

***Teacher Training  
Teaching Problems Encountered by Novice  
Teachers***

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Teacher training refers to the professional preparation of teachers including all aspects of teacher development. It should focus its attention on classroom practice and have as its main goal the improvement of the teacher's practical efforts to provide effective learning on the students. Therefore, it is an important issue because it provides choices and use of adequate methodology in teaching. However, some questions can be put forward:

-Are teachers in our universities really equipped with learning as well as teaching theories to bring about them an effective learning?

-Can post-graduate students, getting a job for the first time, be able to provide an efficient learning?

-As far as the 4th students are concerned, is there a link between what is done in TEFL lectures at the university and the courses taught to pupils in the secondary school?

To tackle these questions, some suggestions will be mentioned so as to promote pedagogic development and to help teachers improve their practice. In this communication, I would like to start by making a distinction between teacher development and teacher

training which are often used interchangeably and refer to the same thing: the professional preparation of teachers.

### ***Teacher development-Teacher training***

Teacher development is seen as a continuous progress that starts with a pre-service preparation and spans the entire career of the teacher. (Sithamparan and Dhamotharan, 1992.)

Teacher training, on the other hand, involves giving experienced and non experienced teachers alike "*ready-made* «answers as opposed to «*allowing them to discover their own alternatives*"(Lucas,1988:42) According to Davis and Plumb(1988:40) training entails "*pre-planned*" agenda set by a syllabus as opposed to an "*impromptu, flexible*" agenda set by groups, "*qualification*" as opposed to "*career development*", "*leader and experts*" as opposed to "*peer group*" and "*standardisation*" as opposed to "*innovation*". To Irvine-Niakaris and Bacigal (1992:42) "*the trainee passively undergoes a period of conditioning during the "dos" and the "dont's" of classroom practice are inculcated. Only after this basic training does the teacher trainer become concerned about empowering trainees to become agents of their own development, much in the same way that the scales must be mastered before a would-be pianist is able to interpret a sonata.*"Freeman (1989:39) defines training as a strategy by directed intervention in the teacher's teaching from the part of the trainer."*The intervention is focused on specific outcomes achieved through a sequence of steps, within a specific period of time. It is*

*based on the assumption that through mastery of discrete skills, teachers will be effective in the classroom."*

### ***Teaching problems***

To answer the questions in the abstract one can say that the quality of teaching has an effect upon the quality of education. However, some problems arise in the Algerian universities. New post-graduate students are only interested, and it is logic, to find a job first, and experience would come later. English language teaching seems to be one of the few fields where experience is not an emphasized prerequisite because there is a high demand on the profession in a country where a population is growing rapidly. So, there is an increasing tendency to put untrained new teachers with some form or no form at all of preparation into classrooms. As far as the department I belong to is concerned, most of the teachers have not received any preparation for their roles as methodologists. They have no idea about approaches, techniques, language skills, materials, and strategies to use. As an example, in the module of conversation, one of the difficulties that all teachers (experienced and unexperienced) face is that the classroom is not designed in "natural" communication. It is a place where information is given and received and the teacher is in the centre and the only focal point. Therefore, this arrangement isolates the learner from the teacher and even from his classmates. Moreover, it seems that there is a bad tendency for some teachers to act as "academics" and "lecturers" with no feedback and interaction from the learners. Another difficulty that new teachers seem deprived concerns their skill awareness of teaching. A

teacher needs to be equipped with an appropriate competence as to the choices and use of an adequate methodology for teaching it. Teachers also seem to ignore the theoretical aspects behind methodology (mainly the 4 skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing) so as to adopt adapt or reject it. Furthermore, university students appear to be confused as teachers give lectures in the modules of TEFL, Psycho-pedagogy Psycho-linguistics with exactly the same contents and topics. The last but not the least, teachers in their first years avoid asking for help from colleagues because they consider that they are now "experienced" and not "incompetent".

As far as the 4th year students are concerned, there seemed to be no link between the secondary school and the university. Theoretical lectures given in TEFL at the university have no link with the practical courses and tasks provided in the secondary school. In addition, the graduate students-to be are thrown into the classroom without any psychological and pedagogical preparation for about a month and a half to dispense lessons to adolescents for the first time of their life.

### ***Suggestions***

In the attempt to bring some change, it would be appropriate to mention some suggestions to solve problems met by unexperienced teachers.

The new teachers need assistance from their colleagues, but although they are given the title of "maitres-assistants», in practice no assistance is taking place. Nevertheless, this assistance should be mutual in the sense that the assistant teacher could be able to help

and be helped by the qualified or experienced teachers. One way to gain this experience is to observe other teachers dispensing lectures or lessons. Not only can he construct and reconstruct his own knowledge, for example, he can evaluate past and current trends in methodology, but also he can plan and execute lectures, use valid materials and, above all, be aware of educational theory, new approaches and classroom management skills.

The assistant teacher should also "tally" certain behaviors and attitudes such as lack of confidence, air of superiority and aggression which can have a negative effect on students and even on colleagues. Certainly, the pre-service training programme starts at this point since the assistant teacher is expected to adapt instructional materials, monitor pair and group work, and produce teaching materials and design tests related to materials.

Clearly, all that has been mentioned before can be the main ingredients of any pre-service training.

As far as the graduate students-to be are concerned, theoretical lectures in TEFL taught at the university should be linked to the secondary school syllabuses in order to compensate the bridge that exists between the two institutions.

Without doubt, the 4th year students need a solid training before coming to the secondary school classroom. For this purpose, they should benefit from some training sessions other than those scheduled by the institution. Rather, they should start classroom observations from the 3rd year to improve their training which can be achieved and supervised by the teachers of

university and the inspector of the field to better the learning and teaching of English language in general.

To conclude, neither diploma nor certificate can prove that a person is the holder of competence in teaching. Experienced or unexperienced, a teacher needs to improve himself most of the time and be subjected to continual training. However, a new teacher needs guidance, at the beginning of his career, which can come from his colleagues. In this way, he can not only ameliorate his learning and teaching but also creates a fresh enthusiasm and cooperative spirit among his colleagues.

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