

PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THE LIGHT OF INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract

Pre-service and in-service teacher training programs are changed in the light of innovation in Algerian school. Though ancient and new training programs do not differ from each other in the level of goals, they are different in methods of training, techniques and areas of focus. Teacher training programs are of paramount importance in teachers' preparation for the professional life. They are fundamental in the improvement of language education. The Ministry of Education in Algeria recognizes the importance of those training programs as experiences needed to improve the educational system. However, the adequacy of these programs for better teaching needs to be investigated. The presentation deals with training programs and the main challenges facing them among which the balance between theory and practice. This study will be of interest to pre-service and in-service teachers, teacher educators, researchers and administrators keen to create and manage teaching and learning more effectively.

Keywords: Challenges; innovation; programs; teacher training

1. Introduction

Innovation and change in language education addresses questions about what to teach and how best to teach, so that, teachers become able to organise teaching and learning more effectively. For the sake of driving professional practice in the language classroom, pre-service and in-service training programs are changed in the light of innovation in Algeria. Nowadays the Algerian Ministry of Education announces that the pedagogical training programs of the novice teachers (starting from 2016) will be for 6 weeks in a training period of 180 hours. They are supervised by inspectors of all stages, professors and engineers. They include theoretical classes and practical work. The trainee adopts a cognitive and professional training. Those teachers are required to prepare a final report.

2. Literature Review

There are several definitions of the concept teacher training programs in the previous research, in the next phase some of them are selected, and light was shed on the goals and the importance of teacher training programs in education.

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2.1 Teacher Training Programs Definition

Teacher Training Programs have been dealt with by several researchers in the field of education. Training programs are set of guided efforts to provide teachers with information and skills needed for better teaching.

Djaafri defines them as: “ a set of guided efforts for the sake of providing the teacher with information, and comprehensions to acquire competence in performing his task, and seeks to advance his experiences, which leads to increase his capacities in order to prepare him to carry out a high level’s tasks” (Djaafri, 2009, p. 25). So teacher training programs are series of training activities, which are organized, and well- planned for teachers, who are already working as fresh ones to improve their current and future services. By providing new education, information, skills and attitudes in the teaching profession which lead to increasing their abilities. Furthermore, we can sum up with the fact that the teacher training programs are a conscious operation that focuses on making optional changes in the teacher’s behaviour, in which it leads to acquire professional capacities. In this context, the Ministry of Education arranges those programs as an obligation to train fresh teachers and prepare them to teach effectively.

2.2 Training Programs Importance and Goals

The training programs play an important pedagogical role, because they lead to educational growth. Pre and in-service training programs are fundamental in the improvement of language education. They are experiences needed to improve the educational system. Teacher training programs main objective is to better teaching performance and improve student’s level. The training helps acquire educational qualification and experiences needed to improve the education system, as well as identify the most important successful pedagogical techniques which lead to master the general educational goals. It aims at improving the learning’s level within the direct training for the fresh teachers, to participate in the educational school’s advancement. According to Mirou (2015), Teacher training programs main objectives are to:

1. Increase the teacher performance, and develop his educational skills and abilities.
2. Help the teacher to learn more about the modern teaching methods, and build his trust zone .i.e. the relationship between the teacher and his students.
3. Guide teachers to get effective methods that affect the students’ behaviour.
4. Improve the efficiency of teachers’ objectives in education.
5. Help teachers identify trends and developments in the field of education and improve working relationships.
6. Provide teachers with everything new to increase their efficiency and refine their expertise.
7. Qualify the teacher to face problems that hinder his career.
8. Improve teacher’s competencies and treat their deficiencies and encourage them to do scientific research.

3. Historical Overview of Teacher Training Programs

Training programs in Algerian educational system have developed through time; they have been given importance in the wave of innovation and change. Though ancient and new training programs do not differ from each other in the level of goals, they are different in methods of training. The educational authorities start giving much importance to training programs in all levels in the educational system.

3.1 Traditional Programs for Training

After more than a century of French colonialism, most of intellectuals have been studied in French. In 1962, the French colonial educational system established in Algeria 6 training schools for primary teachers. After independence, there were 1000 to 2600 French language teachers. The school entry of September 1962 needed about 20.000 teachers. In an issue 62/10 dated in 27th September 1962, the government has started to rely on the direct employment for teachers, without giving attention to teacher's educational level. Two training institutions in the period 1963-67 were founded, which are: the National Training Centre of Primary and Middle School's inspectors. National School of Technical Learning in El Harach, Algiers. (Benmati, 2008)

3.2 Innovative Programs of Teaching

According to Ghedjghoudj (2002) the recent education reforms have noticeably a direct impact on teacher education and training. The shifts of aims and contents of the curricula unfold new implications in terms of teaching strategies, means and evaluation systems and procedures. The impressive development of information technology has profoundly changed the role of teachers. From a most important, if not the only, source of knowledge, their task has become that of a conductor and manager. Teaching is oriented more towards helping learners to find, select and use the adequate knowledge among the vast and diversified sources. These changes in teaching and learning processes are to be integrated into the training programs of teachers. To face the new challenges of the era and to perform the innovative role expected from them.

According to Benmati (2008) the Ministry of Education established two bodies for training teachers: the first was the continual Training Body during the service from December 1999 to March 2000. The second was the Temporary Training Body for the Basic Educational Teachers that has not finished their Secondary learning.

In 1999 to 2000, the Algerian Ministry of Education has moved the teachers training into University, exactly to the Higher National Schools (ENS). Ministry proclamation N° 22/10/2000 has marked three different teachers training institutions.

- 1- The higher schools of teachers 1999 to 2000.
- 2- The national teachers training institutions.
- 3- The teachers training institutions during the service.

The Ministry of Education makes innovation in teacher employment through competition in the 2000's. The competition consists of speciality exam, Arabic language exam, culture exam, and ICT's exam. Training programs contain 09 modules. According to the innovation made in education, starting from 2015 novice teachers are required to have a pedagogical training for 6 weeks. Modules and subjects in EFL Teacher Training Programs are as follows: Didactics, Educational Psychology, School Legislation, Ethical Profession, Automated Media School Mediation, The Algerian Educational System, and Training Engineering.

After the educational reforms of the Algerian educational sector, the Ministry of Education relies on the employment by exams for the university graduates, that have BA degree as an employment condition. Therefore, the Ministry organizes set of exams within a National Competition for teaching employment; details are explained in the following table:

Table 1.*Exams and coefficients in the competition for teacher employment*

| Exams | Coefficients |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Specialty Exam | 3 |
| Foreign Language Exam (Arabic) | 1 |
| Culture Exam | 1 |
| ICT's Exam | 1 |

After success in the competition teachers are required to have a training program in 09 modules, the training is divided into 6 weeks, the first week, for instance, from 23rd to 28th December and the second from 20th March to 26th, an illustration is provided in the table below:

Table 2.*An illustration of one week of training*

| 08-10h | 10.30-12.30h | 13-15h |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| The Algerian Educational System | Educational Psychology | School Legislation |
| Training Engineering | // | Didactics |
| Didactics | School Mediation | Automated Media |
| // | Automated Media | Ethical Profession |
| The Algerian Educational System | Training Engineering | School Legislation |
| // | Didactics | Automated Media |

It is noticed from the table that theory is dealt with more than practice, especially in modules like: Didactics, educational psychology, Algerian educational system, and school legislation, those modules in addition of the fact that they are theoretical, the trainees have already dealt with at university level.

4. Challenges of EFL Teacher Training Programs

Maraf (2012) describes the training of teachers as the 'core dilemma' of the Algerian education. Many studies touch upon the current issues that English language teachers should be aware to focus more on their own professional development. Maraf (2012) explains further and says : “ Teacher training and retraining has been given a strong emphasis in the proceedings of the reform as well as in most official discourses about contemporary national education. But, teacher training has often been neglected in education policies. There has

always been a delay, even a gap between education reforms and appropriate teacher preparation” (Maraf, 2012, p. 8).

Teacher Training programs in Algeria, though innovation, are still facing several challenges, among them:

- 1- To bridge the gap between the knowledge acquired at university and the real world of teaching.
- 2- To maintain a balance between theory and practice, as it is noticed in modules trainees have in their training are theoretical, didactics as example and language Psychology are already dealt with at university.
- 3- Teachers graduating from university and those from ENS High Schools for teachers are different in level and 6 weeks for training those graduating from university are not sufficient.

There is a gap between the knowledge acquired at university and the practice of teaching, that knowledge is theoretical. In fact, what those novice teachers really need is to practise teaching. Teacher training programs are to be reconsidered for bridging the gap between university and the real world of teaching. A proverb says: “you cannot teach swimming without swimming pool”, in fact, we cannot train teachers how to teach in a theory only without practical activities. Educational authorities have better reconsider the development of teacher training programs, their goals, and the main challenges of these programs.

Ghedjghoudj (2002) considers Educational policies in Algeria as over ambitious considering the limited human and material resources in the face of a growing school population. Plenty of challenges should be surmounted for the sake of establishing efficient teacher training programs.

5. Conclusion

The reforms made in Algerian teacher training programs are considered as fairly good initiative for improving the quality of teaching, however, this initiative is not enough, and plenty of challenges are facing teacher training programs in Algeria. The low level of qualifications and professional training of the highest proportion of teachers make teacher in-service training more crucial. This is even more necessary for primary and middle school teachers. The latest reform, with the radical changes in the aims, contents, and methods in education requires rapid updating in the educational system. Though the existing challenges, a sparkling hope can be seen in the possible coming innovation and change in teacher training programs.

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