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SOME ASPECTS OF AN ESP TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

ESP has developed at a time when a fundamental revision of our view of language and learning has been taking place. Largely because of this fact it has undergone a number of major shifts in its orientation. Consequently, ESP teachers cannot turn to linguistics and psychology in the hope of finding ready-made answers to the problems they will face. Rather, they need to distil and synthesise, from the range of options available, those which best suit the particular circumstances. To do so requires an open mind, curiosity, and a degree of scepticism. ESP teachers need to equip themselves with a sound knowledge of both theoretical and practical developments in ELT in order to be able to make a range of decisions they are called upon to make. All ESP teachers are in effect pioneers who are helping to shape the world of ESP.

Most ESP methodologists regard ESP teaching as extremely varied, and for this reason they use the term 'practitioner' to emphasise that ESP involves much more than teaching. T. Dudley –Evans and M. Jo St John identify five key roles of ESP practitioner as teacher, course designer and materials provider, collaborator, researcher and evaluator. Hence there is an urgent need for continuous professional development of an ESP teacher.

The purpose of this article is to describe in-service teacher training courses (INSET) and peer observations as possible ways of professional development of an ESP teacher and to determine the terms of their effectiveness.

Short INSET courses- 'summer schools', 'refresher courses', 'professional upgrading programmes' are familiar phenomena in many countries where English is taught. While they take various forms and are designed to fulfil many different functions, their popularity lies in what Widdowson calls the 'social and professional intensity of the event' (Widdowson 1987, p.27): the break in routine, the chance to meet new colleagues and to discuss one's professional problems, the exposure to lots of stimulating ideas, the novelty of being students again. Yet how much good do they do?

Brian Tomlinson concluded that without subsequent follow-up courses, their effect would have been 'disastrous', because the 'motivation and stimulus the participants had gained would soon have been negated by the confusion and frustration they would have suffered in trying to apply all that they had learnt... within the existing parameters of syllabus, examinations, materials, official expectations, and class size' (Tomlinson 1988, p.18). Too often the designers and tutors of INSET courses leave the country and have little opportunity to discover the long-term effect of their work.

Martin Lamb claims that even more significant were the mental parameters within which they conceptualised the teaching and learning process, and which had determined how they had interpreted the ideas during and after the course. (Lamb:1995, p.73) In

short, what the tutors had said was not necessarily what the participants had heard or remembered later. The importance of teachers' conscious or unconscious beliefs has been recognised by several educationists in recent years.

Ramani, for example, distinguished between 'research theory', the body of knowledge produced by academe, and the 'individual teacher's theory', which she describes as a 'mix of vaguely perceived ideas and relationships, a primitive conceptual framework, which has a far more influential and determining effect on practice' (Ramani 1987, p. 117). In this context the remedy of follow-up sessions suggested by Tomplinson is surely not enough. They might be useful as first aid for teachers painfully trying to understand and apply the advice they have been given, though, it will be necessary to moderate the input itself. Models of teacher education which depend on knowledge transmission seem to be essentially ineffective. This is because they depend on received knowledge to influence behaviour and do not encourage teacher-learners to construct their own versions of teaching.

The focus of the short INSET course should be the teachers' beliefs themselves. These need to be articulated and analysed for potential contradictions with each other, the teaching circumstances and learners' beliefs. Only then will ESP teachers be able to accommodate new ideas to appreciate the theory underlying them, understand their practical realisation, and evaluate their usefulness.

There is a strong argument for starting INSET course with awareness-raising activities, where participants confront their own routine practice and the values it is intended to serve. This can be done, for example, through examination of videoed lessons, analysis of classroom tasks or the completion of questionnaires on teacher and learners roles (Ramani 1987, p. 120). And, finally, instead of tutors recommending ready-made solutions for predetermined problems, it should be the participants themselves who, on the basis of their expanded awareness of the practice, determine the specific areas of their teaching that they wish to develop, and formulate their own agenda for change in the classroom (Lamb 1995, p. 79). In this way, the short INSET course could serve not only as an intense learning experience in itself, but could also enhance the learning value of all the many occasions when teachers are exposed to new ideas - in the classroom, at conferences, during peer observations etc. The latter needs our particular attention as it can serve as a vehicle of continuous ESP teacher development.

This explains the recent interest at all levels of education in various models of observation. These management techniques have strong educational justification behind them and can have a very positive effect on job satisfaction and staff development. However many of these have been reduced to the level of a routine administrative procedure. This paper examines reflective models of peer observation at tertiary level and their influence on teacher development.

Some of the evidence shows that peer observation is frequently carried out for purposes of appraisal or judgement of the observed, and can be detrimental both to teacher confidence and to a supportive teaching environment. Furthermore, this approach seems to have little value for active teacher development, since the focus is on

being developed, rather than on self-awareness and self-development. Peer observation, therefore, should not be a vehicle for the evaluation of others on the basis of our assumptions, but a reassessment of those assumptions on the basis of their teaching.

Many teachers have observed lessons, and have in their turn been observed. Their roles in these two activities are radically different. When observing, their role is to learn from others, and when being observed they are being assessed. Most teachers, however, who seldom observe, or are observed by their peers, are uncertain whether their role is to assess and to judge, or to learn.

This uncertainty became clear to me in a recent discussion on the implementation of peer observation in our department at the Ukrainian academy of banking. A number of comments revealed that many of those present saw the exercise as threatening or critical, and assumed that the observer was making some form of assessment on the performance of the teacher. However, my contention is that they all arise from a false view of what the objective of peer observation should be.

In the above contexts, the teacher's role is passive. There is an emphasis on teachers being observed, and being told about their teaching, rather than a process of active self-development through reflection, and self-awareness. It is debatable to what extent teachers will improve their performance in the classroom from being told what is wrong with their teaching; a very natural and common reaction would be for them to become defensive, and resist any further suggestions. It is also important to realise that teaching styles and methods are very subjective, and that, despite much research, so far there has been no proof that any one method or style of teaching is significantly more successful than others [Ellis 1994, p.124]. It seems to me, therefore, not only that we are unqualified to judge our peers, but also that our judgements are subjective, and therefore of limited and questionable value to anyone other than ourselves.

As one of the buzz terms for the 1990s in British methodology was 'team building', the aim was and is to work together to improve team and individual performance and confidence, and to give mutual support in the face of external judgements and assessment. Good teachers need not only knowledge but enthusiasm, confidence, self-value, and a desire to grow professionally. A commitment to mutual support was realised through three 'supportive' models:

Model 1: Colleagues observe each other against a background of agreed criteria. This is followed by constructive feedback and discussion: 'The aim of the observation is to help improve the skills of the observed, therefore quality feedback is essential.' [Fullerton 1993, p.82]

Model 2: Pair mentoring. Two teachers observe each other's lessons, discussing areas of mutual interest, and planning future strategies [Whicker 1996, p.65]. This is less threatening, but limits awareness of other teaching styles to just one teacher.

Model 3: Lessons are videoed. Teachers watch extracts from lessons, relate these to agreed criteria, discuss, and propose future developments. [Claydon and McDowell 1993, p.23]

These models usually emphasize the importance of trust, supportiveness, and the recognition and development of good practice, rather than the locating and correcting of bad practice. They are, nonetheless, still based on the assumption that people improve and develop best through the comments and knowledge of others. This may be true at the initial training stage, although even then reflection and self-awareness can be vital, but I contend that for experienced teachers this is not the case, since genuine development comes about through self-awareness, reflection, and open-mindedness to other approaches and styles. The observation process itself can play a crucial role in preventing teachers from becoming routinized and isolated. It would therefore seem beneficial to widen that experience. The emphasis in a reflective approach, however, is very different.

In a reflective context, peer observation is carried out in order to encourage self-reflection and self-awareness about our own teaching. The focus is on the teachers own development, rather than on any presumed ability to develop the teaching of peers or colleagues. Those of us who have observed in this spirit know that there is a great deal to be learnt by reassessing our teaching in the light of other teaching styles. It stimulates awareness, reflection, and a questioning approach, it may also make us aware of exciting techniques that we are temperamentally unable to implement. If, as sometimes happens, a teacher is totally lacking in self-awareness and self-criticism, there would seem to be little chance of any approach helping them to become a good teacher.

Two possible models of reflective observation have been revealed through the analysis of Jill Cosh's findings.

Model 4: An area of general interest or potential problem is selected, e.g. variety and pacing. Teachers observe a class, and fill in an observation task sheet or feedback sheet about ideas generated, and any possible further action for their development. A workshop is then held where everyone discusses the topic.

Model 5: Each teacher observes a class on an area relevant to his/her own concerns and area of teaching. There could be a bank of questions, criteria, or observation sheets to focus on and promote ideas.

In their particular case of implementation of these two models it was decided to use a simple feedback sheet for the observer to record what has been learnt from the observation. The role of the sheet was both to clarify ideas, and to make suggestions for future staff development in the area of workshops, seminars or demonstrations. The author points out that the anonymity of the observed should be respected unless the observers wish them to demonstrate or explain some example of good practice with their agreement. She hopes this will lead to other staff development such as enquiry into theory, courses, conferences, and to an atmosphere of enthusiasm about the processes of teaching and learning [Cosh 1999, p.26].

It is important to note that the size of department or institution, and the similarity or otherwise of areas of teaching will influence whether these models are carried out jointly by the whole group of teachers or in smaller groups. There is also a need for a co-ordinator to make sure that insights are shared, good practice is disseminated,

and that the scheme doesn't die through inertia. We have decided to incorporate these ideas and practices into Ukrainian context. After a year in operation the models will be evaluated by all involved, and any refinements or alterations made.

In conclusion, I would argue towards a view of an ESP teacher as a professional, with autonomy and independence, as the initiator of his/her own development, rather than as a skilled person dependent on development by others. The art of teaching can best be developed by a 'reflective' view. This includes reflection in action- the ability to make decisions and adapt during the process, and creative reflection-examining and assessing of our own values and beliefs in the light of the theories and practice of others.

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ФОРМУВАННЯ МОВНИХ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЙ У НАВЧАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ СТУДЕНТІВ ЕКОНОМІЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

Мета цієї статті полягає в тому, щоб ознайомити читачів з низкою проблемних завдань, що використовуються у формуванні мовної компетенції студентів та висвітлити їх роль в оптимізації процесу навчання.