

## **Teacher Development vs Teacher Training in the EFL/ ESL Class and the ICTs' role.**

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**Abstract:** The aim of the article is to present critically some concepts in teacher development in ELT. In the first part, there is a brief discussion of terms, such as Teacher Development, Training, the three Teacher Education Models, the three conceptions of teaching, the four elements of teaching training courses, the Enriched Reflection Model and the integration of theory and practice in training courses. In the second part, there is a description of the training context of a particular course, while its content and the processes followed are analyzed and evaluated. Finally, there is a brief discussion around these ideas.

### **1. Literature Review**

According to Freeman (1989:42), 'Teacher Training' is a process of direct intervention aiming to improve knowledge and skills following specific steps for a specific period of time. On the other hand, 'Teacher Development' is a lifelong open-ended process of influence aiming at attitude and awareness, achieved through constant attention. Its main aim is to develop teachers both personally and professionally. 'Teacher Education' is a general term and it includes the previous ones.

According to Wallace (1991), there were three models of Teacher Education, the Craft Model (trainees should learn from other teachers), the Applied Science Model (institutions train teacher-trainees) and the Reflective Model (both trainers and trainees have active role in the teaching-learning process, as they can adjust it to their needs). According to studies, the Reflection Model is necessary in teacher education (Clarke, 2006; Conway, 2001; Dintelman, 2000; Reiman, 1999; Tillema, 2000) leading to professional development (Dewey, 1933,1938; Loughran, 1996; Reis-Jorge, 2007), while trainees are able to learn on their own (Richards, 1998), making decisions even on pre-course planning, giving a learner-centered character to the course (Nunan, 1988).

Additionally, there were three conceptions of teaching (Freeman & Richards, 1993:206), the Science/Research (methods come from research), the Theory/Philosophy (what should work/ is morally right) and the Art/Craft (teachers act autonomously by exploring, observing and analyzing). Also, there were four constituents of most teacher training courses, such as knowledge (content to be taught to the trainees), skills (process to teach trainees), attitude (someone's stance to learning) and awareness (ability to monitor someone's attention to something) (Freeman, 1989).

Moreover, Strevens (1974) set out four principles of teacher training, such as selection, personal education (content of a course), general training (input addressed to trainees) and specific training (combination of theory and practice). Finally, it was mentioned by researchers that theory should be put into practice by trainees (Crandall, 1994; Johnson, 1996; Richards, 1990) so as to increase the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process.

## **2. Description of the current teaching situation**

### **a. Characteristics of the trainees**

The particular course addresses EFL teachers holding a bachelor or a master degree in ELT, while the majority has participated in EFL seminars, acquiring spherical knowledge in many areas concerning education, maximizing thus their linguistic and teaching competence. During the course, trainees were strongly motivated to explore every aspect thoroughly. The group was homogeneous, since everyone was Greek teaching English to Greek learners attending public or private elementary schools, while most teachers expressed their need to engage in the course decisions (Lawler, 1991; Rogers, 1999).

### **b. Characteristics of the trainers**

The trainers of the course are all holding at least a PHD degree and they have been specialized in the use of technology and webtools in the EFL class and Special Education, while at the same time they have great experience in teaching similar courses.

### **c. Characteristics of the training institution**

This course called 'The use of Webtools in Special Education' was held in Democritus University and it was part of the master held in it.

### **d. Target Teaching Situation**

The majority of the EFL trainees mentioned that their learners' age was 7-11 years old, having special needs, attending elementary schools, while simultaneously they were facing difficulty in using English. However, they had a quite positive stance towards the activities and games held in the target language. Additionally, the trainees expressed their concerns due to the existing constraints, such as the time allocation of the in-class activities, the lack of appropriate school equipment or the existence of outdated one and the use of old-fashioned books unable to meet their learners' needs. At the same time, they supported that the school curriculum did not cater their learners' needs and interests. Finally, through their lessons they observed that when they combined English with technology, the results were spectacular.

## **3. Analysis and Evaluation of the course**

The six-month-course's main objective was to equip EFL teachers with the necessary knowledge on how to use numerous webtools and technology to teach English to their learners with special needs.

During the course, trainers used a variety of training processes, such as lectures, group-pair discussions, workshops, demonstrations and plenary discussions (Ellis, 1986), while data was provided to learners in many ways, among which were the use of video-audio recordings of actual lessons, classroom/ group/ peer teaching, microteaching, readings and feedback sessions. Throughout the course, trainees activated their background schemata, presented their knowledge on the use of technology in class, compared and contrasted with their peers, improved their skills and decided on several topics concerning their training. After having attended lectures and demonstrations and done research, they were given the chance to apply all the theory into practice with their peers in the workshops provided to them, while at the same time they taught them in real-life conditions. In other words, through microteaching, which is brief structural lesson, where learners use specific strategies to teach their peers (Richards, 1990: 3-16), teacher-trainees used their experiences and developed their

skills significantly, while they worked autonomously, guided by their trainers, who were seen as consultants, facilitators, developmental and non-directive (Kullman, 1998; Richards, 1990:15). Finally, they offered and received meaningful peer feedback, key component of a successful course.

This competency-based course (Britten, 1985: 113) includes both elements of training and development, as on the one hand trainees are taught specific strategies in using webtools with their learners with special needs, but on the other hand, it is part of a master aiming at developing teachers on the whole. It incorporates the elements of theory and practice, since learners apply their knowledge in order to practice and learn. Also, this trainee-centered course follows the Reflective Model of Teacher Education (Wallace, 1991), as trainees engage in new experiences (Lawler & King, 2000), recall their previous ones and through class observations, where they learn by imitating (O' Brien, 1981), they question the strengths and the weaknesses of their teaching (Wallace, 1991). Additionally, based on their beliefs and attitudes, they engage actively in experiential learning activities either individually or in groups/pairs (Korthagen,1993), such as microteaching (Cruikshank, 1985; Sparkslinger & Colton, 1991; Zeichnen, 1986). Thus, collaboration which is a fundamental element in adult learning is achieved (Bailey et al, 1996). The conception of teaching followed is the Art/Craft, as teachers discover and analyze things and make their own decisions (Freeman-Richards, 1993: 208). Also, the course focuses mostly on knowledge (webtools in special education) and skills (how to use them in practice), while three of Streven's principles are met, that is selection, personal education and specific training, as theory is put into practice. Finally, it follows the EROTI model (O'Brien, 1981) based on experience, rational observation, trial and integration, while feedback is provided quite often in the form of plenary circle (Parrott, 1993:12).

#### **4. Conclusion**

The particular course followed the Reflective Model of teaching, while both teacher training and development features were profound. Some of them were peer observation, leading to discovery (Wajnryb, 1992), self-monitoring (Freeman & Richards, 1996) and the use of descriptive and non-evaluative feedback (Pelletier, 2000; Wilkins- Canler, 1997). Finally, the aim of a successful EFL course including observation and practice should be to develop teacher-trainees' autonomy upon their learning (Ellis, 1986; Raman, 1987; Nunan, 1989).

Finally, we must highlight the productive and effective role of digital technologies in the field of education. These technologies, which include mobile devices (26-34), a variety of ICTs (35-71), AI & STEM ROBOTICS (72-90), and games (91-94), facilitate and improve educational procedures such as assessment, intervention, and instruction. In addition, the use of ICTs in conjunction with theories and models of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and emotional intelligence cultivation [95-140], as well as with environmental factors and nutrition [22-25], accelerates and enhances educational practices and outcomes, particularly for gifted students with ADHD.

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