TEACHER DEVELOPMENT-FOCUSED INSET COURSE
SAMPLE MATERIALS AND PROCEDURES

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Teacher development is considered as a concept denoting a teacher's personal and professional self-improvement, and a movement promoting this self-improvement, as a lifelong process of learning and renewal. In order to stimulate the teacher's self-paced lifelong growth the author suggests some samples of tasks of our INSET course. These are tasks of the first 2 hours session of the course component 'Personal Vision-Building'. The topic of the session is 'Teacher Development'. The aims of the session are to clarify for participants the necessity of teacher development and to shape their own understanding of teacher development.

Task 1.

Trainer: *I want you to take a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle so that you've got two columns. At the top of one column, write 'Teacher Training'; at the top of the other, 'Teacher Development'. Now write one word in each column which characterises or sums up the essential difference between the two concepts. Put a circle round those words. They are your words.*

Let us imagine that some of our participants are quite experienced teachers (15 years and more) and others are not very experienced (5 years). Let me anticipate their reactions. I think that both groups will be puzzled and confused because never before have trainers asked for their opinion. At the same time they will be enthusiastic and rather competitive trying to show their best. I anticipate that less experienced teachers may experience some difficulties because of the necessity to articulate their own opinions in the presence of more experienced teachers and the trainer. So the trainer may help them with leading questions. The level of help should vary from low to high as demanded by circumstances.

In order to unblock participants' confusion and tension of their negative reactions I offer task 2.

Task 2.

I give you this grid to fill in:

Describe what you did	Describe your feelings	What was the aim of the task?	What was your role?	What was your trainer's role?	Other remarks

do

After filling the grid participants discuss their reactions. Here I do not expect any difficulty. Ukrainian teachers are quite sincere and straightforward. On the contrary, I may predict that they will be surprised and thankful when the trainer acknowledges the participants' confusion.

The main danger here may be the following. Being used to the applied science model of learning, participants may demand from the trainer to be more rational and scientific. They may demand the opinion of the trainer and other acknowledged experts in teacher training. They may ask the trainer to stop 'childish games' and start teaching seriously. (To some extent the grid may reduce the level of tension because of the Ukrainian teachers' learning habit for some systematisation of their activity.) So the trainer should be very careful to avoid ready-made answers and may prefer to answer the participants' questions with her own questions. At the same time if the trainer feels that the tension is critical she should be honest enough to tell participants that they will try to find answers together in the process of their course, but that participants should do this themselves with the trainer's help.

I realise that task 2 breaks the coherence of task 1 and task 3 but we do it deliberately to neutralise the participants' negative feelings.

Task 3.

I am going to give you some words. You have to decide which words should go in each column, Teacher Training or Teacher Development. These words are: self-awareness, growth, personal, imitation, know-how, evolution, sensitivity, skills, opening, prepare, encourage, analytical, practice, models, enabling, finite, choices, standard.

This task is very focused and cannot cause any difficulty. So it may be directly followed by task 4.

Task 4.

Form groups of three, say, and compare what you've got: both your words and your columns.

The anticipated difficulty for participants here is their inability to listen to each other. Experienced teachers may sound very authoritative. Their experience can make them even more combative. The result may be the following: everybody will try to find weaknesses in each other's arguments and disprove them. They may never compromise or seek for points of agreement. That is why I include the separate course component on the development of interpersonal skills in the course. However, it is a long-term objective. In order to agree on some points now I suggest using groups of 3s (not 2s).

Another way out is to agree to disagree and discuss this after filling the grid again. Now 'gridding' includes tasks 3 and 4. After filling the grid participants' feelings are articulated. Reflecting on their feelings in the whole group discussion participants, *first,* examine their subjective responses more critically (especially when they find that there are other participants who disagree with them. *Second*, the understanding that their feelings are similar to other participants' feelings reconcile them in their groups. The main outcome, I think, is that it is the first time in their life when they analyse their own feelings and their own thinking without reference to academics. Moreover, they realise that they can do it. In terms of experiential learning cycle participants have moved from the stages of experience and reflection (tasks 1- 4) to making sense of them (task 5).

Task 5.

Now, still in your group write a definition of Teacher Training and Teacher Development using your circled words - provided you can agree on them - plus any of the other words you find useful.

This task appeals to the participants' skill of generalization. They used to this during their initial training, so it must not be difficult for them. Moreover, I think (because I experienced it myself) the main reward for them will be the feeling of self-respect because of making sense of their own experience and feelings.

Now participants are ready to receive some input, for instance, articles on Teacher Development. I think in order to bridge the gap between this session and the following sessions where participants will present their case studies the trainer may give participants some articles on Teacher Development and its relationship to the career cycle (see, for instance, [2]).

From here, participants can work towards their personal action plan in the 4th week, for instance further training to receive a Master's degree.

To sum up, I showed a range of opportunities for the teacher's development. I fully agree with Hargreaves [1:18] that Teacher Development is not "a self-evident solution to the crises affecting teachers and schools." Nor does it mean exactly the same thing for every teacher. However, my assumption is that Teacher Development has the potential to bring about significant changes in learning and teaching.

References

1. Hargreaves, A. (1994) Changing Teachers, Changing Times. London: Cassell.

2. Huberman, M. (1992) Teacher development and instructional mastery. In Hargreaves, A. and M.G. Fullan (eds) (1992) Understanding Teacher Development. London: Cassell.