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Introduction

Teacher development is all about the nature of change and how change can be brought about – whether the kind of change that is targeted involves change in knowledge and understanding, in beliefs, or changes in practice. Initiatives to foster change may be both top down – initiated by government or ministry policy, by universities and institution tasked with teacher development and training, by the local or school administration, as well as bottom up – initiated by the individual teacher, working alone, with peers, or with the participation of teacher trainers and university teacher educators. The papers in this edition of the journal demonstrate these different perspectives and approaches to teacher development.

The lead article by Donald Freeman, Dudley Reynolds, Will Toledo and Abdullah Mohammad Hamdan Abu-Tineh sets the scene for the issue. The authors report findings from information collected in Qatar on the first phase of a broader transnational research project that aims to document both the forms and content of teacher development that are provided by different agencies and organizations in both the public and private sector as well as the extent of uptake by teachers who participate in professional development opportunities that are provided. The present paper describes opportunities provided by the principal agencies participating in PD in Qatar – the national government, universities and training centers, and extra-governmental organization such as the British Council. In their paper they report both on the kinds of events provided and the topics included in events, as well as the different assumptions and expectations stakeholders in the PD enterprise may operate from leading the underlying understandings of what constitutes good teaching and how best practice differs according to the agency tasked with providing the training. (Their paper also adds a new word to my lexicon - 'fungible' - showing that vocabulary acquisition is a life-long process). We can look forward to the findings of other stages in the project as it proceeds.

In the next paper, Kylah Clark-Goff and Zohreh Eslami explore changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs about language and the extent to which their beliefs change as a result of a semester-long course on ESL teaching and assessment methods and second language learning. Changes in student teachers' beliefs is regarded as the basis for achieving changes in teachers' practices, hence research on teacher beliefs has a long tradition in teacher education research. The study reported here was based both on questionnaire data as well as follow up focus group interviews of mainstream student teachers who would be likely to encounter significant numbers of ESL students in their future

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classes. The authors found that the student teachers underwent significant changes in their beliefs as a consequence of completing the course, a reassuring finding for those involved in teacher education.

The role of teacher beliefs is further explored in the paper by Zia Tajeddin and Aylar Adeh who explore the role of identity in native and nonnative ESL teachers, both in regard to their own sense of professional identity as well as their perceptions of other native and non-native ESL teachers. Using both a questionnaire and interview data, their research extends and largely confirms finding of previous research on the qualities and characteristics attributed to both categories of teachers and the advantages and disadvantages of native and nonnative teachers. Their findings are that both groups of teachers have their own strengths and advantages, that teaching should be understood on its own terms and that being an effective teacher is not dependent on the teacher's first language.

In the following paper Anne Burns, Anne Westmacott and Antonieta Hidalgo Ferrer describe the issues and processes involved in introducing an ongoing action research project for university ESL teachers in Chile. They provide a case study of how action research was introduced to teachers who are unfamiliar with the goals, values and procedures involved in action research, and describe the factors that need to be considered to sustain teachers in classroom inquiry of this kind. The authors emphasize the role played by workshops, meetings, mentoring, discussions and peer collaboration to address teachers' concerns and describe steps that can be taken to manage action research projects through their life-cycle towards a successful and useful outcome for teachers, learners, and institutions.

The focus of the following paper by Karim Sadeghi and Morteza Sa'adatpourvahid is teacher job satisfaction and stress. They point out that teaching by its nature can often lead to stress, a factor that can affect teachers' performance and effectiveness, though the nature of the stress teachers experience is influenced both by individual as well as contextual factors. Their survey of English teachers in Iran teaching in universities, schools, and language institutes reveal that they encounter many of the same stress-inducing factors experienced by teachers elsewhere, while factors specific to the nature of English teaching in the Iranian context also adds to the lack of job satisfaction many teachers report. They argue that the problems they identified need to be acknowledged by schools and institutes in order for teachers to be provided with working conditions that do not induce stress and that provide greater levels of job satisfaction.

The need for ongoing support for teachers is highlighted in Thomas Farrell's paper, which describes how three novice teachers coped with their first year of teaching by making use of a multi-level approach to reflective practice. Farrell outlines a five-stage level of reflective inquiry consisting of *Philosophy*; *Principles*; *Theory*; *Practice*; and *Beyond Practice* and describes how it formed a focus throughout a 14-week course supported through interaction and discussion with a facilitator (Farrell). As a consequence, the novice teachers were said to successfully navigate some of the complex issues and challenges they faced during their first year of teaching.

Mohammad Reza Anani Sarab, Abbas Monfared and Mohammad Meisam Safarzadeh in the final paper describe a study that investigated Iranian teacher's understanding and beliefs concerning

communicative language teaching as a response to the introduction of new textbooks in Iran that replace a traditional grammar/audiolingual approach to teaching with the former one said to reflect the principles of CLT. Through a questionnaire study of 75 teachers and follow up interviews with some of the teachers they identify the teachers' understanding of the principles of CLT, factors that would be needed to successfully implement it as well as factors likely to mitigate against its successful uptake in Iran. Although many teachers reported that they believed in the approach, their teaching contexts make it difficult to apply CLT in practice.

Readers in both Iran and internationally will find this collection of articles provides a fascinating perspective on current approaches to teacher development. As the papers demonstrate, advances in professional development for language teachers involves careful documentation and analysis of current practices, critical review of the assumptions and procedures underlying current practices, as well as carefully documented accounts of innovations in practice as a basis for evaluation. Hopefully readers will find examples of all of the above in the papers in this special issue of the journal.

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