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Received: 03/03/2023 Accepted: 19/01/2024 Published29/06/2024.

Abstract:

Today, and with the changing in the teaching profession, teacher professional development is needed more than ever before to improve the quality of teaching and learning practices. In connection with this matter, the current research work is carried out to investigate the issue of teachers' professional development under the trend of online education by EFL teachers at the level of English department at Mohamed Lamine Dabaghine University. It endeavors to explore the role of online education in their professional development and see whether these teachers develop professionally. The current study is an exploratory case study. Data is collected through a Google Docs interview of 16 open-ended questions, which is webbed to 10 teachers and then analyzed via SPSS. Te findings reveal that a significant number of teachers think that online teaching is very challenging, if not impossible.

Keywords: online teaching, education, professional development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Modern educational technologies develop extremely promptly, especially in the conditions of the events of the forced mode of the lockdown in 2020. The crisis made enormous changes to all spheres of life. Education is no exception. In fact all the educational system in the Algerian education and around the world, in general, passed to online forms of education. Thus, online learning is one of the consequences of this Covid19 era whereby the use of diverse online platforms for remote instruction proved necessary. The current study describes the teachers' experience(s) with online education and identifies the main challenges of online education encountered during covid-19, as well as, it points out the advantages and disadvantages of online education, in the post Covid era, regarding its impact on the professional development of teachers. In order to answer the research questions, the present study implemented a qualitative approach. Data have been collected through an interview which was administered online via Google docs to 10 teachers of Setif 2 University.

In this regard, this research paper aims at exploring the different issues in education during and after the COVID 19 pandemic through answering the following questions:

1- How did the teachers experience the online education at the English department of Setif-2 University?

2- What do they consider as benefits and drawbacks of online education in the post era?

3- What is the impact of e-learning on the professional development of teachers in the post Covid era?

2. Online Education Vs Traditional Education

Electronic learning or e-learning is a form of interactive learning that gives students access to communication and information technology. It is an education that is based on contemporary communication tools, such as the computer and its networks, diverse audio-visual resources, search engines, electronic libraries, websites and even tablets and cellular phones that are connected to the internet. In Fact e-learning relies on a managed and evaluated integrated digital electronic environment that shows courses over

electronic networks and manages resources and procedures. The importance of e-learning lies in its ability to address the issue of the knowledge explosion, the growing demand for education, and the expansion of admissions opportunities. It also enables workers to be trained and educated while still at work, helps to break down psychological barriers between the teacher and the learner, and satisfies the needs and characteristics of the learner while increasing return on investment by lowering the cost of instruction. Since technology has made it so easy for anyone to access the internet, e-learning has drawn a lot of attention recently in different domains. Education in no exception. This implies that that internet technology has been anticipated as a potential factor in educational settings (Elfaki, Abdulraheem & Abdulrahim, 2019, p. 225, guoted by Allen & Seaman, 2015). On the other hand, traditional education is an education which focuses on the physical relationship between the teacher and the student, places a strong emphasis on the subject matter and enables the student to better understand the information being conveyed by the teacher. (Kelmendi, 2019, p.8). In this sense, the teacher has to be in the same place and at the same time with the student. This in fact may lead to passive learning as the teacher is the sender and the student is the receiver and the teacher cannot seem to provide attention to all the students due to time constraints or sizable classrooms. It is important to mention here that there are some teachers or researchers who prefer online education as they think it is better assimilated and enjoyed when students do not travel to the instructional setting and are intrinsically motivated (Klesius, Homan, & Thompson (1997) (cited in Rovai, Ponton, Wighting & Baker, 2007, p. 416). While others believe that it is impossible to get rid of traditional education because there are some curricula that require the implementation of traditional learning (Chang, Shu, Liang, Tseng, and Hsu, 2014, p. 214) such as oral expression classes where the student must get an actual and a rapid feedback from the teacher to learn more and better. So face to face learning in this case is a must but we still think that even if the traditional learning is battling back and attempting to integrate contemporary methods to maintain students' interest, it doesn't seem to serve anymore the needs of the current generation.

3. Teacher Professional Development

3.1. Definitions of the Related Concepts 3.1.1. Profession

According to Day (1999), the concept of a profession is derived from the Latin word "profiteer," which implies to advance, to have knowledge in the field, and to have self-commitment to grow professionally. The concepts of profession and professionalism are interwoven. Therefore a person who lacks the essential skills and knowledge required for a career cannot be considered professional. In fact, a professional is a member of a profession, according to Eston (2008), and the word also refers to the criteria for education and training that give members the specialized skills and knowledge needed to perform the tasks of that profession. That is why teaching professors are regarded as professional as stated by Morrow (2003)

3.1.2. Professional Development

It refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. According to Glattenhorn (1987), individuals get experience in their professional development through additional experience in their teaching position. This experience is gained through assessing one's teaching skills. Glattenhorn(1987) continues by defining professional development as growth that takes place throughout a teacher's professional cycle. It might be argued that the idea of professional development is related to teachers improving their practices and instructional abilities. It emphasizes how teachers can grow professionally and advance their knowledge by engaging in activities that are typically categorized as both formal and informal professional learning activities. In the same context, Corcoran (1995) affirms that professional development is "the full range of activities that affect how teachers learn how to teach and how to mature intellectually and grow professionally" (p.1).

There are two approaches to carry out professional development. According to Stevens (2008), professional workshops and other formally connected meetings are a part of the professional growth experience. These events consciously take place through conferences, seminars, and workshops or unconsciously by taking in knowledge unintentionally—not on purpose—from experience, friends, books, the internet, television, and other sources. The conscious type of professional development therefore refers to what stakeholders and teacher educators do for the teachers, whereas the unconscious form refers to what teachers do for themselves.

4. Teacher Professional Development Defined

Teacher development is a component of teacher education that improves the skills of in-service teachers. It is characterized by teachers' reflections on their teaching practices in relation to their prior theoretical knowledge and their day-to-day classroom experiments. Therefore, it is a difficult, drawn-out, highly placed, and intensely specialized process that has no beginning or end as stated by Johnson and Glombek (2011). Teacher professional development, according to Garrigton and Robinson (2002), is the process, practices, and opportunities that provide instructors with new perspectives to grow and accumulate knowledge, techniques, and skills to promote efficacy, effectiveness, and empowerment in the classroom. It is claimed that teachers can only be effective if they are self-aware enough to reflect on their own teaching and collaborate.

All in all, teacher professional development comprises a continuous learning process for instructors through conferences, workshops, academic coursework, and accessibility to new technology. So, it is crucial to improve teachers' overall knowledge of the subject matter, teaching practices, techniques, methodologies, and pedagogy.

5. Teacher Development versus Teacher Training

Craft (2000) acknowledges a wide range of ideas while discussing professional development. When referring to a teacher's continued education, terminology like "teacher development," "teacher training,"

"continuing professional development," and "in-service education and training" are frequently used. In some cases, these terms are even used interchangeably. For example, teacher training and teacher education can be used synonymously in the literature, according to Ur (1996, p. 3), who claims that, while "education" is a process of learning that develops the moral, cultural, social, and intellectual aspects of the full person as an individual member of society, "training" has set objectives and prepares one for a certain function or career. According to Semmoud (2015), the word «Development is definitely related to the widely known term training; and both are complementary in the sense of achieving an efficient and effective level of skills and knowledge in the teaching of a language" (p, 23-24). However, it is worth mentioning that there some other writers who focus on the distinctions between these two ideas. What can be inferred from the literature on professional development and teacher training is that the professional development of teachers is influenced by both teacher development and teacher training. Both methods seek to assist teachers in doing their job more effectively and to pave the way for their efficacy and efficiency, which will raise the caliber of their instruction. Nevertheless, each process has its unique characteristics. Ur(19997) is one of the authors who talked about the distinction between teacher development and teacher training. One could argue that although teacher development is an active process, teacher training is a passive one. The difference between teacher development and teacher training is that the former is an in-service program that provides prospective teachers with accreditation, whilst the latter is a pre-service program.

Additionally, Benmoussat (2003) argues that development means "the empowerment of the teacher, in the sense of endowing him with the status of an autonomous professional" (p.258). In the same vein, Richards and Farrell (2010) state, "Training refers to activities directly focused on teachers' present responsibilities and is typically aimed at short term and immediate goals" (p.3). According to them, teacher training entails trying out new strategies in the classroom, usually from others on ones 'practice. Hence, it is 'top-down' whereas teacher development is long term, and

'bottom-up' which is for teacher's professional growth. Furthermore, professional development is a lifelong process that never ends, meaning that learning is ongoing and constant. Professional development appears to place the greatest emphasis on teachers' success in terms of their professional and personal performance, as well as their evaluation, while teacher training seems to focus rather on the formal aspect of the training only. Even vet, despite their differences, teacher development and teacher training complement one another. According to Roe (1992), teacher training is a component of development and should be handled separately. To put it in another way, teacher development and teacher training go hand in hand. However, the deficiencies of training can be made up for by pairing it with additional activities for teacher development. In brief, as stated by Head & Taylor (1997, p.9), "it is more useful to see training and development as two complementary competent of a fully rounded teacher education". In other words, even though they are complementary to one another, teacher development and teacher training are macro and micro processes, respectively.

6. The Virtue of Professional Development

Recently, great deals of scholars have shifted their attention to professional development. At present, teachers feel a great need to improve their skills and quality of their teaching. This feeling is brought into existence by the emergence of demands for professional high standards that are imposed by a disruptive and rapidly changing world fuelled by information and driven by technology.

According to professional development literature, professional development has shifted from being done by experts to being done by teachers in response to their own pedagogical needs and concerns. (Grimmet, 2014).

According to Craft (2002), the status of the teacher has gradually changed over the past 20 years from "a government-imposed technician to a professional development shaped skilled craftsman" (p.11). Professional

development implies that in order to meet the demands of the profession, educators and teachers must immediately refresh their knowledge base. Accordingly, a lot of researchers argue that instructors need professional development. For instance, Smith and Gillespie (2007) assert that ongoing professional development enables in-service teachers to better prepare them for the difficulties they experience in the classroom by introducing them to cutting-edge approaches and tools. In the same line of thought, Stewart (2014) affirms that teacher development is a crucial element in enhancing teacher instruction and keeping up with the most recent advancements in their field. In addition, Mizell (2004) asserts that educators must continually evolve if they are to meet the needs and aspirations of students. Professional development helps teachers deepen their knowledge and improve their teaching practices to be effective and good learning facilitators. In other words, it adapts to the introduction of new approaches to education.

Moreover, Rosemary et al, (2007) assert that knowledge, which is the core of excellent teaching practice, is dynamic. They also argued that the important goal of professional development is to engage teachers in very rigorous thinking with complex ideas, then to take disciplined action within a framework of evidence-based literacy education" (Ibid, p.12).

Additionally, as correctly stated by Campbell, McNamara, and Gilroy (2005) and others, "teaching today takes place in a world of rapid development and educators are expected to meet high standards of teaching and raise the levels of achievement in schools and colleges" (p.13). In this regard, Goh (2016) agrees that teachers in the modern day must be well-prepared to handle both the emerging demands and the changing obstacles of today's classrooms. On the same wavelength, Taylor and Mc Kenny (2008) contended that technology can be infused to strengthen critical thinking in the areas of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and it can be integrated into classrooms to improve communication, feedback, and reflection to facilitate revisions.

7. Research Methodology

7.1. Research Design

This study targeted to EFL teachers regarding the role of online education in teachers' Professional development beyond the pandemic COVID-19. To that end, an exploratory method endorsing a qualitative approach was opted, through a random sampling technique, by the use of an interview as a data collection tool carried out with ten (10) EFL teachers at the level of the department of English at Setif-2 University. The study is qualitative in nature. Thus, the qualitative methodology was adopted as the most suitable to gain in-depth insights and to capture teachers' experiences and views accurately. The interview was administrated online via Google Docs, and the data collection was analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis. Accordingly, the findings are classified into the main themes related to the research questions addressed in this study.

7.2. Participants

This research population constitutes of EFL teachers of Setif 2 University. The number of volunteers' participants which constitutes our sample is the sample consisted of 20 teachers in the departments of English language and literature from previously mentioned university. Their teaching experience ranges from 3 years to 20 years and more.

7.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

As far as the interview is concerned, it is composed of 15 questions, open-ended and only few closed-ended questions, that invited teachers to talk about their views on the use of online education before, during and after Covid-19, and to explore generally their attitudes towards the role of online education in teachers' professional development in the post Covid era. The questions of the interview deal initially with teachers' experience (s) with online learning and teaching in terms of their level of digital literacy and the advantages and challenges encountered. Additionally, they tackle the perceived conception of online education after covid-19 and the impact of e-learning on their professional development.

8. Results and Discussions

The main findings of the interview analysis are presented as follows:

Question Six: Teachers' Attitudes towards the Adaptation of Online Teaching during the Covid-19

The majority hold a negative attitude. For them such kind of teaching was difficult, annoying, defensive, and ineffective as one of the participants declared: «It was a bit difficult to conduct as we were forced to use Moodle and send audio lessons and lesson summaries". Also, it is mentioned by one of them "That was the first time I felt my country adopted online teaching and learning! Yet, teachers seem to lack knowledge of the effectiveness of and awareness about e-teaching and learning". In the same line another one stated: «There was no actual online teaching, I just had to attach materials and lectures that I would have taught them personally if not for Covid". However, few of them hold a positive attitude. For them, it is not bad, not that hard, and satisfying as an experience as one of them said: " very happy and strongly welcomed the decision".

To conclude, the two views are summarized by one of the participants in his declaration: "My initial attitude towards transitioning to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic was a complex mixture of confusion and excitement. On one hand, I was confused by the sudden shift to online teaching, particularly as the university had chosen to use an elearning platform, Moodle, which I believed to be inadequate as an interactive teaching tool. On the other hand, I was excited by the opportunity to explore a new modality of teaching, as I had a good command of technology but had never taught online before. I perceived this as an opportunity to expand my pedagogical skills and adapt to the new challenges posed by the pandemic".

Question Seven: The Description of Teachers 'Experience in Online Education at the English Department of Setif-2 University

The outbreak of the pandemic covid-19 necessitated a paradigm shift to online teaching and learning. Based on the participants' answers, only two teachers showed a positive view. On the other hand, the majority, who had no previous experience with online education before have described their experience negatively reporting: it was poor not that effective, tiring,

normal with lots of lacks, a kind of failure to some extent. This is probably due to the way they applied it as one teacher admitted: "I don't believe there was an online teaching in the first place. Most teachers just uploaded books and videos...with no actual teaching...» Moreover, they did not enjoy this experience as one teacher said: "very low quality and not considered at all online education; email education".

Question Eight: The main Challenges of Online Teaching during Covid-19

Based on teachers' experiences with online learning and teaching, a number of challenges were identified. As far as these challenges are concerned, they mainly turn around the absence of the needed requirements essential to engage in this process. The umbrella problem is technical as stated by the participants including poor interest access; slow network, which is crucial to log in the different platforms. Moreover, the lack of technology competency or digital literacy is another impediment that made the online teaching/learning process complex and challenging as one teacher replied: " Little knowledge about how to conduct a real online course" Furthermore, teachers complained about the unavailability of all students, their unawareness and lack of interest, in using new experiences of learning, and therefore, they could not develop the needed interaction. Furthermore, one teacher pointed the fact that the overuse of screens provoke health risks "Personally I can no longer stand the PC screen rays; they hurt my eyes". Finally, assessing students' productions is considered as a problem for another teacher.

Question Nine: The Continuity of Using Online Teaching in the Current Days after the Disappearance of Covid-19 and in the Future

The answers of this raised question were stated briefly and differently; meanwhile, some of the participants said "No". Others said "yes" as exemplified below:

"Of course yes! And the best we can do is still modest to what is really called online Instruction".

"As a university EFL teacher, I have not been able to use online education as extensively as I would like due to limited time. However, I am considering incorporating it more into my teaching by delivering two lessons to my students online in instances when I am unable to be physically present in the classroom. I believe that online education can be a valuable tool in my teaching career, as it offers an alternative mode of instruction that can be especially beneficial under some circumstances".

Question Ten: Regarding Online Learning as a Short Term Temporary Solution or a Teaching/Learning Technique

When asking the teachers if the online education was just a short term temporary solution or a real chance that distance teaching and learning will become a teaching technique in the post Covid era, the majority of them (90%) agree that it was just a temporary plan to cope with the situation and an alternative tool that will be replaced once the Virus vanishes and Covid disappears.

Question Eleven: The Impact of E-learning on the Professional Development of Teachers in Post Covid Era?

Concerning the impact of e-learning on the professional development of teachers, surprisingly, there have been divergent answers. While some of teachers (50%) stated that up to now it is still unclear and no one impact have been detected. Some others (50%) believe that teachers become techsavvy, and more updated about the use and benefits of technology in teaching and that e-learning helped them include more data and material to their lectures. Thus, it boosts their professional development.

Question Thirteen: The Positive Influence of Online Education on the Teachers' Teaching and Learning Practices

In relation to this question, very few teachers who said "no" or "not really". Whereas, most of them replied positively "yes" with small extent to a large one as it is noted through their declarations as follows:

"To some extent. Teachers are not accustomed to it".

"Yes, I learnt how to design an online course and communicate with my students virtually".

"Yes; strongly. It made me design full lecture notes".

"Yes, to a great extent. Online education has allowed me to progress my teaching and learning practices by providing me with new tools and resources to enhance the engagement and interactive nature of my classes".

"Yes to a high extent. Via making my teaching more diverse more inclusive and more ongoing with the new era. Changing and replacing as well as assessing some if I might say "old ways of delivering and teaching".

"If the teacher dominates the class contents and materials then it's to a great extent that it would be way more efficient".

"Yes, I learnt how to design an online course and communicate with my students virtually".

Question Fourteen: Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Education in the Post Covid Era

Concerning the most common benefits of online education among the teachers are: accessibility, easiness, saving time and efforts. More importantly, "enhance learning autonomous." as declared by one of the participants. Among the noticeable disadvantages as it is emphasized: "it is not helping to improve language interaction between teachers and learners".

9. CONCLUSION

Some professions need higher levels of skills mastery and, therefore, require continuous professional development such as teachers who deal with human beings (Wallace, 1998). In this regard teacher professional development is a big concern and a long critical process that teachers need to hone their skills and practices. We can safely say that changes in the

teaching profession are calling for teacher empowerment more than ever before and teachers nowadays are also students of their students when it comes to the newest modes of technology.

Through our experience with the sample of the study and our interpretation of information gathered from its contribution to our study, we recommend that:

- Teachers should adopt online education as a complementary aid or a teaching method to support face to face learning and keep a balance between online and face-to-face scenarios.
- Technology is art of the 21st century skills and It boosts teacher development. Accordingly, more workshops and consistency of high quality trainings are needed to use online application and ICTs within education must be scheduled and raise more Awareness about their importance because after all we still do have teachers who are by no means be approximate to today's online knowledge background.

- Providing equipment and the necessary tools, including the reduction number of students to ensure a high quality learning/ teaching process and for making the use of online learning a success and its future experience not that sort of failure.

- Students should be aware of the importance of online learning and therefore, they are required to take part of this experience with interest and focus.

- Efforts should be made to improve the e-learning platforms currently available, such as Moodle, to make them more user-friendly and interactive. This could involve incorporating more multimedia resources and interactive activities, as well as developing more sophisticated assessment tools that can be used in an online setting.

- Both teachers and students should be open to new world's developed ideas and innovations in education to become skilled at manipulating not only Moodle but also other higher educational online platforms, and to support more well the sophisticated skills they need to acquire.

- A professional pedagogical training should be provided for teachers to master effectively the use of online platforms and for better implementation of online education

- Teacher professional development programs should include special training on how to effectively utilize online education tools and platforms. This would include not only training on the technical aspects of using these tools, but also on how to design interactive and engaging online lessons, and how to effectively assess student learning in an online environment

All in all, professional development is an ongoing process and the hub of educational reform. Given that, creating a healthy atmosphere to make professional development effective is a crucial aspect of the process and developing successful teachers is critical. To be well-equipped in the 21st century, teachers are in a great and urgent need to grow professionally because professional development is a need rather than just an improvement tool.

In other words, English language teachers should be introduced as active participants of knowledge and should be abreast of the new teaching techniques and e-learning instruments to be able to cope with the changing teaching learning atmosphere by reshaping and redefining their insights into improving their teaching.

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11. Appendices Interview

Dear teachers,

This interview is part of an ongoing study that aims to explore the role of online education in the professional development of teachers in the post Covid-era, identify the main challenges of online education encountered during Covid 19 and describe the teachers' experience(s) with online education. We would like you to answer some questions that would

help us funding solutions and some recommendations for the research problem. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Questions

1.As a university teacher, did you use online teaching and learning before the Covid?

2.Did you use online teaching and learning during the prevailing Covid?

3. What are the different platforms did you use to deliver your lectures?

3.1. How do you find the use of these E-learning platforms and what do you think they provided to you as a university EFL teacher?

3.2. On which of them would you have preferred the online courses to be held? Please, justify why?

4. What are the different platforms did you use to assess your students in the Covid era?

5¹What are the techniques you have used to ensure effective E-learning environment for your students?

6. What was your attitude towards transitioning to online teaching during the covid-19?

7. How would you describe the experience of online education at the English department of Setif-2 University?

8. What are the main challenges and difficulties you encountered with online teaching during covid-19?

9. Do you still use online teaching in the current days after the disappearance of covid-19? If yes, will you keep rely on it in your teaching career?

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10. Was online learning a short term temporary solution or a real chance that distance teaching and learning will become a teaching technique in the post Covid era?

11. What is the impact of e-learning on the professional development of teachers?

12. What changes in your attitudes about online education happened as a result of teachers' professional development and vice versa?

13. Do you think that online education progress your teaching and learning practices? If yes, to what extent?

14. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online education in the post Covid ear? How does it affect teachers' professional development?

15. If given the choice, what changes would you bring to the teachers' professional development under the trend of online education and what would you suggest improving them?

16. If you have any other suggestions concerning the topic.

Thank you for your cooperation

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