

Is it Training or Professional Development? Towards an Alternative Approach in Professional Growth for EFL/ESL Teachers

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Abstract

Teacher education nowadays enjoys a high priority for officials and decision makers within the education sector in general and the field of English language teaching in specific. The understanding and determination of the main elements that constitute a particular teacher education programme for language teachers, such as the approach, structure and content is fundamental when designing any teacher education programme for novice language teachers to be qualified to perform sufficiently in the profession. This paper presents a critical review of the main approaches in the in-service programmes as a one type of the teacher education programmes in relation to the main concepts ‘training’, ‘development’ and ‘education’, with a special reference to the reality of teacher education programme for English language teachers in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The paper also offers an alternative approach with its elements for English language teachers’ training and development.

1. Introduction

The recent rapid social and technological advancements, such as social media, virtual learning and global standardization of assessment and testing, have increased pressure upon schools’ accountability as learning institutions to pursue change in their teaching-learning practices (Silva et. al, 2017). These pressures are originated from many quarters both within the educational system, such as the Ministry of Education, or beyond it, such as parents, media and society in the way that schools and educational practitioners should accept change is an essential factor achieve innovative

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none-native language speakers of English. This corroborates and supports the earlier mentioned point that any INSET programme for ELT should include mutual fulfilment of both pedagogical and language needs of ELTs.

Conclusion

Scrutinizing the different terms and issues related to ELTs' professional development shows that clear vision and determination of what and how ELTs should be trained in order to avoid an interchangeable use of INSET and CPD. This paper tried to set out a determination for this interchanging by proposing an alternative approach in INSET for ELTs through diverting the focus of language teachers' programme from one way direction to teachers that focuses on language proficiency only to a two-way direction from and to the teachers, in which both aspects the language pedagogy and language proficiency are addressed and practiced. This can be achieved by making the INSET programmes more decentralised in order to overcome most of the procedural constraints like clashes between the trainees' school tables and INSET programme timings, the difficulty for some trainees to reach the training centre. Therefore, school-based in-service education and training provides a potential framework for collaborative decision-making that is lacking in the current INSET programmes and to make them related directly to the English language teachers' real needs.

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