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Level: Master Two

Module: Teacher Education Development

Title: TED as a component to Professional Development

Time Required to cover the course: two sessions (3hours)

Teacher Education Development as a Component to Professional Development

Introduction:

Because of the new reforms in the educational system that are carried out in many countries of the world, the professional development of teachers (pre-service and in-service training) is going to new dimensions, which consist in putting teachers on the track of an on-going learning process, in which they engage deliberately to learn how best to adjust their teaching to the learning needs of their learners. These needs may incorporate issues of methodology, language and pedagogy. Moreover, teachers' professional development has become, increasingly, important as a way to ensure teachers to succeed in enabling their learners develop proficiency in the target language accompanied by implications on the target culture

Characteristics of Good Teaching

Actually the prerequisites a teacher should have before tackling the job of teaching are, most definitely, warmth, humour and the ability to care about people. Added to this is the planning of lectures, hard work and self-discipline. What has increasingly become important, on a worthier side, is that teachers should imperatively have a minimum professional knowledge of instruction and pedagogy in order to articulate the most important standards of the teaching job and substantively update and refine their own assumptions and beliefs about teaching. What is more, research has identified that teachers must have a thorough catch up in

many areas of professional knowledge. Actually, t need to know about the curriculum materials and programmes appropriate for their subject so as to teach certain learners some particular concepts, the characteristics and cultural backgrounds of learners, and most of all, the goals and the purposes of teaching. In this regard Brown and McIntyre (1989)reported that a good teacher should :

1. Create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom
2. Retain control in the classroom
3. Present work in an interesting and motivating way
4. Provide conditions so that learners understand the work
5. Make clear what learners are to do and achieve
6. Judge what can be expected of a learner
7. Help learners with difficulties
8. Encourage learners to raise their expectations of themselves
9. Develop personal mature relationship with learners
10. Demonstrate personal talent or knowledge

Defining learning:

Learning is the noun from the verb to learn/learnt, learned/ learnt, Learned. It is defined in the Sage's English dictionary and Thesaurus as follow:

- The cognitive process of acquiring skill or knowledge.
- Getting to know or becoming aware of, usually accidentally.
- Committing to memory; learning by heart.
- Profound scholarly knowledge.
- modification of a behavioural tendency by experience (as exposure to conditioning)

Learning is the acquisition of new words, syntactic structures and new concepts. It is essential to humans in order to become literate, well educated behaving with moral values and leading to an ethical form of life in their communities. All human and some animals have got the ability to learn. Learning is not compulsory; it is contextual. It does not happen all at once, but builds upon and is shaped by what we previously acquired. To that end, learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge. Learning is based on experience. In the past, learning was seen as an observable and measurable change

in behaviour that is the result of an experience, but can it be successful unless it is undergone by valid not vapid teaching strategies.

The Current Learning Process

It is now, widely known, that new learning is based over the foundation of our own earlier learning. New things become clear and understandable to us if we use appropriately the already acquired knowledge and experience. Furthermore, evidence indicates that teaching has become an active thinking and decision-making process in which the teacher is constantly assessing what the learners already know, what they need to know, and how to provide for successful learning. In the same line of thought Kolb defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of knowledge (1984:38) He underlies four characteristics of experiential learning :

- Learning is conceived as a process, not as a series of outcomes.
- This process is continuous, and grounded on the learner's own experience.
- It involves bringing out the learner's existing beliefs and theories, testing them against new experiences and insights, and reintegrating the new, more refined ideas that evolve through this process of examination and reflection.
- It is a process of ongoing adaptation to an environment which is constantly changing.
(ibid)

Besides, and above all, the current process of learning often involves five steps: doing something, recalling what happened, reflecting on that, drawing conclusions to inform and preparing for future practical experience. This is, in fact, a cycle which goes around as the learning process evolves and traces out the way of giving learners opportunities to do things themselves. However, a teacher may attain significant results if he worries less about teaching techniques and tries to make the enabling of learning his/her main concern. Hereby, In such learning process, because learners are intelligent, fully functioning humans, not simply receptacles for passed-on knowledge, it is acceptable for them to make mistakes, to try things out and get things wrong and learn from that. This learning process also requires teachers who have been trained to set up the development of learner centred classes. These teachers have distinct teaching qualities as opposed to those of the traditional learning process

The Need for Change

It is widely known that dispensing knowledge is not enough, i.e. what is taught is not always learnt. The positivist view enhanced the maintenance of traditional classroom where teachers are the sole source of knowledge. Accordingly, the P.P.P. (Presentation Production Practice) lesson loomed largely in the language classrooms where an illusion of mastery was and (still some teachers refuse the change) still prevailing. This view is congruent with positivism (as opposed to constructivism) which counter runs the teacher development. A shift of classroom setting from traditional to modern classroom is enhanced through the notion that knowledge is not taught but learnt or constructed by learners. Henceforth, the role of the teachers turns out from a passed- on knowledge to the one of a mediator, a guide or even a facilitator. As stated by Nunan& Lamb. The competent teacher is the one who creates a positive pedagogical environment in the classroom and is able to make professional decisions to ensure that learning is taking place effectively. (1996:69)

To this extent, teachers while attending in-service training, seminars and the like can be acquainted by the occurring changes, to cope with them at the same time taking into consideration learner's individual differences. More importantly, teachers can be released to set themselves free from the practice-based profession i.e. the slavish application of programmes, syllabuses, textbooks, methods and to take on new responsibilities by investigating, exploring, and reflecting on their experience in order to gain self-confidence and awareness. In addition to this, they must be ready to be professionally observed in an individual presentation and willing to observe other teachers' presentation to share experiences with them. It is rightly conceived that observation leads to constructivism in which teachers are provided with feedback and criticism on one's teaching. In this way, and only by taking new responsibilities, they launch in a new conceptual teaching of reformulation, reconstruction, reconsideration and refinement, which is likely to bring satisfaction and betterment. This new conception of teaching is Teacher Education Development.

Teacher Education Development

Teacher Education Development in its broad scope is totally distinguished from Training as the former is mainly something that is articulated using one's own capacities(bottom up) and for oneself; whereas, the latter is definitely and admittedly presented or prepared by others(top down) Lange, in this particular context, highlights this

blueprint by a concise definition “ **a term used...to describe of continual intellectual, experiential and attitudinal growth of teachers...the intent here is to suggest that teachers continue to evolve in the use, adaptation, and application of their art and craft**” (1990:250) The concept of teacher education is seen by Lange, hereby, as an on-going process of change in the teaching practices which tacitly and emphatically represents a professional development of these teachers.

The conception of TED as a reflective process is the one in which every aspect and stage of teacher education experience becomes open to critical examination and reconsideration. It asks teachers to observe themselves, collect data about their own classrooms and their roles, and to use the data as a basis for self-evaluation, and for change. In other words, TED encourages teachers to benefit from the procedures of classroom research and self-reflection to understand better themselves and what is happening in their own classrooms in order to gain a renewed sense of purpose and direction (Ourghi :2002).

Teachers who find it hard to carry on their routinised ways of teaching and would like to change thoroughly their teaching practices, by trying new ideas or changing the ways they use old ones, not only they improve their own performance, but also they learn more about teaching and about themselves. The concept of teacher education development can be introduced while teachers attend in-service training to both prospective and experienced teachers. Ely suggests that while in teacher training,

Teachers learn clearly defined skills and behaviours appropriate to second language instruction...teacher development is concerned with preparing teachers for the exigencies of unforeseen future teaching situation. It attempts to bring about pedagogical development through heightening teachers' ability to observe, reflect upon, and modify their own instructional patterns. Teacher development seeks organic, attitudinal, holistic development along lines suited to the individuals themselves. It attempts not to mold teachers, but rather to empower them to show them alternative approaches and choose among them. (Ely 1994:336)

Ely discusses the new language teaching/ learning paradigm in which teachers whether prospective or experienced can be involved and which entice them to change their assumptions and their attitudes of teaching for better and for improvement.

Conclusion:

The university teaching system should embark on the bases of new assumptions of language teacher education, whose objectives should be to ascertain high standards of pedagogical preparation of teachers. Admittedly, it is conceived that any successful teaching could not be achieved without prior of a fundamental teacher training since teachers are the corner stone of any educational policy. If this training is made up in the ways and forms congruent with target objectives, the teacher cannot stand at this level, unconscious about what is changing socially, economically and most of all pedagogically. Development, henceforth, has to be bottom-up, i.e. it is to be generated by the teacher himself not dished out by managers according to their own view of what development teachers need. A professional development wherein teachers' decisions are primarily directed by impulse or by convention without coming to a conscious decision that they are the right things to do or, they are doing things that they have consciously decided they want to be doing, would probably lead to a routinised way of teaching. Contrariwise teacher education development is an important way for teachers of acknowledging their own inner needs and desires and of making their experiences more worthwhile. It is, in fact, about the inner world of responses that teachers make to the outer-world of the classroom.

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