



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE
LINGUISTICS & EDUCATION

Volume 12 Issue 13 Version 1.0 Year 2012

Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)

Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Connecting In-Service Teacher Education with Teachers' Classroom Associated Problems

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Abstract - This paper is a reflection upon issues of in-service teacher education courses by connecting them, with teachers' problems that they face in actual classroom environment. It is a revision of literature where the author after reviewing the literature and discussing about methods and material of in-service courses, researcher's commentary on current teachers' in-service programs, and discussing about reflecting scope of in-service programs and by teachers' concerns about improvement of these programs, the researcher has proposed a model based on teachers' concerns and problems that they face in classroom environment. Generally teaching content of in-service courses is designed by funding agency or by course instructors and they generally taught content relating to teaching methodology or explaining some concepts of new curriculum. They ignore teachers' classroom related problems like students learning and behavioural problems. Therefore, the author developed model has implications for designing of in-service courses of secondary level teachers.

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GJHSS-E Classification : FOR Code: 930299



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



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I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is a tool for achieving quality in education. We can achieve quality in education only if we have quality teacher education. Like engineering, medical, law, etc. teaching is also a profession and other profession it needs pre as well as in service training for continuous development of teachers. For achieving this objective two type of teacher education have been introduced in teaching profession. The first one is pre-service teacher education that is requisite for entry into teaching profession as teacher. For pre-service teacher education there are education colleges, institutes and departments of education universities.

The second one is in-service education of teachers' aims providing training opportunities for teachers about new techniques of teaching and emerging concepts of education. The objective of in-service teachers training or professional development is to provide an opportunity for continuous renewal of professional skills and integration of emerging knowledge, attitudes and technologies in the field of education so that teachers can educate students more effectively.

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II. INSET IN PAKISTAN

In Pakistan public and private both sectors are involved in providing in-service teacher training but these are mostly project based and for short period. No program from public or private sector is running on regular basis for in-service teacher education. Most of the INSET courses offered to primary and secondary school teachers are generated through donor assisted projects.

Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) Lahore and provincial teachers training centers are performing their task of facilitating INSET for professional development of in-service teachers. Especially DSD is providing a lot of services for promotion of INSET in Punjab.

III. OBJECTIVES OF INSET IN PAKISTAN

As the target objective of in-service education of teachers (INSET) is continuous professional development, therefore, in recent times the term continuous professional development (CPD) is used for in-service teachers' education. Actually In-service or CPD is an essential foundation for successful curriculum delivery.

The objectives of In-service teacher training in Pakistan are:

1. To equip teachers with new instructional methods of teaching
2. To update teachers' knowledge about the subject they are teaching
3. To inform them about new changes in the curriculum.

In-service programs provide an opportunity to teachers to examine and assess their own practice and to become inquiring, reflective practitioners.

IV. IMPORTANCE OF INSET

A number of curriculum theorists maintain that classroom practice cannot be changed just by changing curriculum documents and materials. They maintain that the need exists to look critically at existing classroom interaction and at the underlying values and interests of teachers and school administrators (Cornbleth, 1990). Some writers have gone further to say that, whatever the quality of the curriculum itself, success or failure

depends largely on developing teacher quality (Mason, 1999).

"Many countries identify "quality teachers" as the goal and focus of their teacher education programs. Quality teachers are described as having some combination of the following attributes: pedagogical knowledge, subject area content knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for effective teaching, strong understanding of human growth and child development, effective communication skills, strong sense of ethics, and capacity for renewal and ongoing learning. The preparation of new teachers and the ongoing professional development of those in the current teaching force are key to educational improvement" (Cobb, Darling- Hammond & Murrangi (1995). If we want to have quality teachers in Pakistan, then only content and pedagogical knowledge not enough, we need to bring modification and reshaping in the attitudes of teachers. We need to improve their understanding about children and their learning abilities, their understanding about students' emotional development as well as their knowledge about classroom environment.

In an era of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) there is needed to reshuffle traditional ways of training teachers. As the world increasingly becomes a global society. In current scenario our teachers do not have enough information and skill about use of ICT in education. We can update their knowledge and skill regarding use of ICT for education through in-service/ professional development courses. Cobb, Darling-Hammond, & Murangi (1995) observe "education is seen by many as an important avenue for national development. Economic growth, development and improved living standards are considered to be directly linked to the state of education. The preparation of new teachers and the ongoing professional development of those in the current teaching force are key to educational improvement" retrieved from <http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-3/teacher.htm> on December 20, 2011.

The major aim of in- service teacher training is to keep teachers knowledge and skills update so that they can teach effectively. Its purpose is raising the standards of teaching and learning. This thing is not

Programs of INSET should be in accordance with the practices of teachers in classroom environment. In- service teacher training programmes are to some extent isolated from the practices of teachers in actual classroom environment.

The scheduled meetings of in- service teachers training should be interspersed with classroom practice rather than concentrated and that they allow teachers to work in groups, rather than in isolation (Mary. K, 1998).

Researches show that the target in-service programs of teachers should be classroom, school environment and classroom teachers' concerns rather

resource persons' own concerns and their areas of expertise.

V. NEED OF NEW MODEL IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

It has been estimated that despite policy recommendations that a teacher must have the opportunity for in-service courses (INSET) once every five years (National Education policy 1998-2010), currently, a primary teacher can only once access INSET after 13 years, a middle school teacher after 7-8 years and high school teacher after 16 years.

Teachers face difficulty in participation in in-service teacher education due to their domestic or other problems. Abbasi and Millar (1996) point out that in Pakistan teachers who come from rural areas, especially women, (a report of National Economic Survey Govt. of Pakistan (2002-2003) shows that there are 243, 329 female teachers as compare to male which is 395,404), are deprived of opportunities for professional development and education due to cultural and historical factors. For example female's work is given less importance than male work. Female role is considered more important at home therefore female teachers cannot spare for long hours and days to stay away from their homes for the purpose of in-service training. Teachers pointed out in their discussions with the author that being female member of the society as they had to do a lot of duties at home like up brining their children, cooking food for their family heads and for their children, therefore, their family heads (their fathers, brothers and husbands) did not like that their female should be out of home for long hours only for in-service training.

As Farah and Bacchus (1999) as mention in Melaine (2009) point out that doing household chores, getting married and having and caring for children take a priority over education. Female teachers therefore face issues relating to their household responsibilities and thus they do not have easy access to in-service teacher education programmes due to these barriers.

When we analyze the situation of in-service teachers' education in Pakistan, it is obvious that some drafts for in-service teacher education have been developed by provincial teachers' training centers through funding of national and international organizations. For example report of directorate of curriculum and teacher education Abbotabad Khabar Pukhtoon Khawa (KPK) 2004 and there are many documents available that have been prepared by like UNESCO, World Bank, Asian development bank, or these have provided funding for this purpose. An analysis of these documents makes it clear that drafts or documents that have been developed by various organizations, of course, have great worth in the literature of education but these documents emphasize

more on theoretical aspect of teaching. Practical aspects relating to followings realities was mostly found missing in current documents/material of in-service teachers' training courses:

- a. teaching learning environment;
- b. managing emotional intelligence
- c. teachers' efficacy in teaching their subjects;
- d. understanding and resolving students' Learning problems;
- e. students' behavioural problems;
- f. recognizing cultural diversity
- g. interaction with students;
- h. using school resources
- i. using innovative strategies
- j. promoting multiple intelligences of students Through conducting various activities
- k. considering and resolving students' day to day problems

After reviewing literature on in-service teacher education, orally discussing with in-service teachers and analyzing teaching material /documents developed for in-service teacher in Pakistan scenario, I proposed the model in order to fulfill the gap between theory and practice for in-service teacher education in Pakistan. The proposed model is consisted of following elements:

1. Collecting information about training needs through discussing with target teachers
2. Collecting information about training needs through observation
3. then setting objectives of in-service courses
4. selecting content relating to that particular aspects that have been discussed and observed in classrooms
5. selecting methods how to train teachers in the target areas
6. assessing performance of teachers through using various tools
7. Using results for further improvement in in-service courses.

These components are implemented and supported by nine subsystems, including training curriculum, curriculum management, learning assistance, community connection, assessment and evaluation, credential granting, user management, tracing and analyzing, in addition to login interface.

The focus of this model is teachers' concerns for training regarding the learning and behavioural problems that teachers face in actual classroom scenario.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED MODEL OF INSET

Need assessment

At first we need to have discussion with teachers about their concerns for which they need training. Further, we as planner of the programme can observe by ourselves teachers in classroom which are

the areas in which the respected teachers need training. These area can be students' learning, behavioural, emotional problems, or problems relating to diversity of cultures of students. The problems may be about classroom management.

Formulation of objectives

Keeping in view the information get through discussions with teachers and through experts' observations we can now formulate objectives of the in-service course *that* we think will fulfill the desire needs.

Selection of content

We now can select the content can be conducive for fulfillment or achievement of our objectives. We need to measure our selected content against our objectives.

Teaching methods

We have to keep this point in view that we are going to select courses and teach teachers and not general students. Realization of this fact can save us from lots of things because we have to train teachers to further teacher their students through new methods of teaching. Some methods that are helpful in teaching content in real context are problem solving/ inquiry method, discussion method, role play, teaching through projects and practical activities and demonstration.

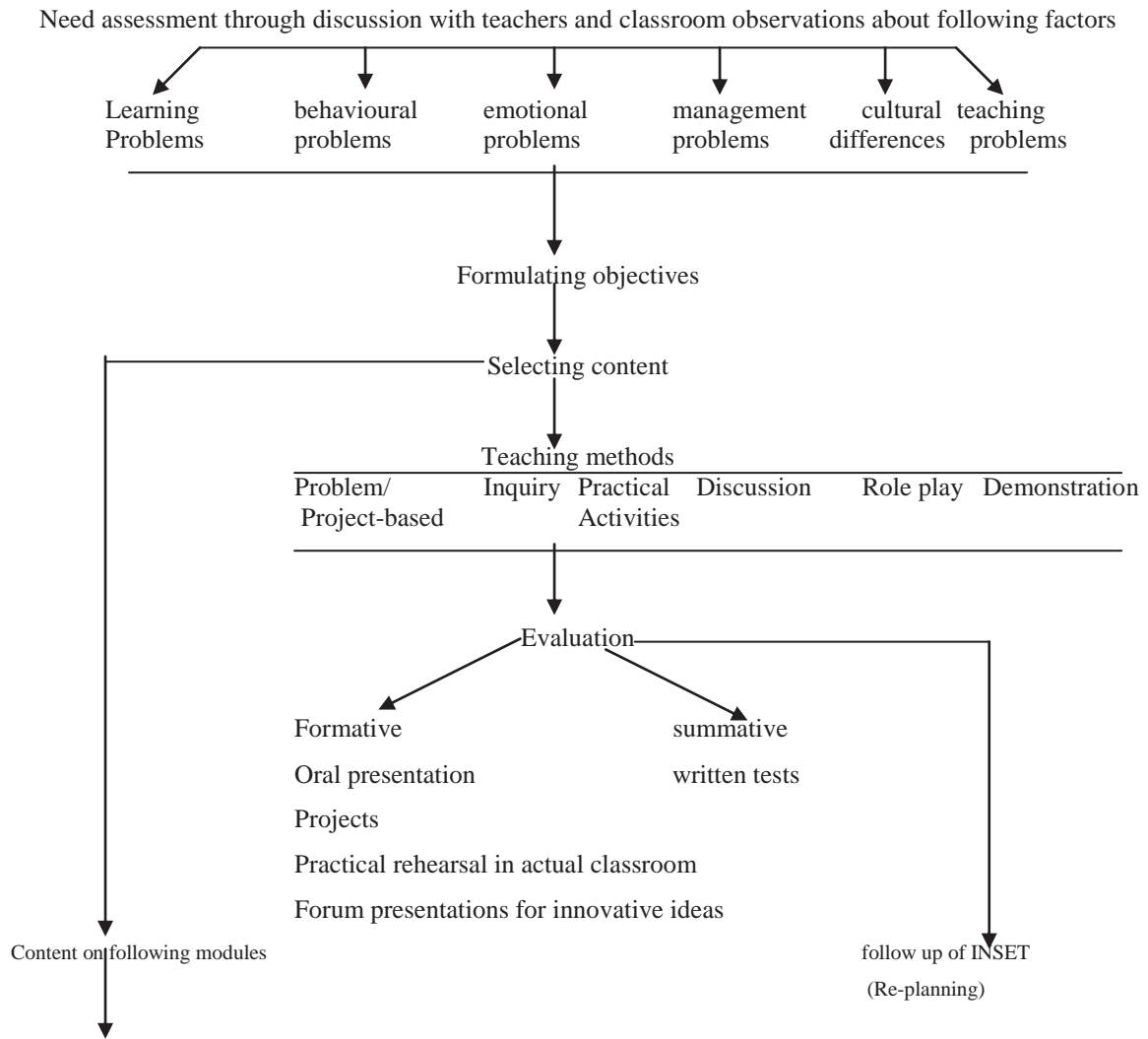
Evaluation

Any activity which is left without having any evaluation does not fruit well. Therefore, in-service teacher training course cannot be left aside without having any assessment. It needs assessment like other courses. However, here, I do not suggest the stereo type evaluation of just memorization of fact. Rather I want the trainee be able to apply the knowledge s/he get during their training course. Therefore, I suggest multi assessment activities for evaluation of in-service course. It may be formative evaluation during teaching of the course, finally a summative, that will be at the end of the course (written test) how much the teachers have understood the underlying concepts of the course. Further we can assess teachers who have gone through in-service training through oral presentation on the topic of classroom related problem, or small projects relating to teaching- learning scenario or problems of teachers' interests. Furthermore, we can have forum of teachers who get training under course and we can have their views for bringing innovation in teaching methods or any other area of teachers' interest. Another suggest for evaluation is to observe teachers who get training in their actual classroom setting, it will be a follow up study for INSET and after this assessment we can re-plan for further improvement that are needed.

Important Note

Content of the module is described in the visual presentation of the model which has been mentioned on following page.

Figure 1 : Propose Model of INSET for Pakistan Based on Teachers' Concerns about Classroom Practices and Students' Related Problems (Learning and Behavioural) (CPSRP).



- a. teaching learning environment;
- b. managing emotional intelligence
- c. teachers' efficacy in teaching their subjects;
- d. understanding and resolving students' Learning problems;
- e. students' behavioural problems;
- f. recognizing cultural diversity;
- g. interaction with students;
- h. using school resources;
- i. using innovative strategies
- j. classroom management
- k. locating for learning styles of students
- l. promoting multiple intelligences of students
- Through conducting various activities
- m. considering and resolving students' Day to day problems
- Other than learning

VII. DISCUSSION

It is a fact that if a programme is designed by consultation with teacher, then of course they will take

UNESCO advised for developing country to invest 4% of GDP on education. However, due to lack of political instability, lack of planning, and poverty our GDP rate for

education could not be raised. That is the reason that for teachers' in-service /professional development we have to rely on donors grants. Therefore, we do not have proper system of in-service training of teachers and proper course content in shape of curriculum. These programmes run randomly whenever they get grant/donation from any funding agency like UNESCO, USAID, World Bank, Asian Bank, etc.

The proposed model is actually a course for teachers' in-service training professional development. It is suggested that whenever, we get any grant for INSET, at least we should have some developed course with us so that we can run our INSET programme according to that course.

Suggestion 1 : Need assessment for finding ground roots realities may be done through discussion with teachers and class observations in teaching of specific subjects.

Suggestion 2 : Teachers may be given options for which mode of training will best suit them in order to improve their teaching.

Suggestion 3 : Time (length), duration (number of days) and venue of INSET programs may be organized in nearest schools.

Suggestion 4 : The model of INSET that I have suggested for INSET programs may be used for professional development of teachers.

Suggestion 5 : INSET training focus on participants' sessions on collaborative work, discussing on actual classroom environment, the way of dealing and interacting with students' problems and their learning difficulties.

Suggestion 6 : Constructive approach may be followed and trainee teachers may be deal as constructor and generator of knowledge.

Suggestion 7 : Providing teachers training in the ways how to develop students' interest and motivation in learning and how to resolve students' disputes by maximum applying constructivist approach in all such matters.

Suggestion 8 : How to create a positive and facilitating environment in classroom and how to develop students' emotional intelligence through various activities and how to teach to cater multiple intelligences of students.

Suggestion 9 : Methodology of in-Service teacher education may focus on the possible issues relevant to students' behavior in classroom environment.

Suggestion 10 : There is need to establish National Council for Professional Development (NCPD) in order to bring uniformity in the INSET curriculum and programs.

Suggestion 11: When ever new curriculum is introduced or some portion of curriculum is revised, then it is essential that along with new curriculum some sort of support material may be developed INSET programs of teachers.

Suggestion 12 : Teachers can be sent on foreign training in developed countries so that they may experience and observe the differences in their teaching methods and can implement in their own country.

Suggestion 13 : In the era of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) we need to equip our teachers with basic ICT skills and use of electronic resources like use of online resources of knowledge so that they use them and can improve their knowledge.

Suggestion 14 : The focus of INSET may be on providing innovative training to teachers on classroom practices to identify what activities teachers can replace/re-emphasize and through which ways.

Suggestion 15 : INSET may particularly be designed and organized to retrain teachers in understanding students' diverse learning styles and learning needs.

Suggestion 16 : Monitoring of follow up of INSET with reference to its effect on students' learning may raise the status of INSET and can earn the trust of donor agencies.

Suggestion 17 : University school partnership may be developed for providing INSET training in universities.

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