

Designing a Training Program for Iraqi EFL In-service Teachers

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Abstract

Iraqi EFL pre-service teachers (students in colleges of education) study one general course in methods of teaching EFL at departments of English at Colleges of Education because there is an excessive concentration on linguistics and literature than methods and approaches of teaching EFL in the English language curricula. The research shows that most of the in-service teachers face difficulty when it comes to English language teaching because of the lack of the appropriate training and the programs [1],[2],[3]. The United States Government Accountability Office report (2009) [4] showed that there is a big demand on teacher preparation training programs due to the lack of the proficient training of English language courses.

The current suggested teachers' preparation program is targeting the Iraqi in-service EFL teachers for three reasons. First, many in-service teachers consider that attending teacher preparation programs is unnecessary because of the accumulated years of experience in teaching EFL. The second reason is that through the four years at Colleges of Education, undergraduate students (pre-service teachers) do not really have overwhelming courses in methods of teaching EFL. The third reason is that since English in Iraq is a foreign language, students and teachers cannot develop their oral-audio skills unless they retain their participation in teachers' preparation programs. The goal of this training course is to assist the in-service teachers to implement new and effective methods for teaching EFL students in Iraq. Therefore, this research has suggested a sixteen-week instructive training program that meets the in-service teachers' needs and expectations.

Keywords: Education, EFL, Preparation program, In-service teachers, Iraqi teachers, Training courses.

تصميم برنامج تدريبي لمدرسي اللغة الإنكليزية لغة اجنبية من العراقيين

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المستخلص

يدرس طلاب البكالوريوس في اقسام اللغة الانكليزية في كليات التربية في العراق مادة مناهج وطرائق تدريس اللغة الإنكليزية كلفة اجنبية في فصل دراسي واحد فقط خلال فترة دراستهم للبكالوريوس والتي تمتد على مدى أربعة سنوات وذلك لان اغلب التركيز في المنهج الدراسي يكون على علم اللغة والادبيات أكثر مما هو عليه بالنسبة لطرائق التدريس على الرغم من ان كليات التربية تهيأ وتخرج طلبتها ليكونوا مدرسين في المستقبل! يوضح البحث ان نسبة كبيرة من مدرسي اللغة الإنكليزية الحاليين يواجهون صعوبة في إيصال المادة الدراسية الى طلبتهم وذلك لافتقارهم للبرامج التدريبية والورشات المناسبة فيما يتعلق بطرائق التدريس. يظهر تقرير مكتب الاعتمادية الحكومي الأمريكي (٢٠٠٩) انه يوجد طلب كبير ومتزايد على إقامة هكذا ورش وبرامج تدريبية بسبب قلة الفصول الدراسية الاحترافية في تدريس اللغة الإنكليزية.

يستهدف البرنامج المقترح الحالي مدرسي اللغة الإنكليزية الحاليين في المدارس العراقية لثلاث أسباب. السبب الأول هو ان العديد من المدرسين الحاليين يعتبرون المشاركة في هذه البرامج التدريبية غير ضرورية لاعتقادهم ان سنوات الخدمة والخبرة المتركمة

من هذه السنوات كافية بحل المشاكل الطارئة في مجال التدريس. السبب الثاني هو انه خلال السنوات الأربعة في اقسام اللغة الإنكليزية في كليات التربية لا يوجد عدد كافي ومكثف من الفصول الدراسية المتعلقة بمناهج وطرائق تدريس اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة اجنبية. اما السبب الثالث والأخير هو حقيقة ان اللغة الإنكليزية في العراق هي لغة اجنبية لذا فان المدرسين والطلاب لا يستطيعون تطوير مهاراتهم السمعية واللغوية مالم يستمروا بالمشاركة بهكذا برامج تدريبية وتطويرية. ان الهدف من هذا البرنامج هو مساعدة مدرسي اللغة الإنكليزية على استخدام وتضمين الطرق الحديثة والفعالة في تدريس اللغة الإنكليزية في المدارس العراقية.

الكلمات الدالة: التعليم، اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة اجنبية، برامج تدريبية، المدرسين الحاليين، المدرسين العراقيين، ورش تدريبية

1. Introduction: Philosophy of Education

Through the researcher's master classes in TESOL and hersixteen years in teaching undergraduateand graduate students in deferent majors and colleges of education in Iraq, she has developed a personalteaching philosophy that will be applied in her future classes. The researcher is fully aware that lessonpreparation will be changed continuously by looking at the students' needs. For instance, ESL and EFL learners on the foundation level are always seeking to demonstrate the English languagebasics like vocabulary and pronunciation, while the needs of the more advanced ESL/EFLlearners are different. They are examining more advanced grammar, academic vocabulary andwriting, and more innovative readings.

The researcher believes that giving the students the opportunity to express themselves and interact withtheir colleagues in class is more beneficial in learning a language, since this will give them theroom to expand their knowledge of new vocabulary and grammatical structures. The teacher's position inthis case will be a facilitator not an administrator in class who makes thing clearer for in-service teachers (current teachers at Iraqi schools)because s/he feels it is valuable for students to work on the answers instead of telling them the rightanswers. In-service teachers need to work together in pairs or groups under the facilitator's observation. The facilitator whowill direct them whenever they feel unable to do their tasks. Moreover, he will be encouraging and motivatingthe in-service teachers to participate in class and let their feelings about what they think lead themthrough the activities so they will not hesitate to share their ideas. This process will help themexperience the language even if they make mistakes. The facilitator is going to use the communicativeapproach to give them the space they need in the classroom to work and communicate with theircolleagues.

The researcher's aim is to create a safe learning environment for the in-service teachers to express themselves inthe classroom that gives them the courage to use the language outside theclassroom because thisis the real purpose behind learning a language. The facilitator feels it is his/ her job to make in-service teachers feel confident communicating with native speakers of the language, when possible, without hesitating because they think theymay make mistakes. This shouting down idea may slow them down and delay languageacquisition. The facilitator wantsthein-service teachers to love what they are learning and doing inside the classroom andoutside it.

2. Literature Review

Iraqi EFL pre-service teachers (students in Colleges of Education) have one general course in Methods of Teaching EFL in the Department of English at Colleges of Education because they study about the language more than the techniques of teaching the language to EFL students. "Second language instructors expressed that their second language instructor preparation program overemphasized the study of literature, while deemphasizing the study of the target language itself" [5].

Although pre-service teachers graduate to be EFL teacher but their knowledge about how to teach English language to K-12 EFL students is limited. All they know is to follow the same methods and techniques other teachers in other fields (mathematics, science, etc.) are using to teach their students. The lack of the accurate efficient EFL teaching courses in their four-years of undergraduate studies make them vulnerable when it comes to difficulties their EFL students face when they learn the language [6]. If they get comprehensive EFL courses in each content area (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), they will be able to help their students overcome the difficulties of learning the English language. This is not only an Iraqi concern; it is more like a worldwide issue that most of the pre-service teachers go through when they go to the real world of teaching EFL students.

The research shows that most of the in-service teachers face difficulty when it comes to English language teaching because of the lack of the appropriate training and the programs [1], [2], [3]. The United States Government Accountability Office report (2009) [4] shows that there is a big demand on teacher preparation training programs due to the lack of the proficient training of English language courses.

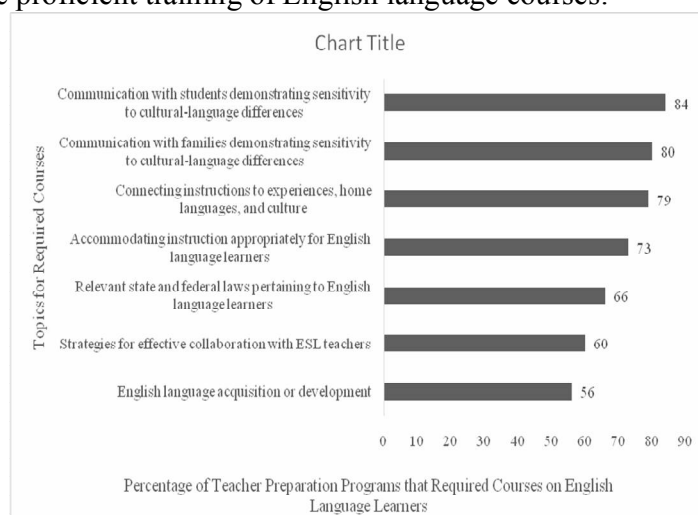


Fig. (1): Teacher Preparation Programs and Required Courses on English Language Learners[4]

3. Teacher Preparation Course for Iraqi in-service EFL Teachers

The teachers' preparation program, the researcher working on, is targeting the Iraqi in-service EFL teachers for three reasons. First, many in-service teachers believe that

after graduation and their many years of experience, they do not need to attend teachers' preparation programs because they consider themselves as fully acknowledged of what it takes to be a good teacher. These programs keep teachers on track with new techniques and methods of teaching EFL students. This course is designed for the in-service EFL Iraqi teachers who are currently involved in Iraqi K-12 (kindergarten to high school) public and private schools and seeking courses in methods of teaching EFL students. The second reason why the researcher is targeting the Iraqi in-service teachers is that through all their undergraduate courses they do not really have a clear course about methods of teaching EFL students. There are not enough courses offered for them in EFL teaching in each content areas, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The only course they are offered, during the four-year undergraduate, is the theories around methods of teaching EFL students in general with no focus on any content area. The third reason is, English in Iraq is a foreign language that means people do not use it outside school so their speaking and listening skills are not advanced. Students and teachers cannot develop these skills because they do not communicate with English that make it 'school language'.

3.1 Course Objectives

In-service teachers will be able to demonstrate the following:

1. Understanding the new techniques and methods in teaching EFL students in each content area (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).
2. Developing activities that motivate their EFL students to participate in class and interact with the pairs.
3. Designing effective lesson plans that meet the EFL students' needs.
4. Understanding and practicing pair observation and teacher observation to help colleagues develop their courses design or lesson plans.
5. Initiating a solid platform for cooperating and collaborating with their colleagues that will elevate the students' comprehension skills.

3.2 The Course Goals

The goals of the in-service teachers' preparation course are as follows:

1. Offering a program of courses and activities that allow the in-service teachers to systematically adopt and progress with new methods of teaching EFL students in Iraq that were tested and showed their effectiveness.
2. Offering professional feedback from colleagues and teachers through the three types of observations that will be used to evaluate the in-service teachers' development.
3. Providing teachers with opportunities to practice the techniques and methods being explained in the course in addition to instant feedback from their colleagues and teachers. Moreover, this course gives them the chance to observe their colleagues and understand the importance of the effective observation.
4. Serving as a connection to promote better multicultural educational awareness and appreciation between the in-service teachers.

5. Establishing a solid ground for cooperation and collaboration the teacher and the in-service teachers. This trust and willingness to work in groups will help the in-service teachers acquire the spirit their students should have in class in order to comprehend and acquire the language.
6. Ensuring the quality of instructions used in preparing lesson plan, teaching in class, error correction, and effective techniques in teaching each area of content by maintaining effective discussions and class collaboration.
7. Furnishing a forum for workshop opportunities that will maintain the level of comprehension teachers could sustain at the end of the course.
8. Striving to preserve a mutual understanding of in-service teachers from diverse backgrounds in relation to the schools' environments that may affect the in-service teachers' productivity.
9. Providing support services to assist in-service teachers in their academic pursuits as well as social and personal connections.

3.3 Major Outcomes

In-service teachers will be able to:

1. Determine their EFL students' needs in each content area (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and work to push their students' boundaries.
2. Figure out which activities will motivate their students to participate in class and interact with other students.
3. Develop their lesson plans and teaching techniques that will meet their EFL students' needs.
4. Initiate a solid ground to start and develop cooperation and collaboration with the administration and the other teachers in school.
5. Observe their colleagues at schools and give them feedback about the strengths and limitations in their teaching techniques.

3.4 Materials

In-service teachers will be supplied with the articles they need for this class and the books about the History of Education in Iraq. Some books will be optional while others will be mandatory.

A. Optional Books:

1. *New ways in content-based instruction*, by Brinton, D., Master, P. [7]
2. *New ways of classroom assessment*, by Brown, J. D. [8]
3. *Teaching pronunciation: a reference for teachers of English to speakers of other languages*, by Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D., Goodwin, J., & Griner, B. [9]
4. *New ways in teaching reading*, by Day, R. [10]
5. *Teach English: a training course for teachers (trainer's handbook)*, by Doff, A. [11]

6. *Preparing America's teachers*, by Fraser, J. [12]
 7. *New ways in teacher education*, by Freeman, D., & Cornwell, S. [13]
 8. *Research on second language teacher education: a sociocultural perspective on professional development*, by Johnson, K., & Golombek, P. [14]
 9. *New ways in teaching adults*, by Lewis, M. [15]
 10. *Innovating EFL teaching in Asia*, by Muller, T. Herder, S., Adamson, J. [16]
 11. *Techniques in teaching writing*, by Raimes, A. [17]
 12. *New ways in teaching writing*, by White, R. [18]
- B. Mandatory Books:
1. *Teaching the four skills in EFL*, by Baker, T. [19]
 2. *Teaching L2 composition: purpose, process, and practice* (3rd edition), by Dana, F., & Hedgcock, J. [20]
 3. *More discussion starters: activities for building speaking fluency*, by Folse, K., & Ivone, J. [21]
 4. *Teaching ESL/EFL reading and writing (ESL & applied linguistics professional series)*, by Nation. [22]
 5. *Extensive Reading Strategies in EFL Classrooms: A Practical Overview for Enhancing Reading Comprehension*, by Al Ghazali, F. [23]
 6. *Writing in English is easy!: Beginning to intermediate ESL/EFL writing textbook and student workbook* (volume 1), by Galloway. [24]
 7. *Teaching EFL writing in the 21st century Arab world: realities and challenges (1st ed.)*, by Abdulhamid & Abouabdelkader. [25]
- C. Articles:
1. 'Investigating multimedia strategies to aid L2 listening comprehension in EFL environment', by Aldera, A. S. [26]
 2. 'Improving reading rate activities for EFL students: timed reading and repeated oral reading' by Chang, A. [27]
 3. 'Using picture books in EFL college reading classrooms' by Lee, H. [28]
 4. 'Infusing cooperative learning into an EFL classroom' by Tuan, L. T. [29]
 5. 'The effects of advance organizers and subtitles on EFL learners' listening comprehension skills' by Yang, Hui-Yu. [30]
 6. 'Short stories via computers in EFL classrooms: an empirical study for reading and writing skills' by Yilmaz, A. [31]
 7. 'Understanding EFL students' participation in group feedback of L2 writing: a case study from an activity theory perspective' by Yu, S., & Lee, I. [32]

3.5 Delivery Methods

While in-service teachers are expected to be involved in the class activities, the facilitator encourages them to be natural in expressing themselves in a relaxing, friendly, creative, and innovative teaching environment. Kissau [33] in the introductory notes in his article 'Type of instructional delivery and second language teacher candidate performance: online versus face-to-face', stated that there are "no significant differences in learning outcomes for students of fully online or face-to-face (F2F) instruction" (33:

513).

That is the reason why this program will be of two modes: face-to-face and online class

which will help the in-service teachers have as much information as they can and not to miss any subject if they were absent.

1. In classrooms, the communicative approach will be the dominant teaching method by using a wide range of innovative techniques in delivering information and doing the activities. The in-service teachers will meet face to face and express their ideas with their colleagues and teacher. The in-service teachers will be working together in pairs or groups doing the activities and having discussions under the facilitator's observation and direction whenever the facilitator feels they are unable to do their tasks.
2. The second mode is the online meetings where everyone will be using the 'zoom cloud meetings app'. The facilitator and the in-service teachers will use this app to share information and do some activities outside the classroom which will keep the in-service teachers connected with the material they are being taught. The facilitator will be running the session so s/he can interfere whenever there is a need to correct or add so the in-service teachers will be on the track all the time.
3. The third mode is using apps to connect with native speakers of English in the US that create a real environment to practice and use the language in Iraqi Classrooms. Skype and Zoom Apps are very popular to connect people around the world, so the facilitator will use them to connect the in-service teachers with native speakers of English in the US, like teachers in teachers' preparation programs, professors in American universities, specialists, and teachers in K-12 schools.

3.6 Activities and Evaluation

This course will be evaluated by the facilitator through using observation as its assessment instrument and not through paper-based tests because this course is about methods of teaching EFL student. This course is not only about theories of teaching EFL students; it is about the application and experience of these theories. There is no use of the theories being taught in classes unless they are applied in classes where they can be tested. The Iraqi in-service teachers have a theoretical background about methods of teaching EFL students, but they do not know how to implement them in their classes.

2.6.1 Lesson Plan

The in-service teachers are going to write lesson plans about each content area (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) after they have a detailed discussion about each skill. The lesson plan activity will be at the beginning of each week of 'Lesson Presentation', so teachers will have time to practice and review their lesson plans then they will apply them when they present in the same week.

2.6.2 In-class Group Observation

After they are done learning about one area of content (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), students will be representing a model lesson in front of their

colleagues. They will be acting as EFL teachers while their colleagues will be acting like their EFL students. Students will comment on what they think their colleagues should change or which activity s/he should use for each skill. It will be an open discussion where everyone can share his/ her opinion. The facilitator will be sitting in the back observing and taking notes so at the end of the class s/he will give them feedback and they will have an open discussion about what their lesson looked like and how it should be.

2.6.3 Observation

One of the methods the facilitator is going to use is observation where in-service teachers will assess their colleagues in a friendly supportive environment. In-service teachers are given the opportunity to observe classes taught by their colleagues to gain the knowledge of how to teach different skill areas classes. The facilitator asks them to observe their colleagues who are specialized in specific techniques or methods used in certain skills or levels. The objectives of the observation are 1) the enrichment of the observing teacher, 2) see to what extent teachers have gained from the training courses they are involved in, and 3) giving suggestions and recommendations that may help teachers develop or enhance their class management, lesson plans, and techniques of teaching EFL students. The in-service teachers will be provided with review form that will facilitate their observations and reflections.

2.6.4 Teacher Observation

Since this is a methodology course, the facilitator observes the in-service teachers in the last month of the semester to assess their academic development. The facilitator will observe the in-service teachers to determine if they have demonstrated the techniques they have learned. The facilitator will use a different observation form than the observation forms the in-service teachers are going to use when they observe their colleagues to evaluate them as part of their assessment. After s/he finishes observing all the in-service teachers, the facilitator will compare the two observation forms (observation and teacher observation forms). At the end of the course, the facilitator will give them feedback about areas of teaching where they did good job and where they missed using the suitable techniques.

2.6.5 Evaluation Forms

At the last day of the program, the facilitator provides the in-service teachers with an open evaluation form that will speculate on their insights about the program. S/he will ask them to evaluate activities, textbooks, materials, time management, observations as a tool to evaluate them, etc.



Fig. (2): Evaluation Phases

3.7 The Purpose of Evaluation

1. The in-class group observation serves as the basis for immediate instructional and methodological improvement.
2. The observation serves as a guide for in-service teachers as their colleagues reflect upon their effectiveness.
3. The observation serves as a tool in training in-service teachers for coaching and observing colleagues.
4. The facilitator's observation serves as an individual measurement of performance for each in-service teacher.
5. The three types of observation guide professional development for in-service teachers.
6. The constant feedback from the observations will keep in-service teachers informed of how to stay on track regarding the four skills of learning.

3. Teaching Plan (Course Topics)

In-service teachers will be provided with the books that are related to the history of education in Iraq.

Table (1): Teaching Plan and Course Schedule

Schedule	Topics	Resources
Week One	History of Teacher Preparation in Iraq and America.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing America's Teachers: A History. Fraser [12] 2. New ways in Teacher Education. Freeman & Coenwell [13] 3. Research on Second Language Teacher Education: A Sociocultural Perspective on Professional Development. Johnson & Golombek [14]
Week Two	History of Methods of Teaching EFL Classes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching the four skills in EFL, by Baker, T. [19] 2. New Ways in Teaching Adults. Lewis [15] 3. Teach English: A Training Course for Teachers (Trainer's Handbook). By Doff [11] 4. New Ways in Content-Based Instruction. Brinton & Master [7]
Week Three	Methods of Teaching Listening for EFL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articles in listening

Week Four	Lesson Presentation on Listening Presented Individually	
Week Five		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More discussion starters: activities for building speaking fluency. Folse, and Ivone. [21] 2. Talk a Lot: Communication Activities for Speaking Fluency. Folse. [34] 3. Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin [9] 4. Articles in Speaking
Week Six	Lesson Presentation on Speaking Presented Individually	
Week Seven		
	Methods of Teaching Speaking for EFL	
Week Seven		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing in English is easy!: Beginning to intermediate ESL/EFL writing textbook and student workbook (volume 1). Ghallagar [24] 2. Teaching L2 composition: purpose, process, and practice. Dana & Hedgcock. [20] 3. Techniques in Teaching Writing. Raimes [17] 4. Teaching EFL writing in the 21st century Arab world: realities and challenges (1st ed.). Abdulhamid & Abouabdelkader. [25] 5. Articles in writing
	Methods of Teaching Writing for EFL	
Week Eight	Lesson Presentation on Writing Presented Individually	

Week Nine	Methods of Teaching Reading for EFL	1. Teaching ESL/EFL reading and writing (ESL & applied linguistics professional series). Nation. [22] 2. Extensive reading strategies in EFL classrooms: a practical overview for enhancing reading comprehension. Al Ghazali.
Week Ten	Lesson Presentation on Reading Presented Individually	
Week Eleven	Classroom Assessment Techniques	3. Articles in reading 1. New Ways of Classroom Assessment. Brown [8] 2. Articles in ways of assessment
Weeks Twelve & Thirteen	Observation	Evaluation
Week Fourteen	Reflection and Review on Observation (in Class)	
Weeks Fifteen & Sixteen	Teacher Observation and Feedback (on Site) & program evaluation form	

5. Conclusion

The demand for in-service teachers' training programs cannot be underestimated. It is a need for upgrading work performance and inspiration of in-service teachers in the field of EFL. The absence of these programs will hinder professional development of in-service teachers in addition to the "missing gaps" between requests and real accomplishment levels. In-service teachers' training programs that take into consideration conferences, exhibitions, workshops, seminars, etc. that are designed to improve teachers' performance on different levels in countless institutions have proved their effectiveness and influence in the educational institutes from the early employment phase to retirement.

The in-service teachers' educational training programs are designed for the workforce growth of the schools' corporations and the entire educational enterprise. If the in-service teachers are to accomplish their roles efficiently and effectively, it becomes crucial for them to demand training in innovative skills and contemporary methodology. The higher the level of educational fulfilment by in-service teachers, the more advanced the level of educational standards in any country.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**There are no conflicts of interest****References**

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