research and reflection. We argue that AR, when instituted systematically into an educational sector and facilitated progressively and incrementally over sustained periods of time, can have a substantial impact on teacher participants, their schools and centres, and the sector as a whole. We also suggest that, from a teacher-researcher perspective, involvement in such a project can greatly enhance teaching, develop practices of systematic enquiry, and facilitate entry into and active participation in the 'world of research'.

Against this background, we describe the introduction of a professional development innovation, the *Action Research in ELICOS Program*, into the Australian English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) sector by its professional body, English Australia, and evaluate its impact over the four years of its operation. This initiative was seen as a way to address a key strategic goal of English Australia to facilitate high levels of professional practice by ELICOS teachers and to enable teachers to be integrated into this process nationally. Thus, it constitutes both top-down and bottom-up continuing professional development (CPD). In this vein, the chapter is co-authored by the programme facilitator (Anne Burns) and a teacher who participated in 2012 (Emily Edwards), in order to provide both macro (sector-oriented) and micro (individual) perspectives on the innovation and its impact.

The discussion first considers the processes and structures developed to introduce the programme. It focuses in particular on the piloting of the programme in the first year (2010) and the responses of teachers and other stakeholders, and then outlines how the innovation has been sustained. The programme's impact on the sector as a whole is also evaluated. Then, to further illustrate its impact on individual ELICOS teachers and their teaching practices, the chapter includes an account of a previously

omnated teacher's AR experiences and describes how these have led to innovations in practice and professional development renewal. The experiences involved a sense of becoming part of a national and international ELT community through continuing research, publications and conference presentations, illustrating the potential of AR to extend beyond the completion of an individual project.

The chapter concludes by analysing the key drivers (Fullan, 2007) that contributed to the programme's success. This analysis highlights what readers from other sectors wishing to initiate and sustain a similar innovation can take into consideration.

The context of the innovation

The Australian ELICOS sector offers a wide variety of courses for international students, the most popular being General English, English for Academic Purposes (which can provide evidence that successful students have met minimum English language standards required for vocational and higher education programmes) and preparation for examinations, such as the Cambridge suite and IELTS. English Australia, the sector's professional association, has a membership of over 100 colleges, ranging from publicly funded and private institutions attached to city-based universities, vocational colleges and high schools, through to large and small stand-alone private providers in major cities as well as regional areas. English Australia's goals are to play a key leadership role in raising educational, professional and ethical standards within member colleges and to represent the interests of the ELICOS sector to government and other agencies nationally and internationally.

In many contexts worldwide, language schools and colleges offering programmes to attract fee-paying international students are perceived as being concerned more with income generation than CPD. However, one important way that English Australia, as a professional association, seeks to raise standards is by promoting and enhancing professional development among the estimated 2,500 ELICOS teachers, whether or not they work for member colleges. CPD is perceived as a major strategy to enhance the quality of ELICOS institutions (and thus student learning outcomes), which in turn will lead to heightened reputation and increased student numbers. Among the CPD initiatives managed by English Australia are the organisation of state-based professional development workshops, preparation and dissemination of *Guides to Best Practice in ELICOS*, management of a bi-annual peer-reviewed journal and organisation of an annual conference (see www.englishaustralia.com.au/professional-support-and-development).

Despite this range of offerings, there were no sustained opportunities for teachers to conduct research building upon experiences gained through postgraduate study or local initiatives in classroom practice, which could also contribute to higher levels of teacher professionalism (see Brandon, 2011). This lack of engagement was coupled with a general feeling of teacher mistrust towards what traditional academic research had to offer them as practitioners. An approach was needed that would combine shared knowledge about teacher classroom practices with the ELICOS sector's professional goals for quality educational provision.

The innovation

Drawing on concepts and structures underpinning an extensive 15-year AR programme in the Australian Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) (Burns, 2005), English Australia's Professional Support and Development Office (PSDO) and the lead author developed and successfully submitted a proposal to the board of English Australia. Cambridge English Language Assessment in the UK then agreed to fund a one-year pilot study. While the integration of AR into AMEP research and professional development was regarded as successful (see, for example, Roberts, 1998; Borg, 2013), it could by no means be assumed that ELICOS teachers, let alone their academic managers, would embrace the concept of practitioner action research. The sector was not noted nationally for its high level of interest in research-based teaching. Moreover, since it is subject, like many international education programmes, to unpredictable policy, market and industry forces, the general perception externally was that it was driven primarily by financial concerns and its contribution to the Australian economy.

Nevertheless, AR was seen as having the potential to expand teachers' interest and knowledge about research, and to involve them more directly in developing quality classroom practice. In addition, research outcomes could be disseminated nationally to other ELICOS teachers through English Australia. Six core principles of AR (Somekh, 2006: 6–8) encapsulate the essential concepts we aimed to adopt:

- 1 Action research integrates research and action in a series of flexible cycles involving holistic rather than separate steps: the collection of data about the topic of investigation; analysis and interpretation of that data; the planning and introduction of action strategies to bring about positive changes through further data collection, analysis and interpretation ... and so forth to other flexible cycles until a decision is taken to intervene in this process in order to publish its outcomes to date.
- 2 Action research is conducted by a collaborative partnership of participants and researchers whose roles and relationships are sufficiently fluid to maximise mutual support and sufficiently differentiated to allow individuals to make appropriate contributions given existing constraints.
- 3 Action research involves the development of knowledge and understanding of a unique kind. The focus on change and development in a natural social situation, such as classrooms, and the involvement of participant-researchers who are 'insiders' to that situation, gives access to the kinds of knowledge and understanding that are not accessible to traditional researchers from the outside.
- 4 Action research involves a high level of reflexivity and sensitivity to the self in mediating the whole research process.
- 5 Action research involves exploratory engagement with a wide range of existing knowledge drawn from ... fields of social science, in order to test its explanatory power and practical usefulness.
- 6 Action research engenders powerful learning for participants through combining research with reflection on practice.

For English Australia, there were two major strategic goals for this programme:

1. To equip teachers with the skills to enable them to explore and address their own identified teaching challenges
2. To share the outcomes of this research.

In addition, English Australia anticipated four key outcomes that would build into the major strategic goal to facilitate higher levels of professional practice:

1. To provide direct professional development of the teachers involved
2. To initiate the development of teacher peer networks
3. To increase teacher engagement with research and academic researchers
4. To initiate further professional development by the teachers involved.

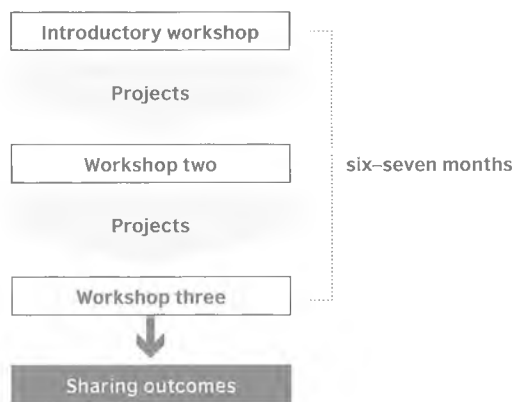
The concept of innovation is notoriously elusive and difficult to define, but it is usually recognised as some kind of change driven by deliberate, conscious intervention in order to produce new ways of thinking and acting. Rogers (2003: 12) defines innovation as 'an idea, practice or object perceived as new by an individual or other units of adoption'. Our aim was to generate new perceptions, not only for individual ELICOS teachers, but also for the national ELICOS sector more generally. Our concept of change and innovation also involved the idea of a new application of existing knowledge (about AR) and experience (from the AMEP precedent) with a view to creating other innovative (and possibly unexpected) forms of knowledge and creativity.

Implementing the innovation

To initiate the programme, English Australia called for Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from ELICOS teachers across Australia. Teachers were encouraged to volunteer to investigate any area of practice within suggested broad ELICOS priority areas, to explain briefly their reasons for investigating this area and to outline some initial plans for undertaking the research. The broad areas for research were identified through previous English Australia consultations with teachers and college administrators, and were wide ranging, covering teaching and learning of macro-language skills, assessment and monitoring of student progress, teaching different types of classes (General English, EAP) and student motivation. In the first year of the programme (2010), 12 EOIs were received and six teachers, located in New South Wales, Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia, were selected by a Reference Panel consisting of representatives from Cambridge English, English Australia and the first author. The topics, addressing the teachers' own classroom issues, included two projects investigating motivation (in high-level and intermediate-level learners), two projects focusing on extensive reading (one introducing extensive reading to beginner students and one exploring its impact on vocabulary development), one project on using digital devices for vocabulary acquisition and another on developing active participation in listening and speaking (see Cambridge Research Notes 48 for teachers' accounts). Since the funding for the initiative was limited to a pilot year, it was agreed that only a small number of teachers would be included in order to test reactions to the programme.

to get the teachers, and their academic managers, would be clearly aware of their commitments from the start, they were informed that they would need to attend three workshops (firstly, one-and-a-half days and, subsequently, one day each), maintain their AR between workshops, submit written accounts and present at a colloquium about the programme at the annual English Australia Conference. The academic managers were asked to endorse their applications. It was essential for teachers to have their direct approval and support, so that they could be released from teaching to attend workshops, given time to write up their accounts and provided with financial support to attend the conference. In order to disseminate the outcomes of the programme further, in Australia and elsewhere, Cambridge English undertook to publish the teachers' accounts in their journal, *Research Focus*. The initial model of the programme structure is represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Initial model for the programme



Each workshop was facilitated by the first author with the support of English Australia's PSDO. The aim of the first workshop, held in early April 2010, was to familiarise the teachers with the main concepts of AR, refine their research plans, develop some initial questions to frame the research process, identify teaching strategies to be trialled and nominate ways to collect data for action and reflection. An important part of this workshop was each teacher's presentation of their initial research plans, and the resulting group discussion where questions and suggestions were made for taking the plans forward. After this workshop the teachers worked at their colleges to put their ideas into action, returning for the second workshop in early July to discuss what they had achieved so far and to raise any issues about the process.

The second workshop, at the end of July 2010, was also based on extensive discussion; after each teacher explained their research processes and reflections to date these ideas were debated by the group, and further strategies and research directions were identified. These sometimes involved refocusing the research in the light of personal reflections or group interactions, identifying a need to collect new forms of data or testing out the findings with new learner groups. Ideas for analysing the data, bringing the research to a conclusion and writing accounts

of the projects were also discussed. Then, the teachers again returned to their workplaces where they continued with their research, but also gradually brought it towards an end-point. At the third workshop, the day before the English Australia Conference, the teachers reported and reflected on how they had finalised their research, and rehearsed their presentations for the joint colloquium. We also discussed the highs and lows of their experiences, stressing that their feedback was also valuable as the basis for a possible extension of the programme.

Evaluating the impact of the innovation

To understand whether this CPD innovation was proceeding effectively, we needed to evaluate it as it was being implemented. After each workshop we collected responses from the six teachers on their reactions and also their suggestions for any changes that should be made. The general reaction to the first workshop was immediately positive, as illustrated here:

A great experience. It was great working with [the facilitators] as well as all the other teachers. They were all friendly and helpful. It's really important to share ideas about classroom research with fellow teachers.

One of the aspects teachers seemed to value most was the opportunity to learn from each other (*inspiration – from ‘thinking’ teachers!*). However, they also expressed some anxiety about the research demands (*Will I get everything done in time?*), uncertainty about their research knowledge (*What a steep learning curve!*) and concerns about their research skills (*refining questions, clarifying the process*). In subsequent workshops, their reflections deepened as they challenged their practices (*I've learned a lot about myself as a teacher and researcher from action research and my students*), but also confirmed their research activities and experiences (*affirmation that I was on the right track*). A comment from the final workshop encapsulates several of the AR principles enunciated by Somekh (2006), which were also more generally supported by all six teachers – the value of collaboration, the movement towards deeper reflection, the development of ‘insider’ and unique forms of knowledge, and the situating of new knowledge within broader existing knowledge to test and frame one’s personal practices.

I've heard everyone else's ideas and there are definitely things I'll take back into my own teaching, especially going from technician to professional, a reflective practitioner. I did get a little lost in my reading. I went back to teaching approaches ... old theories, new theories, all the labels. How am I going to label it and so on? I realised it actually doesn't matter – you are using the best methods you can to do it.

An analysis of the workshop discussions, teacher responses and written accounts showed that the six pilot programme teachers felt they had gained professionally in numerous ways, including:

1. Developing more analytical ways of thinking about their teaching
2. Generating more in depth ways of reflecting on teaching practices
3. Rethinking routine, taken-for-granted practices

4. Gaining knowledge of tools to investigate their teaching more systematically
5. Developing confidence in their ability to conduct research
6. Articulating their personal professional knowledge as a legitimate aspect of their practice
7. Developing deeper notions of learner-centredness through closer consultation with learners
8. Being more willing to integrate learner participation and learner decisions into their practice
9. Gaining greater appreciation of the knowledge, skills and learning preferences learners bring to classrooms.

However, their experiences of conducting research had not been without challenges. One teacher reported considerable resistance and criticism of her involvement in the programme from other teachers at her workplace, who saw it as *just looking for extra work you're not paid for*. Another had experienced little interest from her college management, despite their original assurances about supporting her. This college made few allowances of time or resources for her research, and she felt she had conducted it in relative isolation. However, these attitudes seemed to be relatively limited; in this and subsequent annual programmes most managers were overwhelmingly positive, offered considerable support and also reported that the research had expanded to include others. One reason may be that the level of commitment on the part of colleges was made clear from the beginning. For example, one manager highlighted the impact of the research at his college, noting that it had even led to his direct involvement:

For our college, the impact of the programme was substantial as it affected the whole staff. Most teachers became involved through observation, team teaching and collation of data. Even the [Director of Studies] (myself) was back in the classroom to observe the research 'in action' and to assist. The opportunity to present at the English Australia conference inspired more staff to submit suggestions for research, and seek funding from the college group.

At the final workshop, as they reflected on their experiences, the teachers suggested several ways the programme could be improved. One problem was the time period between workshops where they continued the research independently, which in some cases had led to feelings of isolation. In a country as large as Australia, and with limited funding, it was not possible to organise additional workshops. Therefore, some form of electronic contact needed to be considered if the programme continued. Others felt that they would have benefitted from a longer period between the first and second workshops, so that there was more time to process and establish their research and work out directions to take. In addition, they suggested it would be beneficial to have more than one teacher from the same workplace, working in teams or partnerships on the same topic. Some of the teachers also wanted opportunities to disseminate their work other than through journal accounts, which colleagues might not read (*I'm really passionate about my research! and want to talk about it*). They also felt that the programme could develop annual research 'themes', related closely to areas that became

priorities for ELICOS teachers. This would still allow teachers to select their own topics, but within a framework that could provide stronger relationships and overlaps among their investigations.

The teachers' responses and suggestions outlined above served to enrich the innovation for further development. Even though the stimulus for the research might have begun as a 'top-down' initiative through English Australia, its successful operationalisation fundamentally depended on the close engagement of teachers, who might not otherwise have been prompted to innovate. Their responses suggested that they had taken up and personalised the innovation through renewal of local pedagogical practices.

The teachers' colloquium at the English Australia Conference was attended by over 60 participants from ELICOS colleges across Australia and was a valuable way of gauging broader sector reactions. Formal feedback suggested that the programme was seen as an effective innovation:

I was most pleased to attend the action research colloquium as I had considered taking part in the programme when I first heard about it ... I now feel that I could confidently engage in some action research myself.

It was interesting to hear what some other teachers have been working on/find worthwhile focusing on. Their findings and conclusions raised questions, which was great!

Excellent to hear of research happening in the workplace.

... inspiring in terms of seeing tangible benefits for teacher PD.

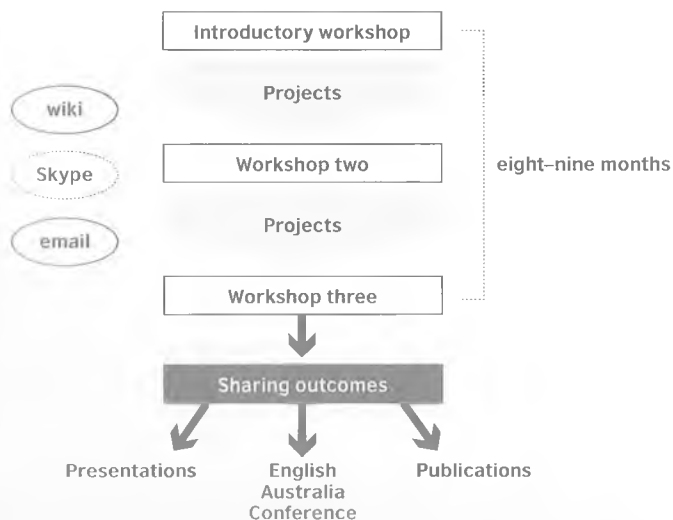
The 2010 pilot provided strong evidence that this innovation was being positively received across the sector. Based on this response, Cambridge English agreed to continue funding the programme, which in 2014 will be in its fifth year of implementation. Taking into consideration the various forms of feedback received during the pilot and others gathered in subsequent years, the programme model has been fine-tuned to include additional aspects:

1. The programme is more focused in terms of research themes. Each year a priority area, responding to teacher and manager perceptions of student needs, is now selected to strengthen practitioner research and teaching. In 2014, the focus is on reading and reading assessment.
2. Teachers can now volunteer for the programme individually or in pairs. Thus, there is more flexibility for teamwork, which also leads to mutual support during the research.
3. The programme duration has been extended. The first workshop is now held in early March and the second workshop in late July. This allows teachers more time to set up the research process and explore their initial ideas. The third workshop remains connected to the English Australia Conference.

4. A closed wiki has been established for sharing reflections, questions, teaching ideas and research tools throughout the programme. Relevant references, resources and articles, writing guidelines and deadlines, and administrative information about workshops are also posted. Also, group or individual contacts are made regularly through email.
5. Between workshops at least one Skype meeting per research project is held, involving the first author and the teachers. These allow us to discuss the research process, pose questions and make further decisions about how to proceed.
6. Each year the participants now contribute to a 'teacher-friendly' newsletter. They write a 350-word account of their research, with illustrative examples of their activities and findings. The newsletter is produced in time for the annual conference and widely disseminated to conference participants and other teachers to inform them about the research and to encourage further participation.
7. Where possible, the first author and the PSDO facilitate additional opportunities for teachers to present their research beyond the English Australia Conference. One example is the annual TESOL Research Network held at the University of Sydney each September; another is the IATEFL Conference in the UK. Teachers have also presented their research extensively at local staff or CPD meetings and other national and international conferences.
8. Teachers are encouraged to publish their research further in newsletters, national journals and, in particular, in the English Australia Journal, and elsewhere as they find opportunities.

The refinement of the programme structure is a work in progress and will be continually adjusted into the future. Its current form is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Current model for the programme



At the time of writing, 38 teachers (with 11 more teachers included in 2014) have completed 24 projects, published in *Research Notes* 44, 48, 53 and 58 (see www.cambridgeenglish.org/research-and-validation/published-research/research-notes/). In addition, teachers from all years of the programme regularly report to English Australia that they continue to present their work at local, national and international seminars and conferences.

Up to this point, we have described the programme implementation at the sectoral level. Below, the second author of this chapter, Emily, offers a 'micro-level', first-person account to illustrate the impact the programme has had on an individual teacher participant.

Emily's experiences of the Action Research innovation

As one of the teachers who participated in 2012, my aim is to outline and reflect on my own experiences. To aid my reflections I draw on the research journal entries and wiki updates I wrote during the programme, my final AR report (Edwards, 2013a), as well as my analysis of the CPD opportunities I have experienced in the 12 months immediately following the programme. First, I provide a brief summary of my teaching context and my AR project. Then, I highlight some of my feelings and experiences during the process of doing my research, before focusing on the impact of my participation in terms of teaching, learning and syllabus development in my context. Finally, I discuss how the programme has been a catalyst for my professional development and career progression.

Background and context

The AR programme in which I participated included nine teacher-researchers from four Australian states who were undertaking six projects, all investigating an aspect of assessment. At the time of my participation, I was working as an Academic English Teacher and Co-ordinator in a relatively small private ELICOS school in Sydney. The Academic English courses were aimed at students ranging from B1 to C1 levels on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Typically, the classes were linguistically diverse, including relatively equal numbers of students from Asia, Europe and Latin America. I had never done any classroom research myself, although I had learned about AR theories and processes while completing coursework in a Master of Applied Linguistics degree just the year before. As an uninitiated teacher-researcher, I was keen to use the AR programme as a professional development opportunity, but also to develop and trial part of my school's Academic English syllabus, which I had recently been involved in re-designing. In fact, one of the original purposes of AR, as proposed by Stenhouse (1975), was as a method of evaluating and renewing a school's curriculum, and from my experience AR certainly proved to be an effective tool for creating an innovative and student-centred syllabus.

Action research focus

The start of the programme in March coincided with my attempt to re-design the assessment rubrics for marking written assignments completed for the school's Academic English courses. I decided to focus on using AR to investigate and evaluate

different ways of integrating the new assessment rubrics into my lessons in order to help my students better understand and address the assessment criteria, and then use my feedback to further their own progress in writing. To gain a theoretical overview, I started reading about Assessment for Learning (AfL) principles, which suggest that both transparent assessment criteria and feedback from assessment tasks should be integrated into teaching in order to assist students to make progress, and therefore benefit from formative assessment (Assessment Reform Group, 2002; Brown, 2004–05; Pooler, 2012). AfL is not a new concept and has in fact become a major trend in mainstream education over the last 20 years, resulting in the publication of the UK-based Assessment Reform Group's set of principles in 2002. However, these theories did not seem to be widely discussed in the Australian ELICOS context, and I myself had limited knowledge of AfL. Also, the Academic English syllabus that I was working on placed very little emphasis on assessment rubrics and how they could be used to help students improve. As a result, the focus of my project led to innovation in both syllabus development and teaching practice in my context. The project involved a total of 12 weeks of research between March and July 2012. Table 1 shows the stages, research questions and results of my AR project (see also Edwards, 2013a, 2013b).

Table 1: An overview of my AR project

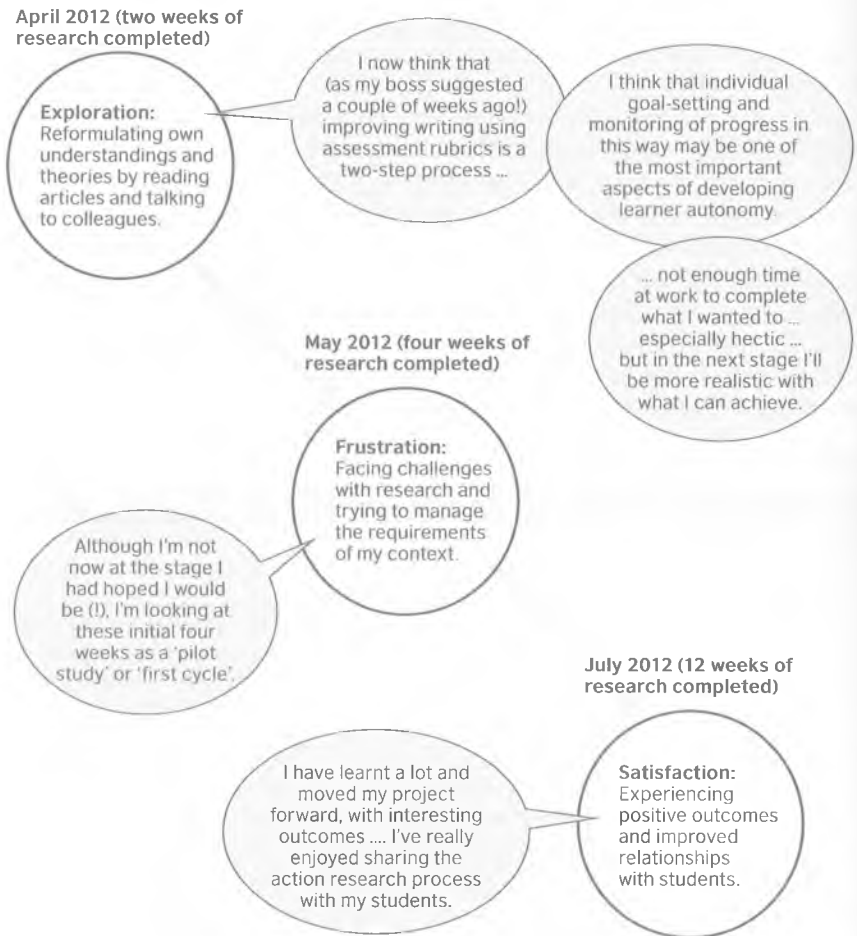
Stage of project	Stage 1 (four weeks)	Stage 2 (eight weeks)
Number of action research cycles	1	3
Research questions	How can explicit use of assessment rubrics in my Academic English class most effectively enable students to assess and monitor their own formative written assignments?	How can goal-setting using assessment rubrics in my Academic English class most effectively enable students to assess and monitor their own formative written assignments?
Results	Many different activities seemed useful (e.g. peer evaluation, editing assignments using checklists, and goal-setting), but setting goals based on teacher feedback and the rubrics seemed to be the most effective in my context.	Using the assessment rubrics and teacher feedback to set and monitor progress goals for writing was successful for most students in terms of progress, motivation, encouraging self-study and developing learner autonomy.

Reflections during the programme

To document the reflections of the teacher research group in which I participated, a wiki was set up by English Australia, where we were encouraged to post updates and journal entries. This allowed us not only to observe the development of our own thinking through our projects, but also to support each other from our different locations across Australia, which was especially important for me as I was conducting the project individually. Although my overall AR experience was very positive, there were moments of frustration when I faced various research and institutional challenges. In retrospect, however, I now see that these were important learning episodes. Figure 3 is a visual summary of the key themes I identified from analysing my wiki updates and journal entries. My feelings and

experiences developed over three stages and are shown in the three white circles. Quotations from my wiki updates and journal entries which most represent what was occurring at each stage are shown in the shaded speech bubbles.

Figure 3: Feelings and experiences during the AR process



Effects on teaching, learning and syllabus development

In terms of the impact of the AR programme in my teaching context, there were some significant effects on my own practice, my students' learning and the syllabus development of the Academic English course (see also Edwards, 2013a). Firstly, as a teacher I became more critical, more inquisitive about many aspects of my teaching and more connected to my students' needs. Conducting focus groups and interviews was an excellent way of encouraging my students to express their opinions and needs more openly, and they gave me new insights into which activities they preferred and why. Consequently, I felt that my lessons became more learner-centred, my teaching methods improved and I was more open to teacher-student negotiation. Secondly, I reflected more deeply on my students' learning and I grew to realise that focusing on goal-setting and monitoring with my

Students substantially benefited their progress in writing and in language learning more generally. Evidence I collected in the second stage of my project showed quite convincingly that getting students to focus every two weeks on one specific goal (based on one of the 15 assessment criteria), and encouraging them to do a self-study activity to address this goal, resulted in increased scores for that criterion (an increase in 83 per cent of the scores).

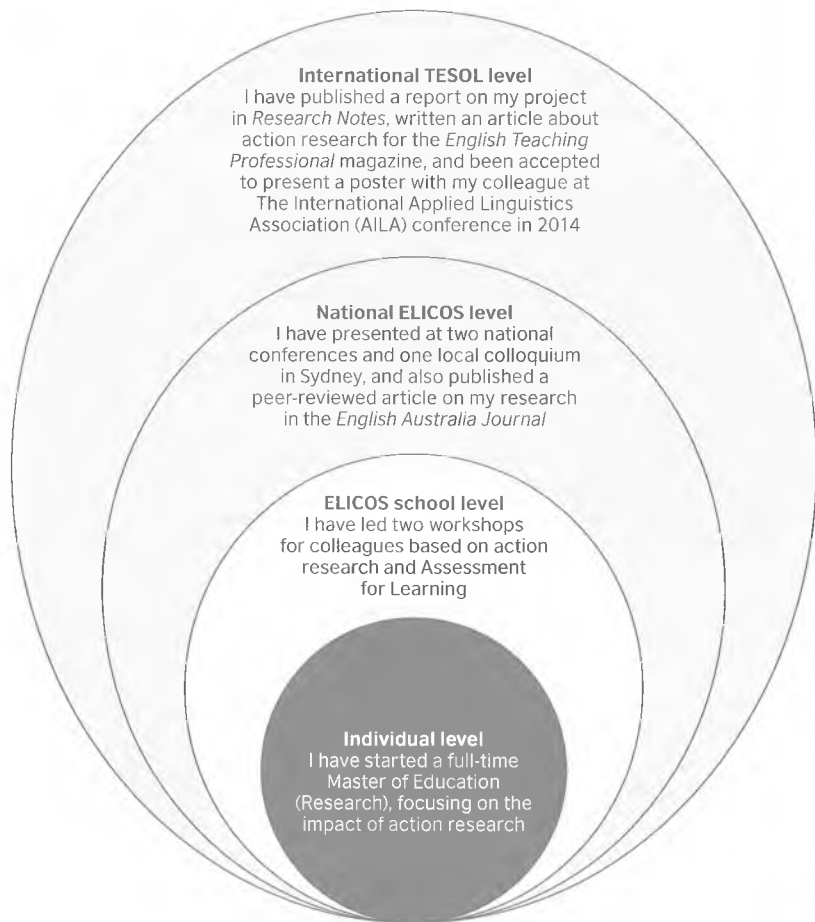
Apart from improving aspects of their writing ability, my students were also developing self-study skills that would be essential once they graduated from the Academic English course and went on to university study in Australia. Although it was not possible for me to track whether the impact of my research on the students was sustained after I completed my project, it seems reasonable to suggest that if a teacher becomes more critical and reflective, and consistently models this behaviour, their students are likely to benefit, no matter what their future learning context. Finally, doing this AR project was a very useful way of evaluating the assessment rubrics and the related classroom activities I had created, which were refined throughout the project and continue to be used in the Academic English course at the school where I worked. Apart from the structured course materials, my research also generated more self-directed learning activities and self-study materials than had been previously available. These materials were developed through negotiation with my students, and this contributed to their practicality and the possibility that other teachers and learners would continue to use them.

AR: A catalyst for continuing professional development

Recent empirical studies (e.g. Banegas et al., 2013; Jones, 2004) and other publications (e.g. Burns, 2009; Somekh and Zeichner, 2009) argue that AR has 'transformative' power, in that it changes teachers' professional lives in many ways. Apart from the impact on teaching practice, student learning and materials or syllabus development, participating in the AR programme has had a sustained effect on my personal professional development and career progression. For me, AR has acted as a kind of catalyst, enabling me to connect with the wider ELICOS and TESOL teaching and research communities.

Figure 4 illustrates the nature of the continuing professional development I have experienced in the 12 months since I completed my AR. It is reflected at four different socio-cultural levels: the individual level, the ELICOS school level, the national ELICOS level and the international TESOL level. Although they are presented separately, these levels are fluid and overlapping in various respects. For example, my recently-started Master of Education research degree, leading to a PhD, will involve exploring in depth the impact of the 2010–15 *Action Research in ELICOS Program* on the sector, including the participating teachers, students, schools, and the wider community. In particular, it will aim to identify the extent to which the impact of this innovation has continued over time. Although this initiative is placed at the individual level, the continued focus on AR in my thesis is, in turn, likely to have an impact on any future work I do in ELICOS schools. Similarly, it is likely to emerge at the national and international levels, as I continue to present and publish my future research findings.

Figure 4: Action Research as a catalyst for continuing professional development



Reflecting on how I have been enabled to pursue these opportunities, I think much can be attributed to the development of my research, writing and presentation skills during my participation in the AR programme. When I reported on my research, I wrote: 'I have had an invaluable induction into classroom-based research methods, equipping me with useful skills to continue my postgraduate studies.' (Edwards, 2013a: 30). Indeed, having collected and analysed my data and experienced the report drafting process as part of the AR programme, I was then able to attempt a longer peer-reviewed article, which was accepted for publication in the *English Australia Journal* (Edwards, 2013b). In turn, my publications provided very valuable support for my research degree application. Finally, through the AR programme, I met the first author of this chapter, who is now supervising my research degree and has had a major continuing impact on my professional development.

However, it is also important to note that for many teachers, continuing professional development can, and arguably should, be centred on their classroom practice. I have emphasised further academic study and research here because that has been my own personal experience and focus. AR can certainly be a catalyst for improving the quality of teaching methods and strategies, especially if a reflective approach is maintained after completing the research. To my knowledge, many, if not most, of the teachers who have completed this AR programme have remained as classroom teachers. Since little is currently known about the ongoing effects that conducting AR might have on teachers' classroom practice, my Masters/PhD research project will explore in detail exactly that issue in the context of this particular AR programme.

For me, the AR programme has achieved far more than improvements to my teaching, my students' learning, and the materials and syllabus used in my context. It has been a catalyst for my further academic study, for my involvement in other colleagues' professional development and for dissemination of my research through publications and presentations. A key element of the programme is that it allows for continuing impact on the professional development of the teachers who participate through specific channels for sharing research results, and active encouragement of further dissemination of their research. It provides a way for ELICOS teachers, who are usually only involved in teaching and learning at an individual level, to become part of a much larger national and international ELICOS and TESOL community. This, in turn, presents substantial opportunities for learning, sharing, networking, career progression and further professionalisation of the ELICOS sector.

Evaluation and reflection on the process of implementing the innovation

Introducing, designing and implementing the *Action Research in ELICOS Program* involved developing an attitude of trial, experimentation and critical evaluation on the part of the facilitators and other participants. It is always valuable to consider how the process of implementation might have been different or how the programme might have been designed in alternative ways.

In some respects, the decisions relating to how it could be structured could be considered cautious or conservative, the antithesis of what innovation is meant to be about. The programme built on a model that was not new, but had been operationalised over many years in a different educational organisation (the AMEP). In this respect, our perspective on innovation was one where existing knowledge and experience of tried-and-tested processes laid the essential foundation. On the other hand, the model was being transplanted to new ground, where conditions for its success were unknown and possibly very different. In its new iteration it combined two major organisations, one of which, English Australia, aimed to evaluate how the programme integrated into its strategic goals for quality improvement in an internationally competitive and industry-focused educational sector, while the other, Cambridge English, had traditionally been prominent in language proficiency testing in Australia but had little familiarity with ELICOS and the professional development of its teachers.

In retrospect, the decision to use an established but also home-grown Australian model that could be progressively developed and adapted has appeared to be an effective one. One advantage was that the model had already been shown to suit a local style of working that Australian teachers could relate to. The types of programmes offered by the AMEP and ELICOS were in some ways similar; both were directed mainly at adult learners, from a wide range of language backgrounds, and offered short-term courses, focused on specific types of language skills development. The six to eight-month programme duration was long enough to allow for a worthwhile AR project to be conducted, but not so long as to exhaust the teachers conducting it. Moreover, the programme could be fitted into the rhythm of the Australian academic year, allowing teachers time to complete their written accounts for publication. Allocating three workshops across the programme was based on estimating the number of times it would be beneficial for teachers to meet, but also accounted for funding restrictions and the capacity of teachers' colleges to release them. Also, the planning of the workshops had to consider the wide geographical dispersion of teachers across the country and the time involved in travelling (Western Australia is more than five hours' flying time from Sydney!).

Thus, the changes over time described above were incremental and the result of continual progressive feedback, from participating teachers and others in the sector, directors of studies, English Australia and its board members, and Cambridge English. For an innovation to be successfully implemented, the drivers of that innovation must be especially alert to the reactions of those who are the most directly impacted, in this case the teachers. As Markee (1997: 24) notes:

Teachers play a key role in the success or failure of a planned innovation, because they are the executive decision makers in the actual setting in which the intended innovation is to be integrated – the classroom.

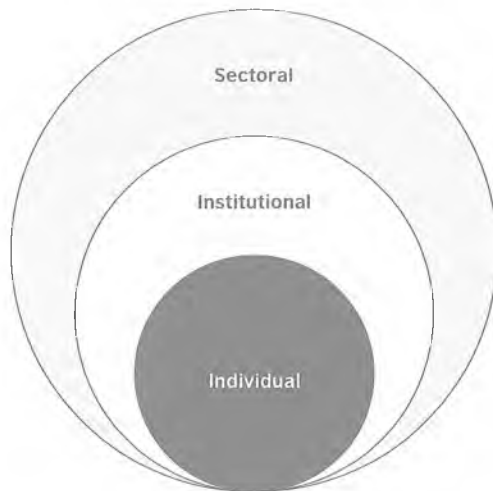
Consequently, it is the constant feedback from teachers that has played the major role in refining the implementation of this programme.

Lessons learned: transferability to other contexts

We have already suggested that several local factors were essential in the process of shaping this innovation and, indeed, the literature on educational change is full of references to the importance of the cultural, social, cognitive, affective and behavioural context in the successful implementation of innovation (e.g. Fullan, 2007; Kennedy, 1987; Markee, 1997). Kennedy (2013) warns against adopting simplistic, linear views of innovation implementation, seeing it as a process that emerges over time rather than a product with a predetermined end-point. Similarly, Fullan (2007) notes that factors in introducing innovation constitute a system of variables that are interrelated and interact to determine success or failure. This means that those embarking on innovations in CPD must be mindful of how they can best harmonise the contextual factors that are central to the complex and multilayered nature of educational change.

of this programme, we now view the notion of innovation context from at least three interacting perspectives: the macro-context of the ELICOS sector, English Australia and the funding body, Cambridge English; the meso-context of the participating colleges and the academic administrators; and the micro-context of the teachers and their perspectives on their experiences. All three of these contextual dimensions interacted dynamically and were significant in ensuring successful implementation. Echoing the model used earlier by Emily, we identify some key factors that provided conditions to facilitate successful implementation. Each section is preceded by illustrative comments.

Figure 5: Contextual dimensions of programme facilitation



Macro level: the sector

The Action Research program is a significant and highly motivating initiative for teachers in the ELICOS sector. (English Australia board member)

- 1 The programme was initiated by the sector's professional body, English Australia and endorsed by its board. It also receives further backing in the form of funding from a large and well-known international organisation, Cambridge English. Therefore, across the sector it is seen to have the imprimatur of key organisations.
- 2 Additional support is available in the form of an experienced researcher with a substantial record of researching and facilitating AR. Thus, expertise is on hand to guide the teachers in how to conduct AR and to support them in the process.
- 3 The programme goals and parameters and the conditions for joining it are defined in advance and widely disseminated via English Australia (see www.englishaustralia.com.au/action-research-program-details). Information and calls for expressions of interest are well publicised to all registered ELICOS colleges. This means that opportunities to participate are widespread and commitments are clear.

4. Access to relevant materials is made available throughout the programme in the form of references, journals and other resources. Teachers also have access to the range of teacher accounts produced for the programme and can be put in touch with previous participants. The programme structure allows participants to collaborate in sharing resources.
5. Opportunities for research dissemination is built into the programme nationally, in the form of the English Australia Conference colloquium, an annual newsletter made available at the conference, the English Australia website, and internationally, through Cambridge English's journal Research Notes. Therefore, the research is strongly endorsed, there are concrete outcomes and they are made publicly available.

Meso-level: institutions

We've arranged for [the teachers] to present to the staff at the next meeting. From our experience with [the programme], we know that sharing the process and the results gets teachers' attention. (College Manager)

The actual research findings will inform [the institution's] development of assessment for learning and independent learning. (College Manager)

1. The teachers' employers endorse the teachers' EOLs and commit to supporting their involvement. Thus, there is managerial 'buy-in' at the institutional level.
2. Colleges provide teaching release time for workshop attendance. As far as possible, they also accommodate timetabling requests, allowing teachers to continue working with classes and students relevant to their research focus. Overall, despite inevitable variations, teachers are well supported institutionally in terms of time and resources.
3. College managers may adopt mentoring roles and encourage other interested teachers to participate in the research. Consequently, the programme has the capacity for a built-in 'ripple-effect' that energises institutional teacher professional development.
4. Colleges are encouraged to see the teachers' participation as an opportunity to strengthen their broader curriculum development. Colleges can provide input into the research themes and use the teachers' AR as part of their own quality initiatives. Thus, there is a 'pay-off' for the institutions involved.

Micro-level: teachers

Our daring journey of action research has contributed to our growth as teachers. This research has been a remarkable journey for us and for our students. An action-researched classroom changes the mundane into a playground of enquiry.

1. Teachers volunteer for the programme and commit in advance to continuing for the whole duration. Thus, the likelihood that they will withdraw from the programme is minimised.
2. Within the framework of annual research themes, teachers are free to select their specific research focus. This means that they are motivated by their own classroom ideas and concerns.

- 3 During each workshop, teachers receive direct input, collectively and individually, into the development of research skills and refinement of their projects. They are also provided with 'in-time' support as required throughout the whole process. Consequently, the research process is highly scaffolded at both individual and group level.
- 4 Teachers are provided with extensive support for writing, in a three-stage process involving short newsletter outlines, interim reports and full accounts of their research. Thus, they are apprenticed into the process of writing for publication for national and international audiences.

Though there is inevitable variability and unpredictability in the way these factors are realised at each level, they are nevertheless illustrative of the conditions that have supported the programme's success (in our view). External evidence that it is regarded as both innovative and successful has also come through a recent International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) Excellence Award for Best Practice/Innovation (2013) and the initiation of a further programme based on this model by English UK (2014), also funded by Cambridge English.

While it may not be possible for others wishing to introduce a similar innovation to replicate all of these conditions, the key messages are clear. Providing teachers with opportunities to conduct action research as a form of CPD is an investment in teacher quality; and ultimately teacher quality leads to enhanced student learning. The programme we have described is transferable to any educational sector, whether private or public, at any educational level. We are not arguing, however, that teachers should be compelled to conduct action research, as seems to be the case in some educational systems, with the result that their responses remain at the level of superficial adherence to the external demands of policy makers or school managers. Rather, our perspective on structuring, supporting and conducting action research is embedded in the procedures and principles outlined here. Fundamentally, it is premised on voluntary participation by teachers open to the notion of practitioner research. It echoes that of Kenny (2002), who argues that success factors in educational innovation come from:

- Sponsorship (clear support) by senior management
- Provision of adequate resources, including time and staff with specialist skills as part of the project team
- Establishment of self-managed project teams with open communication processes
- Accountability processes that emphasise documentation of learning, iterative development, periodic reporting after each cycle and dissemination to the organisation.

Innovation is most effective when there is substantial ongoing institutional 'buy-in' at the various levels of the system, with a shared sense of purpose by those involved at these different levels. It includes consistent support for teacher participants, which assists them to develop research skills and teaching practices. Supporting engagement in AR also means tapping into the realities of teachers' daily work and the inevitable restrictions on their time. As in this programme,

providing at least some time release to conduct research that can lead to enhanced teaching and improved student learning becomes a productive investment on the part of management. Under such circumstances, teacher research can then potentially contribute to larger-scale change and broader quality improvement. Teacher researchers also need opportunities to network with colleagues, including other teachers, teacher educator facilitators and those with expertise in AR, and to have opportunities to report and disseminate their achievements. Finally, there needs to be a clear structural framework that steers the programme towards defined, but not pre-specified, outcomes and affirms teachers' participation by informing others.

Conclusion

As we have aimed to show, introducing innovation is not a simplistic, predetermined event, but an evolving, complex and recursive process. Innovative practices start out uncertainly and, to be successful, must be sensitive to local contexts at multiple levels. Unlike many others, this programme has not operated under conditions of external bureaucratic accountability, but was developed from a felt sectoral need and an openness on the part of various stakeholders, including the funding body, to experiment with new possibilities. It built its foundations from what was known (an existing organisational model of AR) to launch into the unknown (an incremental and adapted model) and is still in a process of evolution. It aligns with what Hargreaves and Shirley (2009: 94) call a 'Fourth Way' of educational change:

In the Fourth Way, professional learning communities develop curriculum and don't just deliver it. They set ambitious targets together rather than running a furious and frantic race to meet the targets imposed by others.

As our description shows, support from above is vital for effective CPD innovation. Ultimately, however, it is teachers who decide whether to embrace or resist what is on offer. Consequently, we leave the last word to one of the programme's teacher participants:

'The greatest rewards of this programme have evolved over time. Firstly, it has given me the confidence to conduct more research within my organisation and to encourage others to participate. This has led to personal and institutional benefits, which stretch far beyond the original programme. Even though I had taught in various positions since 1988, I had never published nor presented at an industry conference. This year I will be presenting my seventh industry presentation and third piece of collaborative action research since the programme. Furthermore, action research, professional development and conference participation have become synonymous with [my college] in the past two years ... It has had a profound impact on my career.'

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**Differentiating
continuing
professional
development in
a large bi-national
centre in Brazil**



4

Differentiating continuing professional development in a large bi-national centre in Brazil

Isabela Villas Boas

Introduction

This chapter focuses on continuing professional development (CPD) with an emphasis on programmes implemented at an institutional level. CPD has traditionally adopted a one-size-fits-all, standardised, decontextualised, prescriptive, 'fix-it' approach, in which decisions on what needs to be 'developed' are usually top-down and lacking teacher ownership (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). Conversely, visionary professional development (VPD) differentiates teachers and their levels of experience, utilises varied and timely delivery methods, involves teachers in the decision-making process and collective construction of programmes, and is context-specific (ibid, p. 11). In reality, institutions do not move from traditional to visionary professional development overnight. This paradigm shift usually takes time and maturity and so it should be considered a continuum. Maturity itself comes with time and reflection, so initiatives succeed or fail, and new projects are implemented or old ones are approved based on the stakeholders' feedback and the lessons learned.

The chapter describes how a large English Language Teaching (ELT) institute in Brazil has been moving away from a traditional CPD approach, towards a more teacher-centred one, aimed at differentiating CPD to meet teachers' varied needs, personalities and interests, with a view to empowering them. The chapter will not focus on a single innovation, but rather a series of projects that have been slowly implemented throughout the past 12 years, quite organically, to adapt to the changing needs of students and teachers, differentiate professional development and legitimise less traditional professional development activities. It will show the changes that the institution has undergone and how each endeavour has built upon the previous ones and filled the gaps in the institution's continuous professional development system.

Context

I have worked at Casa Thomas Jefferson, the institution which is the focus of this chapter, for 27 years and, in addition to teaching, have held the positions of Course Supervisor and Academic Consultant. I am currently the Academic Superintendent, responsible for implementing CPD projects in the institution in collaboration with

academic co-ordinators and consultants, deputy co-ordinators, course supervisors and teachers themselves. Casa Thomas Jefferson (CTJ) is a 50-year-old, non-profit English Language Teaching (ELT) institute in Brasília, Brazil, with 242 teachers and around 17,000 students of different age and proficiency levels. The institute's courses range from those for 'Very Young Learners' to 'Post-Advanced', and its teachers are mostly non-native speakers with a teaching load of between 20 and 36 hours a week. The table below shows the teachers' number of years in the institution:

Table 1: CTJ teachers' number of years in the institution

No. of years	Percentage of CTJ teachers (n = 242)
1-5	61.5%
6-10	09.5%
11-15	12%
Over 16	17%

Most teachers have been in the institution for five years or less. This is partly due to its expansion in the past five years, resulting in the hiring of more teachers. The newly hired teachers have an average of between one and three years of experience, so we can consider them novices in the field. Thus, there is a growing need to cater to these teachers' needs. In addition, with the lack of sufficient qualified teachers in the job market, the institution has been forced to recruit less qualified teachers and, thus, has to provide more extensive training for them. The country context is important also, as Brazil has been experiencing a boom in demand for English language teaching programmes and there are not enough qualified teachers to fill all the available positions. Moreover, specifically in Brasília, many teachers are choosing to leave the teaching profession to study for public service entrance exams, as the number of such positions has increased tremendously and the salaries and benefits are greater than in teaching. As a result, institutions like the Casa Thomas Jefferson (CTJ), which have very high teacher qualification standards, end up having to provide additional in-house training. Nevertheless, despite the number of less experienced teachers, we must also consider that 25 per cent of the teachers have been in the institution for 11 years or more. These senior teachers have very different needs from the novice ones described above. If we do not differentiate the CPD offered, we will certainly provide professional development opportunities that are not appropriate to their needs and might not stimulate them to grow professionally.

The institution has always focused heavily on professional development and has a yearly teacher appraisal system that comprises the following components:

- Planning
- Instructing
- Learning
- Assessing
- Language, Content, Culture, and Digital Literacy
- Investment in Academic Development
- Professional Attitude and Commitment
- Compliance to Rules and Procedures.

Most of the data for the appraisal is drawn from teacher observations, teacher participation in meetings and events, and teacher contributions in general, by way of feedback to course supervisors, for example. In addition to collecting data on the areas above, evaluators rely on teachers' detailed self-evaluations, where they specify all their professional accomplishments throughout the year.

'Treatment in Academic Development' is one of the standards with the greatest weight in the appraisal system. The traditional professional development programmes offered have been: a) a Teacher Development Programme (equivalent to a TEFL Certificate Programme), offered to CTJ teachers and the teaching community for over 10 years; b) in-service sessions preceding each semester, delivered mostly by academic co-ordinators and supervisors and sometimes by invited teachers or teachers who attended an academic conference and were required to give feedback to the staff; c) isolated talks and workshops offered by specialists sponsored by partner publishers or by the US Department of State's Regional English Language Office; and d) four or five classroom observations a year. Besides engaging in these professional development activities, teachers have been constantly encouraged to participate and present in local, national and international conferences and to complete graduate degrees. In fact, presenting in conferences, finishing a graduate degree and publishing in academic journals are professional development activities highly valued in the teacher appraisal system and recognised in the institution's teacher career plan.

Compared to other institutions, CTJ has always offered substantial professional development opportunities and recognised teachers' engagement in them. However, the programmes described above did little to differentiate among teachers in their varying levels of experience and expertise or to meet their different needs; junior and senior teachers attended the same sessions and received the same treatment in the classroom observation system. We realised that, though our initiatives already recognised teachers as the lifeblood of an effective institution, the direction we were taking was still traditional and top-down. There was a need to differentiate among teachers according to their experience and expertise and to treat them as agents of their own continuing professional development, as presented below.

The innovations and their implementation

I will now describe a series of projects that have contributed to moving the institution away from traditional professional development, towards a more voluntary, teacher-centred type. Each project is directed to a particular group of teachers, with a view to differentiating these professionals and meeting their specific needs. The projects were not the result of a pre-defined plan, but rather, were created organically, as the need arose, based on our reflections upon the results of each project and feedback from the teachers themselves. These initiatives were also the result of our growing understanding of our role as leaders and of what a true learning institution should be like (Villas Boas, 2012). The table below outlines each project described in this chapter, its target group and when it was initiated. All projects continue to exist and some have been revised and improved, while others are still being evaluated.

Table 2: Innovations in CPD at Casa Thomas Jefferson

Projects	Targeted group	Year initiated
TEFL Seminar	All teachers	2001
Mentoring	First-semester teachers; sometimes second-semester ones	2007
Weekly workshops for new teachers	First-semester teachers	2012
Senior Teacher Project	Teachers with over five years in the institution and good evaluation results/trainee teachers	2012
Peer mentoring	Senior teachers who successfully completed the Senior Teacher Project/first-semester teachers	2013
Mini-courses led by teachers	Senior teachers	2013
Blogging	All teachers	2012

a) A local TEFL seminar open to the teaching community

The first movement towards a more teacher-centred approach was the launching of a TEFL Seminar in 2001, allowing teachers the possibility to submit proposals for talks or workshops on topics in which they had expertise. Many of the teachers that today present in international conferences began presenting in the TEFL seminar and received first-time-presenter mentoring from academic co-ordinators or supervisors. The seminar has also offered attending teachers the chance to select what to focus on, rather than being obliged to address a topic that might not interest them, as was typically done in more traditional in-service sessions.

In its earlier iterations, the CTJ TEFL seminar featured presentations given mostly by academic co-ordinators and supervisors and a few senior teachers. More recently, mid-career teachers and even those with fewer than five years in the institution have also submitted proposals and presented at the event. While the experienced teachers' sessions are usually on more philosophical or theoretical topics or research and are attended by their senior colleagues, the less experienced teachers' presentations tend to deal with more practical themes and attract novice teachers. This tendency has contributed to flattening the teacher hierarchy, as teachers don't feel they need to be senior in the institution to become presenters.

Unlike the conferences or seminars carried out by other ELT institutes in the area, the CTJ TEFL seminar is open to the local academic community, so half of the participants are from outside the school. This allows the CTJ teachers the opportunity to expand their professional learning network (PLN) and learn with and from professionals in the community at large. It also gives the presenters more visibility and importance in the community, helping raise their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. The value of the seminars in terms of their impact on novice presenters' self-confidence as well as their research skills is illustrated in the following excerpts.

Presenting for the first time at the CTJ seminar served as a springboard to my professional development. After my first experience as a presenter, I became much more confident and got up the courage to develop more projects and share them with other teachers. Since then, I haven't stopped presenting in local, national as

well as international seminars. To my surprise, I ended up developing a taste for delivering presentations and it all started in a CTJ seminar.

I believe the attendees at CTJ seminars are really demanding. Thus, by presenting in such events, you feel more capable to speak in public and you do have to prepare yourself some time before by reading articles and rehearsing the presentations. Therefore, all the preparation required to develop seminar presentations had a direct impact on my professional development.

The CTJ seminar was indeed my first experience as a presenter. I sent a proposal because I felt I had interesting things to share in relation to the interpersonal dynamics between teacher-students. Presenting at the CTJ seminar contributed to my own reflections about teaching practices; it is always interesting to hear what people have to say about our opinions and experience, and reflect upon them.

Reflections on the implementation of the seminar presentations

The teachers' feedback demonstrates how delivering talks and workshops in the TEFL seminar has boosted their confidence about presenting in other local, national and even international events. On the other hand, a drawback of our policy to encourage new presenters to send proposals for the CTJ TEFL seminar is that sometimes, despite the mentoring provided, the presentations are below the standards of others generally, as demonstrated by participants in their seminar evaluation surveys. The mentoring provided to first-time presenters or second-time presenters who need more support thus needs to be more consistent and standardised.

6.1 A mentoring system for newly hired teachers

Newly hired teachers in the institution, whether they are novice in the profession or not, have needs that are different from those of other teachers. Before 2003, first-semester teachers received very little orientation and they adapted to the institution by seeking help from colleagues, co-ordinators and supervisors if and when they wished to do so. In 2003, the institution assigned a professional to be responsible for coaching first-semester teachers, engaging in purely formative, multiple classroom observations. Nevertheless, the number of teachers made it impossible for this single professional to give newly hired teachers all the assistance they needed. Besides, she also had other duties and was involved in the teacher evaluation system, a combination of obligations not considered compatible or appropriate for a mentor (Costa and Garmston, 2002, as cited in Diaz-Maggioli, 2004).

It was not until 2007 that a consistent mentoring system was implemented.

A distinctive characteristic is that it is carried out by three professionals whose only role is to support teachers, so they are not involved in any aspect of teacher appraisal, a crucial requisite for a mentor (Portner, 2008, as cited by Nogueira, 2010). These three professionals are former teachers and academic co-ordinators who have retired from the institution and been hired as consultants. When the mentors find the need for intervention, they adopt different strategies, such as asking the mentees to observe more experienced peers, record their own classes or engage in other sorts of reflective teaching (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001). As the newly hired teachers progress, fewer and fewer observations are made, until they are ready to be part of the mainstream observation system.

However, there is differentiation even within the mentoring system. Not all newly hired teachers are inexperienced or have the same needs. Some are immediately perceived as highly qualified and experienced, and participate in the mentoring system for only a short time. Others might need mentoring that may go beyond one semester. Some teachers seek help from their former mentors when they encounter a new challenge, sometimes even two or three semesters after the mentoring has formally ended. This demonstrates the academic and emotional bond between the mentor and the mentee that is also expressed in these statements collected by Nogueira (2011: 142–144):

Having someone work so closely with you is like having a thousand eyes to see what's going on during classes and this is what makes the coaching process so profitable for parties, the coach and the coachee. During and after the coaching period, I could see my improvement and changes in behaviour, attitudes, actions, etc.

The best part of the coaching process was the support I got from my coach. I mean, I felt like she saw me as a person and was able to support me way beyond pedagogical matters.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring provided in the institution, a survey was conducted with 15 of the 16 teachers hired in the second semester of 2013. Among the 15 teachers, 11 have up to five years of experience, one has between six and ten, two have between 11 and 15, and only one between 16 and 20 years of experience. The survey consisted of four statements to which respondents reacted by marking a number on a Likert scale of 1–5, 1 meaning 'totally disagree' and 5 meaning 'totally agree'. The table below presents the average of the responses to each statement.

Table 3: Survey about the mentoring system

Statement	Average
The mentoring system was important for my adaptation to the institution.	4.6
The mentoring system was important for my development as a teacher.	4.7
I felt supported by my mentor.	4.8
I learned something new from my mentor.	4.7

Most newly hired teachers strongly agreed with all the statements, demonstrating the importance of the mentoring for their adaptation to the institution and for their continuing professional development. The system also proved effective in providing newly hired teachers with the emotional support they need to acculturate into a new institution. When asked how they had felt when told they would have a mentor, ten teachers reported having felt safe, happy or excited about the experience, while five had a negative first reaction, illustrated by the following comments:

I felt like I had to report all my steps to someone, which was a little weird at first, because I had never needed to do that.

I felt a bit afraid, as I didn't know what to expect from them but it ended up being a great experience.

I felt a bit nervous at the beginning because I thought I was going to be evaluated. However, once I understood the system, I felt I could really benefit from it.

However, these five changed their opinions along the way and all 15 corroborated Nogueira's (2011) findings by mentioning these positive points of the mentoring system:

It helps with the adaptation into the school, both pedagogically and professionally; it gives a feeling of safety knowing someone's there for you.

It really makes teachers feel supported, since they have a chance to improve before actually being evaluated.

Knowing that you're not being judged or assessed counts a lot to build rapport with coaches and the company team.

I can ask for help; dealing with difficult situations gets easier because you know where to find support.

Reflections on the implementation of the mentoring system

The mentoring system has indeed fulfilled its objective of providing newly hired teachers' methodological and emotional support so that they can adapt smoothly to the institution and teaching standards can be upheld. Nevertheless, we still found there were gaps in our teacher induction system resulting from the fact that the mentors are no longer teachers and, thus, may sometimes be unable to offer level-oriented recommendations and tips. Also, the mentors' heavy load doesn't allow them to provide more in-depth orientation on a topic about which mentees might lack knowledge (i.e. teaching writing). These gaps led to the creation of weekly sessions for first-semester teachers, described below, and a peer mentor system, described in Section E. Our evaluation of the mentoring system and the feedback from teachers were fundamental in the creation of these other induction programmes, emphasising the organic nature of the initiatives in the sense that each new project is developed based upon lessons learned from other projects underway.

o Weekly sessions for first-semester teachers

In 2012, the institution expanded its new teacher induction programme and added two-hour weekly workshops for first-semester teachers. These sessions are focused on pedagogical and bureaucratic aspects that the mentors, the other observers and the new teachers themselves felt were not fully attended to in the mentoring system. The programme's goal is also to create a learning community among the newly hired teachers to foster mutual support and reduce anxiety.

The programme lasts one semester and is part of teachers' weekly workload. Though teacher induction is not an innovation per se, this particular scheme is innovative in Brazil, as it is very rare for institutions to sustain a semester-long, two-hour-a-week teacher-training programme for newly hired teachers who are not fully paid to engage in it. At the outset of the programme, we selected topics based on an analysis of second-semester teachers' observation reports and the identification of recurrent problems in these teachers' classes. The second semester was chosen for the analysis because that is when teachers do not have a mentor any more, enabling us to identify aspects that the mentoring might not be attending to and focus on them in the weekly training. While a tentative schedule is made in the beginning of the semester, it can be changed along the way to meet the specific group's needs, as identified by the mentors, supervisors, coordinator and sometimes even the teachers themselves. Course supervisors

and senior teachers who have presented workshops on the designated topics deliver the sessions. Table 4 records the topics addressed in the induction carried out in the first semester of 2013, after the pilot in the second semester of 2012 and subsequent adjustments.

Table 4: Weekly workshops

Topics
Learning styles
Teaching grammar in a communicative context
Teaching writing
Teaching reading
Pair work
Teaching very young learners
The brain and language learning
Setting clear objectives for your lesson
Technology in the classroom
Movie segments to assess grammar goals
(based on a co-ordinator's internationally acclaimed blog)

At the end of the semester we distributed a questionnaire to all participants, asking for feedback on the relevance of the sessions, suggestions for other topics to address and insights into whether the programme had enhanced collaboration among newly hired teachers. The topic considered most relevant by all 25 participants was *Setting clear objectives for your lesson*. Suggestions of topics to add were *Classroom management*, *Games in the classroom* and *Dealing with the institution's paperwork*. This feedback helped us confirm that new teachers want more down-to-earth, practical training, on topics related to their day-to-day activities in the classroom and that can be applied immediately.

Regarding the goal of strengthening bonds between newly hired teachers, the feedback provided in the questionnaires was very positive. Below are four responses that depict the main ideas expressed by all 25 teachers:

The sessions definitely helped us teachers develop a collaboration spirit among ourselves. I felt like we all stuck together in order to overcome the difficulties that each one of us had.

Interpersonal relationships were strengthened, which makes it easier to share experiences, both positive and negative.

The training helped me have a sense of belonging and become integrated into the school. It created a close-knit group of people who felt they were in the same boat.

The teachers were given an environment in which they could know each other better and feel comfortable about clarifying doubts with each other, as well as sharing ideas and solutions for issues.

Reflections on the creation of the weekly sessions for newly hired teachers

The weekly workshops are now in their third semester and, since they were implemented, there has been no teacher attrition between the first and second semesters, as there used to be in the past, even in the middle of the first semester itself. It is still too soon to establish a definitive relationship between the two factors, and we're in the process of collecting data from second-semester observations of teachers who didn't undergo this induction, as compared to those who did, to ascertain whether there were significant concrete gains. As Mann (2005) emphasises, the outcomes of teacher training or education programmes need to be measured.

(d) An observation waiver for senior teachers with high scores on their yearly evaluations and an optional Senior Teacher Project

As mentioned in the Context section, the institution conducts a yearly teacher appraisal. Data for the more classroom-oriented standards are collected by way of between four and five classroom observations a year. Until 2012, novice teachers were observed five times a year and all the others four times, regardless of their years of experience or performance in previous evaluations. Thus, while there was differentiation between novice and non-novice teachers, there wasn't any distinction between, for example, a struggling second-year teacher or a constantly well-appraised 20-year teacher.

According to Huberman (1989, as cited in Diaz-Maggioli, 2004), teachers go through five phases in their professional development: exploration, stabilisation, commitment, diversification and serenity or distancing. In each stage, a crisis needs to be resolved. In stage 3, teachers are faced with a professional identity crisis and resolve it by either confirming their commitment to teaching or by moving into administrative positions or teacher education, or leaving the profession altogether. The institution can help teachers confirm their commitment to teaching by making them feel recognised. To this end, in order to differentiate teachers' different levels of expertise and performance, the Senior Teacher Project was created in 2012. Teachers with over five years of experience in the institution and evaluation points above a pre-determined cut-off point are now observed three rather than four times a year and, in lieu of an observation, can choose (or not) to engage in one of three proposed projects, one of them being observing a trainee teacher. Allowing teachers two levels of choice – whether to engage in the project or not and which type of project to engage in – is one of the strongest aspects of the Senior Teacher Project, as it is in keeping with contemporary teacher development principles (Mann, 2005).

The work with a trainee teacher is particularly empowering because it repositions senior teachers as teacher developers, a role that before this project was mostly performed by academic co-ordinators, deputy co-ordinators and supervisors, and very rarely and informally by other teachers, on the infrequent and irregular occasions when they were asked to help a fellow colleague.

The project is in its third semester of implementation. Table 5 summarises how many teachers were invited to participate in the second semester of 2012 and the first semester of 2013, how many actually concluded it and which of the three alternatives was chosen.

Table 5: Senior Teacher Project

Period	No. of teachers invited	Peer observation	Observing a trainee teacher	Reflective teaching	Total number of participants
2/2012	26	3	10	1	14 (54%)
1/2013	24	2	6	1	09 (37.5%)

As participation was on a volunteer basis, not all senior teachers chose to engage in the project. The percentage of participation in the second semester of 2012 (54 per cent) was much higher than in the first semester of 2013 (37.5 per cent). Fifty teachers were selected for the observation waiver, 26 in one semester and 24 in the subsequent one. The first 26 were the teachers with the highest evaluation scores, suggesting that these teachers are indeed more committed to the institution and to continuing professional development, an item with considerable weight in the evaluation and that certainly led them to obtain such high results.

It is intriguing that most teachers chose to engage in the observation of trainee teachers, rather than in peer observation or reflective teaching/exploratory practice. Perhaps they felt more comfortable in the role of a more experienced observer than in that of an observer on an equal footing with the peer. Self-observation and reflection was the least chosen option, suggesting that the institution's teachers might not feel comfortable engaging in exploratory practice and that this is an aspect that needs to be worked on. Alternatively, they might prefer collaborative options rather than more individual, self-directed ones.

One of the 12 teachers who did not participate in this specific project explained that he had preferred to focus on his professional development goal for the year – writing regularly for his blog dedicated to practical activities for mobile learning. Indeed, this particular teacher wrote regular blog posts and presented in several conferences during the year, with due recognition in his evaluation. The fact that this teacher proposed a fourth alternative to the project demonstrates his confidence in the flexibility of the institution and its attempt to meet the teachers' CPD needs and desires, rather than impose a single route. This corroborates Underhill's (1999) proposition that teacher development is self-directed but can be more effective when supported by the institution. An electronic survey was sent to all 21 teachers who participated in the Senior Teacher Project and 17 responded. When asked why they had chosen to participate, since the project was on a volunteer basis, some of the reasons presented were:

It was an opportunity to reflect on my own teaching.

I could give something back to the institution.

It would be an opportunity for learning from my peers.

They all reported very positive gains from the experience, as this statement from one of the senior teachers explains:

I had one of the most interesting challenges of my career. Actually, I believe it is not easy to be in the observer's shoes because it requires hard work and critical thinking to analyse the positive and negative aspects of a class. In this project,

not only have I obtained information about this type of work but also I have seen new perspectives to enrich my own teaching style.

Reflections on implementation of the observation waiver

We must not ignore the fact that only 45.7 percent of the teachers invited actually carried out the project. Our next goal, then, is to investigate their reasons for not pursuing the project. Some might be engaged in other projects, as with the teacher described above. Others might be too occupied with alternative personal engagements. However, there might be a group who would be willing to carry out another type of project but who, unlike the teacher described above, might think that the only options are the three presented. We plan to emphasise that the teachers can propose a fourth alternative that best suits their needs, encouraging self-direction.

Expanding the Senior Teacher Project – senior teachers as peer mentors

With a view to providing novice teachers with the chance to receive feedback from more experienced colleagues rather than only from the official mentors, a new peer mentoring project has just been piloted in the institution, whereby 13 of the 17 teachers who participated in the Senior Teacher Project were invited to help mentor the newly hired teachers, this time receiving financial compensation. Selecting only the ones who had actually completed the previous project was a means of rewarding them for their effort and also guaranteeing that the project would actually be implemented in a timely manner, as they had shown ability to meet deadlines.

The peer mentoring also aimed at engaging senior teachers in a meaningful professional development activity and recognising their expertise and capacity to help the institution train newly hired professionals. In an electronic survey sent to all peer mentors and answered by ten of them, the peer mentors responded that they felt *proud, recognised, valued, trusted* and *honoured* to have been invited to take part in the project, providing evidence that this goal was reached.

Regarding the primary goal of the project, most new teachers recognised the benefits of this additional mentor to their development in the first semester in the institution, as is shown in the survey results summarised in Table 6. Just like the survey about the coaches/mentors, this survey about the peer mentors consisted of four statements to which respondents reacted by marking a number on a Likert scale of 1–5, 1 meaning ‘totally disagree’ and 5 meaning ‘totally agree’. This survey was completed by 12 teachers, as the other three did not have a peer mentor because of their level of experience. Thus, there was differentiation even in determining who needed a peer mentor besides the official mentors, and who didn’t.

Table 6: Survey about the peer mentoring system

Statement	Average
The peer mentoring system was important for my adaptation in the institution.	4.16
The peer mentoring system was important for my development as a teacher.	4.42
I felt supported by my peer mentor.	4.16
I learned something new from my peer mentor.	4.25

Of the 12 teachers, nine had very positive experiences with their peer mentors, had praise for the programme and were able to identify its benefits. Three teachers commented that the peer mentor made them feel more comfortable because they were peers. Another one mentioned that it was beneficial to share experiences with someone engaged in teachers' ongoing, in-class reality (since the coach/mentors are not teaching anymore). Two respondents pointed out that they felt that the mentor/coaches' role was to provide them with a more general view, while the peer mentors provided them with the specifics:

Mentors can help fine-tuning your lesson plans; they are aware of current classroom situations.

It was really enlightening, hands-on work; assistance for class planning.

The mentees' responses corroborate the positive aspects of the project enumerated by the peer mentors, some of which are presented below:

Newcomers are welcomed by experienced teachers who are not supposed to evaluate them. There is a lot of sharing and we, hopefully, help them to lower their anxiety.

It gives senior teachers a chance to share what they know; it connects senior teachers and new teachers in a professional way; it places commitment to training on senior teachers' shoulders; it values the expertise of senior teachers; it gives new teachers the opportunity of bonding with experienced professionals; it gives senior teachers the opportunity of reflecting on their own teaching; it exposes senior teachers to different teaching styles.

I believe this project is really positive to people who want to become teachers here. The mentoring project really enriches people's teaching and gives them maturity to face challenges regarding their professional life. Therefore, I only see positive aspects in this project and I hope it continues.

However, three teachers did not have such a good experience with the mentoring system, as shown in their ratings for the statements (3 or below) and in their comments:

I was observed once by the mentor; she never gave suggestions nor sent me a report or something similar. I felt disappointed.

I only met with my mentor once and we didn't have much contact, so the process didn't actually work as a process. It was not continued.

I didn't think they actually gave me the feedback I was expecting. What they told me wasn't exactly relevant. The teachers involved should be more understanding, more interested.

Peer mentors also pointed out the drawbacks of the project:

Maybe mentors could meet their mentees in the end of the term to talk and wrap up the semester with them. It could be a frank talk about how things were along the semester.

Perhaps a clearer idea of what is hoped for from the teacher being observed – what behaviour and attitude the institution is looking for from newcomers.

I felt I had to observe the class one more time to see if the suggestions were put into practice ... But I don't know how practical this would be due to time constraints.

Reflections on the implementation of the peer mentoring project

It is evident that the new peer mentoring system needs to be fine-tuned so that the teachers selected to perform this task understand more clearly what is expected of them and so that they can be trained as mentors and develop a 'mentor mindset' (Millwater and Yarrow, 1997, as cited in Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). The system also needs to allow for more observations on the part of the peer mentor.

0) Mini-courses led by teachers on topics chosen by teachers

Since 2011, the in-service programme has included mini-courses focused on a number of current topics, for which teachers register according to their needs and interests. We chose to introduce mini-courses in our in-service sessions in order to counterbalance the types of sessions in the TEFL seminar, in which teachers attend a number of shorter talks and workshops on a variety of topics.

The first two rounds of mini-courses were conducted by supervisors and coordinators, and were on topics selected by us, according to our perceptions from teacher observations. They were, thus, a type of more traditional, top-down professional development initiative, though teachers were able to attend the mini-course of their choice.

With a view to personalising the mini-courses and empowering teachers, the next round, carried out in January 2013, adopted a bottom-up approach and moved us closer to visionary teacher development. First, we sent a survey to teachers, inquiring about topics for mini-courses and also asking who would be willing to conduct one and on which topic. With the list of most commonly suggested topics and volunteers to conduct mini-courses, we matched the topics to the presenters and selected other teachers that had not volunteered but had expertise in the theme.

These were the topics of the mini-courses:

- Mobile learning
- Classroom management
- Teaching grammar
- Teaching writing
- Teaching pronunciation
- Learning difficulties
- Teaching teens
- Task design and digital literacy
- Online teaching and learning
- Teaching young learners.

We paired up presenters for each mini-course, so as to encourage collaboration. Among the selected mini-course presenters were senior teachers who had not participated in the Senior Teacher Project. Thus, they were presented with another

option for engagement in the development of their peer teachers and in their own development. The mini-course participants, in their turn, were given the chance to choose the mini-course they wanted to attend, based on their personal needs and interests. In sum, the mini-courses were delivered by the teachers, on topics generated by the teachers, and were so successful that we were asked to repeat the same mini-course offering in January 2014.

Reflections on the implementation of mini-courses led by teachers

We are still unable to assess the effectiveness of each mini-course, as we did not conduct evaluations in the first round. We will do so in the upcoming mini-courses. Informally, though, we have been approached by many teachers praising the initiative and asking that it be repeated in subsequent in-service sessions.

g) Blogging

Another recent initiative in promoting continuous professional development and amplifying the types of CPD activities was the expansion of the school blog, called CTJ Connected, where teachers can post reflections, lesson plans, book reviews, conference notes or anything else connected to their work. The blog was initiated in 2006, but until 2012 most of the posts were written by the educational technology supervisor and monitors. To change this paradigm, the blog was re-launched and all teachers were invited to contribute. Its expansion and democratisation occurred right after Jeremy Harmer's participation in our TEFL Seminar in July 2012. To open the blog, we collected questions composed by different teachers for an interview with Harmer and published the interview in September 2012 (<http://ctjconnected.blogspot.com.br/2012/09/jeremyharmer.html>). There were a total of 11 questions by 11 different teachers.

Participation in the blog is on a volunteer basis and there are no pre-established topics, though teachers are sometimes personally encouraged to write about specific topics that we know they are working with, or to narrate a positive experience with a new technology such as iPads. Cross-posts from teachers' blogs are also encouraged and teachers who receive grants to participate in conferences are asked to write a post about the conference in general or a specific talk or workshop. In fact, the institution has a number of well-known bloggers with large professional learning networks and has recognised their work as an important investment in professional development, just like other more formal initiatives such as writing an article for a journal or presenting at a conference. The task of sharing new developments in the field no longer belongs only to the academic coordinators and supervisors, or invited specialists, but rather to whoever claims their space as teacher developers by way of their blogging, for example.

Nonetheless, not everyone has the time or energy to write regularly for their own blog, so the CTJ Connected Blog is a means to give teachers a chance to write blog posts rather than have their own blog per se. It also gives more introverted professionals the opportunity to share their experiences in a more comfortable manner than, for example, presenting workshops.

Between the re-launch of the blog in September 2012 and November 2013, there were 40 posts by 24 teachers and a total of 8,418 views. Most posts were about mobile learning, a new trend in the field and in our institution, while others were about formative assessment, professional development, using L1 in the classroom and reports on conference talks or workshops attended. The most popular post was a collection of suggestions of first-day-of-class activities, given by various teachers, with over 700 views. The second most popular was about the use of productivity tools for teachers, with over 600 views. The least popular, with only 54 views, was a book recommendation.

Reflections on the implementation of the school blog

Despite the blog's success, as measured by the number of views, the goal of expanding the blog has been only partially reached, as just 24 teachers have published posts in it. We are planning to send teachers more frequent reminders about the blog and encourage them to write short and simple posts about activities that have been successful in their classes. We are also planning to include more posts in which various teachers can provide short contributions, such as the one-once breakers for the beginning of the school year.

Summing up the projects: evaluation and reflection

The purpose of implementing each of the projects described above was to cater for different teachers' needs and offer varied opportunities for continuing professional development for teachers at different stages in their careers, rather than a single, top-down option. The projects targeting more experienced teachers also aimed to promote differentiation and provide multiple alternatives. The projects were not created all at the same time; they were generated at different moments as gaps were perceived and the need to cater for different audiences arose. In fact, development of the projects has been an organic process. Table 7 summarises the strengths and weaknesses of each of the seven innovations aimed at differentiating CPD at Casa Thomas Jefferson, as well as solutions to overcome the weaknesses, some of which have already been implemented.

Table 7: Strengths, weaknesses and future solutions for the innovations

Projects	Strengths	Weaknesses	Solutions
TELL Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered by teachers to teachers. Encouragement for first-time presenters. Topics chosen by presenters. Opportunity to share with a wider community. Feeling of self-worth. Springboard for other presentations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of presentations is not homogeneous, especially in the case of first-time presenters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the mentoring provided to first-time presenters. Provide mentoring to presenters who received negative evaluations.

Projects	Strengths	Weaknesses	Solutions
Mentoring	Reduces new teachers' anxiety. Not seen as punitive or evaluative. Helps guarantee teaching standards.	Mentors are not teaching anymore. Mentors don't have time for more in-depth orientation on particular topics.	Peer mentoring Workshops on topics that need in-depth focus.
Weekly workshops for new teachers	In-depth focus on practical topics. Create a learning community among new teachers.	Some of the topics did not attend to teachers' immediate needs.	Revision of topics, based on teachers' feedback.
Senior Teacher Project	Recognition of senior teachers' expertise. Opportunity to engage in teacher development. Opportunity to observe peers and/or engage in self-reflection.	Fewer than half of the senior teachers have engaged in it.	Present other project alternatives.
Peer mentoring	Recognition of senior teachers' expertise. Feeling of self-worth and importance for the institution.	Not homogeneously carried out.	Provide training to peer mentors.
Mini-courses	Topics chosen by teachers. Delivered by teachers.	Not evaluated.	Include mini-course evaluations.
Blogging	Opportunity for more introverted teachers who don't like to present. Opportunity to connect with educators from around the world. Varied types of posts.	Only 24 teachers have contributed so far (excluding the two collective posts).	Encourage more teachers to write posts. Encourage shorter and more practical posts.

The strengths of the projects outweigh the weaknesses, and teachers' feedback has been very positive, particularly regarding the growing recognition of senior teachers' expertise and capacity to aid novice teachers in their development. The projects can be considered more characteristic of visionary professional development, as they differentiate among teachers and their levels of experience, utilise varied and timely delivery methods, involve teachers in the decision-making process and collective construction of programmes, and are context specific, the criteria set forth by Diaz-Maggioli (2004). Agency and choice are the key features of the projects.

developers in the institution, namely the Academic Superintendent and her staff (comprised of academic co-ordinators, deputy co-ordinators, supervisors and the initially involved mentors). Teachers did contribute to the execution of each project and in making choices within what was proposed, but not to their creation. In order to move even closer to visionary professional development, teachers themselves need to be involved in the designing of the projects, our next goal.

Another goal is to develop a study to assess the concrete impact of the various projects on teachers' performance and engagement in professional development. There is anecdotal evidence that the mentoring, peer mentoring and weekly workshops have helped improve new teachers' performance in the school, but it needs to be formally verified. Likewise, there is evidence that senior teachers who had reached a plateau in their careers and who participated in the Senior Teacher Project, presented a mini-course or wrote for the blog have become more motivated and more positively engaged with the institution. Nevertheless, a formal study needs to be conducted to verify these claims.

Lessons learned: transferability to other contexts

Despite the fact that the innovations at CTJ were implemented in a specific context, the concept of differentiating continuing professional development and adopting more teacher-centred CPD policies and programmes can be transferred to other contexts. Though it is true that teacher-centred professional development is context specific and it behoves each institution to design their own CPD projects, based on their particular needs, some key principles still apply:

- Teachers at different career levels have distinct needs: novice teachers need more practical, down-to-earth training, mid-career teachers need to be given choices and senior teachers need new challenges.
- One way to challenge senior teachers is to engage them in the development of their novice peers.
- Senior teachers feel valued and respected when they are engaged in differentiated professional development activities.
- New teachers in an institution adapt more easily and perform better when they are part of a learning community. Weekly workshops on topics dealing with these teachers' immediate needs, combined with mentoring, help build confidence and reduce anxiety.
- An institutional blog to which any teacher can contribute gives professionals a different type of opportunity to share knowledge and caters for the needs of those who are not inclined to give talks or present workshops but who have ideas to share.
- Choice is of utmost importance in any continuing professional development endeavour: choice of topics to address, choice of presenters and even choice of projects in which to engage.

... and collaboration with the wider ELT community. Seminars, webinars and blogs are a means of achieving this goal.

- Agency is of utmost importance in visionary professional development. Teachers need to be able to propose projects that are in keeping with their goals and interests, rather than merely adhere to pre-established ones.
- The institution has to implement a CPD evaluation system, with surveys, focus groups and individual interviews to assess the programmes' effectiveness, and compile suggestions for future projects.

Conclusion

This article described seven initiatives in an ELT institute in Brazil aimed at embracing teacher-centred professional development so as to cater for teachers' individual needs. By strengthening the support provided to newly hired teachers and involving senior teachers in this endeavour, making them co-responsible for the success of the new teachers' induction, the institution has invested in its academic sustainability. Also, by expanding CPD opportunities, involving teachers in the decision-making process and stimulating collaboration among teachers, the institution has moved closer to visionary professional development. While academic co-ordinators, course supervisors and other academic consultants are still major agents in CPD, they are no longer the sole planners or providers of CPD. Teachers now have a more central role in determining what the topics to be addressed are, who will address them, and how. Teachers are also now true agents of their own development, as not only are they able to choose the projects they want to engage in, but they are given the liberty to propose other projects, as was the case of the teacher who wanted to create his own blog. In the future we will take ever more steps towards visionary professional development with teachers as initiators of their own forms of CPD, in collaboration with academic managers. In this way we hope all stakeholders will be able to contribute to the continuing professional development of our institution as a whole.

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**Teacher-research
as continuing
professional
development:
a project with
Chilean secondary
school teachers**

Teacher-research as continuing professional development: a project with Chilean secondary school teachers

Richard Smith, Tom Connelly and Paula Rebolledo

Introduction

The 'Champion Teachers' project described in this chapter was funded by the British Council in Chile and endorsed (*patrocinado*) by the Chilean Ministry of Education (PIAP/Mineduc). The project was initially conceived by Tom Connelly (British Council Chile) and was managed with advice from Richard Smith (University of Warwick, UK). The third author of this chapter, Paula Rebolledo, was increasingly also involved as an adviser to the project, and, from half-way through, was employed as a mentor to some of the secondary school teachers involved, taking up this role alongside Catherine Thomas, Kevin Towl and Anne Westmacott – all university teachers in Chile – who had been selected as mentors before the project began. The project ran from January to December 2013.

The project's main objectives were to encourage and support a cohort of secondary school English teachers in Chile in (1) identifying problematic issues or 'puzzles' as well as successes in their practice, and (2) designing and carrying out small-scale classroom research projects to develop a better understanding of those issues and find practical solutions to them. Another explicit goal was to develop the project coordinators' own understanding of the feasibility of promoting teacher-research as a means of professional development in the Chilean secondary school context, with a view to further possible iterations of the project. We treated this as a pilot project, which, given its innovative nature, could potentially have wider implications for in-service teacher development in Chile but also beyond – in other Latin American countries, and in contexts further afield.⁸

For more on the initial intentions and hopes we had for the project see the 10 minute video and link to further information here: <https://www.facebook.com/BritishCouncilChile/posts/608683645828475> For further background and reports connected with the project (including teachers' own interim and final reports), see: <https://championteachers.weebly.com/>

As this chapter will aim to clarify, the project was innovative – both in the Chilean context and in the wider field – in several important respects:

(1) It placed teacher-research at centre stage within an in-service CPD intervention, relying on *intrinsic* not instrumental motivation, since participation was *voluntary* and not qualification-oriented.

(2) It targeted public or semi-public *secondary school* teachers facing large classes (40+ students), very busy schedules (often around 40 hours of direct teaching contact per week) and other difficult circumstances.

(3) It was a relatively *large-scale* and *long-term* project for its type (with the potential to support a maximum of 80 teachers over a period of one year).

(4) The *type of research* teachers were encouraged to engage in was of a particular kind; in recognition, partly, of the difficulties teachers would face in finding time to do research, the notion of *exploratory* action research was developed and promoted at the initial seminar, whereby teachers were encouraged to engage first in extensive *exploration* of problematic issues via means which would not interfere with their everyday teaching, and only later were they guided optionally to consider trying to 'solve' problems by implementing and evaluating new plans.

(5) Finally, an innovative approach was also adopted towards the development as well as the content of the programme; rather than all steps being determined in advance, a relatively *self-reflective, process-oriented* stance was adopted with regard to planning and development: thus, an exploratory/action research orientation informed the ongoing design of the programme as well as the projects engaged in by teachers.

Context

Opting to study to become an English teacher at a university in Chile following graduation does not promise a particularly bright future as far as income and status are concerned. In addition, the conditions facing public or semi-public school teachers can be very demanding, with 38 hours per week of direct contact teaching and classes of 40 students being the norm. There are historical reasons for the relatively low status of school teaching: during the Pinochet years (1973–89), teaching was regarded as one of a number of 'subversive' professions, and many good teachers were removed from their posts on political grounds. The subsequent freezing of salaries, consistent under-investment in state sector education and outsourcing of public school administration to municipalities meant that by the time the transition to democracy occurred in 1990, teaching had become an unattractive option for school leavers contemplating future careers. Through no fault of their own, there are many qualified English teachers whose grasp of the language is at best rudimentary and who consider it normal to deliver the whole class in Spanish using a methodology akin to Grammar-Translation. Meanwhile, in the state sector at least, problems of demoralisation remain, with many teachers appearing reluctant to participate in professional development programmes. These are some of the challenges facing the present and future Chilean governments.

Why, then, was it felt that attempting to engage state school teachers in action research – in counterpoint to other forms of teacher development which have already been tried in this context – could be a way out of the situation of very difficult teaching conditions, widespread demoralisation and traditional pedagogies that we have been describing? As we have indicated, the project was originally conceived by Tom Connelly, whose 13-year experience of English teacher training work in Chile had led him to the conclusion that in-service English teacher training (henceforth, INSETT) in this context tends to be very top-down in the sense of focus and content being dictated by the educational authorities. He had also seen that INSETT programmes delivered nationally have tended to involve isolated, one-off efforts, which have proved to be unsustainable with regard to long-term benefits for the participating teachers. Teachers themselves have little or no input into the INSETT offered to them, and what they do receive is often quickly forgotten once they return to their schools. The scant in-service training teachers receive fails to take into account the realities of the difficult circumstances they face – rather than being contextually oriented, the contents of training have tended to be governed by fashionable methodologies and technologies imported from the outside.

Thus, the implementation of generic, one-size-fits-all forms of INSETT has been problematic, as can be illustrated with an example of 'unsustainable' practice within a project which Tom was himself involved in managing. This was the so-called 'Recoleta Project', an ambitious ICT and ELT initiative delivered from 2008 to 2011 in a large municipal primary school in Recoleta, Santiago. One strand of the project entailed the installation and implementation of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) in each of the 24 classrooms in the school. All teachers (42 in total) received basic technical instruction in use of the technology, and the four English teachers also received 15 hours of instruction in designing materials using the software associated with the brand of IWB chosen. Two months after the training was completed only one of the English teachers (a self-confessed technophile) was actually using the IWB in her lessons, but even she was not designing lesson materials using the IWB software, as in her words, she: *'simply did not have time nor interest to do so'*. The other three English teachers claimed that the IWBs never worked properly so they had given up using them altogether. After four months many of the IWBs had been covered with student work or class notices and were no longer used at all. This case conforms with the common phenomenon (in this context) of a top-down project that fails to be based on an analysis of whether or not the project goals are relevant and realistic to the contexts of those it is aiming to help. In Tom's experience, the top-down approach adopted was highly symptomatic of in-service English teacher training more generally in the public education system in Chile.

Being essentially teacher-originated and teacher-directed (though potentially scaffolded by mentors) can be viewed as a defining feature of CPD. These factors are also key to taking English teacher in-service development to a new level of relevance in the Chilean context in terms of appropriateness to context and sustainability. With such issues of context and sustainability in mind, the promotion of voluntary teacher action research presented itself as a logical option for fulfilling needs for an innovative, bottom-up approach to CPD with in-service Chilean teachers.

Unsurprisingly, very little teacher-research seems to have been carried out previously by Chilean teachers in schools, perhaps due to teachers learning little or nothing about teacher-research in the course of their pre-service training; secondly, no in-service 'culture' of teacher-research has been fostered at either local or at national level by educational administrators. In short, there is little awareness of the potential of teacher-research as a tool for solving problems or as a useful CPD activity among English teachers in Chile.

It needs to be recognised, of course, that the very same conditions that make teacher-research an attractive 'solution' constitute potential barriers that can prevent many teachers from engaging in self-directed inquiry, including time constraints, negative attitudes towards research and perceived deficiencies in research ability. Such barriers have previously been identified in Chile in relation to a rare professional development programme that included an action research component. As Rebolledo's (2013) analysis shows, the project failed to teach teachers about action research or have any impact on teachers' professional development. The overloaded schedules of teachers, the fact that their participation was not voluntary, the lack of support from tutors and an overly academic framework conspired against the efficacy of the initiative (*ibid.*). Knowing about this project, and expecting to face numerous difficulties, we were not overly optimistic about the success of our own initiative. However, we did believe that there were ways an appropriate teacher-research support programme could be envisaged and that it would be worth trying, exploring and reflecting upon such an attempt given the failure of previous INSETT initiatives in this context, and the known potential of action research to *empower* teachers. We were also encouraged by a recent study by Ávalos and Sotomayor (2012), who found, within a sample of 1,929 primary and secondary teachers, that Chilean teachers tend to have a deep sense of vocation and commitment to the learning of their students – a 'strong sense of mission' (p. 85) which 'explains not only why they chose teaching but also why they remain in practice, despite the pay and conditions recognised as adverse.' (*ibid.*) We hoped, then, to discover and tap into positive possibilities in this context in spite of recognised constraints.

The innovation

A shift from a transmissive, input-led and training-based paradigm to a more transformative and developmental CPD perspective entails that teachers should be supported to initiate and manage their own development through the ongoing examination of their practices (Burns, 2005; Richards and Farrell, 2005). In this connection, there has been an increasing number of publications that discuss and favour the integration of CPD with teacher-initiated research (TR), but, still, teacher engagement with or in research is not usually viewed as an integral part of continuing professional development initiatives, particularly outside universities. Nevertheless, the TR movement shares similar motivations to the CPD tradition, and systematic inquiry initiated and carried out by teachers into their own practice can be viewed as a particularly 'strong' form of CPD.

TR can be defined as a form of practitioner research whereby 'classroom practitioners at any level, from preschool to tertiary [...] are involved individually or collaboratively in self-motivated and self-generated systematic and informed inquiry undertaken with a view to enhancing their vocation as professional educators.' (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004: 9) This definition lays emphasis on the idea that TR is teacher-initiated and is aimed at assisting teachers to improve their practice for the benefit of their own professional growth. In other words, TR helps practitioners to explore the teaching and learning processes taking place in their own classrooms with a view to their making more informed pedagogical decisions.

Freeman (1998: 13) claims that TR was in the past a foreign activity for teachers and that they 'have left it to others to define the knowledge that forms the official basis of teaching'. TR entails a change in the former, relatively passive role of teachers to a more active, reflective, knowing and problem-solving one. Thus, systematic inquiry initiated and carried out by teachers can be seen as a particularly empowering form of CPD, particularly if such exploration is conducted by teachers in their own classroom contexts, about issues of immediate concern. This sense of empowerment has been reported in a number of previous studies, taking the form of increased self-awareness, improved teaching practice, informed problem-solving, and personal and professional growth (Atay, 2008; Edge, 2001; Kirkwood and Christie, 2006; McDonough, 2006).

'Teacher research' is an umbrella term that comprises various possible modes of teacher inquiry. A dominant form of teacher research in our field is action research (AR). AR pursues improved practice and professional development via the systematic collection of data in reflective cycles. It represents a distinct approach both from reflective practice in general and from other forms of TR in its intention to 'solve the immediate and pressing day-to-day problems of practitioners,' (McKernan, 1996: 6) that is, to improve practice through problem-solving (Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Nunan, 1990). Other forms of teacher research may focus not on intervening to gain improvement but instead on careful observation of a particular situation to achieve gains in understanding. Indeed, in the field of ELT, Exploratory Practice (EP) has emerged as a powerful alternative to AR's problem-orientation, placing the focus on understanding why problems arise and, consequently, laying emphasis on exploring 'puzzles' rather than solving problems (see Allwright and Hanks, 2009). According to EP advocates, it is only by understanding a situation that a problem can be accurately addressed. Allwright and Hanks (ibid.) additionally argue that the empowerment pursued through teacher-research should also reach learners. They claim that unlike AR, which can marginalise learners or at least moderate the potential of their participation, EP views learners as partners in the research process. Moreover, EP involves a critique of the technical frameworks often proposed for AR, which, it is claimed, make the activity unsustainable and add a burden to teachers' already busy lives. In opposition, EP proposes ideas for making research an integral part of teachers' everyday practices. However, the criticisms made of AR, which led to the development of EP are not AR-exclusive, since they have been reported in teacher research initiatives more broadly as well.

There are widely recognised difficulties that prevent many teachers from engaging in self directed inquiry, including negative attitudes towards research, time constraints, unsupportive school cultures and perceived deficiencies in ability (Atay, 2008; Borg, 2013; Burns and Rochsantingsih, 2006).

As mentioned above, publications about the role of teacher-research in teachers' professional development have increased in the last decade; however, there are limitations in previous descriptions both of AR and of EP practice in ELT. Firstly, previous initiatives have tended to be located in small language school or ESOL settings (Burns, 1996; Kirkwood and Christie, 2006) or in higher education settings (Barkhuizen, 2009; Borg, 2006), or they describe small projects and thereby fail to have many lessons for larger-scale reform programmes (Atay, 2008; Burns and Rochsantingsih, 2006; Vergara, Hernández and Cárdenas, 2009). Considerable doubts have been expressed about the feasibility (though not the desirability) of teacher-research forming part of 'ordinary' teachers' lives (Borg, 2013), but, to our knowledge, there have been no previous reports on national-level, state-supported projects taking place in EFL contexts, focusing on primary and secondary school teachers working with minimal support and/or resources. Thus, this chapter describes an innovative CPD initiative aimed at promoting teacher-research in an under-explored setting and is likely to contribute to a new understanding of the practical constraints associated with supporting teacher-research in relatively under-resourced contexts.

In counterpoint to previously published accounts of TR initiatives in ELT, our project is innovative in several respects: (1) it relied on voluntary participation, not being part of work for a qualification; (2) it was focused on secondary school teachers confronted with large classes, very busy timetables and other unfavourable circumstances; and (3) it was a relatively large-scale project for its type (80 teachers were initially involved, with four mentors and British Council/Chilean Ministry of Education backing). The project was ambitious, then, and deliberately 'experimental' and self-reflective. Given the doubts that have been previously expressed about the feasibility of teacher-research forming part of ordinary teachers' lives, the question uppermost in our minds was: 'Would it be possible to design an intervention that could overcome some of the previously recognised barriers?'

Recognising that contextual conditions and local realities cannot be stripped from any CPD initiative, we developed an approach to supporting TR which attempted to acknowledge these constraints in an innovative manner. It was based on a year-long plan, which would allow teachers to develop an understanding of research processes progressively. It also involved ongoing online support from a group of mentors who would communicate with teachers as supportive research collaborators rather than as assessors. For the purposes of this project, based on an awareness of the difficulties teachers would be likely to face and the need for a gradual lead-in to 'action research proper', a decision was also taken to recommend what was termed 'Exploratory Action Research' to teachers. In brief, teachers were encouraged to engage first in exploration of problematic issues via means which would not interfere

with their everyday teaching, rather than immediately trying to 'solve' problems by taking and attempting to evaluate a new action. Only later were they guided optionally to consider trying to 'solve' problems by implementing and evaluating new plans. Thus, borrowing from EP, the exploratory first part of *Exploratory Action Research* was to involve clarifying the existing situation – the nature of 'the problem' – before any action for change would be undertaken. An example given to teachers was that, if lack of motivation seems to be an issue, students can write about their current motivation (in Spanish or English) and the teacher can analyse their writing by identifying common concerns. This can not only help teachers decide on changes that are appropriate to their students, it can also provide them with 'baseline data' – a way to compare the situations 'before' and 'after' any change they do try to introduce at a later stage. Finally, an innovative approach was also adopted towards the development as well as the content of the programme; rather than all steps being determined in advance, a relatively *self-reflective, process-oriented* stance was adopted with regard to planning and development. Thus, an exploratory/action research orientation informed the ongoing design of the programme as well as the projects engaged in by teachers.

Implementing the innovation

Preparation and initial seminar

Groundwork for the project involved requesting Ministry of Education approval, putting out a call for participation (103 teachers applied and 80 were selected, on the basis of personal statements), making arrangements for a two-day workshop in January 2013, setting up a Moodle platform for the project and selecting four mentors. A workshop facilitator was invited from the UK (Richard Smith), who was asked to indicate to teachers how they could take the first steps in designing and carrying out an action research study (it was at this point that the notion of 'exploratory action research' was formulated).

At the two-day workshop, the participating school teachers identified and discussed both successes and problems they had been having in their teaching, and formed small groups according to the topic they had identified as being the most important and relevant to them in their context. The following were some of those identified:

- Poor student motivation to learn English
- Difficulty in getting students to speak English in class
- Classroom management issues as a result of having large classes (40+ students)
- Having to deal with different levels of ability within the same class
- Problems with discipline
- Lack of parental involvement in pupils' learning.

In the present chapter, rather than reporting on the particular research projects which arose from these and other issues, our focus will be more on describing and reflecting on the overall process of involving and supporting participants in CPD-oriented teacher research. However, it is worth noting that the themes selected reflect the particularly difficult circumstances faced by most Chilean

secondary school teachers, and that any work that could be built on these themes, in coming from teachers' own experience, would at the very least be more contextually relevant than most previous INSETT initiatives in the Chilean context.

In collaboration with one another and with the four mentor tutors, teachers started to develop research questions which could help them to investigate these problems. They designed posters that illustrated the problem and wrote their initial research questions, which were then commented upon by other groups, the mentors and workshop leader, who provided relevant feedback based on their own experiences and beliefs. Initial plans were made for data collection, which were to be further refined via Moodle-enabled interaction with mentors assigned to the different groups. Overall, a great deal of enthusiasm was generated at the two-day workshop, and it was evaluated very positively, although some participants felt that two days had not allowed for sufficient preparation.

Following a break of one month for summer holidays, teachers and mentors were expected to get back in touch in March 2013, when the teachers would begin their investigations, from the beginning of the new school year. The participating teachers were all enrolled on the British Council Moodle platform specially created for the project. Through the platform it was hoped that they would report what they were investigating, discuss problems with each other and get help from the mentor tutors. They would also be able to download articles related to classroom research that could help them to define their own research better. At a later stage they would be expected to decide if their classroom research projects would remain as Exploratory Research or be transformed into Action Research 'proper'.

Problems arising and improvements made (via a revised plan at the mid-point)

A number of quite serious difficulties arose during the first phase following the initial workshop, as follows:

- Lack of communication among 'research partners' in groups established at the January workshop
- Lack of communication between mentors and some teachers
- Apparent drop-out of many teachers
- Lack of communication among mentors for sharing of experience/good practice.

The occurrence of these problems can probably be attributed, with hindsight, to the following phenomena, some of which could doubtless have been avoided with a longer lead-in time and better forward planning, while others were of an unpredictable nature:

- Some participants in the January workshop appeared to have come just for the workshop, with little intention of continuing; or they may have decided, following the workshop, that action research was not 'for them'.
- Hiatus and loss of momentum caused by the February summer holiday.
- Several teachers found themselves in a different or more difficult work situation from March onwards.

- General 'busyness' of the start of the new academic year in March – for teachers and mentors alike.
- In some cases, insufficient information was collected for mentors to contact participants (contact details of some participants were not accurately recorded).
- A delay in establishment of contact between mentors and participants in many cases; one of the four mentors (responsible for 15 participants) made no attempt to contact mentees but could not be replaced until June.
- Moodle did not prove successful as a platform for the project; many teachers did not access it or used it only sporadically; most mentors, as well as teachers, found it difficult to access, navigate and use.
- The official letter from the Ministry of Education, which had been promised to teachers to support participation in the project locally, was not forthcoming until July.
- Inadequate time for discussion among co-ordinators and mentors regarding follow-up to the initial workshop before the workshop, due to lateness of project approval.

In light of these serious 'teething problems', it is probably unsurprising in retrospect – although it was a source of concern to the mentors and co-ordinators at the time – that no more than 40 teachers (in other words, half of the participants in the January workshop) were in contact with their mentors at the mid-point (July). Of the remainder (the 40 who had apparently 'dropped out'), some 20–30 participants had not once been in touch with their mentor, and in this sense cannot be said to have really begun to participate in the project, as opposed to the initial seminar. On the positive side, according to mentors' interim reports and information gathered from regular Skype meetings between the academic co-ordinator and mentors, good progress had been shown by many of the 40 still participating teachers, to the point that they had findings and experiences worth sharing with others by the mid-point (July).

There had also been cases of good, sometimes very good, practice by mentors (regular contact with mentees, beginning soon after the workshop and continuing weekly; editing and publication online of mentees' reports; effective record-keeping (in use of Excel; encouragement to report on progress via user-friendly reporting forms; and feedback to some individuals). Mentors had generally settled into their role, developed good experience and appeared fully committed to the project. Also, an effective means of mentor-mentoring had been developed whereby the academic co-ordinator would Skype individual mentors once per month.

Thus, several problems mentioned above had been resolved by the mid-point (July), or were less serious than they had been. All mentors had developed a clearer picture of who their participating teachers were and how to contact them. Mentors reported a willingness to make a fresh start on the part of some teachers who had not yet been participating actively. A new website (<http://hampointeachers.weebly.com/>) was established to bring together progress reports and advice on the programme, and a Facebook group was set up – these served as a complement to Moodle and quite quickly became a much

more flexible and accessible replacement for it. A second-phase plan establishing a firm commitment for participants to report on a monthly basis to mentors was discussed by the mentors and the academic co-ordinator, and implemented for a final phase, from September to December.

The second phase

At the interim point (July), the problems faced by the project were serious ones but *nevertheless* progress had been made by a number of teachers. The priority seemed to be for that progress to be shared, and for the positive atmosphere and 'energy' established at the January workshop to be revived for the period leading up to final reports at year-end. A number of progress reports were uploaded to the new website during this period, and the Facebook group was quite active – certainly much more active than the Moodle had ever been. Towards the end of the second phase two further problems emerged which required resolution:

- The form of end-point reporting by teachers had not been sufficiently defined.
- There were perceived needs for guidance regarding data analysis and ways of reporting data – topics that had not been covered in the January workshop.

Overall, however, the 'teething problems' mentioned above appear to have been overcome for those teachers who had kept in touch (almost without exception these teachers subsequently remained with us and submitted end-of-year reports). Indeed, as we shall see, by the end-point the participating teachers were reporting having gained important benefits, despite difficulties encountered along the way.

Final presentations and written reports

A total of 32 teachers took part in the final get-together in Santiago in January 2014, postponed from December 2013. Overall, 40 had made it through to this final point but eight were unable to attend. Teachers' expectations had clearly been that the final report should be written up in academic style but we decided to attempt something different. Thus, an innovative, deliberately teacher-friendly approach was taken to presentation of reports – audio-recorded oral poster presentations, responded to by other teachers, were followed up by transcription of these oral reports as a further activity, during the second morning of the workshop itself. These 'informal' written versions were then critiqued by fellow participants, and further writing ensued, as a basis for wider dissemination. The advice we gave to keep both oral and written reporting relatively informal was our response to the two areas of concern which had emerged in the second phase, and to worries expressed by a number of participants in conversations with mentors regarding academic writing. In feedback on the workshop, participants said they particularly appreciated the staged, supported manner of presenting, first in groups of three, then pairs, then larger groups, and the collaborative process approach that had been adopted to writing up.

A closer look at participants' experiences

The dominant challenge for participants – as revealed by the overall reflections they were encouraged to include in their final reports – had been *lack of time*. A representative viewpoint, balancing the positive benefits of teacher research against this one major difficulty, was as follows:

Time was [...] a problem because, as teachers, we are always busy at school and at home (planning, reading, checking homework or tests). But on the other hand, you get such great benefits out of this research, for instance, you get to know more your students and even yourself, you become more interested about this, because you know that this can contribute to your classes, you can discover new things and [...] you realise that you can make a change and that it is in your hands.

In this way, rapport is a crucial piece to this puzzle, because you are not alone inside the classroom and you need to pay attention to your students, not to assume things about them, but take the time to talk to them and to really listen to what they are saying, so as to understand more. By doing this, rapport improves and you end up finding out that what they actually say to you helps you to think of a variety of ways to plan your lessons and to approach them. [...] So, you find yourself having more opportunities to gain inspiration, motivation and confidence for your teaching practices. (Karla Ojeda, final report)⁹

As this – and many other final examples of reflective writing – showed, the teachers who had persisted with teacher-research felt that, despite the challenges, they had gained important benefits. Chief among these – according to our overall thematic analysis – were: (1) a new perception that involving learners in solving problems is a good approach to teaching (this, we believe, was an outcome of the emphasis we had placed throughout on the importance of ‘exploratory’ research involving consultation with learners, as a prelude – or, potentially, even a replacement – for additional ‘action’); and (2) a new sense that change is in the teacher’s own hands rather than something to be despaired of or expected only from above’. Many expressed a desire to continue to engage in teacher-research, of their own accord and under their own steam though with hopes of further support if available, and/or to share their new perceptions and skills with other teachers. In a word, a major outcome had clearly been a strong sense of *empowerment* for many of these teachers.

These two dominant benefits can be further illustrated with reference to the experience of two more teachers, Roberto Delgado and Andrea Robles, selected due to the ease of access we had to them for an interview following the end of the project (in Roberto’s case) and for elicitation of an additional piece of reflective writing (in Andrea’s). The following brief summaries of their overall experience were also to offer an additional perspective on difficulties within the programme, and how these were – or potentially can be – overcome.

Roberto, when talking about what he had learned from the project overall, laid special emphasis on the way he had begun to see students as an important source of ideas for his teaching:

You have to interact with them. [In the future, if] I see some things that are not working I don't want to take any measures without considering their point of view. I've come to see it as] a kind of dialogue and that helped me a lot because from now on I – when I do classes I will start with that: for example, as a starting point:

⁹ This teacher, referred to and quoted in this chapter (Karla Ojeda, Roberto Delgado, Andrea Robles, Erika Diaz and Ana Lucilla) saw the final draft and agreed to (1) the way their views and actions are represented and (2) to be acknowledged with their real names rather than pseudonyms.

'How would you like my classes to be?' And then at some point in the year we have to [evaluate] that – I think action research works in that way.

(Roberto Delgado, interview)

This realisation appears to have come about due to the way, through asking students themselves for their suggestions, Roberto had gained an inventory of new ideas, in particular with regard to assessment of oral skills (his chosen topic being how to decrease students' anxiety in relation to speaking in class and assessment of speaking abilities). Following exploration of students' perceptions by means of a survey, he had tried out a number of new ideas including creative dialogue writing and use of subtitled video in class during the second phase. He had observed positive changes as a result, not so much in students' assessed performance but in their motivation to speak in English in class and, perhaps most importantly for him, in an enhanced general receptivity on the part of students to experimentation with new ideas.

For Roberto, the first seminar, with its emphasis on narrowing down research questions and planning appropriate data collection methods in groups, had been *'perfect'* in showing how action research (which he was already acquainted with, but only in theory) could be both practicable and something he would actually like to try out. He had not subsequently been much in touch with his mentor – due possibly, he thought, to his own and his mentor's difficulties with using Moodle – and had found that his original research partner and he were in contexts too far apart (she in a university, he in a school with classes of 40 teenage learners) for collaborative work to make much sense. However, Roberto did not appear to view such absences of communication as particularly salient, and clearly he had taken on considerable responsibility for the completion of his project in his own way. His overall experience perhaps shows how someone with a relatively high degree of initial understanding, enthusiasm, confidence and self-reliance can, in a sense, teach themselves teacher-research once they can see an initial way forward, even though – as Roberto himself suggested in our interview – he might have benefitted from more input, structure and collaboration overall.

The major constraint Roberto perceived had not been the lack of contact with a mentor or research partner, nor lack of input or structure or even lack of time (although he did mention this as a factor which had limited his achievement, 40 contact hours per week with students being the norm in his experience); instead, what emerged from our interview was a lack of freedom to teach in a *'different'* way without the official letter from the Ministry of Education, which had not arrived until July. On presenting this to the principal of his school, he had been allowed significantly more leeway to experiment with new ideas by changing the way of teaching pre-specified in his yearly plan. This highlights the importance of official top-down approval being seen to be given to bottom-up pedagogical experimentation in Chilean public and semi-public secondary schools, and will be an important consideration for future iterations of our project.

Finally, Roberto raised some important questions about the follow up envisaged for this cohort of teachers, emphasising the importance for them not only of a publication opportunity being created but also of some kind of network being formed to

to further support and strengthen their action research capabilities into the future. Roberto's strong impression, from his own experience and from interaction with other participants, was that the project was both innovative and valuable, indeed *'one of the best things that has happened [in ELT] in Chile,'* partly because involvement had enhanced participants' self-respect. As he said: *'Participation really gets teachers involved, you have that sense of belonging to something, and that's good because we feel recognised – [we feel] 'OK, we're doing well.'* The challenge the interview with Roberto has given us, though, is how the kind of gains he identified, including the sense of self-worth which comes from being an action researcher within a network, can be sustained for participants like him into the future, and how such participants' research abilities can continue to be enhanced.

Andrea, like Roberto, laid emphasis on the increased sense of self-worth that she had gained from the teacher-research experience overall:

I started this research feeling that something was not right. I had the chance to stop and think why I felt that, proved that there was a problem, [and] did different actions to change my reality. [Some of them worked, some others did not, but at the end I could understand that the teacher is crucial for the students' learning. (Andrea Robles, final report)

The particular focus of Andrea's investigations was how to end her classes in a productive way and, as her final report showed, she ended up experimenting with a number of different ways of closing her lessons. However, the start of the experience was not promising:

The first [seminar] was very clear and I felt that it was a nice challenge for me, but when I arrived back at school and I lost contact with my team (the other teachers with the same topic) I was kind of lost and I felt lonely because I had nobody to share with. (Andrea Robles, additional reflective writing)

In her case, much more than in Roberto's, the establishment of effective interaction with a supportive mentor (around July) had proved to be crucial:

I hadn't thought that the result was my goal and not the process but I met my mentor, who explained, guided and asked me the right questions to make me focus and reflect on what really matters in the first part of the experience, the [exploration and] reflection. She asked key questions that I [hadn't] thought before and made me think, plan and see things I was not taking into account. (ibid.)

This seems to corroborate her mentor's own recollection:

When I contacted my group of teachers [...] asking them to tell me about their progress, they replied very briefly and gave me no further information. Later I learned that they had done very little of their projects and they felt they 'needed' to have something done to report back [...]. [So,] I stressed my mentoring role by telling them, 'I'm here for you,' and I made my emails sound more approachable from then on and I emphasised the fact that I was a school teacher as well and that I fully understood their commitments at school. This, plus communicating in Spanish, may have been effective because it was then [that] they agreed to a Skype meeting. (Paula Rebolledo, final written reflections)

Face-to-face interaction with Paula proved to be important for Andrea in relieving pressure and reminding her that what was important was not a 'product' but developing her own understanding. Together with the deadlines and structure provided by the September 'relaunch' of the project we have described above, interaction with Paula motivated Andrea to begin her research in earnest and reminded her of the importance of collecting evidence (in the form of students' perceptions of different activities) systematically. As a result:

Now I know that [...] we must research first in order to change a reality effectively. I also know, with the guidance of my mentor, that the result is not always the objective; the idea is to know my problem and see it from different perspectives before I make a change. I [also now] know that the evidence is very important because at the beginning I did not register my results so I did not have evidence.
(Andrea Robles, additional reflective writing)

Paula herself gained much in terms of her own development as a mentor from the experience of working with Andrea. Since they happened to live in the same city (Iquique, in the north of Chile) they met face to face between July and December, not just over Skype as was the case with Paula's other mentees. Paula was able to develop a style of mentoring (in Spanish) which primarily involved '*support and encouragement: being an active listener, avoiding academic jargon and keeping language simple, and asking questions constantly about the process, questions which triggered reflection.*' (Paula Rebolledo, final mentor reflections) At one meeting Andrea expressed concern over writing up her research, worried about the perceived need to do so in an academic style. Engaging in relatively informal writing based on the notes of their conversation, at Paula's suggestion, proved to be a good way of overcoming this anxiety for Andrea, and Paula recommended the same approach to her other mentees. This procedure of moving from spoken to written later informed the reporting approach adopted for all participants in the final seminar (see above). Face-to-face interaction, as it turned out, had therefore proved to be a crucial factor not only in Andrea's development as a researcher but also in the development of Paula's mentoring abilities, and in the ongoing design of the project overall.

Overview of feedback on the project from teachers

Returning now to the wider group of teachers who participated in the final (January 2014) seminar, anonymous written feedback showed that the most highly valued aspects of the programme had been: (1) the initial seminar; (2) the mentoring/support received; (3) learning from other teachers; and (4) the final workshop. All four of these, we noted, involve interaction, and we also remarked when reading this feedback that the *face-to-face* interaction involved in the initial and final seminars – and within some, though by no means all, mentor-mentee relationships – appeared to be particularly highly valued. Anonymous final feedback, along with reflections included in participants' final reports, was very positive overall and confirmed the important developmental gains reported on above, which – in our eyes – validated the focus we had placed on teacher-research as a privileged means of CPD in this context.

On the other hand, some of the problems and 'rescue measures' we have described in this chapter also received attention when we asked for anonymous views on 'points to improve' for future iterations of the project. Thus, the use of Facebook in combination with a website was praised in comparison with initial use of Moodle, with the major reason being that the former was better integrated with teachers' busy everyday lives and did not require special efforts of access or navigation. Mentoring, as we have seen, was considered one of the major strengths of the programme overall, but it was clear also that some participants felt there had been problems of communication in this area. Thus, how to establish effective communication channels and mentoring relationships emerged as a major focus of reflection for us with a view to future improvement. Finally, there were some requests for more guidelines, deadlines and a sense of structure from the beginning, not just from the mid-point. In retrospect, until it became apparent half way through the project that 'salvage' measures needed to be taken, we had probably erred on the side of freedom and flexibility, relying over-much on mentors and mentees to negotiate their individual pathways. This is of course a possibility when relationships are strong, when mentors are confident, when time is available and when synchronous communications are relatively easy. However, in a relatively large-scale programme like ours where mentors were supervising action research for the first time, and where it proved difficult for mentors and mentees to find time to talk with one another directly, more central guidance than we had been able to provide initially certainly now seems advisable and will be something we aim to introduce alongside enhanced mentor preparation in future.

Discussion is currently ongoing regarding attempts to sustain the project through establishment of a teachers' research network, possibly to be associated with local affiliates of IATEFL and TESOL. Participants in the January meeting appear enthusiastic about presenting on their research at the annual conferences of these two associations. It is also hoped that a further iteration of the project will be supported by the Ministry of Education, and that first-year participants will perform a valuable role in mentoring those who take part in the second-year follow-up.

Lessons learned

Although every context is different, we hope that this report of our experience, as well as that of some teachers, provides useful insights and offers encouragement to those potentially interested in relatively large-scale teacher-research support schemes for secondary school teachers elsewhere. We have not presented an account which skates over problems, in the belief that others can learn from the 'mistakes' and difficulties associated with this particular project, as we ourselves will attempt to do for an extension of it into a second year with different teachers. It is therefore worth making explicit, for others as well as ourselves, the changes envisaged. These will include:

- Starting the project at a different point, not just prior to a holiday, and certainly after the busy period of the beginning of the school year is over; in our case, this implies a June or July start, perhaps with a shorter timespan (six months rather than a year)

- Providing a clearer structure from the outset, with deadlines for reporting
- Ensuring that the letter from the Ministry giving official support for the project is issued earlier – the importance of this letter for teachers in enabling them to gain institutional support was underestimated
- Attempting to ensure in advance that mentors can make the commitment necessary, and providing initial mentor training
- Providing input with regard to data analysis (at a meeting or via online materials at a point when data has been gathered)
- Ensuring that face-to-face or other synchronous meeting opportunities are provided for mentors and teachers; for example, via a series of pre-programmed local meetings and/or telephone or Skype meetings. When such meetings did occur, they proved to be very valuable, whereas communication via email and Moodle had been relatively problematic.
- Integrating this first year's participants as mentors or critical friends, thus developing local expertise and support, and regional networks.

Conclusion

Finally, we revisit the question of the potential of teacher-research within CPD in difficult circumstances in the light of our project experience.

There were certainly difficulties in implementing this teacher-research initiative, partly due to contextual constraints and partly due to what, in retrospect, could be seen as inadequacies in planning (although the flexible, experimental approach we adopted meant that solutions to several of these problems were developed in the course of the year). There were early drop-outs, for many possible reasons; however, 'exploratory' action research seems to have been a desirable, feasible and empowering option for nearly half of the initial cohort, despite the difficulties encountered. We count this as a major success given previous reports highlighting the problems of engaging practising teachers in voluntary teacher-research. As we have seen, a dominant theme in final reflections was that participants had learned to listen to their students more, and that doing exploratory research had thereby fulfilled a valuable pedagogical function which plunging immediately into the 'action' part of action research might not have fulfilled to the same extent. Overall, then, we feel we succeeded in developing innovative ways of making teacher-research appear feasible as well as desirable in teachers' eyes, in apparently very unpromising conditions. The successes achieved despite the difficulties encountered are equally, we should emphasise, a testament to the determination of the participating teachers, and to the dedication of their mentors.

Our experience suggests that the success or otherwise of initiatives to engage teachers in teacher-research may depend largely on what kind of teacher-research is introduced to teachers, how it is presented to them, how it is supported and what style of sharing of the research is expected. All of these aspects can be made either relatively 'academic' (as, we find, in the models of action research often advocated to teachers) or relatively accessible and attractive to teachers (as we have deliberately attempted to make them in our own innovation, with some increasingly positive

effects). What we found ourselves promoting, increasingly, was something innovative and teacher-friendly, whereby we approached teachers in a way that was not off-putting or overly academic. The initial difficulties experienced in mentoring and the over-reliance placed on a particular online platform can, we believe, be overcome in a future iteration of the project. Rather than asynchronous online communication, a strong need emerged in this context for face-to-face (including telephone or Skype) interaction and – possibly – for a degree of ‘closeness’ involving the mentor having shared similar experiences to those of the teachers. We are now looking forward to putting the insights we gained into practice in future iterations of the project, being better aware of the difficulties involved but also encouraged by reflections such as the following, which draw attention to the benefits for teachers – and, just as importantly, for students – of teacher-research as a form of CPD in this context, and perhaps in other, comparable settings:

This was a very interesting process. Whereas it was long, I learned a lot about how I can manage my class results by considering students' voices during the process. They opened my eyes about working collaboratively. It's good to know that some problems' solutions are just in your hands. For that Action Research is an essential tool. We should incorporate it in all of our professional activities, particularly the reflective process that this methodology involves. If we as teachers could have the time to reflect on our pedagogical process, our students' achievements should be better every time. (Erika Diaz, final report)

It is difficult to balance everything in our lives [...] but the motivation and desire to continue, try and somehow become better teachers was what drove us to keep on going and working with the project. I truly believe many of us want to give our best and what we learned with this project left us happy. I am one of them. (Maizta Badilla, Facebook post)

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**The house of 'do's'
and 'don'ts': teachers,
self-access and
learner autonomy
in Ethiopia and
Afghanistan**

6

The house of ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’: teachers, self-access and learner autonomy in Ethiopia and Afghanistan

Andy Keedwell

Introduction

In many countries, self-access systems involving learners working more autonomously than in the classroom have become commonplace. However, there are also still contexts around the world where self-access and autonomy are very unfamiliar concepts. This chapter will examine two such contexts, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. It will suggest that in this type of context, there is a considerable risk of failure for implementation of self-access systems and that stakeholders’ conservative perceptions of teaching and learning represent a major potential obstacle to effective implementation, however plentiful self-access resources may be. The chapter will propose that these risks of failure can only be mitigated through systematic CPD and will examine in depth the rationale, design and impact of a CPD programme aiming to support all those involved with self-access systems.

A growing body of research on self-access has accessed the views of users and, to a lesser extent, teachers, but much of this research has examined self-access operations in Europe or other well-developed educational environments such as Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. With the exception of a handful of studies (e.g. Jones, 1995; Joshi, 2011; Ahmadi, 2012), contexts where the idea of self-access is completely new have been far less investigated. There have also been few studies in which progress has been evaluated over time (on the model of Gardner and Miller, 2010) or in which stakeholders are asked to report retrospectively. Usually although an emphasis is placed in the literature on the need for training to accompany self-access development, there seem to be very few accounts of how this was actually done.

Continuous, professional development of this type was very new to participants in Ethiopia and Afghanistan, and it was perceived as being very innovative and leading to significant shifts in thinking and application. I hope that the focus on training design, the changing perceptions of stakeholders and the extent of impact of the CPD described will be useful to those considering introducing self-access to similar contexts.

The context

Self-access learning described in this chapter was delivered through two projects: in Ethiopia, the Peacekeeping English Project (PEP) and in Afghanistan, the English for Defence and Security Project. These two projects vary in a number of ways but also have many similarities. Both projects are managed by the British Council on behalf of sponsors including the British Embassy, the UK Ministry of Defence and (in the case of Ethiopia) the Africa Conflict Prevention Fund, with the aim of working in partnership with local partners to secure sustainability after eventual handover. Both projects support the delivery of English to military officers, although Ethiopian officers will serve on United Nations Peacekeeping missions in conflict zones outside Ethiopia and Afghan officers are involved in the process of stabilisation of their own country. The projects employ or support the employment of national staff with a consequent focus on training and there is a focus on self-access delivery and the establishment of self-access centres, although resourcing, administration and the extent of countrywide reach differ. My own role in Ethiopia (2009–12) and Afghanistan (2012–present) was to support the development of systems, design and deliver teacher-training and trainer-training and to provide monitoring and quality assurance. Resources had been procured and systems set up before my arrival on the assumption that continuous professional development would follow.

The benefits of self-access are many. In a military environment, either complementing or substituting classroom study, it can accelerate rates of learning and mean personnel are ready to *interoperate* (communicate in English in crisis or conflict situations) sooner and more effectively. Self-access can support the development of more resourceful, independent learners who 'take charge of their own learning' (Holec, 1981: 3) after course completion. It enables learners to meet their own needs and aspirations, working at their own pace as they fit learning into busy, demanding military lives, adds variety to intensive courses and provides access to a wider range of materials and ways of learning – 'a bridge to the real world'. (Cotterall and Reinders, 2001: 25)

The centres

Ethiopia now has eight self-access centres (two in the capital and six at other locations). Centres correspond to military commands at geographical points of the compass, with one base serving the air force. Ethiopia also manages a separate programme, with a self-access centre, across the border in Djibouti. Afghanistan has five centres, with four serving the Afghanistan National Security Forces/Ministry of Defence and a newly opened fifth at the Military High School. A further self-access centre will eventually operate at the new Officers Academy.

What are known in Ethiopia as Self-Access Centres (SACs) and in Afghanistan as Learning Centres (LCs) have much in common. Between ten and 20 computers are provided for each centre, with a range of software. Published resources are available for users, including dictionaries, skills and grammar practice. Classroom activity and methodology resources are also provided for teachers. SACs in Ethiopia are equipped with satellite television. Centre use also follows roughly similar patterns. At all centres in Ethiopia and the majority in Afghanistan, self-

access sessions are combined with regular classes as an integral part of the delivery of English. At some bases in Afghanistan, delivery of English is wholly through guided self-access sessions. Completely independent use is restricted by factors including transportation (Ethiopia) and security concerns (Afghanistan) but is popular at bases where users are resident or live nearby.

The stakeholders

Gardner (2001: 169) defines those involved with self-access as 'self-access stakeholders'. In the cases of Ethiopia and Afghanistan, these stakeholders constitute quite a diverse group. The group includes the **users** themselves, the vast majority of whom are male (although in Ethiopia, the overall number of female military officers is growing, with impact on the number of female users). In Ethiopia, there are four to seven civilian teachers at each base with joint responsibility for self-access supported by military administration, all employed by the Ministry of National Defence and Security. In Afghanistan, each base has a civilian, British Council-employed LC co-ordinator working alongside military-appointed counterparts and one to three civilian teachers delivering classroom English. For the sake of clarity, all these groups are referred to in this chapter as **teacher co-ordinators**. In Ethiopia, stakeholders also include military appointed **IT co-ordinators**, who have a technical non-teaching role. In both countries, ultimate responsibility for SAC and LC operations is in the process of devolving to a further group of stakeholders: **senior military personnel** who will eventually have full responsibility for operations.

Why do self-access systems often fail?

If many educational projects fail, self-access systems seem especially vulnerable. Anecdotal evidence suggests there are numerous situations in which they collapse soon after the departure of the funding organisation. Equipment and resources may be dispersed or put to inappropriate uses far different from those originally envisaged by the implementer. Possibly far more significant are the cases where the self-access centre survives in pristine condition but is barely used or not used at all.

This chapter will suggest that self-access systems often fail because there is insufficient training for the stakeholders described above, those involved in self-access delivery and development. This is quite possibly because of an understandable, instinctive reaction by project management to focus on resources – bricks and mortar, computers, software, hardware and published materials. Project managers are often under considerable pressure to disburse budgets quickly, efficiently and sometimes to relatively unrealistic deadlines. A well-equipped centre provides tangible evidence to donors that the project is working and establishes visible, branded presence in sometimes far-flung regions of the country where the project is taking place. It may also represent to the recipient concrete evidence of the goodwill of the supporting organisation and in some countries (Djibouti, for example) corresponds to the traditional notions of the pre-eminence of the traditional language laboratory.

However, when resources are prioritised, a primary concern for project management and senior levels of the recipient organisation is neglect. This is a very real concern

– initially, at one Ethiopian centre, ineffective management by the local military administration led to a situation where many computers did not function and birds were nesting happily in the centre roof! Yet, the opposite strategy of over-zealous protection of resources can result in just as negative a situation. Concerns by the military administration in both countries about possible theft or misuse led to resources being locked away in cupboards, appointment of key-holders who were often called away on other duties and a resulting lack of access to self-access. The administration required considerable persuasion before they would allow resources to be displayed on unlocked shelves or books to be borrowed.

The most significant obstacle to self-access, though, may be rooted in the beliefs about effective teaching and learning held by users, co-ordinators, teachers and administration, and the prevailing paradigm of classroom practice in the context. To all stakeholders in Ethiopia and Afghanistan, the establishment of SACs and LCs was in itself novel and innovatory. Studies (e.g. Edes, 2007) have shown that teachers with positive experience of self-access are much more likely to motivate their students to use it – but none of the stakeholders described in this chapter had had any type of self-access component in their own education and there are few opportunities in either country for self-access. During recent interviews for the post of Learning Centre Co-ordinator in Afghanistan, not one candidate had any direct experience of self-access; one thought it might be a type of distance learning, one confused the concept with the idea of a student-centred classroom and three were unable to comment at all.

The idea of learner autonomy is also very new. Some teachers reported that they had been introduced to the idea of learner autonomy during their initial country-based training, but had not come across practical applications of the concept and had been left with little more than a few memorised notions and the names of a handful of methodologists. One comment from an Afghan co-ordinator sums up the confusion: *'We are trying to help our learners become more autonomous but we do not want to tell them that we are'*.

In Ethiopia and Afghanistan, the role of a teacher is close to that of a factory operator attending to the machinery that churns out knowledge for transfer into the empty heads of trainees. All teaching is focused on whatever coursebook or materials the teacher is issued with: the coursebook becomes 'reified' (Richards, 1998: 47). When a group of Ethiopian teachers were asked to provide metaphors for the coursebook, their responses included 'the holy book that we must follow', 'a white stick to a blind man' and other images stressing huge dependence on materials. This paradigm also included the fact that the possibility of choice, a key concept in self-access, had never been considered. Prior to CPD, the pattern of use (in cases where centres were actually used) was for learners to do exactly the same thing at exactly the same time with the teacher co-ordinator instructing all learners to work on the same item of software directly linked to a discrete grammatical item that had been studied in that day's lesson. While a session of this type (resembling a fairly traditional 'computer lesson') would undeniably lead to some reinforcement of learning, it was certainly not self-access. Interestingly, teacher co-ordinators had implemented coursebook adherence and lockstep SAC use on their own initiative

With a few local exceptions, they had never been instructed to work like this but were presumably working on the expectation that this was what they were expected to do.

During and after CPD, teacher co-ordinators were asked to retrospectively report what their conception of self-access had been at entry point to the project. While some more recently recruited co-ordinators in Afghanistan described a feeling of excitement at the prospect of working at the LC, their more experienced colleagues remembered being sceptical as to possible success. In Ethiopia, teachers emphasised that they had initial concerns that they would be held responsible for breakage or misuse of equipment and, in a memorable phrase, one teacher described the SAC as the '*House of Do's and Don'ts*' – a heavily regulated, intimidating, best-avoided operation. A reluctance to become involved in SAC operations was compounded by a tradition that the teacher is only responsible for the hour he/she directly teaches and anything beyond is not of his/her concern. Teachers may also have suffered from 'SAC shock' (Case, n.d.) when a plethora of resources reduces a teacher accustomed to a low-resource environment to a state of immobility – too many resources available mean that none are used. Users and teacher co-ordinators may feel overwhelmed and, as O'Dell (1992: 153) has observed: 'The better resourced the centre, the more of a problem this can be'.

Implementation of CPD

In both countries, as the Peacekeeping English Project trainer in Ethiopia and Head of Teacher Development in Afghanistan, I worked with project managers farsighted enough to budget for extensive training for stakeholders; my role was to design and deliver these training programmes. CPD was implemented in the following ways:

Course Implementation in Ethiopia 2009–present	
Early 2010	Delivery of a short course (ten hours) to six selected Peacekeeping English Project teacher co-ordinators. This course served as a prototype course for training detailed below.
Mid 2010	Delivery of an expanded version (30 hours) of the course above to all Peacekeeping English Project teacher co-ordinators (28 participants from around the country) with previous participants acting as co-trainers. This course became the core course for further training.
Mid 2010	Delivery of a simplified version of the expanded course by a teacher participant from that course to 15 IT military co-ordinators, in their first language.
Late 2010	Visit and training delivered by a consultant from Ukraine, formerly Peacekeeping English Project, Ukraine.
2011–12	Extensive follow-up and small-scale training at military bases by Peacekeeping English teacher-trainer.
Early mid 2011	Two 30-hour courses on task and material design for groups of 15 selected project personnel, including implementation of tasks designed by participants for self-access purposes.
2011	Regular short technical training to selected groups of teacher co-ordinators and IT support by professional IT trainer.
Early 2012	30-hour course delivered to ten newly recruited teachers with newly formed team of five Peacekeeping English Project trainers acting as co-trainers.
Early 2012	Training delivered to small group of personnel from Djibouti.

Course implementation in Ethiopia 2009–present	
Mid-2012	Discussion of self-access included as course component in management skills training course for 15 military administration and civilian co-ordinators.
Late 2012	SAC review course for teacher co-ordinators selected to have specific responsibilities for self-access development.
To present	SAC-oriented CPD continues in Ethiopia to date.

Course implementation in Afghanistan 2013–present	
Mid-late 2013	Delivery of 30-hour CPD to 15 civilian and military teacher co-ordinators.
Ongoing	Security situation allowing, regular monitoring and quality assurance.
Early 2014	Commencement of delivery of further CPD to 15 civilian and military teacher co-ordinators.

Face-to-face training on software use was also provided by the software provider in late 2012 in Ethiopia and through Skype in Afghanistan in late 2013. This was the first occasion that Skype had been used in Afghanistan for training purposes and enabled input from outside Afghanistan which would not have been possible physically; it proved to be a very positive experience.

Rationale for CPD

Course design and delivery was founded on a number of principles, which have been refined as each course has been delivered. These are described below.

Principle 1: CPD needs to engage with the beliefs and perceptions of stakeholders

It was important through CPD to provide participants with opportunities to restructure some deeply held beliefs on teaching and learning so that they could 'adapt to their new roles successfully' (Gardner and Miller, 1999: 13). This was especially important for non-teaching personnel whose knowledge of teaching and learning was based solely on their personal experiences of education. Teacher beliefs are notoriously difficult to change. One strategy planned for CPD was to ask trainees to reflect on situations outside the classroom. Trainees were asked to consider the characteristics of real-life customer service encounters (both satisfying and unsatisfying) through which the idea of choice emerged naturally. Trainees offered their own experiences of limited choice in less than successful service encounters and then applied lessons learned to self-access delivery. Trainees were also asked to describe their own non-language based experiences of learning something autonomously themselves – these accounts enabled them to reach conclusions on language learning in the classroom and to identify what really makes an effective learner.

Principle 2: Effective self-access needs systems and procedures: stakeholders need the opportunity to design, revise and have ownership of these systems and procedures

In many situations, procedures are imposed top-down and require personnel to implement systems which they may not fully understand, value or even like (see Martyn and Voller, 1993: 105). As far as possible, the CPD described here aimed that trainees would be asked to contribute to procedure and document design.

We began by agreeing on the usefulness of these basic procedures and examined examples from other centres and published sources. Trainees were asked to identify what they liked about the examples to enable them to synthesise the results of their discussion into the design of their own procedures and documents, which they then implemented. The course also aimed to provide hands-on practice for short counselling sessions, through role play based on the participants' own learning needs and wants, to enable them to conduct 'pedagogic dialogues' (Mozzon-McPherson, n.d.). From our analysis, we agreed together that:

- a. Effective self-access systems require a time-efficient, cost-effective procedure for needs analysis for users at entry point.
- b. Learners benefit from a thorough induction process and learner training.
- c. Effective self-access systems require a process in which teacher co-ordinators reach agreement on what the learner can achieve through self-access within an agreed timeline, with agreed tasks and some type of feedback mechanism on how useful these tasks are. This process needs to be documented in a readily accessible way (sometimes referred to as a learner contract or SAC log).
- d. This agreement requires a counselling and discussion procedure for teacher co-ordinators and learners near the beginning and near the end of the timeline. This counselling needs to give the opportunity to the teacher co-ordinator and learner to discuss fully without putting too onerous a burden on the counsellor.
- e. Processes to collect and analyse learner feedback need to be in place.
- f. The regulatory aspect of the 'House of Do's and Don'ts' is important to avoid the risk of misuse but equally important is helpful encouragement and advice for learners.
- g. Effective self-access systems require a process to identify overall SAC/LC use, including establishing level, frequency and nature of use. This process needs to be documented and, in summarised form, can be a useful leverage tool to obtain further funding.

Principle 3: Resources in themselves are not enough: opportunities need to be provided for stakeholders to engage with resources

The provision of resources is often one of the most top-down of all interventions related to self-access. All stakeholders, especially those nearest to the chalk face, benefit from familiarisation and engagement with those resources. A simple process was planned for CPD in which trainees were asked to list what resources they could recall and then make a physical comparison with what was actually available. Trainees were given the opportunity to experiment with resources they were least familiar with and report back in order to identify resources that could be used to meet specific needs. Throughout the training, teacher co-ordinators were encouraged to give their own opinions on what further resources could be purchased.

In Ethiopia, in order to reach all stakeholders, awareness-raising on providing easy access to resources and the idea of choice was included in training for senior management and a simplified version of the course was delivered by one of the most able of the project teachers to military-appointed IT support in their first language (Amharic). Technical training was also provided by a skilled IT professional. Training

for teacher co-ordinators on resources in both countries was supplemented by training by the software provider (face to face in the case of Ethiopia and online in the case of Afghanistan).

Principle 4: Self-access Implementers can contribute to the development of resources, and need support to enable them to do this

In Ethiopia, over a four-year period, almost all teaching staff undertook the Cambridge CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) qualification. This process is ongoing in Afghanistan. The impact of CELTA as an in-service training tool is dramatic and leads to a very significant increase in the quality of teaching. At the same time, a number of areas for development were identified in Ethiopia at the post-CELTA stage, including the capacity to design and produce tasks and materials – Block's (1991) 'Do It Yourself' materials design. Trainees identified that locally produced materials were necessary a) to target local cultural contexts and users' backgrounds and b) to widen access to a range of authentic military-oriented materials. Course planning aimed to expose trainees to a range of more effective and less effective tasks (in particular, reading tasks). Input was included on the technicalities of ensuring tasks were appropriate for particular levels, had clear aims and were well presented.

Principle 5: Effective self-access development requires support for and development of the problem-solving and evaluation skills of stakeholders

The process of development needed some difficult questions to be asked and challenges to be identified and solved. Near the beginning of the programme, trainees were asked to identify current strengths and areas for development for operations and these were returned to throughout the training. It was as important to discourage specific groups of stakeholders from 'passing the buck' (and a measure of blame) to other stakeholder groups and to focus on trainees working to find realistic solutions. The course aimed to develop an atmosphere of honest, objective and constructive evaluation, and provide opportunities for participants to raise issues and discuss the challenges they themselves perceived.

Impact of CPD: achievements

Impact on stakeholder beliefs and attitudes

Ninety-six per cent of CPD trainees in Ethiopia (100 per cent in Afghanistan) rated training as very effective and of high quality (one or two lone sceptics remaining to act as a reality check). A significant aim of the training had been to provide an opportunity for trainees to reconsider their beliefs and attitudes regarding the relative responsibilities of teachers and learners, the importance of choice and learner autonomy, and the practical application of these to self-access. It is always difficult to quantify shifts in teacher beliefs although useful evidence can be gathered through accessing the views of participants, direct observation and analysing feedback from users.

Participant self-reports were collected through questionnaires and one-to-one interviews. Trainees were quite articulate in describing how their opinions had changed and were able to revise their perceptions of their own roles.

- 'After the course, my role is changed from a dominant and rigid teacher to a democratic and flexible counsellor.' (Teacher co-ordinator, Ethiopia)
- '[The CPD] helped me to transform the traditional teacher-based teaching approach to more effective learner-based language learning in the classroom and the SAC. I think this is a milestone in my entire professional career.' (Teacher, Ethiopia)

Other stakeholders had also evidently taken on board new concepts of choice and learner autonomy:

- 'Before the course, I had limited knowledge about autonomous learning. Through this course, I've realised that self-access, which is a completely new culture in Afghanistan, is the most effective culture.' (LC co-ordinator, Afghanistan)
- 'One of the major changes which we learned and implemented after taking the course was giving users the choice and fair level of autonomy.' (Programme manager, Afghanistan)

Participants had clearly come to see the SACs and LCs and how they could operate in a different way. Ethiopian participants were asked to describe the self-access centre using a range of shop metaphors (derived from Gardner and Miller, 1999: 143):

- 'The SAC is like a supermarket that stocks a wide range of goods where the customer has to choose what they like. You can ask for help but you make the decisions yourself. There are things you can't buy anywhere else.'
- 'The SAC is like a fast food shop because it meets your immediate needs and provides quick satisfaction when convenient. It is also very easy to use.'

One aspect of self-access-oriented CPD (and methodology courses for teachers which were run in parallel with it) was an identification of the need for a shift from factory operative to a facilitator of learning. Teachers often seemed to find this transition and the idea of choice quite liberating. They came up with new metaphors for the coursebook – a tool, a springboard or a menu: '*A deep lake from which we can draw water when we need it*'. The idea of freedom was stressed:

- 'The training gave me the freedom to think – it helped me understand that the coursebook is not a holy book.'
- 'It made me feel confident to go out of the coursebook and help learners in the SAC.'

Teacher co-ordinators recognised that there were advantages to the lockstep mode of working with software in that it led to effective language learning in a specific, finite language area, was easy to control and possibly more suitable for the lowest levels. But they also concluded that:

- 'All learners are forced/obliged to all do the same thing at the same time and have no opportunity to share ideas. It makes the learners over-dependent.' (Feedback from a group of Afghan teachers and co-ordinators)

In contrast, through discussion during CPD, alternatives of providing choice to users had been identified and were implemented, with one Afghan co-ordinator summing up his new awareness of the idea of choice in this way: '*A diet of only cheese is not enough*'

Impact on implementation and effectiveness of systems and procedures

However, what stakeholders say they do may well be different from what they actually do in practice. In Ethiopia, I was able to visit SACs at military bases, often at locations up to 1,300 km from the capital for extended periods. In Afghanistan, although all LCs are located in the capital, regular monitoring is more problematic due to a rapidly changing security situation but it does take place whenever possible. In both countries, visits were essential to identify the extent to which change was happening and systems were being monitored.

In Ethiopia, some scepticism had initially been expressed as to the value of processes for analysing needs and obtaining learner feedback. Teacher co-ordinators reasoned that, after all, they chatted to individual students during the break and if students had problems, they would surely approach the teacher to discuss them. It took time for stakeholders to appreciate the importance of systematic feedback and additional sessions were required to help teacher co-ordinators to analyse the data they were collecting.

This data was often very interesting. Feedback clearly showed that while learners valued grammatical input, they also emphasised that input and practice to help them develop skills, vocabulary and pronunciation were really welcome. This contradicted the teachers' reasoning that because students only wanted grammar, they would therefore only give them grammar and they were consequently encouraged to reconsider the focus of their teaching. Learners articulated a desire for variety and downgraded teaching that was wholly coursebook-dependent and, again, this came as a surprise to some teachers. There was also a progression across levels as more experienced learners reduced their preference for individual work and expressed preferences for more interactive activities. Data of this type reinforced the message teacher co-ordinators were receiving from elsewhere and helped them to continue to revise their own thinking.

A shift from lockstep sessions to ones in which users worked more independently was observed in Ethiopia and is also currently taking place in Afghanistan. This shift needs time to take place and in Ethiopia required extensive follow up to the original CPD. However, the SAC log system (see Appendix 2) worked effectively once personnel had developed commitment to it and some helpful, supportive counselling was observed. Trainees had clearly understood the need for learner involvement in the process, the use of questioning and the need for agreement:

- 'We need to begin the counselling warmly and be polite and smile and use the right kind of body language. We need to be encouraging and democratic, and exchange not impose or be dictatorial but we also need to be realistic.'
(Ethiopian participant)

Observations showed that teachers co-ordinators applied their own guidelines in the counselling and were clearly deriving satisfaction from developing their counselling skills.

Participants in Afghanistan listed the advantages of the process as including encouragement for learner self-assessment, helping to build a culture of self-access and learner autonomy in which the learner makes his/her own decisions, and increasing the teacher's knowledge of learner needs; as an Afghan programme manager put it: '*A win-win situation for both teachers and students*'. They valued a system that was standardised, realistic and relatively straightforward.

Involvement with the design and implementation of these systems and procedures meant that teacher co-ordinators took a different view of their own roles in the centre:

- 'Now I know that I have great responsibility to help the trainees – using the SAC log, I need to discuss their strong points and areas to be improved.' (Ethiopian teacher)
- 'After the course, I know I need to give advice to users and counsel them and monitor their progress. By knowing their strengths and areas to develop in our users, they find a clear goal of using the Learning Centre.' (Afghan LC co-ordinator)

Impact on exploitation of resources and task design

'Accessibility' became something of a buzzword with CPD participants, and the initial course led directly to a great deal of unlocking and emptying of cupboards, repositioning of shelves and introduction of loan systems. This process was enabled by the fact that the support of local military commands had been sought and obtained through awareness-raising sessions. Sometimes, these changes were quite small but effective – simple, routine changes in timetabling enabled users to have access to the self-access centre during their free time. Again, this process was gradual, sometimes frustratingly so.

CPD participants emphasised retrospectively that at entry point they had only seen the SAC or LC in terms of IT – initially in Afghanistan, the LC was often referred to as 'the Lab':

- 'I was thinking that we must use only the computers and the software. I had no idea other than thinking it was a computer room.' (Ethiopian teacher)

CPD led to a wider range of resources being used both in the classroom and in the SAC. Teacher co-ordinators reported a need for learner training in this area – novelty meant that the possibility of using the computers and software had something of a magnetic effect on users to the neglect of other resources. Nevertheless, by 2012 in Ethiopia, it had become common to see users in the SAC working with a range of resources.

Some significant progress was also made in terms of task design. This was undertaken in the form of mini-projects with trainees working in pairs or small groups, producing drafts which were trialled, redrafted and modified. Examples of effective tasks included support for vocabulary development, reading and watching the news in English (a very popular activity in some SACs). Open-ended tasks were also developed collaboratively to exploit the British Army magazine *Soldier* (see Appendix 3).

Impact as assessed by self-access users

In early 2013, colleagues in Ethiopia undertook a survey of 100 users at five centres to identify perceptions of self-access (Hailelul et al., 2013), and I would like to acknowledge their analysis of some extremely useful data. Data had also been collected through a limited sample of questionnaires at one base in early 2010 and, when the two sets of information are contrasted, a very positive impact on self-access use can be identified. While some of the 2010 feedback was very positive (especially on staff-learner relationships), a sense of frustration on the part of users was also evident, with complaints about the lack of access to the centre, a feeling of being lost amid resources they barely understood and a small but significant minority felt that self-access did not really contribute to learning at all.

The 2013 feedback was much more positive, however. Ninety-one per cent of users stated that they were free to choose materials and software and 86 per cent strongly agreed that the SAC was easy to use. All users reported that they used the centre at least once a week. Eighty-two per cent of users said that they based their learning on their personal log. CPD had encouraged participants to agree on what should be included in induction and once this was in place, it was obviously clearly appreciated by users, 95 per cent of whom said that they had received adequate briefing and induction and had learned through practice:

- 'When I started to use the SAC, it was difficult. After I learned about the SAC, I can use it easily.'

Other comments included:

- 'The SAC is easy to use, even in the absence of teachers, one can learn different skills alone.'
- 'I use the SAC every time after the class.'

Afghan users have not been systematically surveyed to date. This will take place following the establishment of systems and procedures and will feed directly back into the ongoing CPD programme.

Impact: challenges

CPD has had a significant and lasting effect on the effectiveness and efficiency of self-access learning but the process was not without challenges.

Gradual change

CPD for stakeholders began in Ethiopia in mid-2010 but it was at least two years before systems were fully functioning to the satisfaction of project management and there remains plenty of scope for further development. The process of implementation needed thorough training, a great deal of time and extensive follow up. In both countries it felt at times as if two steps had been taken forward with one step back. In Ethiopia, three months after the initial CPD course, a consultant from the Ukraine identified that there were still many resources being underused and to date not all resources (in particular, some of the software programmes) are being fully exploited. Some centres implemented systems for one course of learning but abandoned (or forgot) them on the next. Occasionally, changes in local military

administration meant the cycle of change had to be begun again. In Afghanistan, CPD began in early 2013 and will continue for at least another year but the rate of change has been rather more rapid, partly due to a more robust national middle management. However, here, logistical and security concerns can slow the process down and limit effective monitoring and feedback.

Stakeholder beliefs

Those closest to the chalk face sometimes seemed to be the most open to the ideas of autonomy and choice and, while some absorbed new ideas very quickly, it took longer for the military administration to change thinking. Nevertheless, as this chapter has emphasised, it was essential to win their support before change could happen. Some teacher co-ordinators' beliefs proved to be deeply entrenched and resistant to change. In Ethiopia, many teachers adapted to the use of SAC logs and counselling quite rapidly, but invariably listed as target areas sets of discrete grammatical items (especially verb forms and prepositions) to the neglect of other skills work and directed users only to grammar reference and software grammar practice resources. This was influenced by the respect, almost reverence, for grammar (although less often for grammatical accuracy), which is an important component in the local paradigm of language teaching.

In Afghanistan, initial reactions to the idea of choice and a process in which teacher co-ordinator and learner could agree tasks to be performed was very positive, but teachers soon focused on monitoring and a desire to oversee each and every learning step. How could we best ensure that users were completing learning logs and performing tasks – were weekly checks required? How could we ensure that tasks were completed that targeted language areas which appeared less attractive or more demanding to learners? How could we ensure that learners were always honest? It is easy for a system that claims to encourage autonomy to become one of control and surveillance (Díaz, 2012) and in both contexts the concept that the teacher's role is to constantly 'check' learning is dearly held. This is partly a result of the emphasis put on control by national teacher-training programmes and partly a hangover from previous school teaching backgrounds. It takes considerable diplomacy to help practitioners see that learners (in degrees of motivation, tenacity, frankness and problem-solving skills) are not very different from ourselves as language learners and that 'checking' can often be more of an obstacle than an aid to effective learning.

Task design

Teacher co-ordinators also needed time to develop skills in the design of tasks and sometimes found the process challenging. Results were sometimes patchy and required tactful, critical support until they were fully usable. There was also a certain degree of plagiarism, which had to be countered. An unfortunate by-product of the process of analysing sample tasks was that participants became quite capable of identifying strengths and weaknesses in materials (especially the latter, in assessing the work of their peers) but not always capable of actually producing serviceable tasks. Task design also demands a degree of imaginative creativity, something for which it is difficult to provide training.

Challenges as identified by stakeholders

Critical thinking and evaluation skills developed through CPD enabled participants to identify a wide range of challenges and in many cases to solve them. Some of these problems were beyond our control (the location of SACs, space in centres, restrictions to access in Afghanistan due to security concerns) while others were technical (lack of power, power surges). Teacher co-ordinators were conscious of the challenges their users faced, however. These included learner difficulties other commentators have recognised (e.g. McMurry et al., 2009) in identifying which resources to choose and using them effectively (emphasising the importance of induction, SAC logs and learner training). Personnel in both countries described a certain type of learner who seeks security in learning by selecting and completing the same tasks repetitively and were also concerned about the low level of IT skills of some users. As one Ethiopian teacher put it: *'We are living in a country where military officers do not know how to or do not want to use computers and pass the work on to their secretaries'*. Teachers did not feel confident about developing the basic computer skills of users (and neither did their trainer to any great extent) and while we agreed it was fundamentally a matter for the military themselves to address, personnel did their best to support IT-challenged users.

Participants in both countries also reported that by far the most under-exploited resource was commercially published readers. They attributed this to the fact that *'we do not live in a reading culture,'* and (in Ethiopia) that reading fiction is not traditionally seen as a form of learning. In the 2103 survey in Ethiopia, only two per cent of users stated that they regularly use readers. This issue was not really addressed through CPD in Ethiopia: centres in Afghanistan do not currently stock more than a handful of readers but this is set to change and it will be interesting to see if users' reading behaviour can be modified.

Maintaining sustainability

Perhaps the most significant challenge in both countries is that of sustainability. A 2012 IATEFL presentation by an Ethiopia Peacekeeping English Project team (Hare et al., 2012) defined sustainability as implying that 'local partners are able to maintain/develop a flow of benefits, outputs and some, if not all, activities associated with the project to an acceptable level after the withdrawal of the British Council and without external support'.

'Some, if not all' is probably the operative phrase as regards self-access systems. To what extent will hardware and software remain in situ and function effectively? Are systems and procedures robust enough to survive withdrawal? Will trained personnel continue to apply learning – indeed, will they continue to work with the military and Ministries of Defence at all? In Ethiopia, management training for senior administration included extensive discussion of the topic and, as regards equipment and maintenance, the process of handover has already begun. In Afghanistan, the future of all UK-funded interventions after major change anticipated for the end of 2014 is not yet at all clear.

Lessons learned

When I left post in Ethiopia in 2012 some substantial gains had been made and a process of reflection meant that a number of lessons learned could be applied to the development of self-access in Afghanistan. These lessons are described below and might well be relevant to any implementation of educational innovations.

Innovation depends on people and not things

The CPD described in this chapter aimed to provide training and support at each stage of implementing self-access systems and procedures for people, and to reduce risks perceived as resulting in many contexts from a focus on supplying *things*, such as infrastructure and resources. Resources are essential but, to the extent that implementing self-access has been successful in the contexts described, success has been just as much as a result of the development of the skills, beliefs and behaviour of a varied group of stakeholders and, in particular, in helping these stakeholders to reach agreement on what needs to be done and how to do it. Even following extensive CPD, some resources remained under exploited at some bases. Projects cannot just provide *things* in the expectation that people will simply find a way to use them.

Innovation needs to take people's beliefs (about what makes effective teaching and learning, for example) into account and provide opportunities for them to reconsider and restructure their beliefs

No innovation can be successful unless stakeholders are helped to identify and articulate their beliefs and, if appropriate, restructure them. Un-reconstituted stakeholder perceptions of teaching and learning probably had the greatest potential to impede effective self-access implementation. A range of simple awareness-raising activities were built into our CPD to enable participants to articulate their beliefs, challenge and revise them, and apply them in real-life problem-solving and discussion of challenges. Trainee discussion (and any sense of urgency it had, as it was the participants themselves who would be implementing systems and procedures) was at least as important as any input provided by trainers. Even then, the primary focus on grammar, which remains at some bases in Ethiopia, shows how resilient beliefs can be.

Innovation needs time

In both countries, projects benefited from the fact that funding was available for intensive training over time for a relatively small group of stakeholders. The original course in Ethiopia would probably not have had full impact without an extensive follow up at bases, with recycling and a second review course (with a third planned for 2014) all taking place over time. In Afghanistan, logistical and security factors meant that CPD had to be delivered in segments over weeks and months but in many ways this has proved to be more effective than the intensive courses in Ethiopia as it has enabled trainees to go away, work on the design of items, implement them and return with fresh ideas to discuss their experiences.

Innovation needs ownership

The aim of CPD was to involve participants as much as possible in the design of systems, procedures, tasks and other self-access routines. This type of direct

involvement contributed to the success of implementation and provided stakeholders with a sense of ownership. In cases where stakeholders were less involved in design and where procedures were relatively top-down, change was much slower or did not happen. In Ethiopia, for example, participants were originally provided with a needs analysis document rather than being given the opportunity to design their own (although they later revised the document) and it took time and effort to ensure that it was being used. In Afghanistan, CPD included design of the process, at first in small groups and then reaching a consensus on what needed to be included. Although the design process took time, once the document had been completed (see Appendix 1), it was quickly translated into Dari and Pashto, the users' first languages, and processes were implemented.

Innovation needs the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders

If innovation is to be successful, it needs the awareness of all stakeholders, not only those working directly with learners. The support of the military administration, based on a working knowledge of what teacher co-ordinators were trying to do, was essential not only to ensure that processes could be put in place but also to remind personnel what should be in place and to monitor change. CPD for military appointed IT support not only raised awareness but also gave an important but easily overlooked stakeholder group a sense that they too were valued. In Afghanistan, programme managers, teachers, co-ordinators and military counterparts have increasingly come to feel part of one team working for a single purpose.

Innovation needs to be 'joined up'

As Fullan (2007: 93) says, problems in educational initiatives often arise not because innovation does not happen but because there are 'too many disconnected, episodic, piecemeal, superficially adorned projects' and an 'endless cycle of initiatives'. The projects described here were relatively small scale, which had the advantage of meaning it was easy to inter-relate different strands of the projects. Participants were able to make connections between the CPD for self-access and other courses they were involved in, such as testing and classroom methodology, and the impact of one CPD programme fed into that of others.

Innovation needs to be accompanied by support for critical-thinking skills

A conscious aim of CPD was to help participants critically evaluate systems and challenges and find solutions. At times, the sequencing of the course seemed to take on a natural progression of its own: once a consensus of agreement had been reached on autonomy and choice, trainees were curious as to how this could be put into practice in practical terms and this brought us logically to systems and procedures required for effective self-access. Throughout CPD, over time, participants matured and developed as people, interacted more and more effectively, and grew in range and depth of perception. Opportunities for stakeholders to develop in this way would obviously benefit any innovation.

Conclusions

By fortunate coincidence, the key themes described in this chapter combine to form a simple acronym – *recast* – which encompasses:

- Resources
- Evaluation
- Choice
- Autonomy
- Systems
- Training

Stakeholders needed the opportunity to *recast* the way they thought about teaching and learning, their roles with respect to self-access and the operations and procedures they employed. The increased effectiveness and efficiency of systems that resulted were *recast* versions of the original. This was partly due to the *resources* that were provided, but this chapter has stressed that *resources* in themselves are not a solution. CPD encouraged participants to become involved in the *evaluation* of problems, challenges and solutions in a more perceptive (and interactive) way. Effectiveness increased also because of heightened awareness and understanding of learner *choice* and *autonomy*, and the application of that awareness to implementing *systems* and *procedures* to which all agreed. Finally, there was a general shift in thinking, which could only be achieved through *training*.

In both contexts there remains a great deal to be done. Some resources are not fully used, some teacher co-ordinator beliefs proved quite resilient to modification, not all learners are ready for autonomy and there is still a certain fragility to operations in general (and, especially in Afghanistan, to long-term project success). In another context, perhaps the achievements described here might appear to be quite modest although in Ethiopia and Afghanistan they have been quite dramatic and, given the foreignness of the whole idea of self-access, involved a radical shift in stakeholder beliefs. One Ethiopian co-ordinator summarised the achievements in the following way:

[The CPD] opened my eyes and I looked into the SAC, which is like a sea full of fish, and learned how to give guidance and counselling to learners and how to use the SAC to its maximum potential.

It is a long way from the house of 'do's' and 'don'ts' to 'a sea full of fish'.

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Appendix 1: English for Defence and Security: Needs analysis questionnaire

(Designed by CPD participants, Afghanistan)

Full name: _____
Age: _____
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Rank: _____
First Language: _____
Education: _____

1. Have you studied English before?

Yes No

If yes, when? _____

2. Do you have basic computer skills?

Yes No

Please comment if you would like to.

3. Why do you want to learn English?

Job Scholarship Personal enjoyment

Other (please specify) _____

4. Which areas of English would you like to develop?

Speaking Reading Writing Listening

Grammar Vocabulary Pronunciation

Other (please specify) _____

5 Do you think learning English is:

- Very interesting Fairly interesting Not very interesting Boring

Please comment if you would like to: _____

6 Do you prefer to learn:

- Individually In pairs In groups As a whole class

Please comment if you would like to: _____

7 Will you be able to practise your English outside the classroom?

- Yes No

If yes, will you be able to:

- Listen to English on television or radio? Make use of the learning centre?
 Use the internet in English? Study materials in English?
 Use English as part of your work? Practise speaking English?

8 Do you have family members/friends who speak some English and can help you learn?

- Yes No

9. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your opinions are very valuable to us!

Appendix 2: Self-access Log

(Designed by CPD participants, Ethiopia)

Name: _____

Rank: _____

Level: _____

Course dates: _____

Target language area	What tasks will I do?	When will I complete them?	Tasks completed	Was I successful? Why/why not?	Signature of teacher/co-ordinator
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Plan agreed:

Self-access user: _____

Teacher/co-ordinator: _____

Plan completed

Self-access user: _____

Teacher/co-ordinator: _____

Appendix 3: Sample self-access task

(Designed by CPD participants, Western Command, Ethiopia)

Reading an article in *Soldier* magazine: help with effective reading.

- 1 Go to the Self-Access Centre and choose any copy of *Soldier* magazine.
- 2 Look at the cover of the magazine and choose a **title/headline** that interests you.
- 3 Open the magazine and find the article: **do not try to read the whole article yet**. Does it look interesting? Write down the page of the article here:

Page _____

- 4 Close the magazine. Open the magazine again, and look through the pages of the magazine quickly to find a picture that interests you.

Write down the page of the article here:

Page _____

- 5 Close the magazine again. Open the magazine and look at the different headlines you will find in the magazine. Choose one that looks interesting.

Write down the page of the article here:

Page _____

- 6 Now you have chosen a) a title from the front cover b) a picture and c) a headline.

Decide which article you want to read in more detail.

- 7 Read the article silently – take your time!
- 8 When you have finished, look at the **adjectives** in the box below:

boring	interesting	informative	factual	dull	amusing
--------	-------------	-------------	---------	------	---------

Which adjectives describe the article you have read? You can choose as many adjectives as you want to. If you want to add any adjectives to the list, please do.

- 9 Choose **three** words, phrases or expressions which interest you or which you would like to know more about. Use a dictionary to help you find out what these words mean.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

10. Write a short summary of the article you have read in three sentences (no more and no less).

11. Would you recommend this article to someone else?

Yes

No

If possible, share your ideas with a friend, or with your teacher.

*We hope you enjoy working in our SAC! If so, please tell your colleagues.
If not, please tell us!*

**Using technology
to provide greater
flexibility and
access to continuing
professional
development**

7

Using technology to provide greater flexibility and access to continuing professional development

Russell Stannard and Savraj Matharu

Introduction

This chapter examines the use of technology to provide greater access to continuing professional development (CPD) training materials through the internet. It draws on the experiences of Russell Stannard, the founder of www.teachertrainingvideos.com (henceforth TTV.com), a website currently used all over the world for training teachers to use technology in their teaching. The success of TTV.com led to a second project, which took a similar approach but with very different goals. For the second project, Russell Stannard and Savraj Matharu produced www.multimediatrainingvideos.com (henceforth MMTV.com) to support students and multimedia professionals in their development. This second project was jointly funded by the UK's Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the University of Westminster. Several key issues emerge from both these projects:

- 1 The impact of using screen capture and video materials as a central part of any online CPD content and the overwhelmingly positive responses to its use.
- 2 The interesting way that the content is actually being used, both as a direct source for CPD via the training material and also as back up and support material for face-to-face CPD courses run by organisations and individuals.
- 3 The importance of flexibility and ease of access to CPD for maximum impact. The CPD content in one of the examples we will outline, TTV.com, has been accessed by over one million users in the last four years and is currently receiving around 350,000 visitors a year.
- 4 The possible marketing impact of making the CDP content free and open. Each project looked to achieve different marketing goals but both projects took a similar approach to the challenge.

The aim of this chapter is, then, to provide readers with a greater understanding of the impact of using screen capture for the purposes of CPD, particularly how accessible and flexible such CPD content is and why participants feel it is so useful. It will also highlight the importance of social networking and receiving continual feedback from users of the content, which, in turn, improves the learning experience

Additional readers might be quite surprised by the open strategy that both these projects took and their considerable impact on marketing the organisations and people that the courses were associated with. The information on which the chapter is based is drawn from the experience of both writers and from a range of surveys, questionnaires and focus groups that the writers have conducted in the last five years.

Part 1: Overcoming barriers to CPD – Russell Stannard

Participation in CPD programmes varies widely from organisation to organisation. CPD, though recognised as important, is still not always clearly defined and the policies and procedures of organisations often reflect that fact. This lack of definition is a barrier to its wider acceptance and implementation (Friedman and Phillips, 2001). So, although the term CPD has emerged as the standard term in most UK settings, a wide range of other terms for professional development, each with a slightly different focus, do still exist (Robinson et al., 2011). Moreover, employees are not even always clear what actually counts as CPD, as Friedman and Phillips (2001: 5) point out in their research into barriers to CPD: 'Opinion was divided as to the kinds of activity that should count as CPD, which again points to ambiguity over its fundamental purpose'.

Another challenge for CPD is the way it is perceived. Teachers often see CPD as a top-down process normally run by school management. Indeed, recent surveys would tend to back this position with head teachers generally dominating the decision-making process within schools (Friedman and Phillips, *ibid*). In this way, the benefits are often viewed in terms of management goals rather than for the individuals concerned. There is a growing awareness that it is imperative to tailor CPD to the needs of employees and make it much more about the personal development of individuals within an organisation and not just for the benefit of the organisation itself (Dent et al., 2008).

A further challenge relates to quality. To conduct CPD many organisations bring in outside speakers and trainers who have very little idea of the needs of a company and their employers, or school and its teachers. There is often a real lack of planning in terms of the sort of CPD that an organisation needs and the best people to provide it. Indeed, a recent blog post in *The Guardian* was particularly critical in this respect.

A fair amount of teacher professional development (also known variously as teacher training, inset, CPD or professional learning) is really bad. I don't just mean that it's poor value for money or insufficiently effective – it's much worse than that. A large swathe of training has no effect whatsoever on pupil outcomes. (The Guardian, 2012)

Whether of course the problem is the trainers themselves or rather the information provided to the trainers in preparation for their courses is another matter. Since some organisations do very little to highlight where training is required and what skills their workforce lack or need, it is hardly surprising that outside trainers are not able to respond to genuine needs.

training and then disappear, the training tends to be superficial (Weston, 2013). There is no back up, no planned system of evaluation of impact. The problem of evaluation is critical from the employer's perspective and a lack of demonstrable impact means that some organisations perceive CPD as an additional expense with very little return. There is a growing awareness of the need to deal with this issue and, indeed, in some of the recent CPD work I have done, the sponsoring organisations have established ways of evaluating the impact of the training. For example, in a recent programme I undertook in Northern Ireland, teachers were required to put an 'action plan' into place and report on three changes they were planning to make after the training. They then had to write up an evaluation of the impact of the changes, derived from questionnaires with students, interviews and observations from peers. However, in my experience, this kind of follow-up action planning is still fairly unusual.

Such CPD is also organised through one-off events that take place once or twice a year and this often creates logistical problems. Large organisations have employees located all over a particular country (or even all over the world) and so organising such events can be quite complex. Low participation in CPD events may be nothing to do with the quality or content of the training but simply a matter of timing or other logistical reasons.

Research into barriers to CPD will often cite some of the reasons mentioned above. However, from the employer's perspective it often boils down to two factors, which are integrally related: money and resources. Firstly, CPD can be very costly, especially if, as previously mentioned, employers have to bring in employees from long distances, hire venues and accommodation, organise food and bring in speakers and trainers (Weston, *ibid*). Smaller organisations might be able to avoid many of these costs but that still leaves the second factor – human resources. If CPD is done in school time then there is the problem of finding teaching cover. For example, I recently worked with a group of teachers from Kazakhstan who had visited the UK for a week of training in ELT and information communication technology (ICT) at the Norwich Institute of Language Education. Not only was there the substantial cost of bringing 25 teachers to the UK, but all the teachers needed cover for their own classes while they were away. CPD can be a very costly experience.

The potential of screen capture in CPD

As a possible solution to some of these barriers to CPD, in June 2006 I began to develop a website called www.teachertrainingvideos.com. At the time I was writing a regular column in the *English Teaching Professional* called 'Webwatcher' (which is still running after 13 years). Webwatcher is about using technology in ELT and often teachers would write to me to say they liked the ideas but didn't know how to do a *podcast* or a *blog* or a *wiki*. They complained about the lack of training and support for their own development, especially in the area of ICT. Instead of replying with long texts about how you press this button and use that drop-down menu, I decided to screen capture myself working with the technologies the teachers wanted to learn and send the videos to the teachers (the terms 'screen capture' and 'screen casting' are often used to refer to the same process).

piece of software, it allows you to record the screen of your computer as if you had a video camera pointing at it. Everything you do on the screen is simply recorded as a video, with all the cursor movements, writing, closing and opening of windows all captured. Whatever is on the screen or done on the screen simply comes out in a video. If you have a microphone connected then the software also records your voice. It is commonly used in computer training but its uses can go far beyond this and indeed the education industry is beginning to take a real interest in its possibilities (Loch, 2012). Once the video is created it can be shared on the internet, added to a website or to a blog or Moodle site. Users can simply click on the link and watch and listen to the video. They can stop, pause or rewind the video. This makes it ideal for training. If, for example, the user is watching a video about how to make a podcast, they can watch it, pause it and then open up the podcasting tool and try and do the same thing themselves. As one user said: *'It is like having you sitting next to me showing me what to do'*.

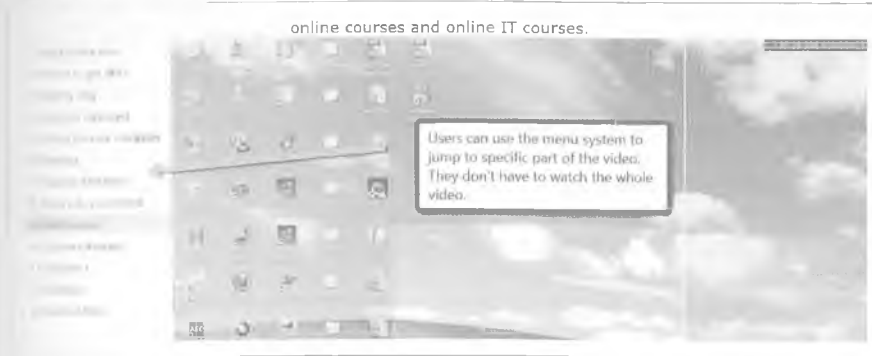
My interest in the use of screen capture software had really started because of the work of Richard Mayer (Mayer, 2001). Mayer looked at making the maximum use of visual and auditory channels to provide learning content and particularly at how overuse of one of the channels can lead to cognitive overload. He found that retention can be maximised with balanced use of both channels, particularly if the information was complementary (for example, like the commentary that supports a documentary on television or the commentary that a user can include along with screen capture video). There was also a practical reason for my choice of using screen capture tools. It is often a lot quicker to simply record the screen of your computer as you describe using a particular technology than to write out the instructions verbose. It seems a far more 'natural' and effective way of providing training.

Teachers' reactions to the videos I sent them when they requested my help were very enthusiastic. They immediately began to flag the advantages of being able to play and replay the videos and also the fact that they could see and hear what I was showing them. What immediately became clear were the huge advantages that screen capture offered as a form of training. Since I was getting so much positive feedback, I decided to create a website and make the videos accessible to a wider audience. I paid for a server and bought the domain name www.teachertrainingvideos.com. I initially loaded about ten sets of training videos dealing with blogs, iTunes, wikis and so on.

The speed with which use of the website spread through the ELT community and beyond was quite surprising and the reaction from the educational community even more so. The videos became instantly popular and in 2008 I was awarded the *Times Higher Outstanding Initiative in ICT award* and two years later the site received the British Council ELTons technology award. The approach was to make the videos as complete as possible. Each video set is really complete training in how to use a certain tool or technology. The videos take users through the absolute basics such as signing up to an account or downloading the software. Since the videos are organised into a menu system, which clearly labels the different topics,

to watch (see Figure 1, below). This allows for quite a wide range of users to make use of the content, though the emphasis is always on helping those teachers who are a bit technophobic or hesitant about technology. The videos are organised into sections. So, for example, there are a series of videos under the section 'Video, video and YouTube,' which deal with tools that can help teachers to create audio or visual content. Another section deals with blogs, wikis and virtual classrooms. There are also lists of the most 'popular' videos, the 'latest' videos and a section of 'recommended' videos.

Figure 1 Sample screen shot from TTV.com illustrating user choices



Making the content free

I took the view that TTV.com should be free to the user. This meant there would be no need to create paid walls to control access to the site. It would also mean that almost any teacher, anywhere in the world could make use of the content. This makes the organisation of the content simpler since the content is not divided between paid and free sections. It also allowed a huge range of users to access and make use of the content. I have received extraordinary emails from people all over the world thanking me for the development of the site and for keeping it free. Perhaps my favourite one is this:

Dear Mr Stannard,

I am writing to express my gratitude and admiration.

I have been teaching English as a second language in Uruguay for almost 13 years now. Last year I had to spend some time without working due to a health problem and that was when I discovered your website. I took all the tutorials since then!

Curiosity is my element and I am always trying to learn more and more to engage my students into English. Your site has been invaluable for me and I cannot express how much I learnt from you.

One of the first things that emerged as I added more videos to TTV.com was the importance of social networking. I began to use a range of social networking tools to promote and inform users about the site. I used Twitter, Facebook and, to some degree, even LinkedIn to make users aware of the training material. The numbers

networks allow quick dissemination of the content as well as a way to receive continual feedback on the content

How the site is being used

Since the launch of the site, I have run four user surveys using the tool *Survey Monkey*. I have also conducted a series of interviews and focus groups. Each survey has been completed by 100 participants (the maximum *Survey Monkey* will allow for free). The surveys have focused on four key areas:

- How/why do you use the videos?
- What do you find most useful about them?
- How has the site impacted on your CPD/the CPD of the people you train?
- How could the site be improved?

The results from these four surveys have been very consistent, especially in terms of the reason the content is so popular. However, there have been some interesting changes in the last two surveys, which relate to the groups of people that are using the site.

Why and how the videos are being used: teachers' views

Sixty-three per cent of the users are teachers or lecturers. About 70 per cent of users are teaching languages, though the number is declining as more and more teachers of other subjects make use of the content. Most teachers are using the site for three reasons. One is to keep up with advances in technology (I try to introduce one or two new sets of videos each month and update older videos). A second reason is simply to refresh their knowledge when they haven't used a particular tool for a long time and the third reason is to learn about a particular tool they already know about or have heard about but don't know how to use. The teachers are generally self-motivated and learn the tools without any top-down pressure to do so. However, in the most recent survey, teachers have pointed out that they sometimes 'have to' learn the tools and have made use of the learning content on TTV.com to fulfil CPD requirements. This may be a reflection of the recent shift in interest in the use of ICT, with many educational institutions now stipulating the wider use of ICT in teaching and learning as an objective.

When it comes to how the videos are being used, nearly all the teachers are doing the same thing. They watch a part of the video, then open up the relevant technology and see if they can replicate what they have seen. It is this very practical hands-on approach that is one of the overwhelmingly popular features of the videos. Here is a typical explanation of how the videos are being used:

When I set up my WordPress blog last year, yeah, I went back and forth between the video and the blog as I was creating it. It was very helpful to me, especially to understand the difference between a page and a post. Yes, I generally do both things at the same time.

as they like and there is clearly a feature that they like and that helps their learning. (This would be a difficult feature to replicate in face-to-face training, since trainers simply have the time to keep going over something repeatedly.) A teacher's comment illustrates the value of repeated viewing:

This is the best site I have found to get information about useful tools for teachers. I can watch the tutorials as many times as I need, practise on my own and then I can use it in class once I have mastered it!

The point this trainer made about learning 'on my own' and repeating the tutorials as many times as needed is a frequent comment. Indeed, the fact that some people may be slightly embarrassed about their ICT knowledge might be a key reason for the success of the training videos, as the following comment suggests:

I publish educational materials for people who teach teens and adults. My audience is very reluctant to be seen as not knowing how to use technology. I recommend www.teachertrainingvideos.com regularly in my newsletter because the materials are not only good, but they can be used by individuals privately. They don't have to expose their ignorance before their peers.

Finally, the fact the videos also start from the very basics and cover things like creating accounts and downloading the software is also highlighted quite frequently in the surveys, as this user explains:

I also love how you are able to do the videos and make it for 'dummies' like me to take part in it.

Why and how the videos are being used: trainers' views

One fact that has been emerging from the last two surveys is the number of trainers that are now using the site. These are people engaged in providing teacher training and CPD sessions themselves: 24 per cent of those surveyed said they were either involved in delivering CPD as part of their job or were actually teacher trainers.

The teacher trainers are using the videos in similar ways to the teachers but with the specific aim of cascading the knowledge to their trainees. In addition, they also use them to back up the face-to-face training they organise so that trainees can access the videos after their sessions. This way of using the site has emerged in the last three years. Previously, very few of the users were involved in CPD activities themselves.

Indeed, the videos are actually helping some teachers to become teacher trainers. Here we have an example of a teacher with very low initial levels of ICT knowledge, who has turned teacher trainer due, in part, to the impact of the videos:

It has helped me feel more comfortable trying new sites and technology. Three years ago I needed help from students to hook up the LCD projector (pitiful, yes, I agree). One summer I took two grad classes on web2.0 and then continued learning with sites like yours and others. The librarian now considers me one of the most knowledgeable teachers as far as technology and how to best use it with students and in instruction and to develop a PLN. Three years ago I would have laughed at the thought of being a leader at my school with things related to tech-related web sites, but now it is a reality. I've led two tech-related workshops

It is interesting to see how the website is being used as a sort of 'central hub' for teacher trainers, and this model could be useful for organisations that are providing CPD on a large scale. For example, in institutions where teacher training might take place in a range of locations nationally or internationally, a central hub of training material and videos could help to standardise training and also provide knowledge and information to those trainers, who would then cascade the training to their trainees. Screen capture tools allow for a whole array of different types of training material to be produced. Since the screen of your computer is recorded, it is possible to record yourself as you talk through a PowerPoint presentation, record yourself as you talk over a PDF or Word file or as you go through a website or piece of software. It is also possible to insert other video within the screen capture so you are not limited to only adding screen-captured material. It is also easy to add quizzes, subtitles, separate audio and hotspots. What is perhaps even more interesting is the low cost of such products. Even high-quality screen capture tools cost less than \$200.

What users like the most

Recent survey respondents were provided with a list of possible reasons they might like the site, based on previous surveys. They were also encouraged to add additional reasons themselves. The overwhelming reason 84 per cent of respondents liked the videos is because they are both 'visual and oral'. Participants can watch the screen and listen to the commentary and play and re-play the content as much as they want. This links in with my own observations about screen capture and the way in which it provides a dual-coded medium for learning, tightly linked to the types of learning content that Richard Mayer (2001) outlined.

Apart from the importance of the 'visual and oral' benefits of using screen capture videos, there are ten other reasons for liking the site mentioned by 50 per cent or more of those surveyed.

Table 1: Reasons for liking TTV.com videos

1	The videos are comprehensive.
2	They are frequently updated and allow the followers to keep up.
3	There is a newsletter.
4	It is easy to dip into the videos as they are organised into sub-menus.
5	The videos suggest ways to use the technologies as well as showing how to use them
6	The videos can be paused, stopped and repeated as often as the user likes.
7	Complete flexibility. The videos can be used at any time, including at home.
8	The videos are free.
9	The videos are easy to access. There is no sign in or registration.
10	There is a large choice of videos. They cover a range of technologies.

to requests for help and didn't see the site in terms of its impact on professional development. What is clear from my surveys is that a growing number of organisations are using it to complement their other CPD activities or as a source of information for their own trainers. Organisations and individuals use the videos for their own development and also recommend the videos to their trainees and staff. In other words, it is quite common for trainers to recommend the videos as 'back up' after they have provided face-to-face training – which is something I do myself. Trainees are thus able to continue and extend their learning after the face-to-face event. This process helps to counter complaints in the literature about the lack of joined-up thinking regarding CPD (Weston, 2013), that is, training is provided but there is no further contact with the trainer and a lack of evaluation of the impact of the training. The training videos on TTV.com offer a way to support and complement face-to-face training, as this comment from a survey respondent illustrates:

I am currently only teaching, but previously had responsibility for organising and running technology-related professional development for teachers (over 100) in my college. I often promoted TTVs generally and also specific videos through the online community I had set up. I also referred teachers to specific videos when they requested help with something. I also use it for my own PD.

What has emerged from both the surveys and the focus group sessions is that the impact of TTV.com is beginning to fall into two categories. The first is impact on the trainers and organisations who use the site to support and complement their own CPD courses and also as a way of keeping themselves informed of new developments in ICT; and the second is impact on individuals who use the site for their own development. This is explicated in Table 2, below.

Table 2: Impact of TTV.com on trainers/organisations and individuals

Impact on organisations/trainers
Provide information about emerging technologies
Offer reference material to their staff
Help their own teacher/CPD trainers to develop
Provide a model for a way they could develop their own CPD strategy
Impact on individuals
Help them to develop at their own pace and privately
Inform them of emerging technologies
Help them to get recognition and promotion
Provide revision material for exams/professional qualifications
Provide teaching ideas for the class

The comments below epitomise this impact.

Example one: individual

It's just so helpful to have someone take me through step by step – with images, sound and the capability to 'rewind' as many times as I need to hear the info. Since I turn around and teach some of this to my own students, I have to sound like I know what I'm talking about ... and I have to be able to convince some of my tech-fearful students that learning about these tools is something they can do.

Example two: trainer

I have recently completed the Certified Online Facilitator course through the LPI and I'm not sure I would have had the confidence to do that if I hadn't first become more familiar with technology through your work. Thank you.

Example three: trainer

First of all it is a gold mine for CPD. Second, I can learn about new ways to teach better, create material for my students, and then learn how to use the tools. Third, I can make better-informed decisions about using/purchasing specific tools. It makes my life easier all around! And it makes a better teacher/trainer of me, which reflects on my success as well as the achievement of my students. A huge thank you to you!

Other organisations with which I have been involved have taken a similar approach to CPD. At the University of Warwick, I have developed a series of training videos around Moodle, Powerpoint, Sitebuilder and other tools that staff needed to become familiar with. We used these videos as a complement to the direct CPD training organised in-house. This has resulted in a more blended approach to CPD where the videos are not taking on the primary training role but, rather, supporting more traditional CPD activities.

Improving TTV.com

Teacher training videos has developed over time in response to the regular surveys and user interviews. It now has a monthly newsletter with 17,200 subscribers (as of February 2014). The newsletter informs the subscribers about the latest videos that have been added to the site as well as any updates or changes to older videos. At a later stage a Twitter feed was added and then, more recently, a Facebook fan page where users can engage more, ask questions and send feedback. Recently, with more and more users having iPads that are not able to access the flash-based training videos, we have added the content onto YouTube, so that iPad users can access the content. The layout of the site has also been improved with the videos being organised into pages with general topics that make finding the content easier. There is a lot more that can be done, however these changes need to be contextualised within the philosophy of the site and the reason why it is so successful.

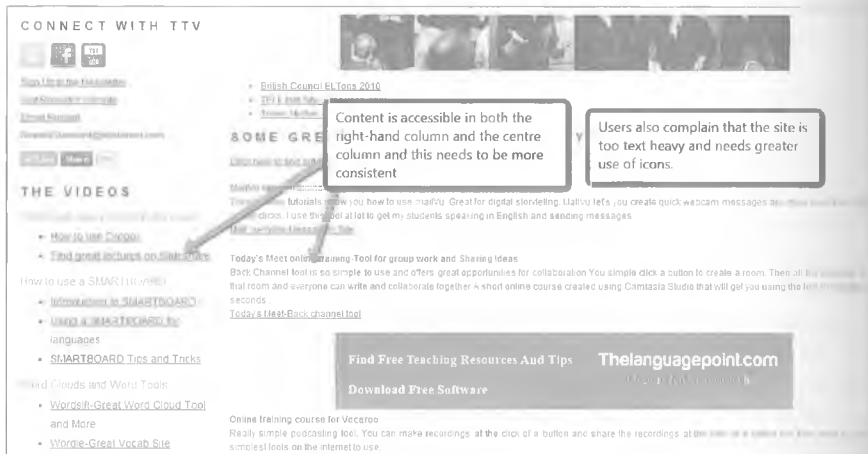
the very nature of technology means that an almost endless number of elements and additions can be added to any device or software. In the past we bought devices that often did just one thing; for example, a camera simply took photos, a Hoover vacuumed your floor and a radio transmitted radio signals. Nowadays we have devices that can all do a multitude of tasks. My camera can record audio, take video and even edit pictures as well as take them. As for my telephone, well I don't even understand all of its functionality! Technologies tend to become more complex as they establish themselves in the market. In the educational domain software such as Moodle and Blackboard offer growing numbers of tools and plug-ins, as does WordPress. The problem is that, as products grow in complexity, they become more diluted, less defined and, of course, harder to navigate. As the message becomes more diluted the essence of what the product is for gets lost.

There is growing awareness of this issue. Indeed, the *Apple* devices (though not necessarily the software they run) are very simple in design and functionality. There are a growing number of organisations that highlight the simplicity of their software and actually make this a marketing point. *2Simple* would be a perfect example of a very successful software company that prides itself on keeping the software simple and easy to navigate. I have always been aware of this issue of burgeoning complexity and the feedback I get would suggest that the users feel the same. At one point I began to add extra elements to TTV.com, including video views, podcasts and live lectures that I had given. However, I realised that, overall, these additional elements were impacting negatively on the site. It meant I needed additional sections and these sections were not part of the core message of the site, i.e. providing teacher training videos. These additional elements made the navigation more complex and diluted the message of what the site was trying to achieve. So, though it is quite typical of users of TTV.com to suggest a whole array of additions that they would like to see, these must be considered within the overall philosophy of what the site is attempting to achieve. Not all user feedback is useful and some of it can be very misguided.

This does not mean to say that we need to discard all suggestions made by the users. What we perhaps need to do is consider whether the suggestions contribute to the core activity of the site or whether they end up diluting the message. To give a specific example, adding podcasts or a blog dilutes the message. It brings new modalities to the site and means there is more than just training videos for consumption. In contrast, adding clearly labelled sub-sections, providing a search engine, creating a section of quick videos or making lists of the most popular videos, doesn't change the essence of what the site is about; it simply improves access to the existing content and builds on the core objective.

The number one request I have received is for a search engine. The amount of content on the site has grown considerably over the years and it is getting harder and harder to find content easily. A second request is for the amount of text and links to be reduced. We currently have navigation in both the centre section and also on the left-hand column, and this is clearly confusing the users who say the navigation should be more consistent (see Figure 2, below). Building consistent sites, where the pages function in a similar way, is a key design issue as it makes learning to use the site and navigating it much easier (Nielsen, 2000).

Figure 2: Issues with navigation in TTV.com



Other suggestions revolve around making the website more attractive visually. Icons of the products that are covered by the videos could be added to the website, as could short descriptions of what the training videos cover. Some of these changes I have begun to implement. I am also looking into developing clearer, larger and better-organised labels for the different sections. None of these changes affect the core activities of the site. The site is very much a work in progress, but it is interesting to see that even a few small changes that we have recently made to the organisation of the content has improved the numbers of visitors returning. It highlights the importance of making the content clear and easy to use and find.

TTV.com is far from complete and I am aware of just how much further we could take the website in terms of CPD. It would be easy to add quizzes and mini-tests to check understanding. We could also include additional downloadable PDF files with extra support and information. Some users have even suggested having a series of interviews where I talk about the different technologies and the way I have used them. Other comments include the introduction of podcasts, a blog and even fully blown courses with certification. These are all options that are open to anyone thinking of attempting something similar to TTV.com. However, since the model of TTV.com is to offer its services for free, and since all these options would require time and money, at present there are no plans to implement these additions.

Applying TTV.com to an institutional scenario

TTV.com has generated a great deal of interest as an example of an Open Educational Resource (OER). OERs are becoming increasingly common. The Open University in the UK offers free learning content through Open Learn (www.open.edu/openlearn/) and does the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA with its Open Courseware (<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>). A notable feature of these initiatives from an organisational standpoint is that indirectly they have become marketing tools for the institutions involved. So, for example, the free content released on the Open Learn platform has actually generated interest in some of the paid courses the Open University offers. The next section in this chapter describes a similar experience at the University of Westminster in the UK.

Part 2: From TTV.com to MMTV.com Russell Stannard and Savraj Matharu

While working as the course leader on the MSc in Multimedia at the University of Westminster a colleague, Savraj Matharu and I had produced screencast training videos for the course. As a follow-up to these training videos we decided to create a similar site to TTV.com, which we called www.multimediatrainingvideos.com (henceforth MMTV.com).

When developing the new site we took a very similar approach to TTV.com, releasing screencast training videos that we had created for the course and allowing anyone to access them. We had two very clear objectives for MMTV.com.

1. To 'flip' our classes

We realised that too much time was being taken up with training students to use the software they needed for the course. This was taking up valuable lecture time. We decided to create more training videos to deal with these issues, release them and reduce actual lecture time, which would, in turn, increase the number of hours for hands-on tutorials. This was a very early attempt at the flipped classroom model (Dedering, 2012) that we hear so much about today. In essence, the students were engaged in their own continuing professional development through MMTV.com as a basis for their coursework.

2. To promote the course

We decided to release the videos for free on the MMTV site and allow students and professionals all over the world to use the content. We hoped that, in doing so, we could generate interest in the MSc Multimedia course at the University of Westminster. If the users of the site liked the content then perhaps they would be interested in undertaking the MSc that we both worked on.

Though MMTV.com is not directed solely at the ELT community (as TTV.com was), it is nevertheless worth considering the lessons we learned from this second project and how we were able to build on the work of TTV.com. Many of these lessons will be very useful to anyone considering using technology as a way of supporting CPD activities within their organisations.

First of all, there is benefit with respect to the increasingly popular 'Flipped Classroom' model (Gibbs, 2013). We produced a huge collection of training videos, and in doing so were able to reduce lecture time to just one hour a week. Tutorial time was then doubled, giving the students far more time to practise with the technology and to learn hands-on through a series of mini-tasks. Back in 2007/08, this was still a fairly new approach but it was enthusiastically received by the students and created quite a 'buzz' on the multimedia courses we worked on.

We were able to learn from the TTV.com project and in many ways MMTV.com was better planned and organised. TTV.com has only recently released its content onto YouTube but with MMTV.com we engaged with social media right from the start. In fact, we co-ordinated a whole range of activities with the primary goal of making the website more popular and providing the MSc in Multimedia course with as much exposure as possible. The screen-casting tool we used allowed us to produce multiple video formats from the same original video and so we released the content onto both YouTube and Vimeo. Vimeo is popular with multimedia professionals and helped us to build awareness of MMTV.com within the multimedia industry, as well as among students studying on a variety of other courses.

We also took a slightly different approach to Twitter. We actually targeted multimedia professionals who were on Twitter and 'followed' them, in the hope they would follow us back. In doing so we were able to widen the appeal of the website and build a very strong base within the multimedia industry. Through Twitter we were able to announce new training videos quickly and efficiently. This method drew forward momentum to the project, where organisations and individuals started sharing our content, thus making our learning materials more widely accessible and open. We also introduced a Facebook page, which was less effective as at the time it was still a relatively untapped way of communicating outside the student domain. Today, in comparison, there are hundreds of multimedia groups that we could have tapped into.

One key addition to what had been done on TTV.com was to concentrate from the start on getting a high search engine ranking for the MMTV.com website. We used the Keyword Tool provided by Google to look for the most common and frequently used key words based around the learning material we were releasing for free. Each set of videos sits inside a webpage and we were able to carefully choose our metatags and descriptions so that Google was able to find the site easily and rank it. We found out a lot about search engine optimisation, including making use of XML maps. This was incredibly successful and even today, despite MMTV.com no longer being updated, the search term 'multimedia training' still returns the website in the top two or three ranking sites.

Taking MMTV.com to another level

In 2009, MMTV was awarded £20,000 worth of funding from the HEA/JISC Open Educational Resources project. This was jointly matched by equal funding from the University of Westminster. This additional funding allowed us to take the project on to another level. We updated the look and feel of the site to closely mirror that of the University of Westminster website, and we improved the video players too so that the videos also had the right branding. We also widened our work on search engines and on targeting users and professionals from demographics where we did not have a large following. It is possible to search for multimedia-based professionals in certain locations through Twitter and then follow these people. We also drilled down into the search engines looking at the search terms and descriptions that allowed our content to be found. We introduced a blog and added many more videos covering a much broader range of multimedia topics. At one point MMTV.com was getting around 50,000 visitors a month and the videos were being accessed in large numbers by students and multimedia professionals. We also surveyed students within the University of Westminster who were using the site and again the overwhelming message to come through was the effectiveness of screen capture as a delivery method for CPD and training.

Screen capture/casting

While there is an abundance of technology that could be used for effective delivery of CPD, we focused on using screen capture/casting, as had TTV.com. As indicated previously, the use of screen capture is closely linked to the work of Richard Mayer (2001) who looked at different ways to reduce cognitive load by essentially making use of both the oral and visual channels and by not overloading the visual channel. At the time of his research, there was a tendency on the internet to create content that was predominately visual through the use of text and pictures. Little use was being made of audio and even less of video (though this may have been due to the limitations of internet speeds at the time). Mayer's work is not just about reducing the visual overload but also about how the information processed in both channels can complement each other. So the connections between the pictorial and verbal information are paramount and help to improve what is retained. This is the 'active processing assumption' (Clark and Mayer, 2011). Screen capture by its very nature affords this option since the user can record his/her verbal comments at the same time as capturing the screen as a video. The two forms of information are complementary. Anyone thinking of taking a similar approach to CPD should take time to become familiar with Mayer's work and others that have tested and developed it (e.g. Austin, 2009).

At the time of developing the content for MMTV.com, there were fewer software options than are currently available and we used *Techsmith Camtasia* (www.techsmith.com/camtasia.html), which has the following features that we found useful:

Recording

- Option to record different sizes and directly in AVI if required.
- The cursor can be highlighted on the screen, making it easier for users to follow the trainer.

Editing

- The option of adding quizzes and concept checking questions with immediate feedback.
- The option to integrate real video into the timeline along with screen capture.
- The ability to add hotspots and clickable elements on the screen (for example, to take the user off to a different website).
- The ability to add titles and subtitles.
- The option to record the audio separately after making the videos.

Production

- The option to produce a variety of different outputs from original screen capture recording so formats could be produced for DVD, for the web and for YouTube.
- The ability to bring all the videos into a menu system using a feature called Camtasia Theatre that allows each video to be individually referenced. In this way users can dip into the video they want and are not forced to watch the whole video.
- A wide range of simple to use compression options that allows users to balance the quality of the videos and the size of the files.

When MMTV.com began in 2007 the training videos were directly related to the MSc in Multimedia course and covered a very broad number of the course modules including Photoshop, Flash, HTML and Director. With the added impact of the funding the website grew rapidly in popularity and for short periods of time was receiving more than 50,000 visitors a month. Clearly, not all of these visitors were interested in taking our MSc in Multimedia but were accessing the videos for their own professional development purposes. Nevertheless, the site had a direct impact on the number of students interested in doing the paid course. In a period when all other courses within the Computer Science Department were losing students, numbers on the MSc in Multimedia increased from 12 in 2007 to 27 in 2010, with 50 per cent of the students international and about 50 per cent UK/EU based (Stannard, 2010).

In 2010 the students were surveyed to ascertain what type of influence MMTV.com had had on their decision to study on the MSc in Multimedia. In the results 15 out of 27 students said that MMTV.com had been the main/or one of the reasons why they had chosen the course at the University of Westminster. The income generated

by the additional numbers exceeded the total cost of the funded project. More interestingly, all 27 students said that the training videos had helped them to understand what the course was about. Having the content free on the internet was actually an effective source for understanding the course better and providing students with additional information about the MSc programme, enabling them to make well-informed decisions about whether they wished to take it or not, while providing a CPD opportunity for those who were interested in the content but did not wish to pursue a formal course.

Conclusion

This chapter was written to provide readers with a possible direction to take in the provision of online CPD. Essentially, it is about the use of screen capture as a way of providing online training and has attempted to highlight both the academic justification for its effectiveness through the work of Richard Mayer (2001) as well as drawing on the very positive feedback from how users have experienced learning through screen capture. It also highlights the importance of not only receiving user feedback, but using that feedback to build and continually develop a product. Though engagement with the target audience and constant reflection will help to move a project forward and keep it relevant, we must also remember that not all feedback is useful. It is vital not to lose sight of one's original objectives, something that is very easy to do in the arena of technology where so many options to extend and develop products exist. We hope we have stirred readers' interest in taking an unconventional approach to CPD via open learning. We also hope we have demonstrated that open learning is a feasible and productive approach to CPD, one that is both sustainable and rewarding for both its users and its developers.

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**Introducing a paradigm
shift in EFL continuing
professional
development in Greece:
the development
of online communities
of practice**



Introducing a paradigm shift in EFL continuing professional development in Greece: the development of online communities of practice

Livlokia Karavas and Smaragda Papadopoulou

Introduction

This chapter presents the rationale for, and main specifications of, an online platform for communities of practice (CoPs), developed for primary English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Greece. The online CoP platform, named *2gather*, was developed within the context of an in-service training programme for the implementation of an innovation which involved the introduction of English in the first and second grade of Greek public primary schools. Implemented in 960 schools and involving more than 2,000 specialist language teachers, the project, which has come to be known by the Greek acronym 'PEAP', was launched in 2010 and was developed within the context of a European funded project entitled 'New Foreign Language Education Policy in Schools: English for young learners' (see Dendrinos, 2013). The training programme developed for the implementation of PEAP adopted a blended learning approach, integrating various forms and means of training.

In the third year of development and implementation, the impact of the teacher training programme on primary school teachers' beliefs and practices was investigated through an online questionnaire. The results of the impact survey highlighted (a) the need for in-school training and support focusing on practical issues and the problems teachers face in dealing with learners of this age group, and (b) the need for closer co-operation between teachers in dealing with the complexities of the innovation. In response, the development of CoPs among Greek EFL primary school language teachers was considered by the university project team (UPT) in charge of PEAP as the most promising and appropriate form of professional development, with the potential of responding more effectively to the needs of teachers and of facilitating the sustainability of the programme as a whole. Given that CoPs constitute an innovative form of teacher development in Greece and introduce a paradigm shift in an in-service training system that is highly centralised, heavily bureaucratic, top-down and additive in nature, a way to facilitate, organise and support the development and work of CoPs was necessary.

The chapter begins by outlining the challenges faced in the development of CoP within the context of the PEAP training programme. It then discusses the pedagogical and technical principles that underlie the construction of the online CoP platform called *2gather*, as well as the results from the first pilot implementation of the platform with a group of project teachers.

The context of foreign language teacher education in Greece

An important part of understanding innovation is that the change to social practice and the measure of value are inherently *context specific*. As Hayes (2012: 50) states:

[A]ny conclusions about what may be best practice in English language educational innovation need to be framed within the constraints and opportunities of the context(s) in which the innovation is to be implemented as well as within an understanding of the socio-cultural and historical context of the system from which the innovative practices derive.

Therefore, in order to appreciate the perceived value of an innovation, the challenge of its implementation and the nature of change in practice, an understanding of the wider educational and social context is necessary.

Greece has one of the most centrally governed and managed education systems in Europe (Gouvias, 2007). The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is responsible for every dimension of educational policy making, from compulsory programmes of study, to detailed school timetables, the salary levels and career development of teachers. Training policy in Greece is also heavily bureaucratic, top-down and additive in nature. To date there is no coherent, long-term, national teacher education policy linking initial education, induction and continuous professional development within the broader context of educational policy. According to Vergidis et al. (2010), teacher training in Greece is characterised by lack of coherence, continuity, systematicity and flexibility, and failure to respond to teachers' real classroom needs. Surveys with various subject teachers throughout Greece confirm the ineffectiveness of Greek teacher training policies (Karabini and Psilou, 2005; Vratsalis, 2005).

The newly founded Institute of Educational Policy has overall responsibility for the in-service training of pre-primary, primary and secondary school teachers in Greece while university departments are responsible for the pre-service training of teachers. Both the Institute of Educational Policy and the universities are under the control of the Ministry of Education. The initial training of English language teachers is carried out by the English Language and Literature departments of the universities of Athens and Thessaloniki. Until recently, university programmes focused on preparing student teachers for teaching at secondary school level. Training in primary ELT methodology is limited to seminars and workshops within methodology courses.

Public primary and secondary school teachers in Greece are all university graduates who have completed a four-year university degree in their respective field. Entrance to the teaching profession in public schools is achieved by successfully passing a very competitive examination, which assesses teachers' knowledge of their subject areas and of the Greek educational system, their lesson planning skills and their ability to justify their decisions and rationalise their practices. In-service training in Greece typically takes two forms: (a) induction training, consisting of an introductory 100-hour compulsory in-service training programme for newly appointed teachers; and (b) in-service training for practising teachers. In-service training takes the form of seminars and is carried out by School Advisers who are appointed by the Minister of Education. Currently there are around 40 School Advisers for English. These are practising public school teachers with extensive teaching experience, postgraduate studies and PhDs in areas related to language education and with some experience in training. The majority of School Advisers have not specialised in primary ELT and have no related training.

Depending on the needs of teachers in schools in their districts of responsibility, School Advisers decide on the range and themes of seminars to be offered to teachers. In other words, School Advisers take on full responsibility for deciding on the content, form and range of training opportunities offered to teachers. Seminars that take place outside school but within teachers' working hours usually last for three hours. Participation in seminars is not compulsory. School Advisers also provide in-school support for teachers in schools within their districts.

Introducing English in Grade 1 and 2 of primary school: the PEAP project

The project, which was developed within the context of a European funded project, aimed at introducing a totally new component in the Greek educational system, i.e. English as a foreign language in Grades 1 and 2 of Greek public all-day primary schools, which until 2010 was only taught from Grade 3 onwards. Responsibility for the development and implementation of the project was given to the Research Centre for Language Teaching, Testing and Assessment (RCeL) of the Faculty of English Language and Literature, University of Athens (www.rcel.enl.uoa.gr) in May 2010. The project was launched initially in 800 all-day primary schools throughout Greece in September 2010, thus giving the project team essentially four months to prepare. The programme involved (a) the development of a curricular framework for the 1st and 2nd grade of primary schools, (b) the *a posteriori* development of syllabi for each grade, and (c) the design and development of new teaching materials and learning experiences for 1st and 2nd grade learners.

The purpose of the two-year course for which the PEAP curriculum has been designed is to introduce young learners to the oral mode of the foreign language and, through it, to develop basic interpersonal communicative skills needed in social situations, relevant to young learners, using day-to-day language. The curriculum, aimed at developing a pre-A1-level oral ability on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), promotes a 'learning by doing' approach and the content is attentive to learners' evolving social, cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills.

Materials consist of a series of activities, embedded in specific socio-cultural contexts, designed to prompt young learners to use the target language creatively, often relating it to their mother tongue (see Dendrinos, 2014). All activities and materials are uploaded and are accessible to teachers through the PEAP portal: <http://rcel.enl.uoa.gr/peap/>

The development of the PEAP teacher-training programme: issues and challenges

Effective change in practice is synonymous with continuous and systematic teacher education. In cases of pedagogical innovation such as this one, teacher training is key to effective implementation of the programme and its contextualisation to local needs and constraints.

One of the first significant challenges that the project team had to face was the fact that no baseline evaluation had been carried out by the Ministry of Education and no information regarding teacher and school profiles was available prior to the launch of the project. This information, however, was absolutely necessary for deciding on the programme's aims and content. In view of this information gap, it was decided that the first year of project implementation would focus on both disseminating the innovation by informing teachers of the main principles and features of the project, and carrying out a baseline evaluation in order to identify project teachers' needs.

The dissemination process had two strands. The first consisted of two conferences, organised by the project team in October and November 2010 with the aim of informing School Advisers, primary school teachers and school head teachers of the aims, principles and innovatory features of the English for Young Learners (EYL) project. The second comprised 75 four-hour seminars carried out by School Advisers throughout Greece with the aim of informing primary EFL school teachers within their districts of the main principles and features of the project.

As information events were being organised throughout the country, a baseline evaluation, which included a survey of our teachers' profiles and the school units, to which they were appointed, was carried out through online questionnaires designed for project teachers and project school head teachers. The baseline study began with the onset of the project in September 2010 and lasted until December 2010, involving 897 project school teachers and 254 project school head teachers.

The survey of the profile of project teachers revealed that, although well over half of the sample had experience in teaching at the primary level, the majority (60 per cent) had no experience in teaching learners of the target age group while the overwhelming majority (90 per cent) had not received systematic training in EYL methodology. One-third of the sample was also novice teachers with one to five years' teaching experience who had received no focused training in EYL methodology. In addition, in the vast majority of EYL project classes (89 per cent), a significant number of students were from different ethnic backgrounds and were learning English as a third language.

The challenge of addressing the diverse characteristics and training needs of project teachers was compounded by the fact that the project schools in the second year of project implementation rose from 800 to 960. As a result, the teaching body in project schools changed by 40 per cent. Moreover, the school adviser evaluation and selection process, which took place towards the end of the first year of implementation, lasted for an inordinate amount of time (May 2011–December 2011) during which school advisers were essentially inactive. This unpredictable development made clear that designing a long-term coherent training programme with face-to-face seminars spanning the three years of the project was not viable due to constant changes in the composition of our teaching and trainer body. This conclusion was reinforced by experience of yet another obstacle: the geographical location of project schools. Around 20 per cent of our project schools are located in remote areas and islands in Greece, which made the provision of face-to-face seminars to these teachers extremely costly in terms of time, money and human resources.

The findings of the baseline surveys and the constraints mentioned above guided the design and development of the PEAP training programme. The training programme had to be *viable and sustainable* regardless of changes in the composition of the teacher body or in the composition of our trainer group. The training programme had to be *coherent*, offering training in more general areas of EYL methodology and progressively leading to training in more specialised areas. It also had to be *flexible in its content*, capable of (a) addressing a very diverse group of teachers with a wealth of different training needs, (b) covering the needs of the less and more experienced teachers, and (c) effecting change in teacher beliefs without being overly didactic and theoretical, but grounded in examples of actual practice. Finally, the programme had to be *flexible in its form*, capable of reaching out to project school teachers located in remote areas and islands in Greece. As a result, the project team decided that the training programme would need to adopt a form of blended learning including various forms and means of training as follows:

- An online training course in *Teaching Early Language Learners*, accessible to all project teachers, aiming at raising teachers' awareness of how young learners think and how they learn language and acquainting them with teaching practices and techniques appropriate for this age group.
- Focused face-to-face seminars delivered by School Advisers.
- Focused face-to-face and tele-training seminars delivered by the project team and organised by the School Advisers.
- One-day conferences focusing on teaching EFL to young learners. delivered by the project team and organised by the School Adviser.

This planning was innovatory for the Greek teacher training context, being flexible in its form and content, contextualised, systematic and continuous.

Assessing the impact of the PEAP training programme: confirming the need for communities of practice

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the PEAP training programme and its impact on teacher practices and beliefs, an online questionnaire was developed by the project team at the end of the third year of project implementation (May 2013). The questionnaire was sent electronically to 465 project school teachers with two years of project experience, of whom 135 replied, a response rate of 29 per cent. The results of the impact study have been presented in detail elsewhere (Karavas and Zouganeli, 2013). Here we will briefly present only those findings that acted as a springboard for the development of CoPs and confirmed their necessity.

The survey found that the most popular form of professional development for teachers was self-development through reflection on practice (90 per cent) followed by seminars organised by the school adviser (88 per cent). However, it should be noted that these seminars offered throughout the year by each school adviser do not necessarily focus on issues related to project implementation but, rather, on general issues of TEFL methodology. Almost half the teachers (47 per cent) also stated that co-operation with colleagues is another popular form of professional development. Forms of training organised by the UPT were not heavily attended by teachers, with only 21 per cent of the sample taking part in seminars and only 12 per cent completing the e-course on Teaching Early Language Learners. Nevertheless, with respect to the effectiveness of various forms of training, the majority of teachers (90 per cent) who participated in them found seminars organised by the UPT most effective for their CPD, followed closely by self-development through reflection (88 per cent) and co-operation with colleagues (83 per cent). The majority (81 per cent) of the small sample of teachers who had taken the e-course also found it very effective.

The results of the impact study made clear that by far the most popular and effective form of professional development for project teachers is reflection on practice, followed by co-operation with colleagues. Moreover, involvement with the project and experience with teaching very young learners seemed to be a more powerful factor influencing project teachers' beliefs and practices than other forms of organised professional development. The message that project teachers sent through their responses seemed to be that teacher learning is not confined to professional development workshops and courses but occurs in many different aspects of practice. The teachers' own classrooms, as well as collaborative dialogue and activity with colleagues, are powerful contexts of learning (Borko, 2009). By engaging in collaborative dialogue with peers and group reflection, teachers de-privatise their practice and subject their views about teaching and learning and their classroom practices to critical analysis. This process, according to Roberts and Pruitt (2009: 20): 'leads to renewed understandings and functions as the groundwork for actions that lead to improved educational practice and ongoing teacher and student learning'. In essence, our teachers' views highlight the fact that professional growth and teacher learning are job embedded, collaborative, site-based and ongoing.

Our teachers' views also resonate with current thinking and research on human learning and teacher cognition. Socio-cultural perspectives on human learning define learning as a dynamic social activity *situated* in physical and social contexts and distributed across persons, tools and activities (Johnson, 2006). They emphasise that learning is not the accumulation of facts and information but is situated (see Lave and Wenger, 1991), that is, it takes place in specific settings or contexts that shape how learning takes place (Burns and Richards, 2009). Research on L2 teacher cognition has also validated the principal tenets of situated learning (see Johnson, 2006). Findings suggest that L2 teacher learning is socially negotiated, normative and lifelong, emerging out of and through experiences in social contexts, and is contingent upon self, students, subject matter, curricula and setting (Johnson, 2009). This has led to a reconsideration of traditional modes of training in foreign language teacher education programmes and the development of alternative professional development structures. Common to all these structures is the belief that teachers' informal and professional networks function as powerful sites for professional learning and that teachers can learn professionally in meaningful ways when they are able to do so together. In other words, teacher learning emerges through social interaction within a *community of practice* (Burns and Richards, 2009).

Communities of Practice (CoPs) have been with us for many years, but the term itself was coined in 1991 by Lave and Wenger, who used it in their exploration of situated learning (i.e. learning which takes place through working practices) (Hildreth and Kimble, 2004). CoPs have been defined as '... groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.' (Wenger et al., 2002: 4). CoPs allow educators to work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Thus, CoPs are grounded in two basic assumptions: (a) that knowledge is situated in the day-to-day experiences of teachers and understood through collaborative critical reflection and inquiry, and (b) that engaging teachers in CoPs will increase their professional knowledge and enhance student learning (Vescio et al., 2008). Among the many benefits of CoPs is their potential to improve teaching practices and educational outcomes and to enhance teachers' sense of professionalism and sense of efficacy (Roberts and Pruitt, 2009).

On the basis of the impact study results and recent research on teacher cognition and learning, the development of CoPs among Greek EFL primary school language teachers was seen by the project team as the most promising, appropriate and meaningful form of professional development with the potential of responding more effectively to the needs of teachers and of facilitating the sustainability of the programme as a whole and its further development and institutionalisation.

Given that CoPs constitute an innovative form of teacher development and introduce a paradigm shift in an in-service training system that is highly centralised, heavily bureaucratic, top-down and additive in nature, a way to facilitate, organise and support the development and work of CoPs was necessary. For this reason, an online CoP platform was designed to help PLAP teachers become members of this professional community. The online platform developed within the context of the PLAP project, called *2gather*, will be described in the following sections.

Why an *online* platform for communities of practice?

In general, *online* communities are groups that use networked technologies (mainly web-based) to communicate and collaborate (Johnson, 2001). The rapid diffusion of internet-based networking technologies has redrawn the boundaries of professional development and has accelerated the development of new forms of community. The integration of internet-based technologies and the use of computer-mediated communication tools (e.g. chat rooms, blogs) have, according to Johnson (2006: 244): 'been found to foster qualitatively different forms of participation than face-to-face instruction does, create more equitable roles as teachers engage in inquiry about their own learning and teaching, foster greater collaboration among teacher learners, and decrease the sense of isolation L2 teachers in disparate locations often experience'.

Compared to traditional communities, online communities differ in several aspects and can prove more beneficial. Traditional communities are place-based and have membership according to norms. Group dynamics often override individual expression. In contrast, online communities are organised around an activity and formed as a need arises (Johnson, 2001); they do not need formal boundaries, and norms do not dominate as they do in traditional communities, thus allowing for greater individual control (Squire and Johnson, 2000). Furthermore, in online communities the physical location and isolation of members is overcome; the utilisation of online spaces and web 2.0 tools bridges the geographical gap, providing opportunities for greater communication, discovery and construction of knowledge while facilitating modelling and visualisation (Lock, 2006).

Moreover, as shown in research studies focusing specifically on *online teacher communities* (Farooq et al., 2007; Barab et al., 2004), teachers tend to interact more frequently, build more diverse networks, and gain more equitable access to human and information resources not available locally. Acknowledging the overall benefits stemming from building online communities, the *2gather* platform provides a flexible and structured context for hosting and supporting online community building.

Designing and developing the *2gather* online platform

In designing the platform's infrastructure and creating support strategies for CoPs, we have been guided by the theoretical CoP framework, the principles of social constructivism and the checklist of fundamental elements required in online community environments as suggested by Koch and Fusco (2008) (see Appendix 1).

Although most online communities are primarily based on one of the following applications, content management systems, bulletin boards, blogs, and social networking services, in developing *2gather* we have combined the community building features found on all of them. With the use of open source technologies, we have constructed a fully customisable online environment, incorporating all the facilities listed by Wenger (2001) as useful to CoPs (see Table 1, below).

Table 1: Facilities useful to a community of practice integrated in the *2gather* platform

Typical facilities useful to a community of practice (Wenger, 2001)	<i>2gather</i> features
Homepage to assert their existence and describe their domain and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homepage
Conversation space for online discussions of a variety of topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Forums • Blogs
Facility for floating questions to the community or a subset of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums • Status Updates • Comments
Directory of membership with some information about their areas of expertise in the domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Directory
Shared workspace for synchronous electronic collaboration, discussion or meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chat
Document repository for their knowledge base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Library
Search engine good enough for them to retrieve things they need from their knowledge base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Search Widget
Community management tools, mostly for the coordinator but sometimes also for the community at large, including the ability to know who is participating actively, how much traffic there is, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Streams
Ability to spawn sub-communities, sub-groups and project teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups • Sub-groups

Participant roles in the *2gather* platform

Role distinction is a significant aspect of *2gather*, in terms of providing an effective support structure for CoPs. Facilitation, a concept borrowed from constructivism, is applied to CoPs and finds expression in the role of the group leader. Rogers (2000) describes the leader's role as a moderator, coach or, at most, a mentor. Squire and Johnson (2000) add that the facilitative role of an instructor is more valuable than content provider or information source.

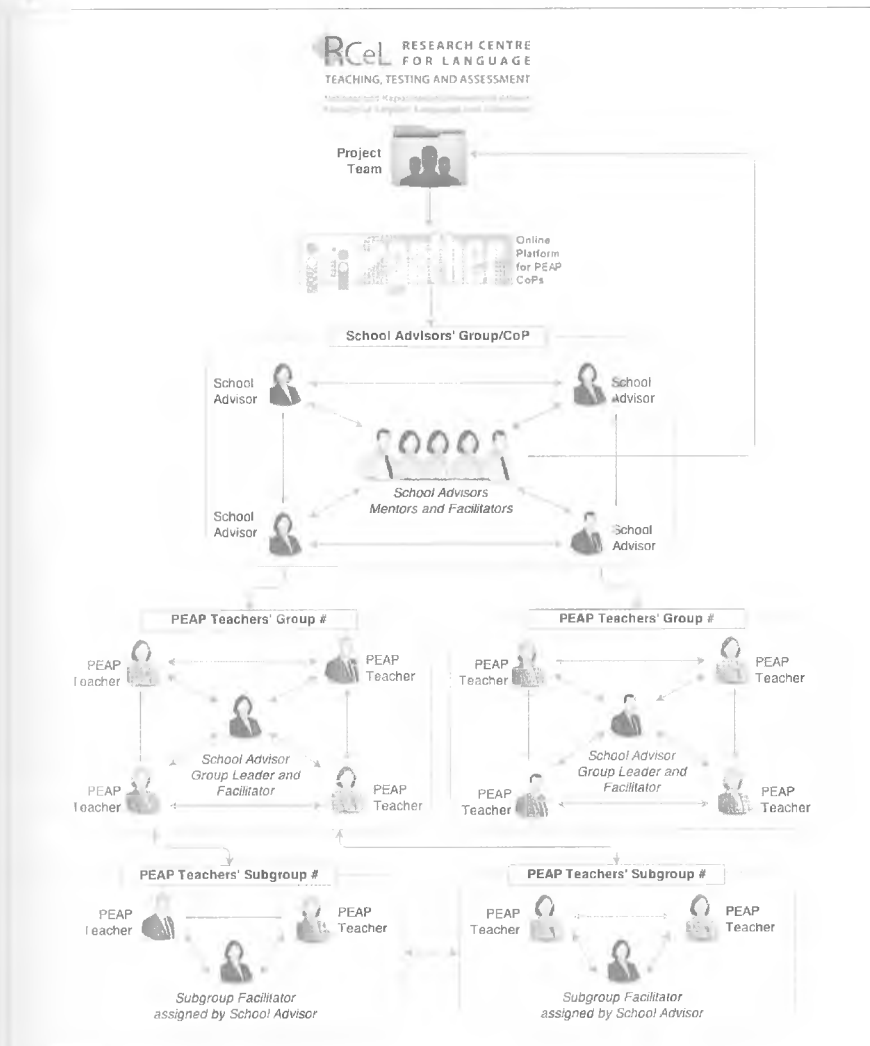
In the *2gather* platform, teacher trainers (school advisers) are delegated as *facilitators*, whereas PEAP teachers are registered as *community participants*. School advisers act as facilitators of groups of PEAP teachers within their district. Each group therefore represents an online community and potential CoP. School advisers' responsibilities as facilitators include, *inter alia*, preparing the community environment for discussion of (i) goals, criteria for meeting goals, (ii) evaluation of whether the goals have been met, plus (iii) peer assessment and self-assessment. In cases where the number of PEAP teachers under the supervision of a single school adviser is large, sub-groups can be formed and experienced EFL teachers can be delegated as group facilitators by the school advisor who remains the main moderator. We have suggested that school advisors take into consideration that communities with fewer than 15 members are very intimate, whereas with between 15 and 50 participants, relationships become more fluid and differentiated.

Communities with over 150 participants tend to divide into sub-groups around topics or geographic location.

Apart from their role as facilitators in CoPs, all school advisers are organised in a separate group, forming their own online community of practice. Within this CoP, school advisers co-operate, share ideas and concerns and keep abreast of developments in other CoPs formed around Greece. Given that some (especially newly appointed) school advisers lack experience in developing CoPs while others lack the digital literacy skills needed for the functioning of online CoPs, school advisers experienced in both areas have been appointed as *mentors* of their less experienced colleagues. Thus, five experienced school advisers covering different geographical areas of Greece function as monitors and facilitators of the work of CoPs in their designated geographical area, providing assistance and support to their colleagues when and where needed. These experienced school advisers report to the UPT any issues and problems that have surfaced in the functioning of CoPs and provide regular updates on the progress of the various CoPs.

This network of CoPs (see Figure 1, opposite), apart from increasing the co-operation between school advisers and between school advisers and the UPT, also facilitates the ongoing development evaluation of the platform and monitoring of the impact of this innovatory professional development structure.

Figure 1: Network of CoPs in the *2gather* platform



Features and functionalities of the *2gather* platform

The *2gather* platform's feature list includes various components of social networking services and learning management systems. To begin with, the registration component enables users to join in with the online communities hosted in the *2gather* platform and enjoy the benefits of membership. Once users sign up, their virtual identities are established via their profile pages. Member profiles display their avatar and a short bio note, the amount of time since they were last active in the community, their activity stream and their latest status update. Status updates are usually short one-to-two-line statements a member writes to inform other community members about what s/he is doing. Status updates can also be used to share a helpful tip or resource or to ask a question that community members will see and may answer.

Each member can have a browseable list of network friends. The friends feature enables all *2gather* members to connect with each other in a standard reciprocal 'friends' relationship. A full listing of community members (name, photo, bio) is offered through the member directory. Furthermore, a main function of *2gather* is to help establish fruitful discussions. For this reason, groups are enabled to host their very own group forums. Facilitators can create unlimited topics to encourage discussion and conversation between group members. Apart from group forums, there is a general community forum in which all registered members can participate.

The *2gather* platform also provides ways for members to send a direct message to another member of the network either publicly or privately. Public messages are sent through mentions (@ + member username), whereas the private messaging function is similar to sending a message to a member via email, but within the confines of the social network. Members can also interact with other members and groups by posting comments directly on activity items. Additionally, *2gather* incorporates a multifunctional chat component, which enables real-time text chat as well as video chat (i.e. member-to-member video chat or video conferencing). Chat rooms can be public or private. Instant member-to-member private messaging is also supported.

Apart from forums and chat rooms, groups own separate dashboards. From the dashboard, facilitators are able to add and manage training materials, references, tasks, events and schedules. Members can use the dashboard to access materials, view timetables and submit their responses. In particular, the task feature provides a means for facilitators to post group and individual activities and collect member responses. Facilitators can also add book, article or webpage references and resources to activities. All tasks and schedules are pinned to the group calendar. Responses to tasks get listed below the activities. The activities can take multiple formats, allowing members to respond to questions, upload a file or embed media. Responses can be either private (i.e. only the school adviser can view them) or visible to the whole group for other group members to provide feedback as peer assessment.

The *2gather* platform also supports blogging. Blogs allow members to manage and maintain articles, publish ideas and photos, and share information, all of which become part of the content flow within the community's activity streams. Community members' blogs encourage information/knowledge sharing and interactivity between members. The advantage of blogs lies in that the more often members publish on their blogs, the more content they provide to the community, which increases the value of the community as a whole. A list of all blogs is provided via the blog directory.

All media (documents, images, videos, recordings, etc.) that are uploaded on the platform and shared on blogs, forums and assignments are gathered on the platform's media library. Advanced search capabilities are offered via custom search widgets. Additionally, all members' activities from groups, forums, blog posts, assignments and friendships are aggregated and displayed on the network into one page. Every action is recorded on the activity stream, which gives community members an easy way to discover what other members are doing and how they are utilising the community facilities.

Apart from the typical facilities useful for CoPs, Wenger (2001) suggests that a technological platform for CoPs should ideally be easy to learn and use, easily integrated with the other software that members of the community are using for their regular work so that participation in the community requires as few extra steps as possible, and not too expensive. *2gather* meets all three requirements, since it complies with usability heuristics for user interface design, it can be integrated with the online services and tools offered by the Pan-Hellenic School Networks, and requires no registration or subscription fee.

Pilot implementation of the *2gather* platform

The beta version of the platform was completed by September 2012 and the first small-scale pilot implementation began in October 2012 and ended in June 2013. The pilot was limited to a single group of 11 PEAP teachers under the supervision of their school adviser, who is a qualified teacher trainer and experienced EFL teacher with advanced digital skills.

All 11 PEAP teachers belonged to the 'A' District in the centre of Athens and teach in different primary schools. However, most of them lacked experience in using digital technologies for teaching and learning. The fact that the majority are over 40 years old suggests that most of them earned degrees at a time when educational technology was at a very different stage of development than it is today. It is, thus, not surprising that they did not consider themselves sufficiently prepared to use technology in the classroom. Hence, at the beginning of the 2012–13 school year, the school adviser decided to build an online community of PEAP teachers, aiming at training them to integrate ICT in their teaching practices.

Considering that meaningful use of ICT in the classroom requires teachers to integrate technological affordances with pedagogical approaches for the specific subject matter to be taught, the school adviser designed a training programme entitled Technology-Enhanced EYL, implementing the TPACK ('tee-pack') framework. Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) was introduced to the educational research field as a theoretical framework for understanding teacher knowledge required for effective technology integration. In particular, TPACK is a framework that introduces the relationships and the complexities between all three basic components of knowledge, i.e. technology, pedagogy and content (Jonassen et al., 2008). At the intersection of these three knowledge types is an intuitive understanding of teaching content with appropriate pedagogical methods and technologies.

The school adviser began designing her online community in this way:

1. Identification of the types of projects that community members might want to carry out in the community
2. Development of a series of scenarios which described various synchronous and asynchronous experiences that would be necessary to carry out the activities
3. Negotiation of face-to-face meeting opportunities for community members
4. Preparation of a weekly schedule for the community

5. Creation of a timeline for the community's development
6. Creation of a structure for organising discussions, documents and resources
7. Development of the community's learning contract and terms and conditions of member participation.

The community contract was emailed to all PEAP teachers of her district accompanied by an online interest form. The 11 interested PEAP teachers were registered in the *2gather* platform by the school adviser and formed the pilot community.

The first online gathering took place in October 2012. During the first week of implementation, the community had loose conversations and experimented with platform features (i.e. editing profile information, uploading their avatar/photo, updating their status and adding other group members to their list of network friends). The school adviser used the group dashboard to welcome the members of the group and inform them about the community's goals and objectives, the way their online social learning experience would be organised and the topics they would be mainly focusing on.

During the weeks that followed, each session began to involve a range of activities, readings and conversations, as well as completion of group and/or individual tasks. Considering that the *2gather* platform has been designed to offer community-based learning experiences and professional development opportunities, the school adviser's role as the group leader and facilitator was to guide fruitful discussions, encourage thoughtful involvement of all participants and provide feedback.

In particular, the first sessions were targeted at familiarising EFL teachers with PEAP principles, goals, objectives, activities and materials (content knowledge). Discussion questions were assigned on a weekly basis so that all participating teachers could have adequate time to formulate and articulate their contributions to the discussions. Discussion questions were mainly conceptual questions addressing pedagogical concerns regarding early language learning. The school adviser implemented several strategies (e.g. brainstorming, think-pair-share) to promote online participation, ensuring that the majority of group members actively contributed to discussions.

The subsequent online sessions were targeted at building teachers' theoretical understanding of pedagogical approaches involved in technology-enhanced learning (pedagogical knowledge). These sessions acquainted PEAP teachers with various student-centred approaches with ICT (e.g. project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, etc.). They also learned about classroom management of ICT lessons, reflecting on case studies provided. Reflective activities involved situations for the participating teachers to critically examine the subject matter through additional personal research or reading of the reference material, thus giving them the opportunity to make new connections between theory and their professional experiences. Moreover, participants were encouraged to use their blogs to keep reflective journals. Reflective journals helped critical thinking development and provided regular feedback between participants and the school adviser.

The other sessions aimed at developing PEAP teachers' technological knowledge with respect to different digital tools. In each session, teachers learned about a category of digital tools (digital storytelling tools, digital drawing and painting, taking pictures, virtual trips, slideshows, audio and image editors), their affordances and limitations, and their pedagogical uses. The school adviser provided PEAP teachers with resources, tutorials and exemplar uses of digital tools for skill-based practice, and scaffolded them with activities to generate lesson ideas applicable to early language learners. The provision of a monitored discussion forum allowed PEAP teachers to discuss, help each other, and share creative ideas, digital activities and open educational resources.

The lesson ideas were then further developed and consolidated into a technology-integrated educational scenario, which constituted their final project. This project required teachers to design at least five technology integration activities for early language learners such that they fulfilled the instructional objectives specified in the PEAP curriculum (technological pedagogical content knowledge). The deliverables for this project were:

1. A detailed report including project title, summary, goals and objectives, lesson plans, description of digital products, justification of how the selected technologies and pedagogical approaches supported instruction and reflection
2. A PowerPoint presentation of the digital project
3. The actual digital products or web links directing to them
4. All accompanying teaching materials
5. The video-recorded instructions, provided that young learners' parents had consented.

All deliverables were uploaded on the *2gather* platform and projects were peer-reviewed with rubrics that measured the application of TPACK.

Evaluation and reflection on the pilot implementation

Measuring and documenting an online community's performance is a multifaceted phenomenon requiring complementary methods of data collection and analysis. Quantitative data was automatically collected by the platforms' internal analytics capabilities and tools. An online survey was also designed to investigate teachers' impressions of their participation in an online community and the impact they think they might have had or will have on their professional development (see Appendix 2). Qualitative data was collected from the open-ended questions of the online survey, the contents of the online discussion forums, the group assignments completed by PEAP teachers, the reflective journals they kept in their blogs and their final deliverables.

The overall feedback received was positive. Participants' responses to the online survey revealed their attitudes and beliefs regarding the CoP they had built. All 11 teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their online community:

1. was mainly driven by the willingness of members to participate
2. helped them build relationships and network with others
3. motivated them to share work-related knowledge
4. provided an informal, welcoming social environment
5. helped them achieve better results in teaching projects
6. encouraged knowledge sharing and learning into work life
7. utilised a user-friendly social platform.

In addition, the vast majority of them agreed or strongly agreed that the community broke down communication barriers among members (91 per cent), gave them a sense of belonging (91 per cent) and built up an agreed set of communal resources over time (90 per cent). At the same time, many participants agreed or strongly agreed that their community leveraged a variety of knowledge management tools (81 per cent) and that it benefited their daily work from the relationships established (82 per cent), whereas fewer agreed that their community strengthened collaboration across schools as well (72 per cent).

A key point resulting from the analysis of members' messages, reflective diaries and products was that group activities and individual tasks were successful in helping PEAP teachers improve their pedagogical knowledge of EYL methodologies and make connections between theory and their professional practice. This was also evident in the online survey. All participants believed that the value of their CoP lies in the fact that it connected learning to action and it enhanced teaching skills, as illustrated by these sample comments:

I believe that the group assignments helped me relate theory with practice and urged me to consider in greater depth children's strengths and needs and the aims of the PEAP syllabus. The projects created the necessity for the design of detailed lesson plans and carefully structured task sheets, for self-observation and observation of learner performance.

It was an interesting experience that allowed me to explore my own capacities and limitations and to put into practice teaching techniques that were of great use to my pupils.

Ten out of 11 (91 per cent) participants also valued highly the fact that their CoP identified, created, stored, shared and used knowledge, and enabled professional development. Moreover, the community's positive impact on teachers' self-confidence became evident, as this comment illustrates:

Being a member of the community supports your everyday effort at school while at the same time promotes your self-confidence. These are the reasons why I believe memberships of this kind have a lot of benefits for teachers. I liked the sense of group work and the fact that my work was supported by an academic institution added to the quality of the work.

Regarding the success of their CoP, participants unanimously believed it depended on encouraging all members to participate. Ten out of 11 (91 per cent) participant teachers also believed that trust, rapport and the sense of community were crucial to the community's success. In addition, the majority of participants praised the fact that communication and collaboration among members was promoted:

It was a very positive experience, unique in building strong relationships among the members.

Through sharing of knowledge, giving and getting feedback and working as a group, it has been easier for me to deal with everyday problems, develop and it has also been fun.

Ten out of 11 (91 per cent) teachers also considered the inspiration provided by their co-ordinator as one of the success factors of their CoP. The valuable role their group facilitator played, acting as a guiding figure and a source of inspiration, is also apparent in teacher commentaries:

No matter how awe-inspiring it may sound at the beginning, when you and your colleagues come together to work under the supervision of someone who knows where to lead you, where your worries and frustrating moments can be shared and discussed, you cannot but stay on track, produce work and eventually astound yourself by your performance.

Knowing that you are working having the support of the whole community and an inspired coordinator is a unique experience that leaves you with a sense of achievement and makes all your efforts and hard work worthwhile.

When asked what strongly motivated them to participate in the community, most teachers (64 per cent) revealed that their main incentive was to update their knowledge of primary ELT methodology, whereas a few (18 per cent) were urged to participate in order to achieve professional goals. When asked what strongly limited their ability to participate in the community, most participants (64 per cent) revealed that their main obstacle was lack of time, whereas for a few (18 per cent) it was lack of digital skills. As far as the features of the online platform are concerned, it was stated that:

All the online tools that have been used by the community of practice have proved indispensable, not only in facilitating communication but also in contributing to achieving both the community's as well as each member's individual goals.

Teachers also praised the fact that the *2gather* platform allowed them, through computer-mediated communication, to share content, ideas and teaching practices:

I believe that the multiple means of communication integrated in the platform help us become members of a supportive circle of creative colleagues that share useful resources and exchange valuable teaching experiences.

Despite this overall positive feedback, we are not yet ready to claim success. Although the pilot implementation demonstrated that it is possible for a dedicated group of PEAP teachers to build a professional CoP, in order for an online CoP to serve as an effective, sustainable catalyst for teacher learning, collaboration and innovation, it must be given the time and resources to mature, develop social

norms, grow leaders and assimilate into the dominant local culture. This inevitably requires long-term and large-scale implementation.

Looking forward to a different future for foreign language teacher education in Greece: first steps towards large-scale implementation of the *2gather* platform

The first official version of the *2gather* platform was launched in mid-October 2011. School advisers were informed and trained in the development of CoPs and the platform was presented to them in a seminar organised by the UPT in early November 2013. The 30 school advisers that expressed interest in designing online CoPs have already been registered and have formed the first community group (School Advisers' Group). They are expected to have informed the PEAP teachers in their districts and have formed their online groups by February 2014. By the end of the 2013–14 school year, it is expected that CoPs will have developed their community contracts, have decided on terms and conditions of member participation and will have negotiated their areas of activity and professional development. Professional development work within the newly formed CoPs will begin in earnest during the next school year. The UPT will continue to monitor the development and work of CoPs, offering continuous support to school advisers and their mentors.

The *2gather* platform has been designed and developed to host and organise online CoPs, which can act as an alternative forum and an innovative means for PEAP teacher professional development. However, due to its flexible development process, *2gather* can easily serve as a versatile social online environment for other foreign language teachers or educators in general who work in other contexts and/or teach other subjects. In particular, *2gather* has been built as a multi-site network platform, i.e. a collection of sites that all share the same core features. This means that the *2gather* platform for CoPs of PEAP can easily have many 'cloned siblings' for various educational purposes. Each platform-clone can be further customised to address the specific needs of CoPs of other educators, paving the way for a true paradigm shift in continuing professional development in Greece.

Conclusion

The development of CoPs among Greek EFL primary school language teachers seems to be an appropriate and meaningful form of professional development with the potential of addressing more effectively the needs of teachers and of facilitating the sustainability of the programme as a whole. For this reason, we designed the *2gather* platform to help PEAP teachers become members of CoPs engaging in conversations, sharing innovative ideas, discovering useful resources, documenting successful practices and applying them in their own classrooms settings. Confident that our vision of a scalable and sustainable online community platform for PEAP teachers is feasible, we are looking forward to monitoring the development and progress of CoPs and evaluating the impact of its first large-scale implementation. We hope that our experience of building this virtual gathering place, in which new ideas flourish, new methods and tools are developed, novice educators learn about the profession and experienced ones become valued resources, will be useful to educators in other contexts considering new forms of CPD for teachers.

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Appendix 1: Design principles of an online environment for CoPs (Koch and Fusco, 2008)

Learning Process and Practice	Each CoP can easily share its approach and commitment to a specific practice within and across the CoP.
Identity and Trust	Everyone's identity in the online environment is consistent and persistent.
Communication	Members have ways to share information and ideas.
Groups	Members can relate to each other in smaller groups, including separate CoPs and smaller groups within a CoP.
Environment, Tools, Artefacts	Members interact in a shared space that is appropriate to the CoP goals.
Boundaries	Members know who belongs in their group and who does not.
Governance	Behaviour is regulated and moderated according to shared or stated values.
Exchange	Members have a system of exchange or barter, and can trade knowledge, support, resources, services and ideas.
Expression	Members have a group identity and know what other members are doing. Members can easily indicate their preferences and opinions.
History and Culture	Both new and veteran members can develop, reproduce and review cultural artefacts, norms, and values over time.
Community Reproduction and Evolution	Groups can grow and evolve the community.

Appendix 2: Survey Questionnaire for CoP Members

You are being asked to complete this online survey because you are a member of a community of practice (CoP) that is participating in a research project conducted by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The purpose of this survey is to examine how CoPs can improve EYL teachers' professional development.

My Community of Practice (CoP): *

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
gives me a sense of belonging.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
helps me build relationships and network with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
benefits my daily work from the relationships established.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
is mainly driven by the willingness of members to participate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
motivates me to share work-related knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
builds up an agreed set of communal resources over time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
breaks down communication barriers among members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
provides an informal, welcoming social environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
has a user-friendly communication platform.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
leverages a variety of knowledge management tools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
helps me achieve better results in teaching projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
builds knowledge sharing and learning into work life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
strengthens collaboration across schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The value of my CoP is that it: *

(Choose all that apply)

- identifies, creates, stores, shares and uses knowledge.
- enables professional development.
- permits faster problem solving.
- showcases good practices.
- enables accelerated learning.
- connects learning to action.
- enhances teaching skills.

The success of my CoP depends on: *

(Choose all that apply)

- specifying members' roles and expectations.
- being inspired by a dedicated and passionate co-ordinator.
- adopting a consistent attitude to collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- encouraging all members to participate.
- building trust, rapport and a sense of community.

My CoP is best at: *

(Choose all that apply)

- filtering (organising and managing important information).
- amplifying (helping understand important but little-known information).
- convening (bringing together different individuals or groups).
- community-building (promoting and sustaining values and standards).
- learning and facilitating (helping work more efficiently and effectively).

What strongly motivates me to participate in CoPs is: *

(Choose all that apply)

- meeting professional goals.
- staying current in the ELT sector.
- career development.
- expanding personal network.
- support for daily activities.
- other: _____

What strongly limits my ability to participate in CoPs is: *

(Choose all that apply)

Lack of time.

Lack of digital skills.

Low awareness of activities.

Lack of incentives.

Communication barriers.

Other: _____

What is your overall impression from being a member of a Community of Practice?

What is your overall impression from the platform used by your Community of Practice?

*Required

**Charting new territory:
the introduction of
online continuing
professional
development
opportunities
for primary and
secondary English
teachers in Oman**

Charting new territory: the introduction of online continuing professional development opportunities for primary and secondary English teachers in Oman

Sarah Rich, Stephen Monteith, Salima Al-Sinani,
Maryam Al-Jardani and Hilal Al-Amri

Introduction

In this chapter we share our experiences of delivering online CPD opportunities to English teachers in Oman. The nine-month pilot project we will describe here, a collaboration between the Ministry of Education in Oman and the British Council, comprised the delivery of three online CPD modules to 200 primary and secondary teachers across the length and breadth of Oman. This also served to prepare teachers for the Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), which they took at the end of the nine-month period. This online course, the first of its kind in Oman, was introduced to provide a complementary form of CPD to the existing face-to-face provision delivered in regional training centres and through workshops in schools. It was intended to help extend the reach of CPD opportunities to English teachers in a vast country with many schools in remote regions. In what follows, we will report on the setting up, monitoring and evaluation of this project, and reflect on important points of learning, which we have carried forward into a second year of offering the online CPD opportunity to English teachers in Oman.

Contextualising the innovation

Oman is a large country located in the south-eastern section of the Arabian Peninsula, bordering Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates. It has a well-established education system that ensures that provision is available to all. English has an important place in the school curriculum and is taught to children across all stages of formal schooling; from the start of schooling at the age of six until students complete their formal school education at the age of 18. There are currently in excess of 7,000 English teachers working in government primary and secondary schools, geographically dispersed over a wide area.

These teachers embark on their careers after completion of pre-service teacher education courses offered by a number of different teacher-training providers in Oman or in other nearby countries.

In Oman the provision of CPD opportunities once teachers enter the field is taken very seriously and a support network of English trainers, supervisors and senior English teachers to assist with this is located in all of the 11 administrative regions (or governorates) in Oman. While teachers are expected and encouraged to undertake self-directed professional development activities, structured formal CPD opportunities are seen as an important support mechanism to encourage teachers to remain professionally invigorated and to appreciate the importance of ongoing professional development throughout their careers. To this end, early-career teachers are offered a number of courses and workshops to help them become familiar with the philosophy underpinning the curriculum and effective ways to implement it, and to help them maintain their English proficiency and develop their understanding of the English language system. More experienced teachers are also provided with an opportunity to attend workshops and courses to maintain their language level and to ensure they are updated with new developments in the curriculum and with their course books. They are also encouraged to attend courses to enable them to undertake exploratory inquiries into their practice and to disseminate findings to others through forums and conferences.

Despite this evident commitment to ensuring English teachers have access to Ministry of Education CPD provision in Oman, currently there is not sufficient capacity to fully meet all of the CPD needs of English teachers. Priority tends to be given to the needs of teachers in the early stages of their career, meaning that experienced teachers have fewer opportunities to engage in formal CPD initiatives. The decision taken by the Ministry of Education to introduce the pilot online CPD course described in this chapter was in part made to find a way of increasing CPD provision for these experienced teachers. The Ministry was also interested in examining the potential of an online course to extend the reach of CPD opportunities to teachers working in relatively remote regions of the country who find it difficult to attend face-to-face delivery in training centres in their governorates.

A number of noted benefits of online language teacher education in the literature also informed the decision to pilot the provision of online CPD opportunities with Omani English teachers. These include the possibility that online learning provides for teachers to engage in CPD at a time that is convenient for them, and the opportunity for teachers to build collaborative online learning communities where they can communicate and share ideas in a stress-free environment without necessarily revealing their identity (England, 2012; Pachler and Daly, 2006). However, this literature also highlighted a number of challenges of online learning that would need to be borne in mind. Firstly, logistical challenges such as the need to ensure clear channels of communication and well-defined roles and expectations for tutors and participants, as well as issues potentially relating to internet connectivity, school workloads and feelings of isolation due to lack of offline support (see, for example, Hall and Knox, 2009). Collectively, these issues are

often cited as the causes of high dropout rates from those who embark on online learning courses (Murray, 2013). Other challenges raised in the literature centre on the quality of course design and pedagogical practices in the delivery of online learning. Most notable are the importance of effective support structures and procedures to address the typically asynchronous nature of online communication, and the need to ensure the cultural appropriateness of online learning materials and activities, particularly where online CPD courses are adopted which have not been locally designed (Murray, 2013).

Since there are very few published accounts of the challenges and benefits of delivering online CPD opportunities to school teachers of English, it is hoped that documenting these on the basis of our experience will be useful to language teacher educators in other countries who are considering introducing similar innovations to their existing CPD provision.

Description of the online CPD course and its implementation

Given the limited local expertise in developing online CPD, the Ministry of Education decided to pilot an established course, the British Council's TKT Essentials course, which had already been trialled successfully with teachers working in a number of different countries. This course is geared to preparing teachers for an internationally recognised test of professional knowledge (the Cambridge TKT) but, since it also provides useful CPD opportunities for teachers in its own right, it was identified as a suitable course to be trialled with teachers in Oman. Moreover, careful scrutiny of the materials and activities showed that the topics covered in the modules, which we discuss below, were seen as valuable in helping teachers refresh and extend their understanding of some core components of professional knowledge. They were also handled through activities which aimed to support teachers in developing culturally meaningful and locally appropriate understandings of practical classroom applications.

The Ministry of Education also decided to provide teachers with the option of actually taking the Cambridge TKT after completion of the modules. It was felt that this internationally recognised test would not only provide teachers with an important form of professional validation but would also act as a useful incentive to encourage them to engage with and complete the TKT Essentials modules. In addition, it was recognised that the TKT provided the Ministry with a valuable way to benchmark teachers against an international teaching standards framework.

The three modules of the 'TKT Essentials' course offered to teachers in Oman were:

- Module 1 – Language and background to language learning and teaching
- Module 2 – Lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching
- Module 3 – Managing the teaching and learning process

Module 1 was delivered from October 2012 to January 2013 and Modules 2 and 3 were delivered simultaneously between February 2013 and April 2013.

Each module of the TKT Essentials course comprises a number of units.

Collectively, the modules cover the following content areas:

- Different teaching methodologies
- The language of teaching
- The use of different aids and resources
- Lesson planning
- Classroom management

Modules are assessed by means of short written assignments, contribution to forums, completion of set tasks and through reflective portfolio activities. Certificates are issued for successful completion of each module, which requires active engagement with all of the forms of assessment.

For the purpose of delivery, participants in the TKT Essentials course are placed in groups of up to 20 teachers who are managed and supported by e-moderators based around the globe. While cohorts tend to be multinational in composition, for the 200 Omani teachers who took part in the pilot study, it was decided to place teachers in groups that only contained other Omani teachers from the 11 governorates across the country. In part, it was felt this would help create a safe space for online learning, and in part it was felt that this would help ensure that contributions from other participants would be closely linked and relevant to the common teaching concerns that teachers in Oman face.

E-moderators are there to help ensure the smooth running of the modules and to structure and facilitate teachers' online learning experience. They provide an important point of contact for participants, helping with technical issues, reminding participants to reach completion targets for units, and offering encouragement and reassurance at both a group and individual level. E-moderators also post discussion threads on the online forum and can engage in those posted by others. Finally, e-moderators are responsible for assessing participants' successful completion of each module. To qualify as a British Council e-moderator requires successful completion of an eight-week training course, which familiarises participants with the various facets of their role as described here. An important component of this is to familiarise e-moderators with the differences between face-to-face and online communication and how to address the problems this can pose when working with linguistically and culturally diverse teachers across the globe.

Module content is delivered through a number of pedagogical tools, which emphasise the importance of self-study on the one hand, but also the value of collaborative interaction between teachers in promoting their professional development on the other. The pedagogical tools used to deliver this module content included wikis, discussion forums and a diverse set of tasks, including the sharing of practical classroom activities developed and trialled by teachers in response to the input received. Each unit provides some written input, which is fed in at various stages of the unit. After some initial input, participants are invited to process and reflect on this by completing set exercises for which they receive immediate feedback. Explanatory information is provided to help participants develop their understanding

of the correct responses, and participants can elect to recomplete these exercises. Typically, following on from this, participants are invited to start discussions about the topic of the unit on the discussion forum. They are also invited to respond to discussion threads started by their e-moderator. Additional activities focus on helping participants practise a particular teaching skill (such as writing lesson aims) or completing reflective tasks that invite them to link new knowledge to their own classroom realities. These activities are either undertaken with other teachers in small groups who collaborate on the construction of an online document or wiki, or are undertaken individually and stored within each teacher's e-portfolio. Again, supportive written input is provided to support and guide the completion of the tasks.

The TKT Essentials course is marketed as suited to newly qualified teachers embarking on their career as teachers of English as an additional language but also as providing a useful refresher course for more experienced teachers. In Oman it was decided to offer the TKT Essentials course to help update teachers with a minimum of three years' teaching experience, as this was the group who were seen to be most in need of additional CPD opportunities, as discussed earlier.

Setting up the course

The TKT course was implemented in the first two weeks of October 2012 following a number of carefully planned and orchestrated preparatory stages. First of all, it was necessary to identify a set of criteria to help supervisors in each governorate select the 200 participants for the course. As mentioned, one of these was a requirement that teachers were selected with a minimum of three years' teaching experience. Efforts were also taken to ensure that those chosen were representative of the English teaching body in each region with respect to gender, the different stages of formal schooling in Oman and the different regions (or 'wilyats') within each governorate. Another prerequisite for selection was that participants' English should be equivalent to a band 5.5 in IELTS. This is stipulated by the British Council as the necessary level of language competence needed to successfully engage in the requirements of the modules. Supervisors were also asked to ensure that participants were aware of the need to work on the modules outside working hours and that they therefore had reliable internet connections at home as well as in their schools. A final criterion for selecting participants was that they would be prepared to contribute to moderated, mixed gender online discussion forums. As the population in Oman is Muslim, and strict protocols exist for contact between men and women, this was an important consideration. However, since much of the existing training is co-educational, in practice this did not pose a major stumbling block to selecting participants.

Once participants had been selected, face-to-face induction sessions were delivered in each governorate by the British Council's English projects manager in Oman. These took place in September 2012 and aimed to provide participants with an overview of the organisation, content and assessment activities of the course. They also sought to familiarise teachers with modes of working online. It was hoped that this would help reassure participants, the vast majority of whom had had no prior experience of learning online. They were thus seen as

an important supplement to the online induction that teachers would receive at the start of the first module, providing participants with an opportunity to seek clarification on any concerns they had.

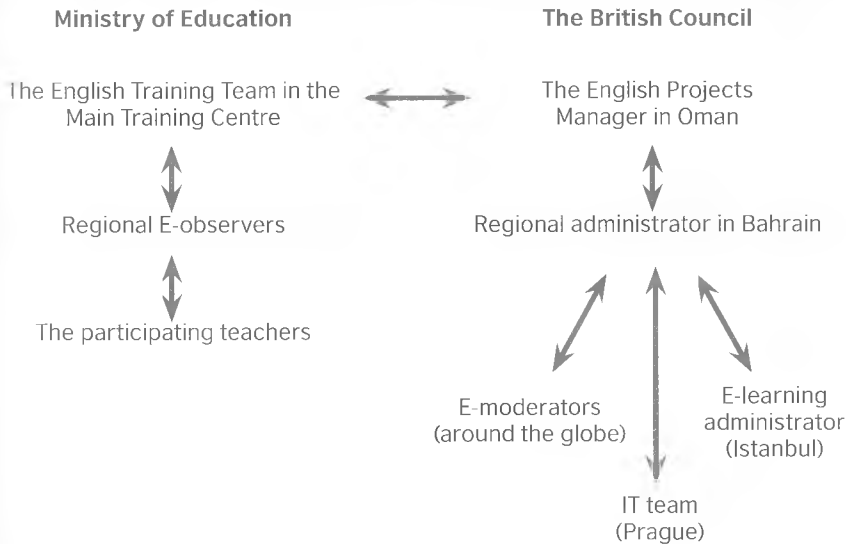
Monitoring the implementation of the pilot course

Bearing in mind some of the logistical issues that are not uncommon with online learning, which we outlined earlier in the chapter, before participants embarked on the online course, a number of steps were taken to monitor it over the nine-month timeframe to ensure its smooth running. Firstly, administrative support structures were put in place to establish clear lines of communication between the Ministry of Education and the British Council.

From the Ministry's side, the project was overseen by the English Training team at the Main Training Centre in the capital city, Muscat. In addition, ten English trainers across the country were selected to be e-observers who were given guest access to the TKT Essentials course. This allowed them to observe the delivery of the course, to see how the e-moderators communicated with and related to the course participants and to get a feeling for what was taking place online in terms of how participants were engaged and learning. It was intended that the role of e-observer would also provide trainers with a useful professional development opportunity. They were also offered the opportunity to take a British Council e-moderator course once the pilot had been completed. E-observers were also there in a supporting role for teachers in their regions, providing an additional point of contact to the e-moderator for participants who were struggling with technology and some of the online learning tools. They also assisted with some administrative tasks, notably the distribution and collection of registration forms for the Cambridge TKT.

From the British Council's side, the management of the delivery of the modules online was overseen by the English Projects manager in the British Council centre in Muscat who maintained close contact with the regional administrator based in Bahrain, who oversees the delivery of the British Council's e-moderated courses in the Gulf region. This regional administrator also served as an important point of liaison between the English Projects manager in Muscat and the team of e-moderators who were based around the globe. Finally, the English Projects manager was also a point of contact between the English course manager and the British Council's e-learning team, based in Prague, and the TKT Essentials course team in Istanbul. We anticipated the need for regular meetings between the Ministry and the British Council as a way of sharing information. Figure 1 summarises the chains of communication that were set up, with arrows indicating the flow of information and feedback within the two partners in the project, and how information was intended to pass from one party in this collaborative venture to the other.

Figure 1: Channels of communication set up in and between stakeholders in the partnership at the start of the project



With the involvement of various contacts in the British Council (both locally, regionally and globally) and those in the Ministry of Education, we soon identified that the layers of communication created considerable complexity and required more careful monitoring in themselves than we had originally anticipated. This led to the generation of considerable email traffic and increased meetings to address issues that surfaced, often technical in nature. This, we quickly learned, was a necessary way of ensuring that issues got resolved as speedily as possible in the interest of ensuring the quality of teachers' learning experience.

Another important way in which we monitored the implementation of the pilot study was through a formative evaluation of the experiences of participating teachers and e-moderators after completion of the first module of the TKT Essentials course in January 2013 and before they embarked on Modules 2 and 3. As Waters (2009: 27) indicates, formative evaluations as opposed to summative evaluations serve a useful purpose in project management, helping to provide warning signals of potential problems impacting on the success of an innovation but which, with adjustments, may be avoided. By soliciting the views of teachers, we were also keen to ensure that they felt they had a voice in this pilot project and that their concerns would be listened to and their opinions valued.

To obtain teacher perspectives after completion of Module 1, we designed an online survey, which was completed by 138 teachers in February 2013. This concentrated on their views and experiences of online learning at that point in time and the suitability of the content and activities in Module 1. Table 1 summarises the perspectives of teachers with regard to Module 1 content and activities.

Table 1: Participants' views of Module 1 content and activities

Overall, units in Module 1	Strongly agree/Agree	Disagree/Strongly disagree
Provided me with a broad overview of ELT knowledge	97%	3%
Introduced me to new ideas about ELT	94%	6%
Encouraged me to try out new ideas in the classroom	93%	7%
Helped me to identify areas for improvement in my teaching	91%	9%
Were at the right level of difficulty	76%	24%

From the table it can be seen that the vast majority of participants were enjoying the course at that time and felt they were gaining new knowledge about English teaching, which they saw as helping them to reflect on and evolve their classroom practice. The survey also revealed that most (91 per cent) felt comfortable learning online. However, an important issue raised by teachers at this point in the pilot, detailed in open-ended responses in the survey, was some confusion over the role that their e-moderators were expected to play. Some teachers compared their own experience unfavourably with that of other teachers with different e-moderators. Particular concerns at this point were the amount of time that some e-moderators took to reply to their queries and the amount of contact and support they had. From informal feedback obtained from e-moderators at this stage of the pilot, it was evident that e-moderators were concerned that some teachers were not regular participants in module activities. While closer inspection of these cases suggested that this was due to reasons such as workload or personal problems, which we couldn't do much about, in a few cases it was simply because participants did not know what to do. On the basis of this feedback it was decided to ask the regional administrator in Bahrain to remind e-moderators of the challenges faced by these novice online learners, such as unfamiliarity with some aspects of online work, pedagogical practices and learning across cultural divides.

Evaluating the success of the innovation

In addition to the formative evaluation process described above, it was considered very important to take steps to undertake a summative evaluation of the experience of key stakeholders involved in the course, to gauge the success of the innovation. As stated earlier, we were particularly interested in understanding the Omani experience of online CPD delivery in order to establish its potential as a supplement for face-to-face delivery. For this reason we focused on collecting data on the perspectives of teachers, the English trainers acting as e-observers and those responsible for administering the course in the Main Training Centre. The ways we did this and the insights these different groups of stakeholders provided into the delivery, design and perceived impact of the course are now discussed in turn. Although in hindsight we think it would have been useful, we did not seek to formally evaluate the perspectives of the course e-moderators.

Teachers' perspectives

We saw developing a mechanism to collect data on teachers' perspectives of their online learning experience as crucial in developing an informed understanding of the success of the innovation and the potential of online CPD provision in Oman. The results obtained by the 169 participants who took the Cambridge TKT presented in Table 2 showed that most of them obtained Band 3 for the three modules of the test that the TKT Essentials course had helped prepare them for.

Table 2: Band scores attained by participants who took the TKT examination

Module	Band attained by teachers (by number of teachers)			
	Band 4	Band 3	Band 2	Band 1
Module 1	12	134	20	3
Module 2	17	126	24	2
Module 3	20	125	22	2

While these results suggested that their knowledge of teaching was generally comprehensive according to the Cambridge TKT assessment criteria, we did not feel they were an adequate way to gauge the success of the innovation for participating teachers. Not only had we not 'measured' their knowledge before they had commenced the course, but we also felt that the success of the course lay more in whether teachers had found their experience to be personally meaningful to them. We were interested to gain insights into whether they had found the activities and module content to meet their needs as teachers, what they felt had been the benefits and pitfalls of engaging in online professional development activities, and the extent to which the structured support both online and offline was seen as helpful and adequate.

Data was obtained on the teacher experience in two ways. Firstly by a second online survey, which was distributed at the end of the course, after participants had taken the Cambridge TKT in May 2013, but before they had received their results. This second survey asked them for their views on the suitability of the content and activities of Modules 2 and 3 and their overall impression of their experience over the nine months; their views of the online and offline support structures, the online learning experience and the course design. It also asked them how well they felt the course and the e-moderators had prepared them for the Cambridge TKT. The surveys used a combination of close-ended, Likert scaled and open-ended questions. Ninety three, or just under half, of the teachers responded to this.

In addition to the surveys, regional focus group interviews with participating teachers were conducted in each governorate in May 2012 by the English trainers performing the role of e-observers. The purpose of the focus group interview was to provide supplementary data on participants' perspectives, which could help shed further light on some of the survey findings. It was also felt that the interviews could provide participants with an opportunity to talk frankly about their experiences, in a way some of them might have felt reluctant to do in open-ended survey questions, despite the fact that surveys were completed anonymously. E-observers were asked to select four participants from their governorate who

would provide a good range of perspectives and opinions about the course, based on their personal dealings with them.

Teachers' views on the course content

Results from the survey and focus group interviews undertaken with teachers show that they were generally very positive about the content of the TKT Essentials course. A summary of their perspectives is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Participants' perspectives on the course content by percentages

The TKT Essentials course	Strongly agree/Agree	Disagree/Strongly disagree
Met my developmental needs	97%	3%
Was engaging	74%	26%
Helped my teaching	73%	27%
Was informative	73%	27%
Is suitable for teachers with my years of teaching experience	81%	19%

From Table 3 it can be seen that most participants felt the TKT Essentials course matched their needs, generated new learning and was appropriate to their experience level. On this basis, almost all of the teachers (98 per cent) who completed the survey indicated that they would recommend it to other teachers. In open-ended questions, as the two illustrative comments below show, participants were very positive about the content of the various modules, indicating that they found the majority of topics covered to be relevant and interesting, and that they helped them improve their understanding and practice:

Thank you so much for providing this course for Omani English teachers. It is valuable and fruitful indeed.

This is my first online experience and I really enjoyed it. I recommend this course for all teachers of English to improve themselves and their teaching.

One way we tried to gauge the sorts of learning opportunities the course provided for teachers was by asking them if they found the content challenging, and which particular things they found to be most challenging. This also provided useful diagnostic information for the Ministry of Education regarding what sorts of things teachers may need additional support with when taking face-to-face training courses and workshops. An overview of the degree of challenge posed by the course content and activities is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Participants' views on the level of challenge of the materials and activities in the TKT Essentials course as a whole

The level of difficulty of the TKT module content and activities		
At the right level	Challenging	Not challenging enough
71%	14%	15%

Table 4 shows that the course content was deemed to provide the right level of difficulty for most participants. For the 15 per cent of participants who did not feel challenged, reasons given included the fact that they felt they had covered the same content in their university courses previously. Nevertheless, by examining their views on the level of difficulty they experienced with individual modules and units within these, we identified that there were units which almost all participants found challenging. This suggested that almost all of the teachers who participated in the course were able to learn something new. In Table 5, those units which were seen to have had the greatest impact on participants' understanding of English teaching knowledge are provided to illustrate this finding. These results have provided the Ministry with useful information for areas to concentrate on further in face-to-face training sessions.

Table 5: Units perceived to have improved participants' knowledge and skills and helped them reflect on their practice

TOPICS	The extent to which the topic improved knowledge and skills/or helped teachers to reflect on their teaching practice		
	A great deal	To some extent	TOTAL
The role of error	51.8%	43.0%	94.8%
Learner-focused units (learner differences, characteristics and needs)	54.4%	40.4%	94.8%
Motivation	50.4%	44.8%	95.2%
Identifying and selecting aims	47.0%	51.8%	98.8%
Selecting and using supplementary materials	48.2%	49.4%	97.6%
Choosing assessment activities	45.8%	51.8%	97.6%

Since most of the participating teachers went on to take the Cambridge TKT, the teacher survey also asked about their views of the relationship between the *TKT Essentials* course and the test. Results showed that 69 per cent felt there was a good match between the content of the TKT course and the final exam. In terms of how well they felt the course had prepared them for the exam, however, results were more mixed. Of the 82 responses received from an open-ended question about this, 32 felt that it did, 21 that it did to some extent but just over a quarter – 25 – did not feel that it had prepared them well. The main reasons teachers gave for this last viewpoint were that they received no sample tests and were not told what would be in the examination.

Teachers' views on their experience of online learning

A very important finding, as Table 6 shows, is that the majority of teachers found online learning to be a positive experience. This is very encouraging given that very few teachers had had any previous experience of online learning. It is also another important success indicator for this project.

Table 6: Teachers' views of online learning

I found online learning	
Enjoyable	79.3%
Effective	78.6%
Flexible	82.6%
Comfortable	90.9%

Nevertheless, online learning did present some challenges for teachers as reported in open-ended questions and in the focus group interviews. Some reasons given for this include the fact that they struggled to navigate the website, were not clear who to ask if they needed help and that they often had to wait several days for responses to their queries. However, the main reason that seemed to affect participants' experience of learning online was difficulties in accessing the internet at home. This was mentioned by 55.6 per cent of all participants. Because of this, some participants relied on trying to complete assignments for the TKT Essentials course during the time they were at school.

Teachers' views on the delivery of the course

Participating teachers were also asked about the delivery of the course and the various support structures put in place to assist them. Below we first consider their views on the face-to-face and online inductions they received and then consider their views on the support they received from e-moderators and e-observers. Table 7 summarises teachers' views on the induction process.

Table 7: Participants' views on the usefulness of the induction at the start of the course

The usefulness of:	Useful	Not very useful
The face-to-face induction	81%	19%
The online induction	84%	16%

From this table it can be seen that on the whole teachers were happy with both the introduction to the course provided by the British Council in different governorates and with the online induction unit. These findings were corroborated by responses to another survey item, which asked about the degree of match between their expectations of the programme and the reality of doing it. This showed that 71 per cent of participants felt there was a good match. However, with regard to the way in which the induction process prepared them for the Cambridge TKT, only 50 per cent felt this had been adequately covered.

Participants commented extensively on the TKT e-moderators in the open-ended questions on the survey and in the focus group interviews. They clearly felt the e-moderators were crucial to the quality of their learning experience. The majority of teachers found their e-moderators provided them with regular feedback and information about the requirements of the modules. Many also found it easy to contact their e-moderators when they needed to and found their e-moderators to be supportive and encouraging, as the following quotes from focus group interviews illustrate:

My e-moderator was very helpful and patient.

She was there whenever I needed her help and she always encouraged me if I was late for any reason.

However, there were also a number who were unhappy with some of the e-moderators. The following table reflects the main concerns raised about e-moderator performance.

Table 8: Participants' views on poor practices of some e-moderators

Poor practices of e-moderators mentioned by some participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Took many days to respond to participants• Rarely contributed to the discussion forums• Didn't make things clear regarding what was expected, particularly regarding the module assessment and other procedures• Showed little flexibility around individual circumstances and deadlines• Rarely offered encouragement or support• Did not provide participants with a sense of how they were progressing.

In general, there was a feeling that there was a need for e-moderators to be more sympathetic regarding participants' personal circumstances, work commitments and their lack of experience of online learning. Participating teachers also felt they needed more guidance and updates on how they were progressing. As one participant said in a focus group interview:

She [the e-moderator] wasn't a regular visitor to the forum. There was no continuous feedback. We got one feedback in our reflective journal at the beginning and one at the end. We got no feedback on how we were doing in the forum, if what we were doing was wrong or right.

Again, participants also highlighted the issue of exam preparation as well, with about one-third of participants commenting that they did not feel they got sufficient support with this from their e-moderators.

Finally, with regard to the e-observers, participants were appreciative of the efforts they made to support them face-to-face or by telephone when they had concerns. However, they were not entirely certain of their roles, as reflected in suggestions for how to improve their role. Some participants proposed that the role of e-moderators should entail more face-to-face classes to support the online learning or that they should take on some of the responsibilities of e-moderators.

Teachers' views on workload and time management issues

Personal workload and time management issues were mentioned by almost all participants. For some, an important positive point of learning had been working out how to manage their time and create space for professional development activities alongside the requirements of their jobs. However, the results of the survey and focus group interviews revealed that, as has been signalled in the literature (see, for example, Murray, 2013), workload and time management issues were a concern for many. Just over half (52 per cent) mentioned that they had found it very challenging to manage the demands of the course alongside their school

workloads. This impacted on the time they had to complete the course requirements. They made many suggestions for addressing this situation. These included extending the length of the course and having a bigger gap between the end of the course and the examination. This was also one important reason why some dropped out of the course, an issue which will be discussed in more depth below.

The perspectives of the e-observers and the administrative team in the ministry's Main Training Centre

The ten trainers who acted as e-observers during the pilot TKT project were also asked for their views of the experience of being e-observers. This information was collected via face-to-face informal chats and in some cases via telephone interviews. Most of the e-observers agreed that the experience of being e-observers hadn't really enriched their knowledge and practice as trainers and that their role had ended up being largely an administrative one. Moreover, echoing the views of the teachers themselves, they felt it was not clear how they could support the participating teachers with their learning, as this was the role of the British Council e-moderators. One e-observer, for example, offered the following observation, typical of the views held by many:

I really don't know what I gained from this experience. I did a lot of administration for sure, but since I wasn't taking the course, I wasn't clear as to what I was supposed to do online.

For those overseeing the delivery of the pilot in the Main Training Centre, the administrative burden was also seen as a problem, particularly at the start of the course, with many teachers needing assistance in logging on, and towards the end of the course when test registration forms and the arrangement of test venues around the country had to be addressed.

Reflections on our experience and some key learning points

From the results of the evaluation outlined above, it is clear that in some ways the innovative approach to CPD for English teachers we introduced in Oman was a success. It was deemed to generate meaningful new learning opportunities for teachers who were also largely enthusiastic about their experience of online learning. Ministry of Education staff have since received a lot of requests from the teachers who participated in this course to be given the opportunity to be enrolled on further online CPD courses, and other teachers who did not participate have also asked to be enrolled on similar courses. Spurred on by these requests and the results of the evaluation, a decision was taken to enrol a further cohort of 250 teachers on the *TKT Essentials* course for the 2013–14 school year.

However, to address the issues raised by the pilot study, a number of adjustments to the delivery of the course in 2013–14 have been put in place, which we hope will help ensure a better experience for all. These changes were developed in a number of meetings between the English Projects manager at the British Council and the English training team in the Main Training Centre. The meetings involved careful scrutiny of all of the data collected during the evaluation and our own experiences.

of administering the course. We identified the following action points as a result of this process, which we addressed in advance of the enrolment of the second cohort in October 2013.

1. To improve the selection and induction procedures

Although only a small number of participants withdrew from the course (11 after Module 1 and 15 during Modules 2 and 3), an examination of the reasons for this revealed two factors that pointed to a need to improve selection procedures and for more written documentation to support the induction process. Indeed, these factors seemed to be closely connected. The first was that some participants had taken the decision to enrol without fully understanding the commitment this course would require of them. Secondly, in a few cases, participants claimed they had been enrolled for the course without full consultation. To help ensure that only teachers who were genuinely committed to the course were selected for the 2013–14 cohort, information about the course was uploaded on the Ministry of Education's electronic forum. In addition, the British Council developed a PDF providing comprehensive information about the course, the roles and responsibilities of e-moderators and examples of the module tasks and assessment requirements, which was handed out during face-to-face induction meetings.

2. To ensure participants are aware of the workload issues involved in online learning

The issue of workload was another reason why some participants dropped out of the course. However, given that participating teachers were experiencing online learning for the first time, in our pilot study the dropout rate was remarkably low. Several participants suggested that teachers should be given a reduced teaching load when undertaking online CPD but, since there are no plans to put this into effect, it is important that teachers are fully aware of the demands of online learning. This issue has been addressed this year more explicitly in the face-to-face induction sessions. Teachers who were participants in the first cohort were also invited to attend the induction sessions for the second cohort and to share some of the ways in which they managed the dual demands of the course and their teaching loads.

3. To ensure a greater consistency of good practice among e-moderators

One element that was evident in the feedback provided by participating teachers in the pilot project was that they perceived the e-moderators' presence to be hugely important in helping sustain their motivation for the course and manage the online learning process. Steps have been taken to try to ensure that e-moderators are made aware of the fact that the majority of participants taking the TKT modules are unfamiliar with online learning and face challenges of accessing the internet in some areas, which can, in turn, affect their ability to work to deadlines. Our experience suggests that when online CPD courses are offered by external providers to novice online learners, efforts will need to be taken to ensure that e-moderators are more fully conversant with important contextual factors that may impact on delivery and support. This requires, on the one hand, that sufficient information about the support needs of participating teachers is made available to external providers from those overseeing the delivery of online CPD courses in country. On the other

hand, it highlights a need for external providers to ensure that additional induction is given to e-moderators working with novice online learners who may be technologically challenged and unfamiliar with the degree of self-direction required by learning online. Attention to these factors and to the need to ensure uniformity of practice between e-moderators is perhaps particularly important when large numbers of teachers from one country are enrolled on a course, as they will inevitably compare and contrast their experiences.

4. To revisit the offline regional support structures

The ten trainers acting as e-observers did not really find that their role gave them a good opportunity to learn about the training. In part, this is because their role was not well structured. They also complained about the additional administrative burden of the TKT in their role as e-observers. We believe that support at a regional level is important for teachers taking this course in Oman. The e-observers provide an immediate point of contact and, as happened last year, there were many instances when teachers felt too shy to ask e-moderators for support with technical or other learning issues. In these cases e-observers could contact the Main Training Centre team, who could then pass support requests on to the British Council team to address. To address the issues raised by e-observers in the pilot, this year we have identified a trainer and supervisor in each governorate to share the burden of meeting any offline support needs of teachers. Both members are also encouraged to observe one online group as last year but have been provided with a series of online observational tasks to help structure the experience. It is hoped that this added structure and support will also generate some useful offline discussion, helping to forge important collaborative bonds between trainers and supervisors at a regional level.

Conclusion

Although there is a growing literature on the experience and impact of online CPD opportunities for TESOL teachers in higher education, such as through the provision of online Masters courses (England, 2012), there is still very little literature on the value-added potential of online CPD courses for school teachers of English. This chapter has sought to go some way to filling this gap. Our objective has been twofold. Firstly, to share some of the insights we have gained from our experiences into what factors need to be addressed in helping to ensure that the potential of online CPD to support teachers' ongoing professional development is realised. Secondly, it has sought to describe the added value of seeking out different stakeholder perspectives in understanding the experience of online CPD.

Inevitably, the lessons we have learned from the efforts to introduce online CPD opportunities for teachers in Oman will not all be transferable to others who may be considering developing similar initiatives. Some of the challenges we have described here stem, for example, from the fact that the e-moderators and the teachers needed not only to bridge technological and geographical gaps, but also to bridge teaching and learning cultural divides as well. Clearly, if online CPD opportunities are introduced and developed within one country, this sort of issue is unlikely to be so pronounced. Nevertheless, other factors such as workload

or challenges posed by lack of familiarity with online learning are likely to resonate with teacher educators in many settings and we hope the ways in which we are currently trying to address them will provide useful information for anyone considering this type of course. Finally, as we have seen, logistical problems of administering and managing online CPD courses are important complicating factors in delivering such professional learning opportunities. In our project, these were perhaps exacerbated by the collaborative venture between the Ministry of Education and the British Council that was at the heart of the project. In such endeavours, as we discovered, it is essential to build a strong and trusting relationship if online CPD initiatives are to be given a chance to work. It is this understanding and co-operation between both partners that has enabled the collection of honest and relevant data in supporting recommendations and implementing changes, which are now being put into effect.

We want to end this chapter by saying a few words about success in the context of online CPD initiatives. For us, success was measured by the perceived value that the innovation we introduced was given by teachers. This is clearly very important but there are a number of other valuable success indicators that are worthy of attention. Our evaluation was able to say very little about what sort of difference the training has made to teachers' classroom practice, for example. It has also not examined the quality of the online discussions in building a collaborative community of practitioners, which is important for sustaining teachers' professional development. These lines of inquiry are ones we are currently seeking actively to explore in furthering our understanding of the ways in which online CPD activities help support English teachers in Oman. We would suggest that these are likely to have broader relevance for language teacher educators everywhere as part of the need to understand the full potential of new technologies to enhance language teacher education.

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**English in action:
a new approach to
continuing professional
development through
the use of mediated
video, peer support and
low-cost mobile phones
in Bangladesh**

10

English in Action: a new approach to continuing professional development through the use of mediated video, peer support and low-cost mobile phones in Bangladesh

Clare Woodward, Malcolm Griffiths and Mike Solly

Introduction

It is a commonly recognised problem that teacher-training institutions across the developing world are unable to meet the teacher education needs of English language teachers (Global Campaign for Education, 2012), whether on pre- or in-service programmes. The complex multiplicity of systemic, geographical, political and other challenges often mean that out-of-school in-service provision, in particular, has to be delivered *en masse* and away from the local school environment. Teachers may take little of practical value back to their classrooms from this kind of in-service programme, or soon revert to former, unproductive ways of teaching in their familiar school environment. There is thus a strong argument for in-service professional development taking place directly in schools, improving the skills and techniques of teachers in their own classrooms. However, many teacher development programmes that aim to reach teachers in schools assume a technological infrastructure and familiarity that may not exist and fail to acknowledge the barriers that lack of access to technology creates (UNESCO, 2012), which can, in turn, be de-motivating to teachers and students frequently faced with large classes and poorly equipped classrooms, with no or intermittent electricity and a blackboard as their sole piece of equipment (EIA, 2009b). Balancing low-tech reality with efficient and easy-to-use high-tech solutions, which are both sustainable and scalable, remains a challenge.

In response to this, English in Action (EIA), a nine-year UK Aid-funded partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, is working with 12,500 primary and secondary school teachers of English between 2012 and 2014 to deliver professional development through low cost mobile phones. This intervention follows on from a pilot study with

750 teachers, which resulted in modifications in approach and materials based on wide-ranging user feedback and ongoing project-wide research, monitoring and evaluation. Between 2014 and 2017 the project will scale up to work with 75,000 teachers across the country.

In this chapter, we will look at the context within which CPD operates in Bangladesh and describe earlier and concurrent approaches to dealing with an overwhelming need for in-service training of teachers. We will then outline the innovative concept of mediated video that EIA has developed using materials on Secure Digital (SD) cards in accessible low-cost mobile phones to deliver a more personalised and reflective approach to teacher professional development, and also tell the story from the perspective of a teacher participating in the project. The chapter will conclude by discussing how the EIA approach is demonstrating the potential to be a very effective model for continuing professional development (CPD), particularly in development contexts, being scalable, adaptable, sustainable and economically viable for both teachers and governments.

A large-scale challenge: the context of CPD in Bangladesh

English in Bangladesh

The vast majority (98 per cent) of Bangladesh's 156 million people use Bangla as a first language and 89 per cent are Muslim. Soon after independence in 1971 Bangla became the medium of education at all levels except in Madrasah schools and some English-medium schools in the cities (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007). Despite the small percentage of non-Bangla first language speakers, the number still amounts to around 3.1 million people who speak some 40 languages (www.ethnologue.com), with strong and deep-rooted linguistic, ethnic and cultural histories.

As English has gained ascendancy as a global language, it is now perceived as an economically valuable language in Bangladesh and as a useful, marketable skill. Some currently undeveloped economic sectors have the potential for major expansion that would be accelerated by the availability of English-speaking workers. In particular, jobs in the digital economy, where English is widely used, are a key part of the government's growth strategy for Bangladesh, but lack of proficiency in English has been identified as a major barrier for the development of this sector (GoB and UNDP, 2010). As in other developing economies, in more recent years the Bangladesh government has actively promoted English language throughout the education system. English has been a compulsory school subject for all grades (1 to 12) since 1986 and throughout much of this period there have been a number of large-scale reform initiatives, aimed at developing the quality of learning and teaching of English. Ultimately, the government aim is to improve the profile of English in the country to prepare a workforce that is better able to participate in the global economy (GoB and UNDP, 2010).

Yet, despite the importance the government attaches to English and the investments made by the government and funding agencies such as the United Nations, the World Bank and bilateral donors such as the UK, the level of English language competence among students and their teachers is often low. In 2009, prior to the EIA intervention a baseline study of 4,171 students' spoken language competence found there was

little evidence of progression through the primary schools over five years, with the majority of students (78 per cent) being at Trinity College level 0 or 1 over the first five school grades. There was also little evidence of systematic progression through secondary schools. The majority of students (97 per cent) in school grades 7 to 10 had the same language ability as those students in grade 6 (EIA, 2009a).

English teachers and professional development

Government and government-registered schools are predominant in the education system at primary and secondary levels. All these schools follow the same National Curriculum, or a curriculum closely linked to it, and they all prepare students for the same set of national examinations.

Initial teacher preparation

Currently, some 100,000 primary and secondary schools are engaged in teaching English across Bangladesh (www.moedu.gov.bd/old/edu_statistics.php). Pre-service preparation to join the teaching profession shows some diversity in pathways and not all teachers may have received full training. In theory, teachers are now expected to be higher education graduates. In practice, many trainee primary teachers who follow pre-service programmes at the country's 57 Primary Teacher Training Institutes (PTIs) are in fact in-service teachers. Due to general teacher shortages and a lack of capacity at the PTIs, many teachers have previously entered the profession qualified only with a school-leaving certificate. Primary teachers are expected to teach all subjects though the PTI training programmes have subject-specific components; for English this includes both English language proficiency development (subject knowledge) and English teaching methodology (pedagogic knowledge). Since the government, through the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, has actively sought to promote communicative language teaching and related approaches since the late 1990s, both the national school textbooks and the training materials have visibly reflected this concern. Moreover, with the phased introduction of the new Diploma in Education (first piloted in 2012 at seven PTIs, and extended to a further 21 since 2013), initial teacher preparation for primary teachers is now overtly placing considerable emphasis on reflective practice and extended periods of supported practical experience in schools directly linked to the institution-based input.

At present, secondary-level teachers (working at grades 6 to 12) frequently enter the profession with no specific pedagogical preparation. Although all are higher education graduates, not all those who are assigned to teach English have a degree in English. Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) offer two-year Bachelor in Education courses but only a limited number of serving teachers may have qualified at these institutions. A limited number of teachers are given opportunities to attend three-week refresher courses at TTCs or the National Academy of Educational Management (NAEM), though in reality for many of them this could be their first systematic pedagogical preparation.

CPD/in service professional development

Apart from a generally held belief in the intrinsic importance and benefits of continuous professional development, both government authorities and funding agencies have long recognised the need for large scale in-service programmes.

Whether stated officially or unofficially, inconsistencies and lack of capacity in initial teacher preparation for much of both the primary and secondary sectors have left space for an important role to be played by in-service or CPD programmes. For English teaching in particular, there has thus been a long history of government initiatives, with and without international support at least from the late 1980s.

Here again, levels of provision and access have been highly diverse with opportunities for professional development for serving teachers varying greatly in duration, appropriacy and quality. However, many of the programmes themselves share a number of common features. For the majority of in-service programmes, teachers would be away from their school for one block of time, six days under the government's current subject-based training programme and commonly about three weeks for secondary teachers on the English Language Teaching Improvement Programme (ELTIP), which ran from 2000 to 2010, and with the Teaching Quality Improvement initiative (TQI). Generally these would be once-in-a-career opportunities and the participants would often attend as the only representative from their schools. The professional development content would generally have been designed by mixed teams of national and international teacher education specialists and, certainly in the case of the larger-scale internationally supported programmes, there would be a clear leaning towards communicative approaches. Cascade models of delivery would be common, with most teachers receiving their training from a local master trainer.

Current levels of practice

Despite some changes in classroom practice traceable to the ELTIP project (Das and Bentinck, 2013), by the late 2000s the government remained concerned that attainment in English by school learners was still low and that teachers were not managing to work with the textbooks in the communicative way that had been envisaged. When, in 2009, the new English in Action project carried out a series of pre-initiation baseline studies of classroom practice the findings were quite striking. As well as confirming that the majority of teachers in primary schools had low levels of English language skills, they also revealed a continued reliance on reading-based, grammar-translation methods. Among the findings from 252 classroom observations were the following:

- Teaching was based almost entirely on the blackboard or textbook.
- Interaction and participation by learners was extremely limited; in the majority of the lessons, fewer than half the learners had any opportunity to participate.
- Learners spoke English very rarely.
- By far the most common type of interaction was closed questioning; other kinds of activity including open questioning; learners reading from the textbook were found in ten per cent of the lessons.
- Teachers used more Bangla than English (in 67 per cent of the lessons).
- Teaching aids were used in less than six per cent of the lessons.

The schools in which these lessons were observed were spread across the country and included a number of rural locations (EIA, 2009b). These findings are confirmed by other researchers (e.g., Chowdhury and Phan, 2008; Hamid and Baldauf, 2008).

A major finding of Das and Bentinck's investigation into the sustainable impact of six professional development-based reform initiatives was that most of the interventions had failed to achieve lasting impact on classroom practice due to 'a lack of monitoring and evaluation during and post project period, lack of ownership on the government's part, teachers' reluctance to adopt new techniques, lack of support from the head teachers, senior colleagues and a lack of integration among various project interventions.' (Das and Bentinck, 2013: 4)

Challenges

Thus, towards the end of the last decade it was clear that many learners in schools were still unable to achieve the levels of English that it was thought Bangladesh would require in order to optimise its opportunities for global engagement from a position of strength. A picture was also emerging that continued investments of effort would be required in order to raise the capacity of the teaching force to the levels required. To reach the required number of teachers, and have the sustained and consistent impacts in classroom practice that so far were little in evidence, any resources that were available would clearly need to be spread carefully. Using conventional approaches of occasional workshop-based tuition meant that, even with a large investment package, it would be too thin a spread to have lasting classroom impact.

Therefore, as previous interventions, despite their large scale and apparently intrinsically expert quality, had not succeeded in bringing about lasting changes in practice, one of the main challenges for new initiatives would be to find an approach that would lead to sustained impact over a long period. If teachers were indeed reluctant to adopt new techniques it may have been because they were not presented in such ways as to make them seem fully appropriate and accessible. Or it may have been that teachers generally experienced only one-off exposure to the new concepts and practices; thus, once they came to review what they had learned from the training programmes and were trying to put it into practice, they may have lacked opportunities to get answers to their queries and resolve areas of confusion.

It is also possible that teachers may have lacked any real incentive, not to mention support and encouragement, to make them persevere in trying to make permanent changes to their practice, especially if they were coming across unexpected difficulties. It may even be the case that by the time the new practices had passed down the cascade through various layers, from course designers through different levels of trainers, the original messages, however well conceived and prepared, may have reached the teachers with less coherence and clarity than would be needed for them to be readily accepted or taken on board. Naturally, the reason for any lack of sustainable take-up could be a combination of any of these factors.

Making space for alternatives: the English in Action innovation

The rationale for a new approach

Therefore, at the inception phase of EIA in 2008, it was obvious that a new, more innovative approach had to be adopted to assist the project in being more creative and imaginative if the cynicism of teachers overburdened in recent years with international projects was to be avoided. Making a space where people can imagine possible futures can be a 'motivator for getting unstuck' (Ogilvy, 2006: 22) by creating alternatives to current practices.

The technology

Internationally, there are few large-scale examples of teacher professional development delivered through mobile phones. In the UNESCO (2012) series on mobile learning, several examples are given where mobile phones are used to deliver teacher support and classroom materials (e.g. the MXit platform in South Africa and the Road to Reading programme in Mali). However, it is significant that in these examples, teachers need an internet-enabled mobile phone and the resulting higher costs limit access to the vast majority of teachers and learners.

Being aware of the popularity of the mobile phone in 2008, and mindful of the likely surge in ownership that was predicted to happen across the developing world, EIA went for an approach that was radically new in Bangladesh. Instead of taking teachers out of the classroom to access training, it was decided that CPD would leave the training centres and come directly to the teachers in their schools. A perfect storm scenario of the expected exponential growth of the mobile phone impacting with the failure of the cascade model of CPD led to the innovative approach of developing video and audio resources which could be delivered offline on handheld devices to provide training directly to individual teachers. Video on the mobile would offer an immediacy of impact and a degree of flexibility that much conventional training room-based, trainer-led and time-bound input often could not match. If, as seemed likely, they could be made easily accessible to teachers in a 'view anywhere, view any time' package, then videos of classroom practice would not merely bring CPD directly to the teachers but they could also take them directly into other teachers' classrooms to see models of good practice.

In the pilot phase of English in Action (2009–10), to test the viability of the EIA approach, EIA developed teacher professional development resources (audio and video) pre-loaded on the Apple iPod Nano (for primary teachers) and iPod Touch (for secondary teachers). The use of high-end Apple technology, while acknowledged as impractical in terms of scale and sustainability, enabled the project to test out the concept of using non-internet-based handheld technology for classroom and school-based CPD at a time when low-cost mobiles were unable to deliver high quality video. There was an assumption that by the time it came to scaling up, low cost solutions accessible to the average teacher would be much more readily available and familiar, and this was indeed the case by 2011. In 2010 prior to scaling up, EIA field tested three technology kits in two rural districts looking at budgetary limitations, ease of use, durability and recharging. Following feedback from a range of teachers, the project decided on the Nokia C1 01 phone with 4GB micro SD card and portable speakers at a cost of £60 per teacher. This cost is currently covered by the project but in the next phase, 2014–17, teachers will provide their own phones.

In Bangladesh the penetration of the mobile phone has been rapid, rising from below one million subscribers in 2001, to 36 million at the beginning of 2008 and almost 116 million in February 2014 (source: www.btrc.gov.bd/content/mobile-phone-subscribers-bangladesh-february-2014). Thus, teachers are generally very familiar with using a mobile phone and, following a brief training session on how to access the SD card materials, have had minimal problems in using them.

The mediated video concept

Despite initial attempts to use Bangladeshi classroom teachers in the pilot phase video, it was not possible to locate appropriate people and the project was therefore obliged to use actors, and build a classroom in a film studio. Although feedback was generally positive it was also obvious to the teachers that this was not authentic and represented an idealised reality that was far removed from their own lives and professional experience. Their responses to it included such comments as: 'I couldn't do this in my classroom,' 'I have too many students to do this activity,' and 'I have to use the course book every day.' It became obvious that in order to get 'buy in' from teachers the project needed to grasp the realities of the average teacher's life, both inside and outside the classroom, and provide materials that reflected that reality, using the government textbook and showing actual teachers modelling good practice in recognisable classroom situations.

While it was true that in 2008–09 it was impossible to identify suitable teachers for filming, by early 2011 the project had access to teachers from the pilot phase who had adopted a range of communicative classroom practices. A group of ten teachers was therefore selected (five primary and five secondary) from across the country in mainly rural locations, and classes were filmed following lessons from the government textbook *English for Today* over a period of two months at the end of 2011. In general, there was about 30 minutes preparation time with each teacher, and then filming commenced. The criticisms that the pilot teachers had levelled at the video-based TPD resources were all addressed, i.e. non-authentic teachers/classroom/students; not using the government textbook; extra classroom resources not available to most teachers. All classroom videos were based on *English for Today* lessons, using teachers from the pilot phase teaching their own students in their own classrooms with no resources other than blackboard, chalk, textbook, the audio recording of textbook dialogues or stories on the teachers' mobile phones and posters supplied to all teachers in the scaling up phase of the project.

However, as the video resources are designed to be used partly in a self-access context, the classroom film alone was not considered sufficient to offer focused and reflective professional development. Teachers would need to be guided through the video, for example in a workshop scenario, in order to make them aware of the objectives of the activities and techniques, and how to take them into their own teaching practice using the coursebook. The authentic classroom film needed, therefore, to be delivered to the teachers by an 'expert' who could deconstruct what the teachers were seeing in the classrooms on the video and enable them to find ways of applying these techniques to their own students. While developing the EIA approach, we felt an important element of the materials should be the forging of the social presence of a Bangladeshi video guide, who is essentially the ELT expert voice, speaking directly to the teachers from their mobile phones. In the human-computer interaction (HCI) field, research indicates that the human face is one of the most

attractive components in an interface (Kang et al., 2008). Feedback from teachers strongly affirms their sense of the narrator, Shanta, as being 'known' by them.

The video guide is the expert voice, speaking a script written by OU academics to 'sandwich' the classroom film. She asks teachers to think carefully about what they are about to view and sets some focused questions for them to think about while they are watching the video. After seeing the classroom footage, the video guide asks the teachers to reflect upon what they have seen, and think about how they could apply similar techniques to classes they are currently teaching. By using the video guide 'expert voice' we were able to move away from the default 'cascade' model where information is passed down from the original author, through a range of master trainers, eventually reaching the teacher in a much diluted form. Instead, each teacher receives training, in its original concentrated form, directly from the expert through the video guide. With the mobile phone, the training is then literally 'held' by the teachers and is very much in their own hands, thus allowing the teachers to build their own understanding of the concepts in a bottom-up manner, through guided reflection, both individually and with support from peers. Figure 1 provides an example of how the guide works in practice.

Figure 1: Extract from the video guide script: English in Action video

Secondary Module 6: Listening in action

Part 1: English in the classroom

Hello and welcome to Module 6, which is about listening in action. We begin with Part 1 (SM6-V1) – English in the classroom. You will start this module by watching two video clips, which show two different teachers teaching the same lesson – Class 7, Unit 3, Lesson 14. As you watch the clips, try to answer this question: In which clip do students listen to more English?

*****video clip 1

*****video clip 2

So – in which clip did the students listen to more English?

[PAUSE]

The students listened to much more English in the first video clip. They played a short game – guessing the name of the country – and they listened to the teacher asking questions about the country; for example: *Is it very big?* The teacher also gave instructions in English; for example, saying things like: *Read the letter for two minutes to find the answers.* In the second video clip, the teacher uses English to give instructions only.

The lesson featured in these two video clips is a reading lesson, but you can see how it is possible to get students listening to English here – and speaking it too – by asking questions in English, and by giving instructions in English. It is true that the activity is quicker in the second clip – but the students in this classroom don't get to hear as much English, don't get to speak it, and may have more problems understanding the text that they are about to read, because they are less prepared, and are not so actively involved.

Now what about you? Is your classroom more like the one in the first clip? Or the second?

[PAUSE]

How can you increase the amount of English you use in your classroom?

[PAUSE]

Go to Module 6 'Try in the Classroom 1' in the Teacher Guide, and learn about how you can use more English in your classroom.

This mediated video deconstruction technique enables the self-access materials to be much more guided and, together with a print Teacher's Guide divided into eight modules, supports the teachers on their journey towards reflective practice. Although a very similar model of delivery is used for both primary and secondary teachers, the mechanism has been modified to meet the differing needs of each. In the secondary materials, each module consists of a set of three videos linked to four 'Try in the Classroom Activities' for teachers to practise in their own classrooms, and then reflect upon and review in their journals. These are accompanied in the printed Teachers Guide by appropriate Classroom Language to enable teachers to deliver clear instructions (also available in an audio file on the mobile), together with examples of games, efficient use of the blackboard and tips for dealing with large classes. As an illustration, Figure 2 shows some of the Teacher Guide support material related to the extract from the video guide's script that was presented in Figure 1.

Figure 2: Extract from Secondary Teacher Guide: page 91

MODULE 6 | Listening in Action


Introduction


In Module 1, you learned about the importance of active listening when learning English. It is likely that your students don't get much chance to listen to English outside the classroom so, in this module, you will learn about how you can increase the opportunities for your students to listen to English in your classroom.


Think for a moment about what you would consider to be the two most important learning objectives in this module for both students and teachers. Make a note of them for yourself.

Once you have done this, turn to the learning objectives at the end of this module and see if the learning objectives you have noted are included in the learning objectives listed.

You are going to begin this module by watching a video - but before you do, think about the following question:

 When do students listen to English in your classroom?

 Write your response to the question in your EIA notebook

 Now watch Video 1 (SM6-V1).

Try in the Classroom 1: Using English in the classroom

It is important to use spoken English in the classroom as much as you can because:

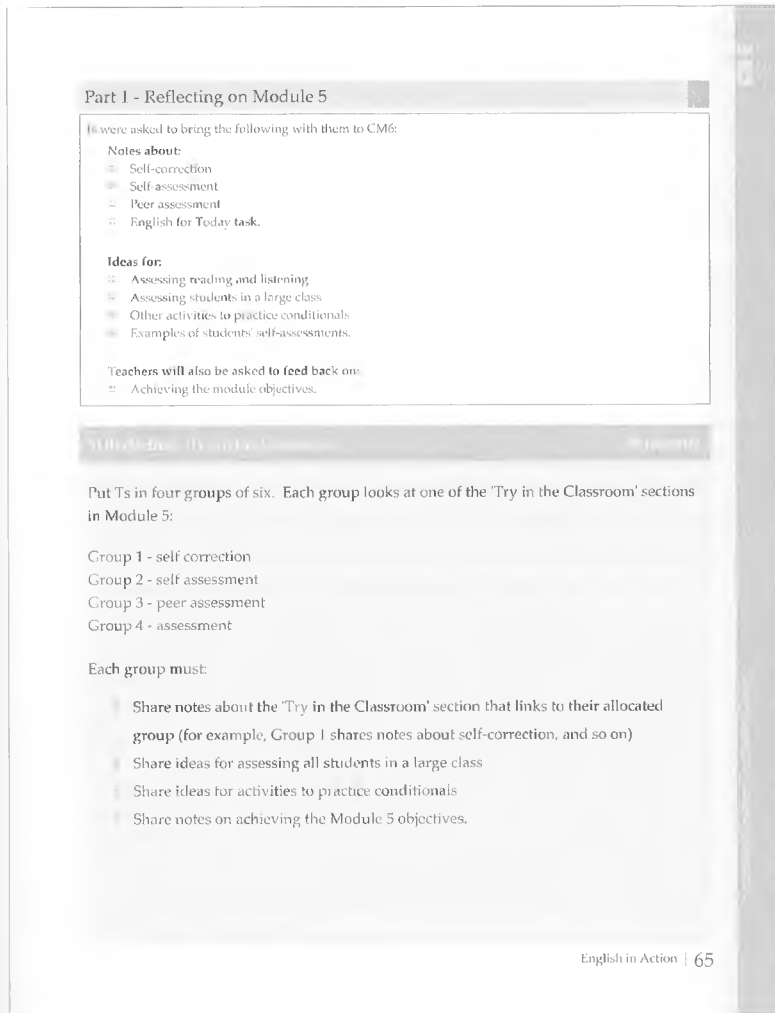
- It gives students the chance to listen to more English
- It gives students confidence in listening to English
- It means that language is recycled (language learnt earlier can be practised again in other contexts)
- It does not need any special equipment or resources - just you!

Secondary Teacher Guide

In the primary teachers' version of the programme, in addition to video and audio materials, teachers are also given printed activity guides, or semi-structured lesson plans, for each grade from 1–5, which they can follow in their lessons using a range of techniques and approaches. Both secondary and primary materials also include classroom audio resources to be delivered via the SD card on the mobile phone, using rechargeable speakers supplied by the project.

These two unique aspects of the EIA approach, the mediated video deconstruction and the storage of the multimedia materials on the SD card on a low-cost mobile phone, combine to enable all teachers to engage in meaningful and authentic classroom-based professional development with a strong focus on reflective practice. The third essential element of the EIA approach is peer support, which has been consciously integrated within the programme design to a degree that is unprecedented in other Bangladeshi CPD programmes. Teachers engage with the project in pairs within their schools and each school pair meets up every six to eight weeks, eight times over a year-and-a-half, with other pairs of teachers from ten to 12 schools across their district or *upazilla*. This departs markedly from most of the other programmes in Bangladesh; the familiar pattern is for individuals from a school to leave regular duties for a one-off block period (currently ranging between six and 21 days, depending on the programme). Rather than being training sessions as such, the one-day EIA *cluster meetings* complement the input from the self-access materials. They are primarily intended as opportunities for teachers to share their experiences, both successes and challenges, reflect on common issues and prepare themselves for the next module in the EIA teachers' guide. Each cluster meeting is led by two experienced teachers, *Teacher Facilitators* (TFs, who also follow the CPD programme along with the teachers in the cluster group). To assist the TFs in managing the cluster meeting, the project developed a printed TF guide, which contains step-by-step instructions on how to run each of the eight cluster meetings across 16 months. An example is given in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Secondary Teacher Facilitator Guide pages



Source: *English in Action Secondary Teacher Facilitator Guide* (p. 62), The Open University 2012

In this case teachers are asked to reflect on and share experiences of trying out the particular techniques shown in the extracts in Figures 1 and 2, above. The TF print guide is accompanied by a TF video that follows the same model as the teacher development videos. Two TFs are shown running a cluster meeting and each section is 'sandwiched' by a video guide who, as with the classroom video, sets focused questions for the TFs to think about while watching. The guide then asks them to reflect upon what they have seen and think about how they could apply similar techniques in their own cluster meetings. A challenge for the project is to convince the TFs that they are not trainers; the expertise and training is all held within the materials – both video and print. The TFs themselves participate in the project as teachers and their role as TFs is to support other teachers and facilitate the running of the cluster meeting. The innovative use of video assists in explaining clearly to them how to carry out this role successfully.

Teachers' stories: implementing the innovation

Across Bangladesh there are currently 12,500 teachers involved in the English in Action project, which will rise to over 120,000 teachers by 2017. Bangladesh is divided into seven divisions, and each of these divisions is in turn broken into many 'upazillas', or small districts. EIA is currently working in 112 upazillas across the country, each of which has one group of ten secondary schools and two groups of ten primary schools involved in the project. Within each school, two teachers take part in the EIA project as well as head teachers.

To describe the implementation of the project in a meaningful way, let's look at it through the eyes of four participating teachers from two of these schools – Mohamed and Ayesha from one school and Arif and Zahir from another – who have recently been observed and interviewed as part of the project's qualitative research.

On the outskirts of Rajshahi in the north west of Bangladesh is the upazilla of Puthia. Within Puthia, 20 primary schools and ten secondary schools are involved in the project. One of the schools involved is Puthia High School where Mohamed and Ayesha are English teachers. Mohamed has been teaching for 13 years, seven of them at this school, and has been involved in other teacher professional development initiatives, namely the Teacher Quality Improvement (TQI) funded by the Asia Development Bank, and the UK-Aid-funded English Language Teacher Improvement Project (ELTIP) project. In both these initiatives, Mohamed went on block training courses as the sole teacher from his school and was away from the classroom for extended periods of time. On returning to his school he reported that he had found it difficult to apply the techniques he had learned to his own classroom. He said that they demonstrated techniques, but it was *'only face to face and it didn't stay with us'*. Conversely, in his participation with EIA his professional development is based on his classroom experience, not leaving the school but working through a set of materials delivered through a basic Nokia phone, which holds a 4GB SD card, and in print over a 16-month period. He stated several times that it was a *'radical transformation'*. Mohamed is about to take over as Head Teacher in his school, and speculated that his promotion is at least in part a consequence of EIA.

By contrast, his EIA partner, Ayesha, is a young, relatively inexperienced teacher and this is her first appointment. EIA teachers are paired up in schools so that they can support each other during their involvement in the project and alleviate the isolation felt in earlier interventions. Occasionally they will visit each other's classrooms to see what their partner is doing, and they may also take photos or videos. Ayesha was very specific in how useful it was for her to be involved in EIA with a more experienced teacher. The programme encourages them to get together once a week to discuss and reflect upon what they have been doing in their teaching, and they are provided with teacher journals in which they are encouraged to reflect and report back on their classroom practice. This is not always possible due to the teachers' workload. However, EIA also works with the head teachers and encourages them to develop a learning community within their school, carving out some time for teachers to sit and reflect together. In the participating primary schools, where they have a full teaching role as well as administrative and managerial duties, head teachers have their own bi-monthly

upazilla level cluster meetings. In their meetings, alongside considering the same content as the primary teachers, they also reflect on their management responsibilities and how to create supportive and reflective learning communities within their schools. In participating secondary schools, head teachers come together quarterly to discuss and reflect on the building of supportive structures within their schools.

All the teachers felt that EIA had brought positive changes in their classroom teaching and that the students were very aware of these changes and were now much more engaged in the classes than they had been prior to EIA. A number of the teachers were specific in saying that prior to EIA their teaching was considerably more teacher-centred (although they did not use this term) but their lessons are now far more activity based with the students being far more involved. In Rajshahi Boys School, another EIA teacher, Arif, stressed that he *'never'* taught in the way he does now before EIA and his teaching partner Zahir demonstrated how his students were far more active now. He described how in the past the students rarely talked or even raised their hands: *'Before I used to lecture the students and they were afraid of me; now they love the classes and speak actively.'* Zahir implied that EIA had made his work easier in that he no longer has to *'talk so much'*. He now elicits the answers and ideas from his students.

Evidence for the teachers' claims of active classrooms was certainly present in all observed classes, to a greater or lesser degree. Even taking into consideration that the observer's presence may have encouraged students and teachers to be particularly active, it was clear that such activity, along with many of the techniques embedded in EIA (such as pair and group work) were established as routines and students now expected and clearly enjoyed using English productively in the classes. When an observer spoke to one class after the lesson, students were vociferous in saying how much they now loved their English classes. A number of the students said they particularly liked the use of audio in the class – and this was stressed too by several of the teachers.

It is also notable that non-EIA teachers had also noticed the positive changes in EIA classes for learners. One of these, for example, in the school in Rajshahi, said: *'In the past the teacher would just go and lecture. Now the students get more help from him.'* Particularly noticeable to non-EIA teachers was the use of audio in classes and the student involvement as a result. Mohamed and Zahir felt that the productive use of the speaker (audio) and mobile phone was the key difference between EIA and programmes that had preceded it. Zahir was specific in saying the *'audio is the most helpful form of support.'* Mohamed stressed how the audio had increased the engagement of the students: *'When they listen to the audio they are very much attentive, but when they listen from my mouth they are not.'* Mohamed also pointed out that the variation in models of pronunciation was very useful.

All the teachers spoke positively of the usefulness of the video, and some of them specifically demonstrated activities that they had found and copied (or adapted) directly from the video clips. As an example, Arif was specific in saying that some activities in his observed lesson came from the video in module four. Ayesha, who said she watched the teacher development videos every day (and liked the video

best of all the EIA materials), also used a lot of activities demonstrated on the videos, including correction techniques, classroom language, gesture and groupwork. On being asked whether EIA would have been more difficult without the TD videos, she was very clear that the video helped the teachers to internalise the techniques demonstrated: *'I use video to overcome my problems. This is very useful for me.'*

In the early videos, the narrator, Shanta, speaks in Bangla, which helps teachers understand the concepts introduced in the classroom practice. Later, as the teachers get more familiar with the materials, she switches to English. When she talks about Shanta, like many of the teachers in the project, Ayesha said that she feels that she 'knows' her, that she is talking directly to her through the mobile phone.

These four teachers know each other, as every six to eight weeks they travel across their upazilla to meet with other teachers on the EIA project at the cluster meeting to share their classroom experiences and reflect on the previous six weeks as they have worked through a module. All four teachers expressed strong support for this face-to-face element; on one occasion when the observers asked where the ideas for specific classroom techniques came from, Mohamed replied that they came from EIA, and in particular *'from the last five cluster meetings'*. On being asked where he had got the idea of playing the audio several times, Arif replied simply: *'cluster meeting.'*

Perhaps the overwhelmingly positive claims from teachers that they liked all the materials was not entirely surprising, but what is particularly significant is that in many cases the teachers were able to demonstrate, with a considerable degree of proficiency a variety of techniques and approaches shown in the videos and practised in the cluster meetings.

Future directions: adapting the model

Having concentrated attention during the 2011–14 scaling-up phase on developing and delivering the basic model of low-cost CPD video mediated with peer support, the project moves at the end of 2014 to its final three-year phase of institutionalisation and sustainability. This will involve a wider range of institutions and possibilities for making the basic CPD content and activities accessible to many thousands of teachers. While exploring possibilities for this phase, it is already starting to appear that there is considerable scope and flexibility in the basic EIA digital material design for a range of customised uses. In terms of hardware provision, it is envisaged that teachers will access the materials on their own mobiles, and the project will provide only the materials on the SD card. A first sub-district started to pilot this own-mobile model in February 2014. All but three per cent of the teachers in this group had mobiles that supported the SD card; a strategy will need to be found for these teachers whose phones are unsupported. There will also be a need to monitor whether, and for how long, the teachers are willing to give up some of the capacity that they may wish to use for personal purposes.

Regarding flexible use of the digital materials themselves, for the government's new Diploma in Education initial teacher preparation programme (DPED), the EIA classroom videos have now been incorporated into session materials within a 'traditional' face-to-face training room setting. Since the primary teacher training institutes (PTIs) are equipped with the basic technology to show the classroom videos, in this case they are presented in a version without the video guide. In the PTIs, the mediation and promotion of reflection come from experienced trainers who are able to exploit the content within the video using spontaneous and reflective interactions.

Under the government's new comprehensive Teacher Education Development plan (TED), which is currently being rolled out, new primary teachers will go through a supported in-school induction programme and, at a later stage in their career, take part in a refresher programme, 'Subject-based training', which, for the period 2014–15 alone, is set to cover 60,000 teachers. Ongoing discussions between the government and English in Action are likely to lead to EIA classroom video materials being incorporated here as well, with EIA intending to tailor new versions of the Teacher Facilitator training videos to suit the context of the large group of locally based teachers engaged on this programme. Although the relevant government bodies do not currently have capacity to develop their own video materials, this is another area on the agenda for further mutual co-operation; thus English in Action is currently looking for opportunities to assist with capacity building that would allow for sustainable ongoing development of video, or other digital materials, which could keep up with changes in the context.

At the other end of the scale, the project team is currently working on adapting the digital materials to be used without any additional supporting materials. In the final phase of the project, when 64,000 additional teachers are to be reached, resources will understandably be limited and spread rather thinly. This means that the print materials which currently support the teachers' digital resources on the mobile are to be reduced to a much slimmer booklet, even possibly eliminated altogether. In this case, the video guide's role is likely to be enhanced to substitute for the text-based mediation contained in the printed guides. It will be crucial to hit the right balance between providing sufficient extra digital input to scaffold the videos as much as is needed without overloading the teachers with excessive amounts of unsupported conceptual material.

Other government CPD provision in the country is also beginning to show signs of moving closer towards in-school approaches. Under the Teacher Education Development plan, for instance, there is likely to be provision for regular in-school professional development meetings with the aim of nurturing learning communities; the potential for low-cost, EIA-type materials to play a role here is also currently being explored. Assuming it does prove possible to make the successful transfer from print to additional digital narrator content, then the potential for wider dissemination and use in diverse contexts would be enormous. As the ubiquity and capacity of even the cheapest and most readily available mobiles is only likely to increase (or be replaced by an even simpler piece of technology), the scope for enhanced utilisation becomes very wide indeed.

Learning points

When reflecting on the project's progress since 2008, a number of critical factors come to mind, which may be useful to those aiming to replicate the approach elsewhere. Firstly, teachers often required support to help them get over some basic 'bottlenecks' with the technology. Though all were familiar with the mobile as a tool for communication, few of them had experienced it as a tool for individual learning. Some initial intensive guided practice in navigation around the filing system of the video folders, supported by trainers and peers, proved essential. However, in almost all cases, this process was relatively quick and the teachers had soon acquired sufficient skills to fall into a routine of accessing and viewing the materials.

Teachers also needed some initial guidance and direction on the 'etiquette' of using the mobile for professional development; for example, it took some time and direction for all of them to routinise the use of headphones to avoid disruption in the peer support group cluster meetings. Some also needed reminding of the implications on the integrity of the professional development data if they wanted to use the 'project mobile' for personal purposes such as taking photographs.

At a pedagogical level, it was found that teachers do not always see in the videos what we want them to see. The mediation through the video guide and reflection with peers in the cluster meetings is therefore essential in taking many of the teachers through initial 'bottlenecks' caused by what amount to distractions, possibly alienation, while viewing other teachers in the videos. Some clips in the early modules were frequently met with far more comments about features such as the video teachers' pronunciation, standing position and board work which were actually peripheral to the main techniques that were the intended focus. Though these comments were frequently valid and the teachers should certainly not be discouraged from personalised observation, some of them also needed initial guidance in focusing on the intended target methodological points and techniques.

Close and clear linkage with the school curriculum and the textbooks has been essential in selecting the lesson materials to be filmed; it has certainly appeared to be a major attraction in convincing teachers that the pedagogy being demonstrated is viable in their own situations. However, the risk has to be faced that the curriculum will be changed; thus, as we found in the second year of the scaling-up phase, there needs to be flexibility both at technical and support levels. Teachers at the early stages of the programme would often be quick to dismiss a video clip as irrelevant to their context if it was explicitly labelled as, for example, 'Class 3, Lesson 3,' if that was no longer valid in the new textbook edition. In such cases we found that there is an important role for the print guide material and peer group facilitators in stressing the generic nature and easy transferability of the techniques.

Finally, adequate orientation and support for the various stakeholder groups who support the teachers in following the programme has also emerged as something vital that could not be left to chance. Not only the peer group facilitators and head teachers, but also local- and national-level administrators have played a critical role in terms of advocating for the approach and providing teachers with space and encouragement, both to work through the CPD materials and equally to apply and

experiment with new techniques in their classrooms. For this reason, the priority given to providing all of these stakeholders with thorough exposure to key elements in the project has increased with each year. Peer group facilitators and primary head teachers of 'EIA schools', who teach English in schools themselves, are as fully equipped and immersed in the videos, classroom try-outs and cluster meetings as the 'regular' teachers and, thus, have shared understanding of the programme. The secondary head teachers and local authority administrators who often observe lessons are given a strong flavour of the teachers' experience on the project and of the pedagogical approaches being promoted. Providing such input at a very early stage in the schools' involvement, as well as in a number of ongoing events during the year, appears to have led to far more positive and facilitative attitudes from these vital players in the change process.

Conclusion

Of course, ultimately, it is important to keep in mind, and to ensure an understanding among all parties involved, that the aim of this project is not to promote technology for technology's sake. The focus is about making the highest quality, most engaging and most appropriate continuing professional development support accessible to those who need it. This kind of approach, we hope, is able to open up opportunities and provide motivation to people for whom traditional opportunities might, firstly, be hard to access for a whole range of logistical reasons and, secondly, have limited possibility of making lasting impact.

As we have discussed in this chapter, English in Action has been attempting to find a successful alternative to previous CPD approaches by addressing some of the major constraints and limitations that have generally seemed to have a dragging effect in Bangladesh. Aiming to locate the centre of gravity for professional development in the schools instead of a training room can mean a focus on developing actual classroom practice and learning at the same time. Focusing on developing support networks (for example, by attending to simple details like ensuring two participants from the same school take part) seems to help encourage teachers to continue both with their self-access activities and to persevere with new practices in the classroom. Taking teachers directly into other teachers' classrooms through the authentic video gives meaningful exposure to models of practice. These are intended to form the focal point for reflection and discussion where teachers build their own understanding of principles, guided by the friendly narrator presence on the video rather than an authoritarian trainer figure who controls the whole process. Last, but crucially, the simple, familiar and low-cost technology makes CPD opportunities readily available to potentially very large numbers of teachers to use as a highly flexible resource according to their own circumstances. Rather than risking disruption to regular school activities, this model of CPD can be readily incorporated into everyday activity to maximise impact.

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**Continuing professional
development policy
'Think Tank': an innovative
experiment in India**

Continuing professional development policy ‘Think Tank’: an innovative experiment in India

Amol Padwad and Krishna Dixit

Introduction

This chapter discusses how an initiative in India called Continuing Professional Development Policy Think Tank (henceforth the Think Tank) promoted in-depth thinking and deliberations on issues and challenges in the continuing professional development (CPD) of English teachers at various levels of the education system, from policy-makers to practitioners. Though initiated and financially supported by an external agency, the British Council, this was an autonomous group consisting mostly of Indian professionals, whose primary focus was to expand and deepen understanding of CPD in the Indian context. The Think Tank represents an important milestone in CPD thinking and practice in particular, and teacher education in general in India. It has had a number of significant impacts, including:

- Developing crucial theoretical insights into CPD
- Helping to compile several examples of innovative individual, institutional and policy-related CPD practices
- Triggering many dissemination, awareness-raising and research activities
- Initiating a gradual shift in perception of CPD from a peripheral issue to a central concern in teacher education thinking in India.

This chapter explores these key contributions of the Think Tank in furthering CPD in India and some of the key insights emerging from it. It also argues that the Think Tank demonstrates a new model of organised collective thinking, different in nature and functioning from typical think tanks.

Since both authors were members of the Think Tank, the discussion in this chapter is informed by our first-hand experience as well as personal observations and understanding. The chapter consists of three parts. In the first part we describe briefly the current CPD scenario in India so as to locate the Think Tank in its educational context. In the second we describe the background of the Think Tank in terms of its composition, working context, activities and outcomes. In the third part we discuss key learning points from the Think Tank, what makes it a unique experiment, and the significance of its contributions. We conclude with a discussion of some implications arising from this initiative. We believe that this chapter offers

at least two valuable lessons: one, an instance of organised 'insider-oriented' thinking about CPD, which may serve as a model to be adapted elsewhere; and two, important theoretical and practical insights, which – though emerging out of the Indian context – may be relevant for many other contexts.

Part 1: The Indian CPD scenario and the Think Tank

The Indian education scene

With a population of more than one billion, India is the second most populated country in the world, after China. It is a culturally and ethnically complex country with 30 major languages, about 400 minor languages and dialects, hundreds of ethnic and tribal groups, an immense diversity of culture, history and religions, and an incredible range of customs and traditions. The Indian education system is similarly vast and complex. According to the eighth All India School Education Survey (NCERT, n.d.), there are over 1.3 million schools in India with a gross national enrolment of 227 million students taught by about 7.2 million teachers. The latest higher education survey reports over 640 universities and 38,000 higher education institutes with a combined teaching staff of about 1.3 million catering for over 28.5 million students (MHRD, 2013). This massive system is further complicated by education being a 'concurrent' subject of governance, i.e. an area managed by both central and state governments. For the primary and secondary education sectors, three national and over 20 state boards of education operate autonomously, with thousands of schools affiliated to each of them. In higher education, there are similarly central, state, deemed and private universities, as well as thousands of affiliated, autonomous, state-run, state-funded, unaided and private colleges. There are separate national apex bodies responsible for different wings of education, such as education planning, teacher training, curriculum and textbooks, and education policies, while many states also have their own similar agencies with state-wide jurisdictions. There are similar separate regulatory bodies in higher education for different disciplines such as humanities and social sciences, engineering and technology, health sciences, teacher education and veterinary sciences. These agencies work autonomously and often in isolation from each other.

There are national norms and standards of entry qualifications, recruitment, service conditions and performance assessment, applicable to all institutions within the purview of the national regulatory bodies. Each state has its own similar norms and standards, broadly following the national ones, with some adaptations. Generally speaking, in order to be a primary or secondary school teacher, one needs to have a bachelor's degree and a pre-service training (two year diploma for primary teachers and one year diploma for secondary teachers). There is neither provision nor requirement for a degree or diploma in education for tertiary-level teachers, who only need to pass a national/state eligibility test. The norms are different for aided and unaided institutions, while unaided institutions often are not that unusual to find inadequately qualified teachers in national institutions.

CPD in India

Within this complex educational scenario in India, the teaching profession is characterised by inadequate and ineffective pre-service education, poor teacher preparation and lack of induction support (MHRD, 2009; NCERT, 2005; NCERT, 2006; Padwad, 2008; Padwad and Dixit, 2010; Rajput and Walia, 2001). In such circumstances CPD assumes added significance, because it also has to compensate for teacher professional learning missed during pre-service education and at induction. CPD is ideally viewed as an ongoing process of learning, both formal and informal, after teachers enter the profession, and involves both their personal initiatives and externally planned and mandated activities. Unlike in the past, recent teacher education policies seem to take this broad view of CPD, at least in principle. The *National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education* (NCFTE) (NCTE, 2010: 63) acknowledges that CPD is essential to accomplish the overarching goals of education such as contributing to economic prosperity, social equity and technological advancement. The NCFTE asserts *inter alia* that CPD should enable teachers to explore, reflect on and develop their practice, deepen their knowledge of the academic discipline, research and reflect on learners and their education, prepare for other professional roles, break out of intellectual isolation and share experiences and insights with others in the field (*ibid*: 64–65).

However, the subsequent provisions and plans following this preamble reflect a narrow view of CPD, equating it to various kinds of in-service training. They talk of various bureaucratic agencies, mechanisms and regulations to be put in place *for the state to provide CPD*. While recognising conferences and meetings as important contributors to CPD, the NCFTE places many restrictions on teachers wanting to attend them, besides making them subject to the approval of education authorities (*ibid*: 69). It goes on to identify universities, teacher education colleges and state centres for teacher training such as DIETs (District Institutes of Education and Training) as the recognised sites for CPD, thereby leaving other sites such as schools and teachers' homes or voluntary groups out of the picture (*ibid*: 71–72). In such a view, informal and voluntary contributions to teacher learning are rarely recognised, teachers' role, responsibility and agency in their own CPD is disregarded, and the state is seen as the sole provider of CPD. Consequently, only officially sanctioned CPD events receive recognition and support, though they may not be relevant to teachers, while other kinds of CPD activities emerging out of teachers' own initiatives, needs and interests are neither recognised nor supported. The official events are usually large scale and do not cater for diverse individual needs and contexts.

This narrow view of CPD also misses a crucial point – the need for teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development and the associated role of teachers' agency and voluntarism within this. Even state-led large-scale CPD programmes are unlikely to have any impact unless teachers find something personally meaningful and relevant in them. The success of large-scale in-service training programmes depends on how far they allow teachers to translate common uniform prescriptions into personally relevant ideas and action plans.

The official policy (and practice) underlines state control over teacher education. The planning, decision making and implementation of CPD activities are usually

the prerogative of 'high-powered' committees consisting of a few senior academic experts and educational bureaucrats, who usually stick to the policy guidelines already in place. The Think Tank broke this mould by including teachers, teacher educators, administrators, NGO activists and freelancers along with academic experts and bureaucrats in a collective process of thinking and reflecting. It also broke the mould by starting without set agendas and fixed guidelines, and allowing the process to evolve in a naturally relevant way.

A crisis in CPD?

The National Council on Teacher Education (NCTE) is the apex agency which regulates and monitors teacher education policy and programmes and also provides broad guidelines for routine CPD activities such as INSET programmes. The actual design and implementation of these INSET programmes is entrusted to national and state teacher training agencies, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), with some autonomy given to adapt them to their respective requirements. But these routine INSET sessions, forming part of teachers' career advancement requirements, are not the only training teachers receive. Both at the national and the state level there are other agencies, including the Central Board of Education, state boards of education, state education departments, national and state education projects, local education authorities, education wings of local governing bodies, universities, institutions of teacher education and many others, all of which are engaged in numerous kinds of teacher training programmes for a variety of purposes. The scene is further complicated by the teacher training activities carried out by NGOs, international agencies, private providers, publishers, teacher associations and schools. There is little co-ordination and sharing among all these agencies, which usually work independently of each other and show ignorance of, or even disregard or indifference towards, each other's teacher development activities. Teachers are often exposed to dissimilar and at times conflicting positions in these widely varying programmes. For those few teachers who seek professional development through self-directed activities, their personal activities are an additional complication.

Most of the state-initiated in-service programmes are based on a 'technical rationality' framework (Schön, 1983) or 'one-stop linear approach' (Hoban, 2001) to teacher development. The implicit belief underlying these approaches is the belief in the presence of objective knowledge and its transferability through training programmes, as pointed out some time ago by Britzman (1986: 442).

[The] dominant model of teacher education is organised on the implicit theory of immediate integration: the university provides theories, methods and skills; schools provide classrooms, curriculum and students; and the teachers provide the individual effort; all of which combine to produce the finished product of professional teacher.

Sandholtz (2002: 815) asserts that this model of teacher education is deeply institutionalised in patterns of organisation, management and resource allocation. In other words, the whole approach to teacher development takes a deficit view, which, as Bolitho (1996: 2) explains, relates to 'a weakness which has been identified in teacher performance by someone in authority: a school principal, inspectors,

a ministry or other employers'. An offshoot of this approach is the prevalence of a culture in which teachers depend on an external expert for solutions to their problems. The constant provision of solutions by experts through training events de-skills and de-motivates teachers to a great extent. While teachers' experience is rarely taken into account in the design and delivery of such programmes, evaluation and follow-up are also considered unnecessary as the training is thought to be complete in itself.

Mezirow (1991: 5) stresses that: '[a] crucial dimension of adult learning involves the process of justifying or validating communicated ideas and the presuppositions of prior learning'. But the usual INSET programmes normally demand unconditional acceptance of ideas delivered by experts. The spirit of teacher learning 'by doing, reading and reflecting (just as students do); by collaborating with other teachers; by looking at students and their work; and by sharing what they see,' (Darling-Hammond and MacLaughlin, 1995: 2) is mostly missing from them. As a result, two key goals of training – promoting qualitative changes in classroom practice and teachers' professional development – are rarely attained in spite of frequent training programmes. In these circumstances, one important casualty is teachers' motivation for learning and development, manifested in the defensive stance teachers take by claiming a complete helplessness in the face of challenges such as lack of resources, the rural background of learners or extra workload.

It is against this backdrop of CPD in India that we need to view and understand the genesis, role and contribution of the Think Tank experiment.

Part 2: The Think Tank

Genesis of the Think Tank

The CPD Policy Think Tank emerged out of the annual international *English for Progress Policy Dialogue* series (2007–09) hosted by the British Council, bringing together key decision makers from academia, government, industry and NGOs to discuss and debate the role of English in the socio-economic future of the region. The third and last event in the series at Delhi in 2009 made a number of recommendations related to four key areas in English language education in India – CPD, in-service teacher education, pre-service teacher education and curricular reform. It was envisaged at that time that the *Policy Dialogue* series would be followed by a *Policy Think Tank* series for each of these focus areas, the first of which was CPD. Thus, the CPD Policy Think Tank was launched at its first meeting in November 2010 in Delhi and the group worked until November 2012. In all, the Think Tank spent two years working on a range of practical and theoretical issues in CPD and exploring examples of CPD practices.

It will be useful at this point to look at the thinking that led to the setting up of the CPD Think Tank. A key part of the *Third Policy Dialogue* was the pre-publication review of David Graddol's book *English Next: India* (2010) and a special panel discussion session on the important issues it raised. There was general agreement on the analysis and arguments Graddol presented in the book about the status and immediate future of English in India and about the conclusion that English language education (ELE) was a key factor in overall development in the country. In this, and many other

sessions deliberating on ELE in India, the issue of ensuring quality of teaching and teachers strongly emerged as an important concern and challenge. Since CPD was recognised both as a crucial element in addressing this concern, and also as a neglected area in need of immediate attention, it was listed as a high-priority area for further work in the recommendations of the *Third Policy Dialogue*.

Composition of the Think Tank

The Think Tank consisted of 28 members who were identified in three ways. Some members were those who had signed up or were nominated at the *Third Policy Dialogue* (2009) where the idea of the Policy Think Tank was first mooted. Some members were nominated by leading organisations associated with teacher education and having a key stake in CPD, in response to an approach by the British Council. Finally, some academics known to have contributed to the field of CPD were nominated by the British Council project manager and the external consultant on the basis of their personal experience and knowledge.

The constitution of the group was largely representative of the overall teacher education sector in India. It included practising teachers from state and private sectors, administrators of education institutions, faculty from national ELT institutions, representatives from state and national teacher education councils, members of NGOs, teacher association representatives, state education officers, academics from universities, an Indian and a UK consultant, and representatives of the British Council. The actual breakdown of the Think Tank membership is listed below (figures in brackets show the number of members):

- Representatives of the national council and some state councils for educational research and training (4)
- The chairperson of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), the apex body regulating teacher education in India (1)
- Senior officials from state education ministries and the education departments of local government bodies such as municipal corporations (4)
- Teacher educators (2)
- Practising teachers (3)
- Senior academics-cum-administrators from universities/colleges (3)
- A representative of English language teachers' associations (1)
- Freelance and private sector trainers (2)
- Representatives of NGOs (2)
- British Council ELT project managers and training consultants (4)
- An Indian and an external (UK) consultant (2)

It can be safely said that the group had the representation of almost all important stakeholders and cross-sections of English language teacher education. There was also a great diversity of members in terms of age (30 to 60 years), work experience (nine to 35 years), work contexts (for example, rural colleges, international universities, state/national councils, NGOs and education ministries) and cultural backgrounds (nine Indian states and ten languages). The common denominator was an interest

in CPD and some experience of having worked on formal or informal initiatives in CPD. The presence of the UK consultant and some non-Indian British Council representatives added a valuable 'outsider' perspective to the work and facilitated the identification of commonalities and generalisations. In the course of the work the diversity of members proved to be a significant asset for the Think Tank, not only because it brought in so many different perspectives and perceptions, but also because it helped everyone involved to better understand the complexity of the field and to make the work as relevant as possible to different contexts within India.

Objectives, agenda and brief overview of activities

At the very outset a concept note about the Think Tank, prepared by the British Council, was sent to the members. The concept note listed the following broad objectives of the Think Tank:

- Stimulating further debate and discussion around the recommendations arising from the Third Policy Dialogue and *English Next India* (Graddol, 2010) and other key documentation and case studies
- Facilitating the production of a set of action plans, which could be reviewed and implemented by major stakeholders
- Facilitating knowledge sharing between policy makers and practitioners of best practice
- Supporting the initiation of ongoing networking and collaboration among policy makers and practitioners.

(British Council, 2010: 1)

These objectives were identified on the basis of the following specific recommendations made by the speakers and delegates at the Third Policy Dialogue in 2009:

- There should be a policy or accreditation framework for continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers and teacher educators. This will facilitate a shared understanding of CPD.
- CPD initiatives need to be given more institutional support, funding and recognition.
- There is a need to improve the interaction among representatives of teacher associations, NGOs and corporate organisations so as to make CPD initiatives relevant to underlying needs.
- It might be useful to build CPD awareness into pre-service teacher education as well as in-service teacher education programmes.
- CPD is still reduced to in-service teacher training and education. It needs to be recognised and understood in its own right.
- It is necessary to evolve a commonly agreed operational definition and action framework for CPD, which will facilitate national policy-making, planning, implementation, accreditation and monitoring.
- No policy document, including NCFTE (National Curricular Framework for Teacher Education), is clear about CPD. What one usually finds is that the terms 'CPD' and 'in-service teacher education/ training' are used as if synonymous.

(British Council, 2010: 2)

Although the objectives were stated quite specifically, there was no detailed work plan to begin with. In fact, the entire work of the Think Tank was characterised by the absence of a pre-decided, closely specified agenda, and by an open, flexible, 'evolve-as-we-go' approach. This turned out to be another helpful factor in the long run, because it enabled the group to determine and focus on those priorities that emerged in the course of its collective thinking, free from any external imposition. The group met twice a year for two years (2011 and 2012). At the launch meeting in November 2010 the members drew up initial plans, shared their ideas and experiences in CPD and tried to identify some immediate and long-term priorities, as well as areas of concern.

One immediate priority was the need to arrive at a common, clear and contextually relevant understanding of the notion of CPD as the basis for the subsequent work, since a wide variety of CPD views were noticed among the members. It was also realised that the work of exploring conceptual, policy and theoretical issues in CPD should be complemented by field work in terms of studying innovative CPD experiments and ideas already in place. Many members came with first-hand experience of being directly involved in a range of experiments and initiatives, varying from large-scale systemic interventions to small-scale individual or group initiatives. Many others knew of interesting examples of CPD practice or potential CPD issues worth investigating. The members therefore felt that it could be useful and valuable if they studied these practices or issues more closely and systematically. Thus, the six months until the next meeting were mostly spent by the members on working towards a shared understanding of CPD and planning their personal field studies.

The second meeting in April 2011 discussed and adopted a CPD definition relevant to India (Padwad and Dixit, 2011: 10), reflecting a shared understanding of CPD that the members had arrived at. At this meeting, members also shared details of CPD practices and issues they had chosen to investigate, together with broad work plans of study. The members also worked in different focus groups to explore what institutions, NGOs and individuals could do to support CPD. The plan of a publication compiling case studies and examples of innovative CPD practices from different parts of India was also given a concrete shape at this meeting. Thus, the members went away from the second meeting having identified their personal choices of studies and made their individual plans of work.

Almost an entire year was spent on these studies exploring CPD in practice, with a meeting in between (October 2011) to take stock of the developments, to share the progress in the work and to make necessary course corrections. The October 2011 meeting also brought in an additional focus on awareness-raising activities, since the members felt that there wasn't enough awareness about CPD in education.

The following meeting in March 2012 marked the beginning of the last leg of the Think Tank work, which was devoted to finalising the publication of case studies, preparing and trying out material and activities for awareness raising, compiling the learning and insights from the Think Tank work, and preparing ideas and material

for dissemination. The Think Tank formally concluded its work with the national launch of the CPD Think Tank publication, followed by multi-city symposia on CPD in India, in November 2012.

The work seemed to proceed in roughly six-monthly cycles, set off by face-to-face meetings where the members discussed various theoretical and practical concerns, shared and assessed the work done so far, planned some more work and went away to carry out their individual plans before coming back again for another meeting and to start another cycle. The meetings, particularly the first two, centred on dialogue and discussion about the nature and role of CPD in teachers' lives. As we have indicated, the initial concerns included reaching a common understanding of CPD, exploring features of effective CPD and sharing experiences of CPD practices. The work of the Think Tank later took on a more specific and concrete turn with the drafting of a working definition of CPD relevant to the Indian education context, identification of best practices in CPD, compiling of CPD experiences and researching CPD policies, programmes and initiatives. The process culminated in the publication *Continuing Professional Development: Lessons from India* (Bolitho and Padwad, 2012), which included studies of innovative CPD practices and discussion of key CPD concerns in English language teacher education in India. The Think Tank members were also continuously engaged in CPD promotion and dissemination activities in their own areas.

Outcomes

There were several outcomes, both material and conceptual, of the Think Tank exercise. Two useful publications came out in the course of the two years' work. The first, *Continuing Professional Development: An Annotated Bibliography* (Padwad and Dixit, 2011), is a valuable document of annotated entries of books, articles and other resources on CPD, addressing a longstanding need in the country for such a resource. The second, *Continuing Professional Development: Lessons from India* (Bolitho and Padwad, 2012), is a similarly pioneering document, which compiles practical studies and theoretical discussion on CPD with specific reference to India. In addition, a number of activities and initiatives were launched for awareness raising about CPD and for networking and dissemination among the ELT community in India. Some interesting and stimulating posters promoting CPD have been produced. Samples of these posters were sent to institutions and also displayed at the International Teacher Educators Conference in Hyderabad in March 2012. Following very positive and encouraging feedback from the viewers, sets of these posters have now been made publicly available on the All India Network of English Teachers (AINET) website (www.theainet.net). A competition for teachers, 'What is your CPD story?', was also conducted nationwide, the winning stories from which have been included in the CPD case studies publication (Bolitho and Padwad, 2012). In order to continue the sharing and networking among the Think Tank members, and also to involve the wider community in CPD work, an online CPD newsletter has been launched. Different members of the Think Tank take turns in preparing and editing the newsletter, which is produced and circulated online by the British Council (see www.britishcouncil.in/sites/britishcouncil.in2/files/cpd_newsletter_jan_-_mar_2013.pdf for a sample issue).

The two years' collaboration and sharing has led to the emergence of a community of CPD enthusiasts, starting with the members of the Think Tank but now steadily expanding with more teachers, teacher educators and researchers joining in. CPD activities have continued beyond the Think Tank too. Several members of the Think Tank, with new colleagues, have launched a collaborative and voluntary project of compiling a multilingual glossary of CPD for the Indian audience. Some members have organised seminars and conferences in their institutions with CPD as a major theme. Those associated with planning and delivering teacher training have started including separate sessions devoted to CPD in training programmes.

In terms of conceptual, theory-related outcomes, the Think Tank managed to develop a working definition of CPD, after looking at definitions from other countries and other professions, and taking into account issues specific to India. It also succeeded in identifying, and to some extent describing, a number of key issues basic to CPD in India, such as:

- The significance of a shared understanding of CPD
- The importance of a broad and holistic CPD view
- The need for systemic support for CPD
- The role of teacher voluntarism in CPD
- The importance of personalisation of CPD by teachers
- The significance of institution-based CPD integrated with teachers' regular work life

The Think Tank work represented the first ever attempt at a deeper and better understanding and formulation of many of these issues in India.

Part 3: Contribution and significance of the Think Tank

Learning from the Think Tank

Teachers' ongoing professional development is not a matter of concern for teachers alone. Various stakeholders – school heads, education authorities, state, society and parents – have interests in teachers' CPD for their own reasons, depending on their place in the education system. Consequently, each of these stakeholders may have differing priorities for and expectations of CPD. Teachers may have their personal developmental priorities, usually determined by their needs, interests and aspirations. Institutions may have different expectations from teachers' professional development, related to their concern with strengthening institutional performance, culture and image. Apart from these, the teaching profession also has interests in teachers' professional development, which are reflected in education policies, politics and administration. Figure 1 represents stakeholder priorities in a general way.

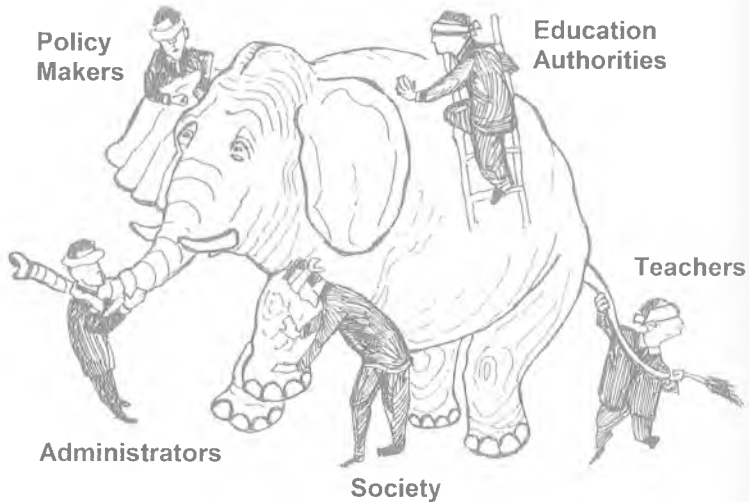
Figure1: Priorities in teachers' professional development



(Adapted from SACE, 2008: 5)

Though the figure shows a balance between the different priorities, in reality professional priorities (including administrative, social and political) and institutional priorities are seen to greatly outweigh teacher priorities. Such different priorities both stem from and lead to different understandings and interpretations of the very notion of CPD. This was the immediate challenge that the Think Tank faced when it commenced its work. Coming from different backgrounds, agencies and organisations, the members showed differing views of the notion of CPD. For example, the representatives of national and state teacher education bodies perceived CPD in terms of traditional INSET, particularly various kinds of training necessitated by curricular reforms, textbook changes, methodological shifts, and so on. In their view, equipping teachers to effectively implement the various programmes and policies of the state was the main objective of CPD. The practising teachers and representatives of teacher associations prioritised teachers' personal interests and professional needs such as enhancing competence in English, becoming trainers, attending conferences and publishing papers. The administrators looked at CPD in terms of enhancing teachers' teaching skills and classroom management, and ensuring the good performance of students in examinations. In the course of subsequent discussions it soon became clear that, while none of these perspectives could be downplayed as unjustified or unimportant, each represented only one aspect of CPD. The Think Tank members summed up this insight in terms of the 'elephant and blind men' metaphor, as in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Multiple views of CPD



It was therefore considered essential to arrive at a broad and inclusive understanding of the notion of CPD as an important prerequisite for the subsequent work. The unique contribution of the Think Tank was to bring all these differing, and at times, conflicting, perspectives together face to face, which facilitated thrashing out of differences, identifying commonalities and arriving at a shared understanding. The outcome of this churning was the following working definition of CPD, which the Think Tank adopted as the basis for further thinking and action:

CPD is a planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities, and to improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organisations and their pupils. (Padwad and Dixit, 2011: 10)

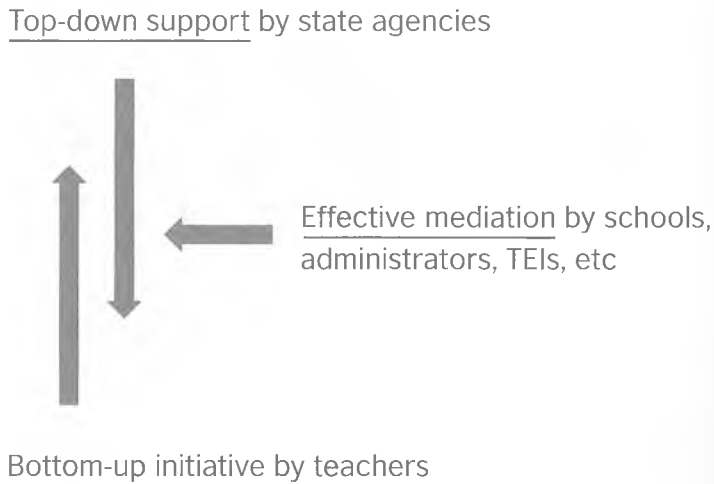
The process of evolving a shared understanding of CPD also led to frequent discussions about key challenges in ensuring effective CPD. There was a general agreement that the CPD scenario in India was not a very happy one, and that there were no effective CPD mechanisms in place. Some of the reasons for this were easy to identify, such as the neglect of CPD in teacher education policies and programmes, the lack of a well-formed and comprehensive CPD policy and the lack of general awareness about CPD. But others only emerged in the course of animated discussions and debates. It was yet again the diversity of views and approaches within the group which helped in understanding the complexity of the challenges. The collective thinking within the group helped in evolving a clearer understanding of challenges, and also a more concrete and specific formulation of issues, even if it wasn't always possible to identify solutions.

An interesting and enlightening example of this process was the discussion around the question of whose responsibility teachers' CPD was. This question is not much explored in research and policy documents on CPD in India, perhaps because it is generally assumed that the education authorities (in other words, the state) are responsible for teachers' CPD. A small-scale study carried out by two Think Tank members also found such an assumption clearly prevalent among the teachers and the authorities they interviewed (Padwad and Dixit, 2012). Even within the Think Tank the initial view of many members was that CPD was obviously the state's responsibility. However, as the cycles of discussions continued and as the members started bringing in findings from their individual studies and initiatives, it became clear that the issue was much more complex. Many studies by the members reported in the Think Tank publication (Bolitho and Padwad, 2012) indicated that teachers' taking responsibility for their CPD was the key factor in the success of the CPD activities in question. For example, Maya Pandit-Narkar's study (2012) pointed out how the member teachers' initiative helped them exploit the District English Centre set up in their town under an education ministry scheme for launching CPD activities. As Rama Mathew found out in her study (2012), the success and value of her experiment in promoting CPD through reflective practice were premised on the participating teachers' voluntarism and willingness to take responsibility for their development: '[a]lthough there [was] no acknowledgement/benefit of any sort in the school for teachers to take on CPD-related work.' (Mathew, 2012: 69) The account of the 30-year-long developmental journey of a voluntary teacher development group (Shivakumar, 2012) clearly established that the member teachers taking responsibility for their own CPD was the crucial and indispensable element in launching and sustaining the group. On a more theoretical level it was remembered that 'development' was not something that could be done by others to an individual; one developed oneself. In the final analysis, none but teachers could be responsible for their own CPD.

At the same time some other studies reported in Bolitho and Padwad (2012) showed that support in the form of policy provisions, resources, incentives, freedom and opportunities was crucial for CPD, and that this would basically be the state responsibility. In a study exploring various stakeholders' views about CPD (Padwad and Dixit, 2012), expectations of state support were explicitly indicated by the participants, who included not only teachers but also administrators, managements and state officials. Another study into the use of school libraries as a resource by teachers (Waris, 2012) indicated that good support of resources like libraries led to better involvement in CPD by teachers. Pandit-Narkar's (2012) study of the District English Centre at Nellore quoted above also showed that the support and opportunities brought in by a 'top-down' intervention of the federal education ministry significantly enhanced the impact and success of the teachers' CPD initiatives. These observations about the need of supportive policy provisions, resources, incentives and opportunities were further corroborated by the two 'guest' contributions from Montenegro (Popovic and Subotic, 2012) and Serbia (Glusac, 2012), countries with explicit legislation and elaborate official provision for teachers' CPD. While underlining the value and significance of policy support for CPD, these studies also highlighted how the importance of school based CPD was recognised and prioritised at the ministry level.

Eventually the Think Tank came round to the conclusion that CPD was a joint responsibility, and would succeed only through a combination of teacher responsibility (teachers' personal initiative and voluntarism) and state responsibility (support of policies and provisions for CPD), i.e. a combination of bottom-up initiative and top-down support. In this combination, schools, administrators, management and teacher education institutions (TEIs) played an important mediator role. Figure 3 shows a visual representation of this conceptualisation.

Figure 3: A model for effective CPD



The Think Tank thus led to the raising and analysing of a critical issue in CPD for the first time in India. It also helped in further clarifying the roles and responsibilities of teachers and other stakeholders in CPD.

The Think Tank also succeeded in identifying several practical issues, specific to the Indian context (though some may be relevant to other contexts too). These included:

- Teachers are likely to work long term for their CPD only when they find it personally meaningful and relevant to do so. What is meaningful and relevant may differ from person to person and also from time to time. It is therefore important to have scope and support for teachers to personalise their CPD. Some ways of doing so include:
 - allowing teachers to identify their personal CPD goals and helping them to work towards them
 - making provision of time, money and resources to support their preferred CPD activities
 - recognising their voluntary initiatives and contributions
 - ensuring freedom and autonomy for teachers to implement their plans.

- The Think Tank felt that in general teacher education policy and provision were weak in terms of both incentives and accountability for CPD. It is important to strengthen these two complementary aspects, because, working in tandem, they can significantly promote CPD.
- Building CPD-related activities into teachers' work routines seems to be a more fruitful way of ensuring CPD than the usual 'INSET' way of conducting CPD activities, which are isolated and disconnected from teachers' work. Institution-based CPD, allotting time for CPD in teachers' assigned workloads and promoting freedom and autonomy for CPD could be some ways in which CPD is integrated with the regular work of teachers.
- CPD can happen in a variety of ways and through multiple channels. It is therefore most productive if teachers have access to a range of avenues and options for their CPD.

Finally, there was also a lot of valuable learning from the concrete examples of good CPD practices compiled by the members as well as the innovative experiments and studies they carried out in the two years of the Think Tank. This was the practical side of the Think Tank's work. The two aspects of its work – collective work of discussion, clarification, theorising and planning during the six-monthly face-to-face meetings, and individual work of trying out or studying interesting CPD ideas – complemented each other well. The learning from the practical field work fed into discussions and theorising, deepening and expanding the CPD thinking in the group, while this enhanced understanding led back to further improvement and enrichment of the CPD experiments and research studies on which the Think Tank members had embarked. The culmination of the process was the publication of these case studies and research experiments (Bolitho and Padwad, 2012), which brought in interesting data, observations, insights and practical ideas from different contexts. They included both top-down (state-led large-scale programmes) and bottom-up (small-scale individual or institution-led initiatives) examples of how CPD was triggered and promoted in different circumstances. This was the first-ever attempt to identify and compile a variety of experiments and experiences addressing different CPD issues. The Think Tank experience, together with the annotated bibliography of CPD (Padwad and Dixit, 2011), provide important groundwork for further research, theorising and practice in CPD in India.

What makes the Think Tank special?

As a precursor to understanding what makes it a unique experiment, it will be helpful to look at some of the Think Tank's underlying working principles:

- The starting point of the work was the participating members' experience and expertise. As the group consisted of representatives of all the major stakeholders, it was felt that the group's perceptions about CPD were collectively a highly valuable resource. Moreover, this approach was thought to be conducive to the overall nature of CPD.
- Discussion and dialogue, rather than expert inputs, was the main mode of planning and decision-making. It turned out to be conducive to developing an inclusive and broad India-specific conceptual framework for CPD, which would have been difficult to achieve with reliance on just expert inputs.

- Sharing of CPD practices was made an essential aspect of the Think Tank process, in order to give it a concrete and tangible dimension. This also enabled the members to understand and explore various nuances of the CPD phenomenon in India.
- Continuity between six-monthly meetings was ensured by starting with stocktaking of the previous work and ending with plans for future actions. Instead of becoming isolated, one-off events, the face-to-face meetings became important milestones in the two-year journey.

This kind of modus operandi is not usual for committees or groups working in teacher education in India, and in this respect alone the role of the Think Tank is quite special in teacher education initiatives in our context. Some of the other features which may justify calling it a unique experiment include the following:

- The composition of the Think Tank is somewhat unusual, since it deviates from the stereotypical idea of a 'Think Tank' as a body of vastly experienced highly positioned academicians with established expertise in the field. The Think Tank consisted of a cross-section of important stakeholders, including practising teachers with several years of work experience and field workers from NGO education projects.
- The work of the Think Tank was a combination of practical and theoretical inputs, concerns and orientations; it included theorising and conceptualising, as well as experimenting and practising.
- The Think Tank worked all along as an open and flexible group with constantly evolving agendas and work plans, negotiating its course through the constant flow of learning, insights, information and ideas emerging out of its work.
- An important feature of the Think Tank was the evolution of the members themselves in the course of the work. There were remarkable changes in perceptions, perspectives, concerns and understanding of most members over the period. For example, many members came to the Think Tank with different narrow views of CPD, related to the 'constituencies' they represented and symbolised by the elephant-and-blind-men metaphor (see Figure 2). In due course they came to acknowledge the validity of many other views of CPD and the restrictiveness of their own, and also began to approach CPD as a much broader and more complex notion. A member initially convinced of the role of a 'top-down' central government scheme as the only deciding factor in triggering CPD became aware of the crucial role also played by the 'bottom-up' initiatives of the teachers involved. Some officials from state education councils, who had earlier highly prioritised policy and curricular goals in CPD, came to realise and accept teachers' personal priorities as equally important.
- The Think Tank managed to collect a great deal of significant data on experiments and innovative practices in CPD in India.
- The Think Tank greatly contributed to revealing the diversity and complexity of the whole area of CPD. A number of issues were taken up and analysed in detail; many new issues or new aspects of issues were unpicked, and all this was accomplished against the backdrop of multiple perspectives and approaches of different stakeholders.

- One of the strengths of the Think Tank was its rootedness in local cultures. The members were mostly Indians, representing different states across the country. This helped in identifying India-specific issues, concerns and practices, in adapting ideas and insights from other contexts to Indian situations, and in ensuring that the overall work remained relevant to India. The 'insider-oriented' thinking in the Think Tank helped to relate its work closely to the socio-cultural contexts of India.
- The UK consultant consolidated the work by providing theoretical and conceptual tools, as well as by bringing in an outsider perspective. He and the British Council representatives helped to situate the Indian CPD scenario on a wider global canvas and draw abstractions and generalisations from it. They also helped in reducing the risk of narrow subjectivity while participating in the process of drawing interpretations and generalisations from the data and experiences collected by the Think Tank.
- The Think Tank was itself a living example of CPD, leading to the significant professional development of its members. It practised what it was trying to preach. The entire working of the Think Tank was, as Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995: 2) say, matched to a vision of learning as a constructed activity and a vision of professional development as an ongoing, inquiry-based and collaborative activity.

Implications of the Think Tank experiment

As we hope will be clear, the Think Tank experiment has many distinctive features, which make it a notable initiative in the Indian context. There are also several implications arising from this experiment that may be relevant for other contexts:

- The Think Tank experiment reiterates the obvious truth that collective thinking involving all possible stakeholders is an effective way of making better sense of the issues and challenges in CPD, and reaching a more realistic understanding of these, than the kind of understanding gained in less representative and less inclusive groups like the 'expert committees' which are so typical in the Indian scenario.
- It is important to ensure that initiatives such as the Think Tank are strongly rooted in local cultures, which helps in making them more relevant through situating all CPD-related work appropriately in the socio-cultural milieu.
- A combination of both theoretical and practical work may be a better way of operating for initiatives like the Think Tank than a concentration only on the theoretical. Cycles of alternating thinking and acting result in mutually reinforcing rounds of learning and understanding.
- Although a clear agenda and 'terms of reference' are necessary for a sense of direction in group initiatives like the Think Tank, ensuring these are not prescriptive, and building in flexibility, is important so that there is scope for priorities, concerns, interests and approaches to emerge in the course of the work.
- The Think Tank greatly benefitted from a long tenure of work and from the continuity between its meetings. Making provision for adequate time and ensuring continuity between different elements of the work are important for the success of initiatives like the Think Tank.

- Constant and open sharing of ideas and experiences was a hallmark of the Think Tank's work. This was greatly facilitated by two things – the use of various modes and channels for sustained communication (electronic and face-to-face), and the absence of hierarchy within the group. The views of a practising teacher from a small town were perceived and received with the same seriousness as those of the chairperson of a national council or an education ministry official. The quality of work, discussions and outcomes of a group enterprise like the Think Tank is crucially related to the kind of sharing and atmosphere it promotes.

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**Investigating
continuing professional
development for
teacher educators
in South Korea:
opportunities
and constraints**

Investigating continuing professional development for teacher educators in South Korea: opportunities and constraints

Kyungsuk Chang, Youngjoo Jeon and Heeseong Ahn

Introduction

This chapter seeks to uncover how the South Korean education system meets the increasing demand for continuing professional development (CPD) among English language teacher educators, focusing on the CPD experiences of education officials and university professors themselves. In South Korea (henceforth 'Korea'), university professors and education officials, as teacher educators, are at the top of the educational hierarchy. However, despite the consensus that teacher educators are important drivers of education policy changes, the considerable demands on them are often left out of the professional development debate. In Korea, for teacher educators even to recognise CPD as central to their own professional effectiveness is considered to be a significant innovation.

A review of research into international practices regarding CPD suggests there cannot be a 'one size fits all' policy for every case (Hayes and Chang, 2012). The review also shows that CPD takes many forms, but there appear to be key universal concepts for effective CPD. For example, there is considerable evidence to suggest that collegiality and collaboration in professional development are important, and research has found that the most popular forms of CPD were 'observation of colleagues' and 'sharing practice' (Boyle et al., 2005). The literature also suggests that reflective practice for professional development is important (Farrell, 2007, 2009). As Day et al. (2006) emphasise, it is necessary to provide teachers with sufficient time and opportunities to reflect on teaching and to share best practices with their colleagues. Regarding the effectiveness of CPD in changing practices, there is increasing concern for accountability with many educational policy-makers and administrators seeking to quantify the effectiveness of professional development. However, Hayes and Chang (2012) point out that evaluation practices tend to lack focus and not to be systematic, while many professional programmes lack a clearly defined evaluation process beyond the formulaic end-of-course. They go on to suggest that a more sophisticated conceptualisation of evaluation is clearly needed.

In the Korean education system, CPD for teacher educators may be characterised as government-led, top-down, product-oriented and evaluation-focused. University professors' CPD is closely related to government-mandated university quality control policies, and, similarly, the competency rating system applied to government officials has an influence on education officials' CPD. The chapter thus examines the experiences of these teacher educators as they pursue CPD and how they cope with the challenges they face both inside and outside the workplace. In so doing, we hope to give due consideration to the development of teacher educators as professionals within society, which rarely features in discussions of education in Korea. Based on the experiences recounted here, we offer suggestions as to ways in which teacher educators' CPD may be improved, and also how professional learning activities inside and outside the workplace may be strengthened. By considering the CPD of teacher educators in their socio-educational context, the chapter shows how CPD needs to be tailored to particular circumstances but it also draws out general principles for CPD for teacher educators, which may be useful for other contexts.

The context

University professors

A university professorship has long been regarded as one of the most popular – but highly competitive – occupations in the job market, offering both security and stability. It was widely accepted that once appointed as a university professor one could keep the position until retirement unless a personal decision was made to resign. There were no specific performance regulations for keeping the job, and professors were promoted according to seniority. They were considered to be experts because they possessed doctoral degrees, they had studied hard and were respected for their specialisations. Because of its security, stability and respectability, the job used to have the nickname 'steel rice bowl', which had a satirical meaning that the job would be kept safe in whatever situation. This is not true any more.

Things began to change at the beginning of the 21st century when Korea introduced an evaluation policy to achieve university excellence. The government introduced a mechanism for differentiated financial aid according to the rankings of the universities. This had implications for university closure or mergers in the long term, another government objective designed to remedy over-expansion in the sector. A 60-year overview reveals that Korean education achieved significant quantitative expansion (Lee et al., 2010) responding to demand – with more than 90 per cent of high school graduates wanting to go to universities – but, as the birth rate has decreased, there is now less demand and universities have been under pressure to close or merge.

Government-mandated university evaluation was introduced to improve the competitiveness of higher education, using objective forms of measurements including teaching quality, research, management and finance. The evaluation was administered by external teams appointed by the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) with results unpublished. A review of the evaluation criticised it for being problematic with regard to validity and reliability (Han et al., 2010) and, in

response, KCUE introduced institution-level self-evaluations alongside the government-mandated evaluation. In 2007, universities were required to publicise the results of their self-evaluations in areas such as teaching quality, research, organisation, operation, facilities and equipment in accordance with the Ministry of Education's Science and Technology Law (Article two of 11, Clause 1, Higher Education Act).

There is agreement that university-led evaluation is an effective means for analysing the overall situations of individual universities. However, it is observed that too much focus is still given to areas prioritised in the government-mandated evaluation, and little attention is paid to how professors may develop as professionals in their field, a key to improving the quality of university education (Han et al., 2010; Jeong et al., 2004).

Education officials

The officials in our study are government officials with teaching experience in charge of tasks such as developing educational policies, consulting in schools, inspection, and teacher training and development in the 17 local offices of education (LOE) across the country. Recently there has been increasing demand for officials to develop professionally to meet the needs of society and schools. Nevertheless, despite the increasing need for CPD for them, an analysis of education officials' tasks shows that 76 per cent of their hours at work are spent on administration with the remaining 24 per cent devoted to school support (Kim et al., 2008). The imbalance among tasks has also affected education officials' ability to self-identify as teacher educators (ibid, 2008). Most LOEs are found to suffer from a shortage of human resources, and for this reason education officials are in charge of too many different tasks (Park et al., 2010). It is not unusual for them to be assigned to new tasks on a regular basis, particularly when the government introduces a new educational policy.

The government-mandated evaluation for education officials focuses on three areas: work experience, task performance efficiency, and training and research achievements. Task performance ratings, the most significant factor in making decisions on officials' professional effectiveness, are done by their supervisors. Training and research achievement is evaluated by counting the number of training hours, and types of degrees acquired or types of prizes awarded. The current evaluation system has been criticised for its lack of relevance or direct link to education officials' own CPD (Park et al., 2010).

Investigating CPD for teacher educators in Korea: The research project

Data collection instruments and sampling

Questionnaires were designed to discover how English language teacher educators managed their CPD at present, from which implications could be drawn for effective innovation in CPD in the future. The questionnaires (see Appendix) comprised three sections: (1) background information; (2) current CPD undertaken and means of evaluating effectiveness; and (3) local constraints and support in CPD. Two online questionnaires were designed for university professors and education officials respectively. Each questionnaire was designed to investigate the following areas:

- What form does education officials' and university professors' own CPD take?
- How helpful do they find different forms of CPD in their own professional learning?
- What activities inside or outside the workplace involve professional learning, and to what extent do these assist their own professional learning?
- What challenges do they face in pursuing their own professional development?
- What specific kinds of support are provided to help them pursue CPD for themselves, and to what extent do these contribute to learning?
- What criteria are applied to evaluate the effectiveness of their own continuing professional learning?

A small-scale pilot study was conducted to improve the validity of the questions. The drafts were sent to five professors and five education officials for review, and amendments were made to address problems seen by reviewers. In the main study, 100 professors involved in English language teacher education were randomly selected from the address books of foreign language professional associations; similarly, 70 education officials responsible for English were selected from the directory of the 17 local offices of education throughout the country. An email message was sent, asking them to go to the link site and complete the questionnaire. From the 100 professors, 64 responded to all the questions, and 56 out of 70 officials completed the questionnaire.

Follow-up semi-structured interviews were also conducted with seven university professors and seven education officials who elected to participate in interviews, after the analysis of the questionnaire responses. The interviews were designed to further explore the issues and topics arising from the questionnaire findings. Both questionnaires and interviews were conducted in Korean, so that language would not constitute a barrier to free expression of opinions, and translated into English by the authors of this chapter.

Participants: university professors

Table 1 shows background information for the 64 university professor respondents. Male professors outnumbered females by double, and 59 per cent of the respondents had more than ten years' teaching experience at universities. It is thus assumed that they are fully aware of changes that have taken place surrounding teacher education over the last decade. Almost all of the respondents hold a doctoral degree, conventionally required as a qualification. Half of the respondents teach ten to 15 hours per week. The background information shows that only 23 per cent of the respondents had previously taught at either primary or secondary schools, while 77 per cent of them had no teaching experience in schools.

Table 1: Background information of university professors

Question	Response	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	43 (67)
	Female	21 (33)
Teaching experience at universities	Under 5 years	22 (34)
	5 years–10 years	11 (18)
	Over 10 years	31 (48)
Degree held	PhDs	60 (94)
	MAAs	4 (6)
Teaching hours per week	Less than 5 hours	2 (3)
	5–10 hours	24 (38)
	11–15 hours	32 (50)
	Over 15 hours	6 (9)
Teaching experience in schools	Yes	15 (23)
	None	49 (77)

Participants: education officials

Table 2 shows the background information of the 56 education officials responding to the questionnaire. All of the respondents had teaching experience at schools, a consequence of the regulation that only those having at least five years' teaching experience are entitled to apply for the position, with 51 (91 per cent) having more than ten years of teaching experience at primary or secondary schools. Though not a requirement of the job, ten of the education officials had doctoral degrees.

Table 2: Background information of education officials

Question	Response	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	30 (54)
	Female	26 (46)
Experience as education officials	Under 3 years	30 (54)
	3 years–under 5 years	14 (25)
	5 years–under 10 years	9 (16)
	Over 10 years	3 (5)
Teaching experience in schools	Under 5 years	3 (5)
	5 years–10 years	2 (4)
	Over 10 years	51 (91)
Degree held	PhDs	10 (18)
	MAAs	42 (75)
	BAs	4 (7)

Findings from the research project

In this section we discuss findings from the research questionnaires and interviews.

Need to pursue CPD: university professors

Table 3 shows the professors' responses to the question: 'Why do you think you need to pursue professional development for yourself?'

Table 3: Reasons for university professors pursuing CPD

Response	Frequency (%)
Being assigned to a new task	46 (72)
Improving teaching effectiveness	50 (78)
Meeting requirements for promotion	28 (44)
Meeting requirements for a higher annual salary	26 (41)
Competing with newly appointed professors	26 (41)
Meeting needs in society	43 (67)
Preparing for future education	54 (84)

A strong majority of professors (84 per cent) chose 'preparation for future education' as a reason for pursuing their own CPD. The next frequently chosen reasons were 'improving teaching effectiveness' (78 per cent), 'being assigned to a new task' (72 per cent) and 'meeting needs in society' (67 per cent). It was found that a smaller number of the professors chose 'competition', 'promotion' and 'a higher annual salary' as a major reason for CPD for themselves. The professors thus seem to be aware of the need for their own CPD to respond to the needs of a changing society, and are less concerned about personal gain.

In discussing these results, all seven professors interviewed agreed that CPD for themselves was indispensable for dealing with changes in the educational environment and in teaching methods, particularly regarding new technology, and students' needs, attitudes and perceptions. Professor Kim stressed the changes in students:

Changes in society have affected students' attitudes and perceptions. As the society has changed, they have changed. I think we need to make continuous efforts to meet their expectations and keep wise as educators. Otherwise, we will fall behind.

The professors in the interviews felt that the future of Korean society depended on education in the present, and that a great deal of emphasis should be given to the future, as Professor Choi remarked:

We educate students to meet both future and present needs. I believe the way education is given influences the future. We educators need to foster a broad understanding of what needs to be prepared for the future.

Need to pursue CPD: education officials

Table 4 shows how the officials responded to the question on reasons for their own CPD.

Table 4: Reasons for education officials pursuing their own CPD

Response	Frequency (%)
Being assigned to a new task	48 (86)
Improving competency in task performance	49 (88)
Meeting requirements for promotion	12 (21)
Meeting requirements for a higher annual salary	10 (18)
Competing with newly appointed professors	13 (23)
Meeting needs in society	37 (66)
Preparing for future education	35 (63)

The two most frequently chosen reasons were 'improving competency in task performance' (88 per cent) and 'being assigned to a new task' (86 per cent). More than half of the officials chose 'meeting needs in society' (66 per cent) and 'preparing for future education' (63 per cent) as reasons for pursuing CPD for themselves. Only about 20 per cent of the officials chose 'competition', 'promotion' and 'a higher annual salary' as a major reason for CPD for themselves. The results of the officials' responses, similar to the professors', show that they are aware of the need for professional learning.

In the interviews, officials explained why 'improving task performance' and 'being assigned to a new task' were considered to be major reasons for pursuing their own CPD. In the administration system, education officials do tasks in rotation and are assigned to new tasks on a yearly basis. This system is based on a policy to train versatile officials who can adapt to any circumstance and is necessary to cope with a great deal of change in educational policy. Official Hong explained this:

When we were appointed as education officials, we were not trained to be competent in every task. Sometimes I am assigned to a task implementing a completely new educational policy. I have a strong need for professional competence in handling the task [...]. I think this is the process of becoming professional.

Mrs Won emphasised that education officials' own CPD was particularly important when the government introduced innovative educational policies:

I think our role is to be a bridge between the government and the schools. This is why we're government education officials. This role becomes more significant when the government introduces innovation to schools. It is us that seek effective ways of bringing about change in schools. For this important role we need to work with professional effectiveness. Without this, effective change cannot be expected.

Forms of CPD and their effectiveness: university professors

Table 5 shows the professors' responses to the question: 'What forms does your own CPD take and how effective is each form?'

Table 5: Forms of professors' CPD and their effectiveness

Form	Frequency (%)	Response (1: least – 4: most effective)			
		1	2	3	4
Teaching improvement activities	46 (72)	3 (5)	13 (20)	30 (47)	18 (28)
Doing research	58 (91)	3 (5)	7 (11)	20 (31)	34 (53)
Publication	28 (44)	2 (3)	16 (25)	28 (44)	18 (28)
Joining academic associations	51 (80)	2 (3)	18 (28)	21 (33)	23 (36)
Keeping a high profile	33 (52)	3 (5)	20 (31)	31 (48)	10 (16)
Media/press activities	9 (14)	21 (33)	25 (39)	14 (22)	4 (6)
Volunteer activities	22 (34)	12 (19)	29 (45)	17 (27)	6 (9)

'Doing research' (91 per cent), 'joining academic associations' (80 per cent) and 'teaching improvement activities' (72 per cent) constitute the majority of the professors' CPD forms. It is not surprising, given their positions, that doing research is most common and considered more effective for the professors' own CPD than teaching improvement activities, which are less valued among the university community. While joining academic associations is the second most common form of CPD, it was considered less effective for individuals than publication.

It is assumed that the professors' perception of effectiveness is influenced by the criteria for staff evaluation, as the results seem to correspond to the allotted weight for each form in the staff evaluation. In most university-mandated evaluations, more priority is given to research and publication outputs than to forms of professional effectiveness that cannot be quantified, such as joining academic associations. The influence of the university-mandated evaluation is also shown in the respondents' relatively low participation in CPD forms with no weight in the evaluation and their less positively perceived effectiveness, such as media/press activities.

In discussing this result, all the interviewees indicated that doing research was closely related to publication, and the goal of doing research was very often to publish articles or books, not directly to improve teaching. They also noted this brought about separation of research and practice. Professor Ban remarked that research was very often conducted entirely isolated from teaching improvement

It is an ideal that a professor with research competence is effective in teaching. This is very unusual if we look around. I know many cases where students complain about the teaching given by a professor with a long list of research project grants and publications.

Aware of the separation as a problem, Professor Ahn contended research and teaching should be mutually complementary:

They should not be separated but, shamefully, we very often see research results are not fed back into practice, or vice versa.

The professors in the interviews all agreed that the separation of research and practice derived from the criteria most universities adopted to meet the requirements of the government-mandated evaluation, specifically the emphasis on professorial publication volume over classroom proficiency or even publication quality. The interviewees said that the impact of research in relation to CPD is largely evaluated by the number of published articles or books, not by to what extent or how research influences or improves teacher educators' teaching.

Concerning how research or publication as the criterion for promotion or reappointment affect professors' motivation to pursue their own development, some professors expressed their opinion that research or publication is very closely related to effective professionalism. Professor Choi remarked that research or publication is at the heart of professional development and the criterion can provide instrumental motivation to foster professors' CPD. However, all the interviewees agreed that it could also be a burden if the evaluation results are among criteria for promotion or reappointment. Professor Lee shared his experience:

It becomes obviously a severe burden, particularly when one is a candidate for promotion or reappointment. Then it becomes something one should do, an obligation ... I am sceptical about how obligation can encourage professors to be more actively involved in CPD.

Table 6 shows professors' responses to the question: 'What kind of activities are you involved in for each form of CPD?'

Table 6: Activities for professors' main forms of CPD

Main form of CPD	Activities	Frequency (%)
Teaching improvement activities	Keeping a teaching diary	45 (70)
	Self-observation	43 (67)
	Peer observation	36 (56)
	Getting consulting from experts	36 (56)
	Feedback from student evaluation of teaching	60 (94)
	Attending workshops for teaching improvement	52 (81)
	Joining a learning community with teachers	46 (72)
	Participating in mentoring	37 (58)
Doing research	University-supported research	61 (95)
	Outside organisation-supported research	56 (70)
	Research in collaboration with outside organisations	58 (91)
Publication	Domestic peer-review journals	64 (100)
	International journals	54 (84)
	Book publication	59 (92)
Joining academic associations	Attending conferences	63 (98)
	Presenting research	60 (94)
	Review articles	63 (98)

It was found that making use of feedback from student evaluation of teaching is what 94 per cent of the respondents do for improving their teaching. From the interviews, it was noted that, along with the criteria for staff evaluation, the university culture might affect the activities professors choose to participate in. For example, with respect to the less frequently chosen 'mentoring', Professor Ahn said that it is not surprising in the Korean culture, where professors are believed to be responsible for their own learning and have very little outside direction. Professor Kang also explains why mentoring is less frequent:

Our university culture is that individuals are treated as experts, having achieved an equal level of expertise in the given field. This makes it very difficult to pair mentors with mentees. For example, if a novice professor is paired to work with a mentor with more experience in teaching but fewer publications, the novice professor may think the mentor professor is not qualified to mentor him. This becomes a problem in matching mentors and mentees, particularly when emphasis is given to publications or research experience in CPD. This is what happens now.

He goes on to suggest that mentoring in universities is simply considered as seniors teaching juniors with less knowledge or experience, rather than a form of collaborative CPD with mutual benefits for both participants.

Forms of CPD and their effectiveness: education officials

Table 7 shows the education officials' responses to the question: 'What forms does your own CPD take and how effective is each form?'

Table 7: Forms of education officials' CPD and their effectiveness

Form	Frequency (%)	Response (1: least – 4: most effective)			
		1	2	3	4
Training for consulting in school	38 (68)	2 (4)	1 (2)	28 (50)	25 (45)
Training for competency in administration	16 (29)	3 (5)	8 (14)	32 (57)	13 (23)
Training for developing teacher training programmes	37 (66)	3 (5)	0 (0)	30 (54)	23 (41)
Doing research and publication	23 (41)	3 (5)	11 (20)	20 (36)	22 (39)
Joining academic associations	14 (25)	5 (9)	13 (23)	28 (50)	10 (18)
Doing volunteer activities	3 (5)	7 (13)	21 (38)	21 (38)	7 (13)

Attending 'training for consulting in school' (68 per cent) and 'training for developing teacher training programmes' (66 per cent) are the forms that the majority of the officials take for their own CPD; and the vast majority of respondents thought these were effective for their professional learning. Most respondents thought training for competency in administration and doing research and publication are also effective, though fewer actually engaged in these activities. The findings clearly indicate that the CPD forms education officials considered effective are closely related to the criteria for government-mandated official evaluation as well as their job of working with school teachers.

All of the officials in the interviews agreed that training for consulting in school and teacher-training programme development were important, as they contribute to supporting schools and teachers, their priority task. Mrs Hong stressed that in a rapidly changing society like Korea, education officials are increasingly required to take training for effective school support, while Mrs Lee expressed doubts about what actually constituted 'school support' from the official viewpoint:

All the tasks called 'school support' are not necessarily directly linked with supporting schools. We need to perform school support tasks where officials directly communicate with teachers at schools. I believe this will lead to learning and development at work.

According to Table 7, 'training for competency in administration' takes place less frequently, but is perceived as effective for officials' CPD. Competency in administration is a significant criterion in the government-mandated evaluation. It is assumed that the weight of the criteria in the evaluation system has an effect on the officials' perception of its effectiveness as a form of CPD. The questionnaire responses revealed that the officials thought that joining academic associations and voluntary work were less helpful than other forms of CPD.

Table 8 shows what kinds of activities the officials are involved in for the two main forms of CPD they perceived to be most effective (see Table 7).

Table 8: Activities for the officials' main forms of CPD

Main form of CPD	Training areas	Frequency (%)
Training for consulting in school	Curriculum implementation	45 (80)
	Consulting about teaching	47 (84)
	Teachers' professional development	48 (86)
	Counselling	28 (50)
	Parents support	30 (54)
	Collaboration with community	28 (50)
	Technology	28 (50)
	School inspection	33 (41)
	Personnel management	28 (50)
	School administration	37 (66)
Training for competency in administration	Online and offline courses	54 (96)
	Leadership	44 (79)
	Language improvement	38 (68)
	Status-tailored courses	45 (80)
	Overseas training	42 (75)

The most frequently taken courses for effective consulting in school are those on curriculum implementation, consulting about teaching and teachers' professional development. As indicated earlier, this result seems to be directly related to demand from schools in a changing society, where autonomy and responsibility is increasingly given to decentralised schools and teachers.

Among the most frequently taken training activities for competency in administration are online and offline courses, status-tailored courses and courses in leadership. This result is also closely related to the criteria in the government rating system, where the number of hours attending training courses is regarded as a key criterion in evaluation for promotion.

Evaluation of CPD and use of its results: university professors

The professors were given the open question: *'How is individuals' professional development evaluated at your university and what are the results used for?'* (This question was not posed to the education officers, for whom the same government-mandated rating is applied, without exception.) An analysis of the professors' responses reveals that in about 93 per cent of the universities where the respondents teach, research and publication-related activities are evaluated by the reputation or types of academic journals in which professors publish. It was found that evaluation results are used as criteria for promotion or reappointment in about 85 per cent of the institutes, while in about ten per cent of the institutes they are used to determine the award of other incentives such as a performance-based bonus, reduction in teaching hours, allocation of research funds or an opportunity to go abroad.

In a majority of the universities (87.5 per cent), teaching was evaluated by using student questionnaires. The results of these student evaluations were used as a criterion for promotion or reappointment at about half of the institutions. At about 30 per cent of the universities the data from student questionnaires was provided to students to help them to choose courses to attend. It was found that over 95 per cent of the universities do not conduct observations to evaluate teaching. Only about five per cent of universities make observation obligatory as a part of staff evaluation and only one-third of these open observation results to the public. In most cases, observation results were shared with the observed professors only. It also seems that co-operative development through peer observation hardly ever occurs at universities. In interviews, Professor Ban explained:

University professors are not used to being observed for improvement or learning to teach. We are afraid of hearing about our shortcomings or what we shouldn't do, what we did wrong, or what we should do better.

Professor Kim suggested that one of the reasons for this mindset might be that objectivity was an issue in observation:

Above all, we need a tool with which we can evaluate our colleagues' teaching objectively. If our teaching is objectively evaluated, then we can accept the results.

Three of the interviewees also said professors will only participate in peer observation if the university imposes it as an obligatory part of staff evaluation.

About three-quarters of the participants mentioned that taking training courses as a means of self-professional development is not taken into account in staff evaluation at their universities. The findings regarding ways of evaluating professional development among professors, and how the results are used, support our earlier

observation that the university evaluation system has a strong influence on how professors pursue their own CPD.

Local constraints in pursuing CPD: university professors

Table 9 shows the professors' responses to the question: 'What are the major constraints in pursuing CPD and other means of improvement?'

Table 9: Constraints on professors' CPD

Response	Frequency (%)
Teaching load	52 (81)
Lack of customised CPD programmes	33 (52)
Lack of co-operative development with colleagues	35 (55)
Obligation to meet university evaluation criteria	41 (64)
Pressure from promotion or contract	36 (56)

A heavy teaching load was thought by 81 per cent of the professors to impede their professional development. As the background information showed earlier, half of the respondents teach between ten and 15 hours a week, which is considerable for professors when preparation, marking and added administration are taken into account. All of the professors in the interviews welcomed the idea of reducing teaching hours to improve the opportunities for CPD according to their individual needs.

Another major constraint for 64 per cent of the respondents was the obligation to meet the criteria of the government-mandated university evaluation. As discussed earlier, these criteria affect the forms of professional development in which professors engage, as well as their perception about their effectiveness. There is a controversy over the obligation to engage in CPD as part of the university evaluation. While two professors in the interview argued that such an obligation would have a positive effect on encouraging professors' professional learning, five professors expressed their concern that it could lead to pursuing CPD simply to achieve a high score in the evaluation, instead of for professional learning for its own sake. The two interviewees in favour of making CPD obligatory stressed that change would never be brought about at universities without this obligation. In contrast, the other five professors expressed their strong disagreement with this position. Professor Park, for example, emphasised the professor's sense of ownership in effective professional development:

I think obligation means ignoring the important role the professor plays in pursuing professional development. CPD should be intrinsically fostered not by external motivation, such means as promotion or reappointment. This is just a product of bureaucracy, with a focus on measurable achievements or quantity.

Professor Kim also argued that obligation was not necessary, as more and more professors have become aware of CPD as a way of achieving self-fulfilment in the context of rapidly changing Korean society. He stressed that when CPD is carried out voluntarily, effective change is more likely to be made than when being motivated by other, external reasons such as promotion.

Local constraints in pursuing CPD: education officials

Table 10 shows the education officials' responses to the question concerning local constraints on their own CPD.

Table 10: Constraints on education officials' CPD

Response	Frequency (%)
Administration work load	56 (100)
Lack of customised CPD programmes	24 (43)
Lack of co-operative development with colleagues	35 (63)
Lack of motivation for CPD	13 (23)
Pressure from promotion/contract	18 (32)

All of the officials chose 'administration' load as a main constraint that prevented them from seeking professional development. Official Jeon puts this succinctly:

We education officials have a nickname, we're '10th-rate government officials', whose job is to assist administration in the office. I spend most of my day handling documents, making telephone calls, dealing with civil complaints, drafting memos, etc. By the time I visit schools, I have little energy or enthusiasm for consulting in schools, for which I took training as part of my own CPD. I'm very often sceptical about whether I was selected as an education professional or as an administration assistant.

Other officials showed similar scepticism about their identity as education professionals, particularly when they thought about the time they spend on administration each day.

The majority of the officials (63 per cent) said a lack of co-operative development with their colleagues constrained them from being actively involved in CPD. Official Lee noted:

Very often professional development is considered as something we should work on by ourselves. That is what the word 'self-development' signifies in this culture. Although more and more officials see the benefits of co-operative CPD, I think it will take a while to change the CPD culture.

Over 40 per cent of the officials said there was a lack of customised programmes to satisfy their individual needs. All of the officials in the interviews expressed their strong agreement with this finding. It was pointed out that lack of customised CPD programmes has caused a lot of problems in a personnel system where education officials are given new tasks without proper training or having the expertise required. Official Song explained his own experience:

Every year we're assigned tasks that we don't have any expertise with. 'Swim or sink' is the rule for assigning new tasks to education officials. Most of us learn by trial and error. By the time we get competent in the newly assigned task, we're given new tasks.

There was agreement among the interviewees that the current task assignment system is a waste of human and material resources. They proposed a dual system whereby education officials are assigned to handle tasks within their area of expertise, and at the same time they may be given new tasks with ongoing CPD support to help them gain the necessary knowledge and skills for those tasks.

Preference for support for effective CPD: university professors

Table 11 reveals the professors' responses to the question: '*What support would you prefer for effective CPD?*'

Table 11: University professors' preferred support areas for CPD

Response	Frequency (%)
Teaching load lessened	47 (73)
CPD as optional, not obligatory for all	38 (59)
Building up a learning community	36 (56)
Sabbatical/officially authorised leave for CPD	45 (70)
Customised CPD programmes	45 (70)

A majority of the professors (73 per cent) responded that teaching loads need to be reduced to provide an environment conducive to their professional learning. Sabbatical leave or research years approved by universities was mentioned as a preference by 70 per cent of the respondents, as was customised CPD programmes to meet individual needs. More than half of the professors (59 per cent) said they should not be obliged to be involved in professional learning, but should be free to take part in CPD available to them as and when they wished. More than half of the professors (56 per cent) were also in favour of building up a learning community for co-operative development.

Concerning individual differences, all the professors in the interviews agreed with the notion of providing tailor-made programmes for effective professional learning. Professor Park strongly argued that if the same programme is applied to all professors without exception, ignoring individual differences or preferences, effective learning cannot be expected. However, among the interviewees, scepticism was expressed about the feasibility of such customised CPD programmes. Professor Kang pointed out that most universities do not have a communication channel where professors' voices are heard and fed back into the decision-making process in staff evaluation. He added that most decisions are made at executive board meetings and are handed down to the majority of professors. Professor Lee expressed his strong doubt about the ability to provide tailored CPD programmes from a resource management perspective.

Preference for support for effective CPD: education officials

Table 12 reveals how the officials responded to the question about their preferred support areas for effective CPD.

Table 12: Education officials' preferred support areas for CPD

Response	Frequency (%)
Reducing administration load	50 (89)
Officially approved leave for CPD	33 (59)
Customised CPD programmes	28 (50)
CPD as optional not obligatory	11 (20)

Almost 90 per cent of the officials said administration work should be reduced to improve the current CPD system; this seems to be closely related to their choice of administration load as a major local constraint to pursuing CPD. More than half of the respondents (59 per cent) also said they needed more opportunities to take officially approved leave, such as sabbatical leave. Half of the officials thought they needed to be given more customised CPD programmes that could meet individual needs. A relatively small number of the officials (20 per cent) thought CPD should be optional rather than obligatory, a view which may be related to criteria in the government-led evaluation applied to all government officials.

Preferred criteria for evaluation of CPD: university professors

Table 13 shows the professors' responses to the question: '*What criteria would you prefer for evaluation of CPD?*'

Table 13: University professors' preference for evaluation of CPD

Response	Frequency (%)
Number of training sessions for professional learning	35 (55)
Teacher evaluation by student	47 (73)
Research and publication	56 (88)
Participating in academic associations	45 (70)
Self-evaluation	40 (63)

A strong majority of professors (88 per cent) expressed their preference for research and publication as a criterion in the evaluation of their own CPD. Teacher evaluation by students and participating in academic associations activities were also chosen as preferred criteria by about 70 per cent of the respondents. The respondents showed little preference for simply counting the hours of training sessions they attend as a criterion for CPD. Again, it seems that these preferences for evaluation criteria are influenced by the staff appraisal criteria that a majority of universities have adopted, as discussed earlier.

A clear majority of the professors (63 per cent) showed their preference for self-evaluation as a criterion for evaluation of professional development even though, as mentioned earlier, staff evaluation systems used by universities do not usually include self-evaluation as a criterion. Both concern and expectation were expressed about this in the interviews. Concern was expressed about the

reliability of self-evaluation of CPD. Professors Kim and Choi expressed their opinion that if self-evaluation is introduced, it should be compulsory and that the result of the evaluation should be publicly available. Professor Kim thought that self-evaluation would face a lot of opposition due to its perceived lack of objectivity and fairness. The objectivity issue was also mentioned by Professor Ban, who suggested that the criteria for self-evaluation should be specified to be effective:

In CPD evaluation, 'who' evaluates CPD is not the issue, but 'how' evaluation is done is what matters. If self-evaluation can be done so objectively that anyone can accept its results, we can consider introducing self-evaluation as a main tool for CPD evaluation. What is important is an evaluation method that can provide reliable data.

Professor Park argued that qualifications for university professors should include competence in both pursuing and evaluating CPD. She went on to say the results of the questionnaire are not surprising, as many professors have already made efforts to pursue their own CPD using self-evaluation in an informal way. Professor Kang put a great deal of emphasis on the role of self-evaluation:

I strongly believe that it is professors who know best about their own professional development. Instead of imposing on them with external evaluation tools, the university should encourage self-evaluation, with which professors can be intrinsically motivated to pursue CPD.

Preferred criteria for evaluation of CPD: education officials

Table 14 shows the education officials' preference for criteria to evaluate their own CPD.

Table 14: Education officials' preferences for evaluation of CPD

Response	Frequency (%)
Number of training sessions for professional learning	54 (94)
Customer (school, teachers, parents) satisfaction	26 (46)
Keeping a high professional profile	28 (50)
Self-evaluation	48 (86)

Almost all (94 per cent) of the officials chose counting the hours of training sessions they attended as a criterion for the evaluation of CPD effectiveness. It was assumed that their preference was influenced by the weight of this criterion in the current evaluation system, where the number of training hours must be recorded. In the interviews there were officials who expressed their concern about this evaluation criterion, revealing that because of it officials were obliged to take training sessions irrelevant to their tasks. It was suggested that instead of simply counting the number of training hours, evaluation should be done to see how officials use what they learn from training at work or what changes the training brings about at work. Official Kim expressed her worries:

There will be officials who did their best to perform the newly assigned tasks and had no time left [to attend training sessions]. They will be given the worst result. I'm worried that I will be one of them. This is very de-motivating.

Among the officials, 46 per cent do not count customer (schools or parents) satisfaction ratings and 50 per cent do not consider keeping a high professional profile as criteria for the evaluation of their professional learning. According to the current government-led evaluation system, these two criteria are not included in the rating. Once again, it seems that the officials' preference for evaluation criteria is influenced by the uniform evaluation tool imposed by the government. Other officials agreed with Mr Park, who said:

Although customer satisfaction and keeping a high professional profile are emphasised in our changing society, they are not included in the evaluation of government officials. The ministry seems to think they are not directly related to professional learning.

The interviewees thus expressed their concern with the gap between what is required in society and the official view of professional learning.

A strong majority (86 per cent) of education officials expressed a preference for self-evaluation as a criterion in the evaluation system. All of the participants in the interviews seemed to welcome and support self-evaluation that would encourage education officials to participate in self-reflection upon their work, rather than responding to obligatory evaluation imposed externally. Official Jeon stated:

One of the advantages self-evaluation can bring is that officials are encouraged to participate in the evaluation process, rather than sitting on their hands. They will take more responsibility for their own professional development. My experience says people become objective in self-appraisal. No worries about subjectivity.

Reflection on CPD for professors and education officials in Korea

The findings of this investigation show the process of implementing the government mandated innovation in professional development is similar to the strategy the Korean government adopted to achieve unprecedented success in economic innovation within a short period of time after the Korean War. The essence of the strategy is to make innovation compulsory with a carrot-and-stick approach. Universities are required to implement the government-mandated evaluation policy so as to be eligible for financial support that will enable them to survive. In this situation, evidence of professors' professional development is considered as one of the criteria for universities to receive government funds. There is, however, a mismatch between professors' motivation for CPD and the universities' goals. The problem lies in the top-down approach universities adopt in implementing government policy. Although the professors themselves recognise that CPD is significant for professional effectiveness in a rapidly changing society, their sense of ownership and agency is limited in the process of implementing the policy and they play a passive role in the change process.

As the literature confirms, successful professional development and change should start with teachers, or in our case with the teacher-educator professors or education officials, and with an acknowledgement of their agency. This appears to be one of

the key ingredients in the success of CPD. Just as important is the institutional climate, and whether institutional leaders and administrators provide adequate support for successful professional development. As O'Sullivan (2001: 195) notes, within a conducive institutional culture teachers are able to reflect, access new ideas, experiment and share experiences, and there is greater potential for professional development and institutional improvement. Thus, a supportive institutional climate should not be undervalued or neglected by institutional leaders for the sake of short-term goals imposed by the government.

In Korean culture, professors tend to perceive pursuing professional development as similar to the doctoral degree-seeking process, where they take responsibility for their own learning and fulfil requirements on their own. The common belief about professional development is that professors, as highly qualified professionals, know their field best and their CPD can be pursued in isolation. However, a collaborative professional learning environment is recognised in the literature as a critical component in the success of continuing professional development for any group. Similarly, in the Korean context, mentoring is thought of only in terms of the induction of beginning lecturers during the first year of their working lives rather than a mutually beneficial partnership that can extend over a longer period. The results of this investigation suggest that there is a need for teacher educators to change their perception about professional development and to engage more in those activities that involve partnership and collaboration with colleagues. As Rhodes and Beneicke's (2002) study shows, peer-networking mechanisms as a means to enhance CPD (encompassing two or more individuals working together to enhance information exchange, dissemination of good practices, and the organisation of mutual support and learning) can have significant benefits for the participants. This kind of networking may occur between individuals or groups within individual institutions or in collaboration with other institutions. Thus, if an individual cannot find the required collegiality within his/her own institution, s/he may seek it elsewhere in the system. It seems, therefore, to be necessary to build up the institutional environment for collaborative learning in Korea, whether in universities or in local education offices, to foster more co-operative professional development.

The kinds of CPD in which professors and education officials engage are strongly affected by the criteria for the evaluation of their professional effectiveness that policy makers have designed. The evaluation system has had an undesirable wash-back effect on professional development, restricting the forms or activities that teacher educators pursue for their professional learning, e.g. the tendency to take CPD activities with more credits available or to fulfil the required number of training hours, neglecting CPD which might have a more direct impact on actual practice. Teaching loads and the amount of administration work were also identified as constraints inhibiting successful professional development for the professors and education officials, respectively. As the research literature suggests, educational policy makers should work to remove constraints identified as inhibiting effective professional learning, so that teacher educators have time and opportunities to reflect on their own practice and to pursue collaborative professional development through sharing practice with their colleagues.

There remains a significant gap between individual teacher educators' needs and what is available to them in terms of CPD, which may result from standardised forms of CPD being preferred because of the evaluation system. Furthermore, the results of the professional development evaluation are often used as criteria for reappointment, promotion or incentives rather than as measures of how individuals develop as professionals. This approach is justified by the perceived need for external stimuli to motivate teacher educators to be actively involved in professional development activities, though the meaningfulness of such motivation is questionable when the system fails to take account of the effects of CPD on the participants in their working lives. Due largely to the considerable resources expended on it, policy makers and administrators tend to consider involvement in CPD only in terms of quantification; yet, as most meaningful change tends to be long term, evaluation needs to run alongside professional development activities, and the effectiveness of CPD in changing practice also needs to be considered.

Conclusion

The findings of this investigation show that language teacher educators, whether professors or education officials, have a need for continuing professional development to meet various demands in a rapidly changing society. The investigation revealed that the ways in which professors pursued their own professional development was strongly influenced by university or government-mandated evaluation. The top-down and standardised evaluation is designed to measure teacher educators' performance quantitatively, e.g. the number of publications professors have completed or the number of hours of training sessions education officials attend. We suggest that too much evaluation, especially of a quantitative type, works against genuine continuing professional development for any group. There is a clear need in Korea for alternative ways of enhancing professional learning, which see professors and education officials as agents of change in their own professional development. A key learning point from the findings is that if ministries want their English teacher professors and education officials to engage in CPD, they need to be much less directive and rigid in terms of how they evaluate performance.

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Appendix: Questionnaires for university professors and education officials

Questionnaires for university professors

Section 1: Background information

1. Sex: ___ male ___ female
2. Teaching experience at universities: _____ year(s) _____ month(s)
3. Degree held: ___ Ph.D. ___ MA
4. Teaching hours per week: _____ hour(s)
5. Teaching experience at schools: _____ year(s) _____ month(s)

Section 2: Current situation

1. Why do you think you need to pursue professional development for yourself?
Choose the three most important reasons.

Reasons	✓
being assigned to a new task	
improving teaching effectiveness	
meeting requirements for promotion	
meeting requirements for a higher annual salary	
competing with newly appointed professors	
meeting needs in society	
preparing for future education	
other	

2. What forms does your own CPD take and how effective is each form?
Choose the three most frequent forms and rate the effectiveness of each one for your CPD.

Form	✓	Response (1:least – 4:most effective)			
		1	2	3	4
teaching improvement activities					
doing research					
publication					
joining academic associations					
keeping a high profile					
media/press activities					
volunteer activities					
other					

3. What kind of activities are you involved in for each form of CPD?

Main form of CPD	Activities	✓
teaching improvement activities	keeping a teaching diary	
	self-observation	
	peer-observation	
	getting consulting from experts	
	feedback from student evaluation of teaching	
	attending workshops for teaching improvement	
	joining learning community with teachers	
	participating in mentoring	
doing research	other	
	university-supported research	
	outside organisation-supported research	
	research in collaboration with outside organisations	
publication	other	
	domestic peer-review journals	
	international journals	
	book publication	
joining academic associations	other	
	attending conferences	
	presenting research	
	review articles	
	other	

4. How are the forms of CPD evaluated and what are their results used for?

CPD form	Evaluation	Use of results

Section 3: Constraints and support

1. What are the major constraints in pursuing CPD and other means of improvement?

Response	✓
teaching load	
lack of customised CPD programmes	
lack of cooperative development with colleagues	
obligation to meet criteria university evaluation	
pressure from promotion or contract	
other	

2. What support would you prefer for effective CPD?

Response	✓
teaching load lessened	
CPD as optional not obligatory to all	
building up learning community	
sabbatical/officially authorised leave for CPD	
customised CPD programmes	
other	

3. What criteria would you prefer for evaluation of CPD?

Response	✓
training sessions for professional learning	
teacher evaluation by student	
research and publication	
participating in academic associations	
self-evaluation	
other	

Questionnaire for education officials

Section 1: Background information

- Sex: male female
- Experience as education officials: _____ year(s) _____ month(s)
- Teaching experience at schools: _____ year(s) _____ month(s)
- Degree held: Ph.D. MA

Section 2: Current situation

- Why do you think you need to pursue professional development for yourself?
Choose the three most important reasons.

Reasons	✓
being assigned to a new task	
improving task performance efficiency	
meeting requirements for promotion	
meeting requirements for a higher annual salary	
competing with newly appointed professors	
meeting needs in society	
preparing for future education	
other	

2. What forms does your own CPD take and how effective is each form? Choose the three most frequent forms and the effectiveness of each one for your CPD

Form	Response (1=least effective, 4=most effective)			
	1	2	3	4
training for school consulting				
training for administration competency				
training for developing teacher training programmes				
doing research and publication				
joining academic associations				
doing volunteer activities				
other				

3. What kind of activities are you involved in for each form of CPD?

Main form of CPD	Areas	✓
training for consulting in school	curriculum implementation	
	teaching consulting	
	professional development	
	counselling	
	parents support	
	collaboration with community	
	technology	
	school inspection	
	personnel management	
	school administration	
other		
training for administration competency	on- and off-line courses	
	leadership	
	language improvement	
	status-tailored courses	
	overseas training	
	other	
training for developing teacher training programmes	design training curriculum	
	training curriculum evaluation	
	designing customised training programmes	
	other	
doing research and publication	joining learning community	
	conducting educational policy research	
	review research reports	
	publishing articles or books	
	other	

joining academic associations	attending conferences	
	giving talks	
	being a board member	
	other	
doing volunteer activities	donation for education	
	voluntary work for community	
	mentoring	
	other	
other		

Section 3: Constraints and support

1. What are the major constraints in pursuing CPD and other means of improvement?

Response	✓
administration work load	
lack of customised CPD programmes	
lack of cooperative development with colleagues	
lack of motivation for CPD	
pressure from promotion/contract	
other	

2. What support would you prefer for effective CPD?

Response	✓
reducing administration load	
officially approved leave for CPD	
customised CPD programmes	
setting up learning community	
CPD as optional not obligatory	
providing incentives	
other	

3. What criteria would you prefer for evaluation of CPD?

Response	✓
the number of training sessions for professional learning	
customer (school, teachers, parents) satisfaction level	
keeping a high profile	
self-evaluation	
other	

If you are interested in participating in a follow-up interview, please tick yes and give your email address and phone number.

Yes – email:

phone:

No

**‘My life changed
when I saw that notice’:
an analysis of the
long-term impact of a
continuing professional
development programme
in Bulgaria**

13

‘My life changed when I saw that notice’: an analysis of the long-term impact of a continuing professional development programme in Bulgaria

Anne Wiseman

Introduction

This chapter describes the process of evaluating the long-term impact of a trainer-training programme, which developed into a lifelong learning, continuing professional development (CPD) experience for a group of teacher trainers in Bulgaria. There are two innovative aspects of this evaluation: firstly, in relation to the time dimension – the context is revisited some 12 years on from the formal end-point of the programme, which is extremely rare in project evaluations; and, secondly, the programme is re-evaluated by analysing the trainers’ life stories, using narrative history and life stories as a methodology.

The evaluation assesses the long-term impact of the original programme and describes the subsequent CPD activities which the trainers pursued as a result of the initial training programme. What emerged during this evaluation process is the strong impact the original trainer-training programme had had on the trainers due to the innovative nature of the programme for its time and context. I will discuss, therefore, how a programme can affect participants in ways which cannot be anticipated in the planning stages by the trainers or course designers. In addition to describing the evaluation process, I will also analyse the long-term outcomes of the original training programme as revealed from the stories told by the trainers. In general, these are positive towards the programme and, in some cases, the subsequent outcomes are surprising.

The political, educational and continuing professional development context in Bulgaria

A number of studies have been undertaken analysing the impact of the fall of communism and the subsequent introduction of a free market economy into former Soviet bloc countries (see, e.g. Grancelli, 1995; Iankova, 1998; Littrell, 2005) and all conclude that the totalitarian regimes stifled a generation in terms of creativity and the ability to develop initiatives. The effect was to be seen throughout Eastern

and Central Europe in the following decades. A study comparing personal initiative in the former East and West Germanys (Frese et al., 1996) showed significantly lower personal initiative in the East than in the West, which they assert was the result of over 40 years of bureaucratic socialism discouraging people from displaying any initiative at all in the workplace.

Because there was no feedback via the market, there was little pressure to change things [at work]. As there was no competition with other companies, there was little incentive to develop high-level goals. The company goal was not to reach a high productivity level but to not make mistakes. Managers in the East were by and large more conventional and risk-avoidant than managers in the West. [...] Employees in East Germany had little control [over their work]. (Frese et al., 1996: 40–41)

The education sector was also affected by this lack of creativity. Teachers as well as managers had been told what to teach and what to think, and were reluctant to voice their opinions. Mitter (1987) argues that most teachers trained in a socialist environment did not and probably could not implement innovative educational change in the early stages of the transition to democratic government: 'Although the period of 1990 to 1992 was marked by an intensity of retraining efforts, exposure to new methodology does not guarantee changed outlook.' (Mitter, 1987: 49). The following teacher's comment illustrates the paradox of high enthusiasm and low understanding of participatory decision-making:

The changes in schools are so many. It is wonderful. We are all very much excited. Yet, we are not sure of the result just now. We must wait to find out what the new parliament will tell us to do. (Maria)

During the period of communist rule in Bulgaria the influence of the Communist Party and its ideology pervaded every part of the education system: textbooks would contain references to the five-year plans, to the workers' co-operative or a day out at the Karl Marx Museum, plus numerous references to the Party leader, Todor Zhikov. Teaching methods tended towards the didactic and students were not expected to think critically. In keeping with this, teacher training and development was based on a standard methodology delivered as an option by the philology departments of the universities.

As with other countries in Eastern and Central Europe, continuing professional development for teachers in Bulgaria pre-1989 was approached from a different perspective than it is today. Anecdotal information gathered in conversations I had during that period and later on from the interviews I conducted for this current research indicated that professional development courses were not popular with teachers. This was partly because attendance was obligatory and partly because sessions were delivered in a lecture mode that did not deal directly with teachers' needs in the classroom. Throughout the country the teacher trainers, or *Metoditzi*, delivered CPD locally in their areas, but again, anecdotal evidence revealed that the teachers did not always feel at ease with the *Metoditzi* who had the power to decide who would get promotion, and who would attend any development courses abroad each year.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the ensuing introduction of democratic systems of government, Western government funding was channelled into countries in Central and Eastern Europe that were seeking to establish new education reform programmes. In Bulgaria much of this reform was centred on the re-training of teachers of Russian to teach English. Linked to the re-training for teachers was the need for more teacher trainers in the country to help with the reform programme. The British Government's Know How Fund¹¹ enabled the British Council to establish a trainer-training project to provide support to the Bulgarian Ministry of Education.

The original CPD project

The aim of the original CPD project in Bulgaria, which began in 1991, was to develop a cadre of teacher trainers to meet the urgent need to re-train hundreds of teachers to teach English. Almost overnight Bulgaria had moved from a communist dictatorship to a democratic system, and with it came the desire to reject anything associated with the old regime. This included the learning of Russian, and its replacement with the language that represented Western values and ideals – English. This radical change imposed by governments throughout Eastern and Central Europe was addressed in a variety of ways. Many governments introduced what was termed a 'fast track' programme, whereby the teachers of Russian attended 'fast track' training courses in the teaching (and learning of) English. In Bulgaria these courses were open to any teachers from any fields, or indeed anybody with a desire to teach, such was the urgency of providing the required number of English teachers for the new curricula.

The British Council trainer development course in Bulgaria was always intended to be part of a long-term professional development programme for teachers who could show they had the capacity, interest, desire and skills to become trainers in the 'new world' of democratic education. Teachers applied for the course and were interviewed and selected by a team consisting of myself and two Bulgarian English Specialists. Many teachers applied to join the course not really knowing what they were joining (as comments in the section on 'Research findings' will demonstrate).

A major obstacle which the project initially faced within the Bulgarian teacher education system was the idea of a teacher trainer who was also a teacher, from the 'ranks' as it were. This concept was very different from the previous system of *Metodizi* mentioned above. In order to be effective and have time off their normal school duties to deliver workshops across their region, the trainers needed to have official recognition. This was a long legal battle, but after two years the government passed an edict recognising the trainers and thereby allowing them time off from their school duties to deliver teacher training in their regions.

The trainer-training course itself contained both theoretical and practical components, but the primary emphasis was always on the practical. The reason for this was to enable the new trainers to demonstrate quickly and clearly to

¹¹ The Know How Fund (KHF) was the technical assistance programme that the British government launched in the spring of 1989 to encourage Poland's transition from communism to democracy and free market capitalism. It was subsequently extended to other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

novice teachers simple classroom techniques and skills, moving away from the traditional pedagogic lecture that was the mainstay of many, if not all, teacher training courses attached to the philology departments at universities. Trainer training sessions were always conducted in a workshop format using an inductive approach, encouraging the trainers to evaluate and work out routes to developing their own workshops. In this respect I would characterise the training more as trainer *development*, as the approach was to develop the innate skills which those teachers already possessed. This in itself was innovative for the time and for the context, as teachers had never been asked to work in this way before.

Although the British Council trainer-training programme was by no means a new approach for trainers from other parts of Europe, interviews from the research I am currently undertaking reveal how innovative it was for Bulgaria and, in some cases, how personally disruptive and worrying the different approach to training was for the trainers. Some participants indicated how difficult they found it to cope with this new way of teaching, training and even thinking; others indicated the extent to which it presented severe problems.

The professional development of these trainers took the form of training courses and, later, supporting seminars and workshops. Building on the existing in-service training pattern, a trainers' meeting for professional development was held in each of the three training centres in Bulgaria in autumn, spring and summer. These meetings were intended to build up a supportive team and to engage participants in reflection on their professional development to date, with action plans for next stages. An unstated aim of the meetings was also for trainers to support each other.

The innovations introduced via the trainer-training project were many: it introduced the idea of trainer-training itself, the concept of inductive learning and teaching, and the freedom of thinking about the meaning of education in terms of the original Latin (*ex duco* – leading out). The British Council team, along with other educators from the UK well versed in this approach, did not realise at the time how much the innovative nature of training struck the participants, and how deeply they were affected.

Project evaluation: traditions and innovations

Traditionally, evaluation of donor-funded programmes has tended to focus on outcomes and outputs and, in doing so, often avoids the personal, i.e. the effect or impact a CPD programme might have in the long term on the people involved in the project. In many of the projects in which I have been involved most of the evaluations took place during and immediately after the project, but none had plans to assess the impact of the project on the participants themselves or to review the project after a lengthy period of time. Hence, my concern now is to ask that 'extra question', and to evaluate the effect of a CPD programme or project long after its official termination, including to what extent the programme has had a long-lasting effect or impact on the trainers' professional lives. This approach to evaluating the impact of a professional development programme is innovative in two respects:

1. The focus is on the impact of educational change programmes on the people involved in the process.
2. The focus is on the long-term impact of educational change processes.

Impact on people

Studies have evaluated the impact of educational change projects on results, or on teachers' beliefs and attitudes (Phipps and Borg, 2009). However, there has been very little research to date looking at the impact of educational change on people's lives. This is perhaps understandable, as any study of this nature has to be a long-term process and needs to be factored in and budgeted for at the very start of the programme. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) (2010) notes the difficulties when measuring the impact of a project. Among the challenges they list are:

1. Determining causality: where changes are observed, evaluators and aid agencies need to know whether they came about as a result of the aid or some other factor.
2. Obtaining verifiable data of the impact of the programme and determining attribution to a particular agency (where there are a number of delivery agents).

Bolitho (2012) notes that the fall of the Berlin Wall resulted in the funding of a number of large-scale teacher-education projects in Eastern and Central Europe and that the subsequent withdrawal of funding had different effects upon different stakeholders, sometimes in places far removed from the project location:

Project after project in different parts of the world ended when the money ran out and the planned time came to an end. This sometimes resulted in resigned acceptance in the host community (among some professionals in Hungary, for example, where the post-1989 injection of funding gave short-lived impetus to the fast-track training of English teachers), in disappointment (which I sensed most acutely in Romania, where funding ran out long before English teachers were able to contemplate paying for their own professional development or to access European Union funds), or in ill-feeling (as in francophone Africa, when ELT professionals there realised that most of their share of the aid cake was being redirected for political ends to the newly 'liberated' countries of Eastern and Central Europe). (Bolitho, 2012: 33)

This sums up the potential for disillusionment there was around Eastern and Central Europe when project funding was withdrawn. However, evidence from the interviews undertaken for this research shows that, in the Bulgarian case, many of the trainers were more positive, and took it upon themselves to take forward their own professional development.

Kushner (2000) and MacDonald (1985) have written extensively about a concern for the 'personal' in evaluation. In *The Portrayal of Persons in Evaluation Data*, MacDonald (1985: 53) argues that evaluation should take 'the experience of the programme participants as the central focus of the investigation'. MacDonald argues that the 'heart' of evaluation, i.e. the people involved in a project or programme, are often left out of the evaluation process and are simply used as data as evaluators

speak clinically of continuation, revision or termination of a programme. He argues that: 'the evaluation task should display educational processes in ways which enable people to engage it with their hearts and minds.' (MacDonald, 1985: 51) Kushner contests that 'Evaluations ... tend to favour the voice of those few for whom programmes are useful instruments to advance their careers and their economic power. For the majority of people involved in a programme, the concept of programme is barely understood and even irrelevant to their lives.' (Kushner, 2000: 11) Kushner is interested in what he can learn (as an evaluator) from the participants involved in any programme he is evaluating.

My research has taken this concept one step further, building on the notion of personalising the evaluation, and following it through in the long term to find out how far a CPD project has impacted on the participants' professional lives 15 years after its official end. Typically in a project or programme evaluation, questionnaires will be distributed, often asking participants to grade their satisfaction with aspects of the programme or to comment on it in open-ended questions, but very little time or money is available to focus on the heart of the matter – the people themselves. This is surprising given that one of the key issues in evaluation must surely be the impact of a programme on the people involved.

Long-term impact

Longitudinal evaluations are rarely undertaken, partly because they are costly. As the ICAI (2010: 10) notes:

The impact of aid programmes can often be fully assessed *only* [my italics] long after the programme has been completed. Programme evaluations, however, usually take place during or shortly after the programme in order to be able to provide timely conclusions. This can present challenges as longer-term impacts may not yet be apparent.

The research I am undertaking takes the long-term view and provides the trainers with an opportunity to reflect on their own career paths and professional identities since the project ended.

The research project

Background

To sum up my purposes, I am currently undertaking a longitudinal study in order to investigate how participants perceive that their professional lives have developed since the CPD project in Bulgaria ended in 2000. The research started in 2012 under the auspices of The University of the West of England, Bristol. My research was approved by the Ethics Review Committee, and to initiate the research I contacted members of the first cohort of trainers in Bulgaria from the CPD programme to see if they would be willing to be interviewed. Initial contact took some time as some of the trainers had moved abroad, but through two members of the team I was able to contact the entire first cohort via email with a request to be in contact again, providing an outline of the research I was undertaking. I made the assumption that those who did not reply would not be interested in

being interviewed. In fact, 90 per cent of the first cohort who were still in Bulgaria did reply positively and consent forms were distributed that outlined the research and ensured all rights to anonymity.

I then made three visits to Bulgaria to undertake in-depth semi-structured interviews, with seven trainers from the original CPD trainer-training project. During the first visit I also interviewed two other people who were not part of the original trainer-training project, to gain a perspective of the times viewed through different, non-pedagogical lenses. One interviewee had been the Head Librarian at the British Council, appointed in 1990 as soon as the British Council was re-established in Sofia; the other is a well known poet and short story writer, Georgi Gospodinov, who gave an interesting insight into pre- and post-Communist life in Bulgaria, which is also reflected in his short stories. These interviews gave me a richer understanding of the background against which I was interviewing the trainers and facilitated a wider and deeper perspective on what I was being told.

Methodology

My purpose in interviewing a small number of trainers was to narrow down the field and look in depth at the interview data through a variety of lenses. All of the interviews are unstructured in the sense that I have asked participants to tell their life histories, since the end of the project, with prompts or probing questions as necessary. This sometimes takes the form of stories; in other cases it is a conversation around the interviewee's life history. In all cases the interview is a co-construction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Life histories are central to this methodology, as it is through the stories which the people tell and the reconstruction of their lives lived that they can connect past experiences with new knowledge.

Positioning

Throughout this process I have been very aware of my position as the previous Project Manager and team leader, who is now conducting interviews to examine the effect of the project 15 years later. Taking Reinharz's (1997) notion of the 'variety of selves' in the field, I, as the interviewer might have as many as 20 different 'selves', ranging from the professional – previous project manager of a large-scale ELT project in Bulgaria – to the 'brought self' of being a mother and being British, to the 'academic self' of being a researcher. However, the fact that I know the participants well and had spent some formative years with them meant that our conversations were much more interesting, richer and revealing than those I could have had with participants whom I did not know so well. An additional benefit was that all the participants were prepared to share personal, difficult or even painful aspects of their personal and professional lives with me during the interviews, something which I had not originally anticipated.

In order to stimulate the stories and reflections I have used material such as photos, books and records. This has led to reflections on the times and the activities and thoughts around the whole process of professional development. Each interview lasted between 15 and 30 minutes, and was recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviews took place in a quiet room, but were often followed up in a cafe with other members of the group and inevitably discussion around CPD and the

original training programme ensued. I was very keen to capture all the conversations, so at times I set up the recorder again, or, if this seemed obtrusive and likely to inhibit the conversation, I made notes when I could and on return to my hotel room made a written record from memory of the main points of the conversation, with the consent of the participants.

Sample selection and representativeness

To date I have interviewed seven trainers who joined the trainer training team in Bulgaria in 1991. There were three key factors that influenced my decision to use this group as the sample group:

1. It was this group which had originally attracted my attention as I had maintained contact with many of them over the years and noticed how they had continued with their professional development long after the project ended, and how some had progressed well in their academic careers.
2. This group were the first to apply to join the project in 1991 – an act which was significant at that time of political upheaval.
3. It was also members of this group who had voiced the comment that the training or the project had changed their lives.

This sample group represented the first wave of teachers who were keen to look at 'new' methodologies and break out of the old system. They chose to join the trainer-training project quite freely, although comments from their interviews reveal how initially they were not really aware what they were joining or getting themselves into, as we shall see in the 'Research findings' section.

Sveti, Yola, Syria, Vera, Iris, Sara and Gail¹² had all shown serious commitment to the trainer-training programme from the very beginning. As I had kept in sporadic contact with them, I discovered over the years that they had all furthered their careers and, in some cases, had started their own educational businesses such as consultancies and language schools.

Data analysis

There are a number of ways in which the researcher can analyse the data collected from interviews, ranging from discourse analysis to conversation analysis and semiotics. Initially I worked from a grounded theory approach, as I am concerned with developing a hypothesis from the data analysis (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011). Taking this approach, I am analysing the data for commonalities or recurring themes from which I may draw some conclusions. Although the data analysis is ongoing, to date all transcribed interviews have been analysed under four headings, as discussed in the following section.

Research findings

The intended outcome of the original CPD project was the creation of a nationwide network of teacher trainers who were able to train English teachers on the fast track programmes, as I have outlined earlier. However, the data collected from the interviews has revealed a number of unintended outcomes related to continuing

¹² Pseudonyms have been given to provide anonymity

professional development. These can be categorised into four areas: professional identity, personal development, career progression and expectations, and pedagogic beliefs and values.

1. Developing a professional identity

By telling their own stories, the trainers are at the same time making meaning of their experiences and then also thinking about their identities. The notion of identity, particularly in relation to the changing of roles from teacher or lecturer to trainers, comes through in the interviews quite clearly:

When people would ask me what I did I would say, well, I'm a lecturer at the X University and then I'm a teacher trainer at the British Council, and sometimes this came first ... and it was true I really felt myself as a teacher trainer first of all, although when I started – when I got into the project – I had really no idea about what was going to happen. (Syria)

Because we started acting as teacher trainers, eventually we, I, started feeling great about it and liked it. (Sveti)

There is no doubt that the trainers identified themselves very much as being part of a community of practice, using Lave and Wenger's (1991: 98) term, described as 'an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities'. This comes through strongly in many comments.

It helped me make contacts, which was of great benefit because normally I'm not a very outgoing person so it was an opportunity for me to make very valuable contacts both on a personal basis and professionally. (Iris)

Well it was a major impact on my professional life in many ways; above all, connecting to all these people, professionals. And learning. (Vera)

The thing is that I say something, just two or three words, with Elena and she understands. With other people, even university people who haven't been part of this group, I have to explain myself. We both have a shared knowledge. (Vera)

And because it was very different, it was very difficult to take everything in, which sort of ... it totally changed my professional personality. (Yola)

From these comments we can clearly see the sense of community which was built up during the project. Even now a majority of the trainers from the first cohort still stay in touch and provide each other with support.

2. Personal development and 'life-changing' events

Part of my rationale to conduct this research was to explore what lay behind the comment which I had heard from time to time that the project had changed people's lives. Interestingly, this view was articulated unprompted in a number of interviews, for example:

I underestimated myself in many ways. I wasn't ambitious to make a career. But [through the project] I realised that relationships helped you. (Sara)

Yola talks about how, because of the project, she became inspired to learn new things, and continues to do so even now:

I learned to swim at 40, I learned to drive and now I am learning Turkish.

This inspiration to continue learning even spread to her family:

This [project] changed my life. So when my husband, for example, got involved in new things, it was thanks again to the fact that I encouraged him to do this. So at some point he combined computers with language teaching and now he has a better job than me.

Gail also feels that joining the cohort of trainers changed her life:

Actually, I think a single event which happened in the university changed my life significantly. And this event is when I saw a notice on the noticeboard saying that British Council Sofia is organising a kind of teacher-training course and anybody can apply.

3. Career progression and professional development

As mentioned in the preceding section, many of the participants were not aware of the exact nature of the trainer training and how it might impact on their lives and professional development. These reflective comments indicate that:

I somehow didn't foresee at that time the impact ... because I just thought I was going to some kind of seminar or something, it wasn't quite clear that it would be such a big thing that would develop. (Yola)

I had really no idea about what was going to happen, and whether I would stay there, I really did it quite accidentally. It was just somebody mentioning the project and encouraging us to try. We'll see whether there's something for us there. (Sara)

For some trainers the change to what was, to all intents and purposes, a new way of thinking and behaving, was quite shocking, although the team became very supportive towards each other.

It was Maria, if you remember her [...] while we stayed at the centre she supported and helped me. And later on I appreciated the fact that I had the courage to stay on. At some point I was on the verge of giving it up because I thought it was very difficult, I couldn't understand. (Yola)

As the training progressed it was clear that not only did we need to train more trainers in terms of the methodology of training, but time also needed to be spent on other areas of professional development such as materials design, syllabus development and issues around testing. Although not initially part of the intended outcome of the project, this broad foundation proved invaluable later on for some of the trainers who moved to different areas of training. For example, Vera found that when she moved to teaching in a medical university she was able to use her previous experience to help design a new syllabus and create materials, as she explains:

This teacher-training period helped me a lot in materials design and programme design and syllabus design. When we were about to train teachers, we had to design our own materials and somehow the fact that I always was used to sitting down in front of a white sheet of paper and writing down the plan of the seminar

or the plan of the course, it helped me a lot, planning the syllabus for nurses, for midwives for pharmacy students as well.

Over a period of time the new trainers became respected and were asked more and more to deliver teacher-training programmes, as Syria said:

At some point I realised that quite a few people in quite a few places all over Bulgaria, had heard about me, I was known, I became known to many people. And I felt great about it.

Others took part in research projects, while many took up lectureship and professor posts in Bulgarian universities.

In some cases the enthusiasm with which some of the trainers devoted themselves to the teacher-training programme and other associated professional development programmes meant that they neglected their own academic careers. In one or two cases some very expert trainers and methodologists did not get promotion because they had not devoted their time working towards a doctorate, which was required in the system. However, all the trainers in that position felt that instead they had developed professionally, as these comments demonstrate:

I would separate professional development and career development, because in terms of promotion, getting higher in the hierarchy, there's not much, not really, very minor; in terms of professional development and development as a person who deals with other professionals – a lot. The career development is perhaps personal. Because we had the option not to become PhDs we didn't, because it was not a university where you were required to grow in the hierarchy and have a PhD almost from the start. We were encouraged to do research work and develop like that but it was not so forceful. So we focused on teaching and good professional teaching. (Syria)

I don't think I would have gone this way without the British Council, definitely. I would probably have gone on teaching probably. Think of our colleagues who did not do any teacher training when we joined the university, some of them never did any teacher training, some of them just continued lecturing. They didn't become involved in many projects. Others wrote PhD projects. I didn't. This is a very sensitive subject ... I mean academically there is probably something more to be done. (Sveti)

The immediate result from the trainer-training programme and CPD programme, when funding was gradually withdrawn, was for the trainers to take it upon themselves to continue with their own professional development. Some did this via research, others through developing new courses at universities and colleges, others via writing, following up initial contacts and getting involved in new projects, as we see here:

And actually it was this event [undertaking the trainer training] which triggered off a chain of events. After that, the first thing I did, I established some contacts, and then I applied on an individual TEMPUS project, the same place in two year's time. Again, the University of Leeds, and again ESP area. It was a very successful one. I also established some contacts there with people at the university and I managed to publish my first article on Suggestopedia. (Gail)

Yola also commented that the project enabled her to learn a new way of doing things:

First of all I learnt things from you – how to write an article, for example. Nobody before that had ever told me how to approach a piece of writing, so these things are all things that I later on used in my job. All the seminars that we had in this project were very useful because they had practical aspects ... so this gave me the literacy for teaching in general.

4. Change of pedagogic beliefs and values

In terms of education reform in Bulgaria, is it interesting to see how teaching methodology gradually took precedence over the more traditional approach to training English teachers, which relied heavily on a philology background and was generally a didactic, transmission-led approach. One interviewee reported:

I remember Prof D teaching linguistics but [because of the project] Elena and me and Maria wanted to go more into teaching and what made good teaching and what made it different ... So it was really a change from linguistics. We had to move [towards methodology]. (Sara)

Others commented:

Methodology was underestimated then [pre-1990]. But we did contribute to changing that in Bulgaria. Joining this project prepared us, and we talked about it in the staffroom. People listened. (Gail)

It wasn't quite clear that it would be such a big thing that would develop. It changed my professional way, life, but in a very positive direction because it gave me insight into a different school of learning in general; because the education I got in Bulgaria was quite traditional concerning methods of teaching. (Yola)

No, no we didn't have this kind of systematic teacher training, no. I mean, like the way you structure, for instance, a session with trainers' notes and trainees' notes, no ... and all the mechanics, no it was completely new. We were not trained into the seminar style when you give a kind of talk – short talk, then you organise a discussion. This new task-based approach was the key. (Sara)

For some the new approach to teaching and training was quite traumatic:

For the first two weeks, 1992, I remember very well, I even had some emotional problems [...] because I couldn't cope with the ideas – the way they were presented. Initially it gave me an inside struggle because the way I have to study these new things, these new methods, teacher-training methods also was completely different from what I had done, so far. (Yola)

The change in pedagogic beliefs and values was welcomed by this group of trainers who had quite forward-looking views for the time, but at the same time we can see from some of the interviews that this transition was not easy. In the following section we will see how in fact the transition has had a long-term impact on the education system itself in Bulgaria as well as on the trainers who implemented and who are at the heart of this change.

Lessons learned

The information provided via interviews from the trainers many years on has provided much food for thought regarding how, with hindsight, things might have been done differently on the project in three key areas. I shall discuss these in turn and also summarise some of the other lessons learned from the research to date, which might be helpful for project planners in the future.

1. Culture shift

Clearly the 'new' methodology was quite a shock to the system for many and, although much appreciated subsequently as a valid and appropriate methodology for training teachers, data from the interviews indicate that perhaps more time was needed for some participants to adapt to the different mindset required to accommodate a creative and, at that time, innovative approach to teacher training.

2. Barriers and the need for adaptation

In terms of the project itself, the interviews also reveal not only the difficulty of implementing change in a very rigid system but also show how a trainer can still develop professionally despite the barriers and adapt what she or he has learned to his or her own context. The following interview comment illustrates the phenomenon:

It's a bit like Frankenstein's monster in a way. You have this idealism, this sort of 'this is what we're going to do', and then you're battering your head against the wall and so in the end I suppose it's easier not to do it. But, it was a kind of switch to more local things, so I started conveying my expertise directly to my students ... so I tried to train them how to learn on their own – learning to learn. So all the expertise I got from the project I still apply, but in a more local way. (Yola)

The comment reveals the difficulty of introducing an innovation or starting a change programme within a system that may not be ready for it. In some interviews trainers reveal the difficulty they had in delivering what was still seen as a new methodology. They also commented that in some ways the trainer-training project was many years ahead of its time:

The thing is that slowly what our [ELT] group of people were doing is seeping through the education system. Teachers of Bulgarian, teachers of other subjects are not all aware of all these issues but the process is kind of slow and the people who decide, the leaders in a given context, and educational context, are usually further behind; and, because of this, somehow we have to wait for them to go away and ripen for the ideas really to be implemented in all areas. (Vera)

As project designers we need, then, to be very aware of the barriers which participants in any change programme might face from within and without their own community. These should be indicated on the project design as a risk factor.

3. CPD project outcomes

As we have seen from the analysis of the data above, there will inevitably be a number of unintended outcomes from a CPD programme, ranging from emotional responses to a heightened awareness of professional identity. Perhaps, then, there needs to be a broader awareness of what the outcome or impact might be on the participants when designing a CPD programme, both in the long term as well as the short term, and not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

4. Other lessons

The following points summarise other lessons learned, which have emerged from analysis of the interviews so far:

- Always research the cultural context before any programme is designed and be aware of the bureaucratic processes which may make or break the CPD programme.
- Always research the political history – what took place and between whom before you arrived on the scene.
- Don't take anything for granted.
- Be aware not only of the participants' aspirations and backgrounds, but of the affective factors which can make or break a participant's involvement in a programme. What support mechanisms can be provided to help participants in a major change project cope with the changes?
- Listen to the sub-texts of any questions or comments throughout the project. Be aware that your questions may be the wrong questions or, at the least, irrelevant.
- Be aware of how commitment to a programme can jeopardise a participant's professional career in their own environment if not accredited in some way.

Analysis of the interviews to date shows how much can be revealed by an in-depth investigation into the lives of people involved in professional development projects. Although at the end of many projects all of the 'intended outcomes' boxes may well have been ticked, it is the unintended outcomes which can be extremely revealing and potentially more useful to programme designers in the future.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the context of an innovative continuing professional development trainer-training programme which took place in Bulgaria from 1991 to 2000. I have discussed the socio-political context and its impact upon the trainers and the outcome of the programme on their personal and professional lives. I then described the study I am undertaking to evaluate the long-term impact of the programme many years later to determine to what extent (if any) the CPD programme has helped the trainers develop professionally. What has been revealed is that, as well as the intended outcomes, there were a number of unintended outcomes of the project, both personal and professional. Data in this chapter reveals the struggles and triumphs of the group to become professional teacher trainers and to continue with their professional development while at the same time continuing to support the educational reform process in Bulgaria.

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This publication offers global perspectives on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of English language teachers across a range of levels – sector-wide, institutional and personal. The chapters are grounded in practice and informed by theory, offering examples of innovations that have been tried and tested and which illustrate the vibrancy of English language teacher development worldwide. As a whole, the chapters illustrate the multi-faceted, lifelong nature of CPD as well as its extent, taking place inside as well as outside the workplace and often moving beyond the professional and into the realm of teachers' personal lives too. The British Council hopes that the volume will provide valuable information for anyone concerned with CPD in their own contexts and offer a means to reflect on and refresh practice at all levels for the benefit of teachers and, in turn, their students.

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