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Current Trends In Professional Development: A Quick Guide For English Language Educators

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Current trends in professional development: A quick guide for English language educators

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to highlight the importance of high-quality Teacher Professional Development (TPD), which is essential for upgrading and updating English Language Educators' qualifications for the current flow of innovations in the field of teaching profession. Since educational backgrounds of teachers may change and pre-service trainings may be inadequate, individual, collegial, or organizational-based TPD is needed for a long-term professional competence. Expanding the knowledge and developing skills and attitude about various aspects in language teaching by using an effective way of TPD is the key issue drawn attention to in This study. Engaging in high-quality TPD while practicing teaching leads educators to willingly expand their career range and take on new responsibilities and job roles such as teacher educators, coordinators, supervisors and administrators to specialize in the field. The aim of this study is to serve as an educational guide of current trends in TPD for foreign language educators, which can be utilized to fabricate a program that should feed individuals both internally and externally.

Keywords: Teacher professional development, English language teaching, current TPD options, PD guide

1. INTRODUCTION

With the beginning of the new millennium, educational reform movements penetrate more into education systems in ever-evolving professional world. In this dynamic system, Teacher Professional Development (TPD) sits in as one of the pivotal elements, which are finally seen as not only a vital change agent but also the subject for improving educational systems. Over the past few years, TPD has been given a significant attention so that it is an expanding and thriving research field in the literature. TPD serves the diverse dimensions in flourishing teaching and learning process to increase learner outcome. As in any occupation, Professional Development is the primary trajectory for professionalism and quality in teaching as well. Given that, TPD should enact continuity, quality, and sustainability to invest the educational systems and to meet the ever-changing needs of learners.

Teacher Professional Development is a growing concern in the field of research (Richards and Farrell, 2005). Learning to teach should be seen as a long-lasting process that starts in the classroom for prospective teachers and that should never end. TPD is defined as a constant process in which teachers actively engage voluntarily in learning to adjust their teaching to their students' needs (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003). Foreign language teaching must adapt rapid changes keeping up with current trends in the field of teaching and new professional paradigms in order to administer currently rising challenges related to testing and assessment, curriculum, and learner outcomes. Under these circumstances, foreign language educators keep their teaching qualifications up to date by developing content knowledge, conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge and pedagogical knowledge; besides, skills and attitude need to be improved to be able to specialize in the profession.

This study is presented as a practical guide for language educators, teacher trainers, coordinators, supervisors, and administrators who wish to implement viable systems with wide variety of approaches related to teacher professional development. Aimed especially for practicing language teachers to provide new perspectives and ideas, who are rather new to the field, experienced teachers would also benefit from This study. As a growing interest, TPD has some practical activities and procedures some of which are fairly new to the field. Especially in the profession of foreign language teaching, rather than the traditional PD options, innovative ones have been on the rise to meet the needs of the language teaching educators worldwide. This study examines different TPD options that need to be tried while practicing language teaching to facilitate TPD in the field: both traditional activities such as the PD models with administrative and clinical supervisions and one-size-fits-all approach; and innovative ones like performance assessment of students, case-based professional development, self-directed TPD, co-operative or collegial development, peer-observations for teaching excellence, reflective and

narrative model, project-based model, teaching portfolios, action research, cascade model, and peer-coaching and mentoring, which can be done as individually, as a small group or organization-wide.

The study focuses on how foreign language educators can steer the wheel of their own professional development opportunities as soon as the periods of their pre-service training end. The necessity of continuous teacher education has been a hot debate in language teaching circles over the past few decades and the focus has been changed into more innovative emergences as TPD options in the field. Since the knowledge base in teaching profession is ever evolving, pre-service education cannot serve a sufficient foundation for a long-lasting success. Opportunities can be provided as in-service trainings (INSETs) aiming on-going development of teachers. Teachers' knowledge, skills and attitude can be upgraded with ongoing renewal of professional trainings teachers need to take in certain stages of their careers. Constant changes in teaching may lead organizations to renew their INSET programs; and individuals to increase their knowledge and skills and improve their practices in their classrooms. The aim of this presentation is to offer information about some possibilities and options to both administrators, teacher educators and teachers to enhance their classroom practices, quality of teaching and professionalism throughout their teaching career. Therefore, the study sets the stage by characterizing current TPD options and diverse voices of the research covering the following research questions:

1. What are the critical features of effective teacher professional development programs?
2. What are the current trends in Teacher Professional Development?
3. What are the implications for Teacher Professional Development inquiry in the process of teacher learning?

2. Understanding TPD

Little (1993) defined professionalism as an act that “tends to take the form of extended assistance to new teachers, expanded career opportunities for experienced teachers, and experiments in site-based decision making” (p.132). The related literature casts myriad of options related to TPD moving beyond traditional models such as workshops, conferences, local or organizational PD options that have strict boundaries not considering individual differences and educational backgrounds of educators. Conceptualization of TPD has been scrutinized by the broad research milieu in the literature; besides, different activities and innovative approaches have emerged over the past years.

Borko (2004) describes teacher learning within many contexts regarding them as both individual learners and participants in the professional learning community. Borko also asked some questions to have a deeper understanding about TPD programs and their impact on teacher learning. Besides, she tries to figure out which directions should educators go and what strategies they need to learn to broaden their perspective about teaching profession. With the light of these wisely asked questions, the researcher spotted the key components – facilitators as a guidance that leads teacher-learners to construct new and current practices in the field, PD program, teachers as learners and the context that the PD takes place that can be used to constitute a professional development system, which any TPD program developer may use in the implementation process (Borko, 2004).

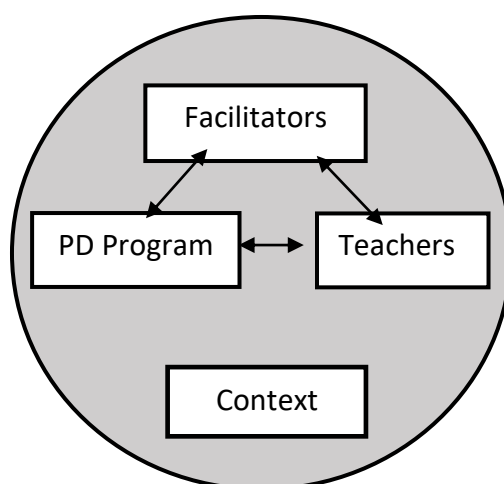


Figure 1. Elements of a professional development system

Learning for teachers may take place in various situative contexts. It may happen in the classroom, in the organizational setting, in the courses designed by the PD team of the organization or the conferences that can be voluntarily attended. Professional learning community plays a very effective role in teacher learning even when two colleagues discuss a situation happened in the classroom environment. Collegial communion and support should be noted as one of the most active collaborators in TPD. Such forms of embedded TPD may intrinsically

foster the dynamic nature of professional development supporting the need of continuity and sustainability aspect of it (Lieberman, 1995).

a. Developing Professional Identity

Teachers' beliefs and cognition influence their perception about teaching and teacher learning while developing professional identity. In teacher education, it should be emphasized that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (Borg, 2003, p. 81).

Understanding the importance of giving some flexibility especially to novice teachers for them to explore their own beliefs and perceptions; and how these affect their own professional identity in various professional contexts such as classroom, collegial and institutional backgrounds encourage teachers to do self-assessment via some currently used options of TPD including self-reflection such as journal writing or teaching diary keeping or self-monitoring. This can raise their awareness about their own individual willingness about learning and professional contributions to analyzing their classroom practices providing the crucial data about what need to be improved to become more effective in the field. The philosophy underneath TPD rests on a foundation, that is, "knowledge is actively constructed by learners and not passively received. Learning is seen as involving reorganization and reconstruction and it is through these processes that knowledge is internalized." (Borg, 2003, p. 7).

b. TPD as Upgrading Teachers' Qualifications

As any other professions, foreign language teaching requires the commitment and effort for a better professional experience and effective operation in the field. Over the time, keeping the passion, enthusiasm and creative mind alive especially for experienced language teachers is getting harder and harder as a result of the challenging situations faced in the educational settings such as the expected teaching and learning outcomes, administrative expectations and demotivation of the students. For this reason, teachers actively working in the field need to broaden their perspectives about evolving features in English language teaching. It is not enough to have personal efforts or interests, but language schools or educational institutions should also reserve some budget to provide some opportunities for teachers to sustain the quality of teaching practice as a long-term career target.

The changing needs of the institutional contexts lead teachers to regularly self-assess and evaluate their teaching knowledge, skills and attitude. Besides, to maintain the high-quality and sustainable success and professional standards in teaching and learning, the educational institutions should support their teachers with opportunities considering their individual needs and interests to uphold the dynamic nature of professional development. Moreover, the most robust and long-lasting learning experience for teachers would be noted as the one happened in their own classroom (Putnam & Borko, 2000) when used self-monitoring and reflection as a medium of upgrading the quality of teaching. Furthermore, the teaching quality would decrease when teachers resist to improve and to keep pace with the growing body of high professional standards. When TPD programs are designed to serve flexibility to choose from regarding the individual needs, active involvement in TPD would then take place.

3. Critical Features of Effective Professional Development Programs

For a long time, teachers have been concentrated on traditional approaches in TPD which provide limited amount of improvement with a low rate of sustainability. In the climate of changing trends in language teaching, logical steps should be taken to increase teaching quality and student achievement accordingly. A concern with the implementation of an effective professional development has been considered by administrators, teacher educators and individuals themselves to tailor their TPD program to the needs of each teacher independently. For a sustainable and an effective practice of professional development, one must analyze the evolution of TPD systems over the years.

a. Evolving TPD systems

Radical educational reforms have been identified to adapt into the changing standards of teaching quality in TPD. Evolving student needs would also be one of the most essential factors for teachers to take initiative for regular updates in their own teaching and learning. Professional development programs have been displayed disappointing results in terms of providing an effective and sustainable improvement in teaching profession. Understanding the reasons of the downfalls of the traditional professional development models helps teachers customize their own TPD plan considering their professional needs. Traditional way of implementation does not support teachers' active involvement to learn through trial and error. Making mistakes and learning from them is the best strategy that helps internalization process cognitively.

Teachers have tried out participating in one-shot workshop sessions, short-term courses and one or two-day conferences that might not cover the need areas for teachers' educational gaps since the sessions are not

connected to each other with no coherence which make this information overload ineffective after some time passes. Traditional TPD is not tailored for a sustainable improvement equipped with no follow-up checks, no feedback sessions or no reflective learning opportunity, which cannot contribute to teacher's instructional repertoire. The realization of those drawback related to the previously used one-size-fits-all approaches draws the attention of the instructional experts to find new ways of increasing the motivation and the quality of learning and improvement process. The emerged problems that need to be solved can be listed as follows:

- No sustainability
- No self-directedness
- No needs assessment before the implementation process
- No drive for a personalized or customized TPD system
- No flexibility to have space to reflect on their own practice
- No measurement of the impact on learner outcome

It is debated that there is no centralized framework that provides the TPD program developers a guide for an effective implementation; however, this creates space for implementing a customized and a cohesive TPD structure considering the needs of its stakeholders. Educators may take this gap and turn into an advantage to construct their own roadmap in this evolving educational landscape.

4. TPD Models from Past to Present

With the educational and technological developments in teaching profession, instructional practices including in and out classroom pedagogies have started to be researched -and according to the findings in the literature - presented new pedagogical approaches in classroom teaching for a better TPD. The aim of this section is to describe considerable number of existing TPD models and their brief descriptions.

a. Traditional TPD models

Traditional TPD models mostly refer to workshop, courses, and training with shorter duration. Guskey and Yoon (2009) express that one-shot or short-term traditional TPD is not fully ineffectual, yet they may give teachers opportunities to have a low-cost and time-saving activities (C. Smith & Gillespie, 2007) to grow better in teaching profession. When combined with some current innovative options, these TPD activities may serve individuals as a personalized way of high-quality instructional development, and this section aims to fill this gap.

i. Administrative Supervision Approach

This type of approach is also called the inspectional model by Bourke (2001) considering its most traditional format, which is typically managed by an administrator who observes teachers' classroom practices according to a rubric or a checklist that is prepared by the organization. At the end of this brief evaluation, the administrator goes out of the classroom without giving any feedback to the teacher. Regarding the base of this evaluation, teachers' annual performances are evaluated to decide on who to promote or whose contract not to be renewed in the following educational year. In this format, the focus is solely on teachers' performance in the classroom at the time of the observation. In most cases, teachers' beliefs, interests, job-motivation are not the concern of the administration, which are the critical components of the teaching profession (Hickcox and Musella, 1992).

Administrative supervision primarily aims to create a change in the quality of education dealing with the pedagogical issues in teachers' classroom practices. Arguably in the related literature, its nature of inspection causes a strong distress and resistance for teachers to be observed, which may negatively affect the professional development process and the intention to improve in the organization (Stoller, 1996; Kayaoglu, 2012). Accordingly, improving teacher learning should not be expected since there are no planned steps to be taken and no collaboration between the administration and the teachers as the observees. This drawback is perhaps formed by the disturbing conditions due to the instant and mechanical visits of the administrator or supervisor in an authoritarian manner, alternately, not in a cooperative way.

ii. Clinical Supervision Approach

The clinical supervision approach is acknowledged as one of the traditional TPD models, which is broadly used for teaching practice (TP) evaluation known as Goldhammer's (1980) versions of model with less discomfoting stages for teachers when wisely planned. Tanner and Tanner (1987) explain the phases of instructional supervision and how critical it is to benefit from the first-hand observation of teaching practice. The most prominent feature that distinguishes this model from the other traditional TPD models is that it has pre-planned stages and contains face-to-face interaction between the teacher educator or the supervisor to analyze the aspects that are in good conditions and that need to be improved as well.

The stages in the most common way of Clinical Supervision Approach can be listed as:

1. Pre-observation Conference
2. Classroom Observation

3. Analysis and Strategy
4. Supervision Conference
5. Post-conference Analysis

With this new perspective to the traditional TPD models, clinical supervision can be considered as an effective medium for having invaluable feedback and advice to improve knowledge, skills and attitude in teaching. Over the past few decades, administrative supervision model has been deliberately transformed into more constructive and less fearful way of performance evaluation, that is, clinical supervision approach. Adding specific intervention in the implementation process may change teachers' attitude towards the process of TP supervision. This only happens when the organization is conducted the system in a placid and respectful manner for teachers to consider the process as a part of their teaching career, not to forcefully do to complete the annual target plan of the organization. Bulunuz, Gürsoy, Kesner, Göktalay & Salihoğlu (2014) claim that clinical supervision has positive impact on teachers' classroom performances and perception about TPD when it is implemented as a well-developed and structured program giving importance to provide constructive feedback and mutual reflection to increase individual, collegial, and organizational success. Since need areas are context-related and changeable in person, the issue of seniority should be taken into consideration. The needs of experienced and novice teachers should be individuated to promote a high-quality of instructional supervision. Smyth (1989) expresses that collaboration between practicing teacher and supervisor is a key element for the success of this kind of supervision, which may not be commonly seen.

iii. One-shot or One-size-fits all Approach

One of the most traditional forms of organizational professional development is conventional INSET program designed with the idea of one-size-fits-all approach including workshops, seminars and courses that may provide one-shot experiences and trainings to the teachers without considering the needs of the teachers in advance. In this type of TPD, teacher involvement is mostly passive while listening to the expert giving suggestions or advice related to the classroom practices for improving teaching and increasing learner outcome as well. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon (2001) declared that the activities in one-shot trainings are oftentimes unsatisfactory in shaping teachers' professional skills with the fundamental teaching tools and building up their instructional creativity (Garet et al., 2001).

Guskey and Yoon (2009) declared that traditional TPD models including one-shot workshop sessions with an expert, short courses or conferences doesn't create the expected impact on teachers since they are completely irrelevant to the need areas of teachers as individuals and not sustainable with no follow-up arrangements after the process. The reason why this type of TPD is favored would be its duration and relatively low cost (Smith & Gillespie, 2007) compared to any pre-planned and well-designed TPD models. Given that the new tendency in TPD as a continual system of growth in teaching and learning, rather than contented with one-shot events, combining them with current trends as professional development options may certainly feed the undeniable void in any teacher- regardless of being novice or expert- to improve the quality of instruction.

Table 1. Traditional Teacher Professional Development Approaches

Administrative Supervision	Clinical Supervision	One-shot or One-size-fits All
Administrators observing teachers	First-hand observation	Workshops, seminars, courses
Evaluating annual performance	Pre-planned stages	Passive teacher involvement
	Face-to-face interaction	

b. Current options of TPD

Over the years, a number of TPD models have been developed and implemented in diverse school contexts to elevate both teaching conditions of the organization and teachers' classroom practices as professional development opportunities. In this section, each TPD model is briefly described for offering language educators a guide to use separately or combined depending on the context.

There are three different contextual categories related to TPD -organizational, small group and individual TPD; for an ultimate success, a model or a combination of models should be chosen wisely from the person responsible for TPD program of the organization including the administrator, teacher educator or supervisor.

i. Self-directed TPD

Adult Learning Theory introduced by Malcolm Knowles in 1968 prescribes six dimensions -self-directedness, experience, need to know, mental orientation, intrinsic motivation, and readiness to learn- for self-initiated development for individuals taking charge of their own development (Knowles, 2005). In this type of professional development, identifying a goal is the first step to consider in order to go towards the right direction with full concentration. The next step is to decide on which TPD activity or sets of activities to continue in the process of self-initiated development either individually or in small groups. In this step, the needs assessment

would be the key component to see which materials, resources and planning and lastly the assessment tools will be required to reach that aim and its implementation. With the full package of the implementation plan, individuals are ready to take initiation for their roles in the TPD process knowing that they can control their own learning and improvement plan without any hindrance.

Abadi, Jahandar, Khodabandehlou and Seyedi (2012, p.3) described the characteristics of self-directed and responsible learners as follows:

- an ability to define one's own objectives,
- awareness of how to use language materials effectively,
- careful organization of time for learning,
- active development of learning strategies

Nunan and Lamb (1996) expresses that taking the responsibility of one's own decisions related to improvement and learning is not always enough to accomplish all the goals that are set. Hence self-directed learning experience still gives the learner flexibility that can promote the nature of learner autonomy to develop teaching knowledge, skills, and competences to face the upcoming challenges both in the classroom and the school settings.

ii. Self-monitoring: Self-reflective and Narrative Model

Self-directed learning is an individual-based professional development activity for teacher development. Self-monitoring is one component under the umbrella of 'self-directed learning. Self-monitoring or self-observation refers to a systematic approach to the observation, evaluation, and management of one's own behavior in order to achieve a better understanding and control over the behavior (Armstrong & Frith, 1984; Koziol & Burns, 1985). Self-monitoring is more than just being a reflective teacher. It must also include action produced from reflection.

Armstrong and Frith (1984, p. 9-12) summarize the benefits of self-monitoring option of TPD to observe the professional improvement in the field as follows:

The first benefit can be seen as "Facilitates the Learning of Responsible Behavior"; that is, considering the diverse social, educational, and socio-economic conditions of individuals, the chance of getting experience socially and professionally is not equally possible. As a result, create their own chance of being mature and knowledgeable in their career to pursue the goals that they set for success. The second crucial profit of this TPD option is "Maximizes Use of Teacher Time". Lastly, "May Improve Self-Awareness" is the third gain for teachers when they use it wisely. As one of the self-directed learning option, self-monitoring leads individuals to be responsible for their own actions to maximize the overall benefit of autonomous development.

There are plentiful types of activities in self-monitoring model. Keeping a journal to provoke self-analysis and reflection can be utilized to observe oneself later on and to make sense of what has been happening during the TPD journey of self. A teacher's knowledge can be transferred into the words as a narrative-based form; therefore, the autonomous teachers can produce stories from their own teaching. Furthermore, journal writing can be recognized one of the most powerful TPD tool for 2 main reasons: by writing, individuals may put their thoughts into words, and by re-reading the journal entries, they are put back into that situation which can inspire a conclusion about what to do next about a specific situation.

Farrell (2019) declared that there are three ways of using reflective teaching as English language teachers. This self-directed way of learning provides teachers a freedom to pre-plan and to act deliberately. This regulates the teaching time of classroom practices and save them from the haunting condition of "I don't know what I will do today" (Farrell, 1998). The observation of one's own performance and reflecting upon it is the key aspect of the reflective teaching model. Various techniques can be exemplified in this type of professional development including diary writing, video-recording, journal entry and action research.

iii. Co-operative or Collegial Development

The prior urge can be detected as the individual desire and self-initiation in any professional development journey since the process may be seen as a solitary quest; notwithstanding, collaboration is the key element for the development of both individuals and institutions to enhance the eventual success. Lieberman (1986b) claimed that institutional needs changes in time; the only thing that never changes is that the improvement comes with collaboration in an organization (p.6).

Cooperative Professional Development is a term used by Glatthorn (1987) to characterize the elements of collegial development process. This model gives the flexibility for small groups of teachers to create their own professional development plan and take the full responsibility in the process, which makes them feel more powerful in their own professional development by cooperatively affecting one another with sharing various perspectives after experiencing different situations related to the same problem. Edge (1992) portrays Co-operative Development as "a way of working together with someone in order to become a better teacher in your own way: two people co-operate for an agreed period in order to allow one person to work on his or her (self-)

development. Co-operative Development is not meant to replace other forms of teacher self-help, it is meant to add an extra potential way forward for those who want to try it.” (Edge, 1992: 62)

Glatthorn (1995) describes the necessary conditions for the most efficient way of implementation of this model as follows:

- There should be a valid collaborative school environment, that is, teachers should be willingly involved in the process, not forcefully;
- Administrative support should be positively observed;
- Enough time should be assigned for teachers to complete all the tasks;
- Necessary trainings should be provided in the implementation process.

Team teaching has a growing interest that supports the practices of various teaching techniques for teachers to collaboratively investigate different ways to experience change in teaching in a supportive environment. Moreover, the cooperation in team teaching promotes reflective practices for both teachers and their students to observe teaching and learner outcome. Lasagabaster (2018) argued that team teaching can be difficult to implement because of the funding issues since typically -in team teaching- two teachers plan, work and be together in the classroom that are expected to be very costly. In the formation of the teams, some considerations should be taken including the harmony of the team, cultural, social, and educational background, and the cost.

iv. Peer-observations for teaching excellence

The opportunity of observing other teachers’ classroom practices opens the way to see different dimensions of language teaching that contribute on teachers’ positive attitude towards TPD. By this way, teachers can learn the number of various usages from one another, and reflect on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that can carry them onto teaching excellence. Peer observation is one of the core professional development activities for ongoing teacher development. It encompasses a pair taking turns closely watching and monitoring a classroom practice to get deeper insights of some aspects of teaching or classroom interactions.

Learning through observation is a key element in this form of professional development, which is a significant way to nonthreateningly see how an observee deals with some of the same issues that an observer confronts in the classroom through reflecting back to their own teaching style. With peer observations, the observer should establish a 'non-threatening environment so the observee can relax to the best of their ability during the observation. Because peer observation partners are egalitarian in nature, this is a practical way to take the power structure inhibitions out of the equation, which are traditionally found with classroom observations conducted by a supervisory element.

Peer Observation Guidelines

Peer observation process includes three basic phases for a successful reciprocal developmental opportunity creating a better environment for teachers to improve teaching and learning. The ultimate aim of peer observation is to promote a flexible and collaborative atmosphere for teachers to plan and schedule the process to agree on the aspects that need to be focused on. In this three-phased implementation, teachers build a shared understanding of effective classroom practice learning from each other by looking at different perspectives.

Pre-observation Meeting

- Clarifying objectives of observation
- Setting a time for observations
- Filling out the peer observation form together.
- Scheduling the post-observation meeting

Classroom Observation

- Focusing on specifics stated from pre-observation meeting
- Resisting the urge to compare the teaching style of the observee since each educator has a different personality and teaching style
- Observing the lesson without interrupting
- Concentrating on trying to be invisible
- Showing up a few minutes early so that students aren't disrupted.
- Respecting confidentiality

Post-observation Meeting

The meeting should take place within 48 hours, or else it becomes less meaningful. Making this process a learning experience supports the classroom practice of the observer. The feedback should not be the outcome in the process. Instead, the essential goal should be how the observer turns reflections on the observation into a meaningful post-observation discussion that conveys key learning points between the observer and the observee.

The purpose of peer observation is not to evaluate the observee. It is an opportunity for the observer to see another teaching style.

v. Teaching Portfolios

A portfolio is a term used as a collection of an individual's work gathered over a designated period of time to display the various aspect of his or her own growth and abilities (Riggs and Sandlin, 2000). Similarly, teaching portfolio is a dossier that record teachers' professional development journey for a limited time frame. Diez (1999) categorizes teaching portfolio into three: an employment portfolio; an assessment and a learning portfolio. Assessment and learning portfolio are the ones teachers occasionally use for monitoring their own improvement. Teaching portfolio is a tool for keeping the record of professional studies, accomplishments and merits of prescribed competences and outcomes in TPD.

Competently use of teaching portfolios provides teachers to reflect on their own work supporting teachers' professional development, as they give opportunities for teachers to monitor their own job performance. In the process of collecting the data about the performance in or out of the classroom, teachers -self-directedly or with the institutional steering- monitor, reflect, assess, and discover the better way of instructional practice. The whole process of this performance report serves as constructive feedback of what teachers have experienced and documented accordingly in a certain period.

vi. Action Research

Action research is one of the most effective TPD tool powered with active involvement, problem solution skills, observation and reflection that can contribute to change (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). There has been a growing interest in using action research as a professional development option not only in general teacher education but also in English language teacher education (Wallace, 1998; Burns, 2005; Borg, 2006, Burns, 2010; Borg, 2010). Action research is a self or collaborative investigation process targeting to provide an impact on the quality of teaching that elevates the existing knowledge of educators with a cycle of steps that needs to be taken in the process.

Action research refers to teacher-conducted classroom research that seeks to clarify and resolve practical teaching issues the foreign language educators would face. Action research takes place in the teacher's own classroom and involves a cycle of activities centering on identifying a problem or issue, collecting information about the issue, devising a strategy to address the issue, trying out the strategy, and observing its effects. It may be carried out individually or collaboratively with colleagues. Since action research is based on teaching, it is best thought of as adding a research dimension to existing practice as a way to better understand and improve such practice. It also seeks to re-define the role of the teacher by giving teachers the means to set their own agendas for improvement and by shifting the responsibility for change or improvement from an outsider (administration, trainers, observers) to teachers themselves.

The Steps of an Effective Action Research

1. Selecting an issue or concern to examine in more detail
2. Selecting a suitable procedure for collecting information about the issue
3. Collecting the information, analyzes it, and decides what changes might be necessary in his or her teaching.
4. Developing an action plan to help bring about the desired change in classroom behavior
5. Observing the effects of the plan on teaching behavior and reflects on its significance.
6. Reflecting upon the outcome and initiates second action cycle, when necessary.

vii. Cascade Model

Griffin (1999) describes the cascade model as a train the trainer model, which can be summarized that teachers who are chosen to be teacher educators are trained about a subject matter, various topics or some features related to teaching in a short span of time first, and then the trained teachers get ready for training other teachers who are competent enough to be trained exactly as their current trainers have been. Selection of the first group and the pre-planning process of the implementation should be regarded as pretty much important since it creates domino effect if the choices are done wrongfully. The cascade model can keep going for up to three generation effectively.

Training plenty of teachers at a time is a challenging process to implement. There are some stages to employ this model including pre-planning, teacher selection and organization. One of the notable advantages of this model is that it can be implemented even when the resources are limited. This model supports active involvement and collaboration by making teachers disseminate the information to their colleagues. Nieto (2003) agrees that the cascade model focuses on knowledge and skills and not much on values and attitudes (Solomon & Tresman, 1999). She suggests that the shift from focusing on 'what' and 'how' into considering the question 'why' needs to be given importance to complete the puzzle.

viii. Coaching and Mentoring

Peer coaching is a procedure in which two teachers collaborate to help one or both teachers improve some aspect of their teaching. In peer coaching, a teacher and a colleague plan a series of opportunities to explore the teacher's teaching collaboratively. One adopts the role of coach or critical friend who "asks questions, makes observations and offers suggestions that help a teacher grow and reflect and produce different decisions" (Harwell-Kee, 1999, p. 28). It is crucial that someone whom one can trust and have confidence in, and who can offer constructive feedback in a positive and supportive manner should be chosen to be the coach or mentor. During and after the process, the coach provides feedback and suggestions to the other teacher. The feedback should be non-judgmental and non-evaluative.

The coach offers observations and suggestions, but the other teacher makes his or her own decisions about what, if anything, to change as a result of the peer-coaching relationship. In other words, each teacher still has the main responsibility for his or her professional development and does not hand over control to a colleague. The collaborating teacher benefits in the peer-coaching relationship by gaining knowledge from a trusted peer, by getting constructive, nonthreatening feedback on his or her teaching, and by expanding his or her teaching repertoires. The coach has the satisfaction of helping a colleague and this helps teachers revitalize their own teaching during the coaching process. The whole process should be reflected and documented to monitor the improvement throughout the process.

Mentoring is a way of coaching that has a limited time frame especially for a novice teacher or for a newcomer to orient into the teaching position or guide to fulfill the needs of the organization and to use the resources effectively. Mentoring serves as a dynamic TPD option, which has positive influence on both the teacher who is mentored and also the mentor typically chosen from an experienced teacher since it is a learning process with a mutual exchange based on classroom practice. A companion teacher known as buddy-mentoring may become a mentor to a newcomer in some cases to share information about the school context and support them by role-modelling and giving some advice. It is reported that although buddy-mentoring has some positive impacts on the new teacher, this type of mentoring has some drawbacks as well (Ballantyne and Hansford, 1995). Using only buddy-mentoring as TPD would be insufficient for novice teachers so that it can be supplemented with other various TPD activities to complete their initial teacher education. Coaching is generally a continuing and a long-term process. To be a coach, certain training sessions should be taken by the prospective coaches and mentors because coaching is a learned skill (Holloway, 2001).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of ongoing TPD is to upgrade teachers' qualifications including theoretical knowledge, classroom practice, teaching skills and strategies. Pre-service teacher education and initial teacher education, which cover theory, subject knowledge and methodology should continue with continuous professional development activities to contribute to positively change the quality of teaching. Keeping up with myriad changes occurred in education settings and involving actively and willingly will optimize the teacher learning opportunity.

All these being considered, strategically planned and customized TPD will maximize the teacher learning experience. Newer conceptualizations give individuals flexibility and freedom to cope with the recent instructional challenges when the institutional regulations will allow teachers to personalize their own TPD options or will implement a customized TPD program that can be efficiently coordinated regarding the needs of the individuals. These points of categorizing and describing of TPD options would serve as a guide for what is currently essential in long-term and sustainable professional development. Overall, This study has explained both traditional and innovative TPD activities that are most suitable for teachers' needs and to make them familiarize with current trends and their critical features as well as less practical and effective professional development in the field to choose from.

Continuous teacher education should be promoted to raise the standards of teaching quality supporting the active involvement of teachers since either individual or collaborative way of improvement fosters a lifelong learning opportunity and experience. The lack of centralization in TPD should not be seen as a drawback; on the contrary, the possible ways can be discovered in the journey of TPD starting from undergraduate teacher education to INSET programs. Combining TPD approaches for reaching the best outcome would help teachers be flexible enough to steer their perspective to wider, deeper and longer goals to build up an ongoing, sustainable TPD and life-long learning.

The emphasis should be on creating a framework that has various pieces that can be embedded and detached on request to provide the flexibility not only to teachers as individuals but also to organizations for generating an interactive, collaborative, and growing community of teacher learners. The creation of professional development community serves as the agency of change within organizations boosting the levels of teacher participation, teaching quality and achievement in the field. Further research might be conducted about personalized or customized professional development programs and their impact on teaching and learning. Identifying the areas that needs to be considered and taken action for -in terms of TPD- can be regarded as the absolute necessity for further investigation.

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