

SELF-ACCESS AS A SOURCE OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

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Let me describe the work of a self-access within the resource centre for pre-service and in-service English teachers. Taking into consideration that one of the burning points of non-native teachers of English is the language performance, on the one hand, and that language improvement is a very delicate matter for teachers, on the other hand, the main function of the self-access centre within the resource centre is to provide opportunities for the teacher's individual work in language improvement and other professional subjects on both remedial and developmental bases. In this way we cater for various groups of learners with different learning styles and strategies: those who prefer to be guided and those who prefer autonomous learning. Therefore, a self-access centre can work in two modules: module 1 and module 2. Module 1 is a directed self-access for pre-service and in-service trainees and all teachers who have the right to unlimited use of the self-access centre. Module 2 is a self-directed learning for the same categories of users. Both modules can operate within the library system, which will make these modules cost effective.

Module 1.

Working in module 1 learners are directed to a specific set of materials in the self-access centre by their trainers. The materials are closely related to the work covered during the sessions in pre-service and in-service courses and classified according to the course components with further subdivision according to particular sessions and the session's activities. Learners using this type of module have little or no control over what they choose to study. The classification of materials is very simple, for instance,

course component, topic, worksheet 1, worksheet 2 and so on. The purpose of this module is not to limit the freedom of the learner, but to make the process of learning as secure for the learner as possible by structuring this process through a set of activities. Therefore the first task of trainers here is to prepare sets of activities for trainees with clear instructions based on the topic, level, language or professional subjects. Of course, this module will be more focused on pre-service trainees, especially at the stage of trainer dependence. By directing trainees to specific materials and including completion of the worksheets as a form of assessment for their English course, for instance, the module motivates trainees to use it. The anticipated effect is that these trainees will become more interested in spending time in the self-access centre and go on to improve their EL skills independently working in module 2.

Module 2.

The self-directed module offers the learner the opportunity to look around and choose what to study. The module displays materials under clearly marked detailed categories. In this way, learners can independently gain access into the module and easily find what subject they wish to study.

Working in the self-directed module does not mean that users are left without help. The trainer's task here is to build up an encouraging rather than prescriptive advisory system for learners. The encouraging advisory system presupposes the trainer's provision of a range of 'linked' activities around the particular topic or language point. Users can choose which particular task they wish to do. If they want to work at topic 'School', for instance, they can choose a listening, reading, writing or speaking task relating to that topic; or they can choose something using either video or computer if they particularly like that mode of study.

To encourage their autonomy and awareness of the learning process users are offered:

- questionnaire which helps them decide if they are 'right' sort of learners;
- needs analysis which helps users to establish broad goals for themselves;
- study plans which encourage users to plan their studies for a future;
- worksheets which show user's progress;
- grids which make users reflect back on what has been done;
- user's diary which gives unstructured user's feedback.