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Ways to continuing professional development

Modernization of educational system demands renewal of the system of improvement teachers' qualifications – the main characters of educational process. As a result of the last decade the grown of professional and scientific exchanges, broadening integrative process, intensification of international interaction and cooperation have stimulated the progressive development of foreign languages education in the Republic Kazakhstan. The priority for foreign languages teacher is the strategy of professional and intercultural-communicative competences formation.

It is obviously that in the frame of involving people in the process of getting knowledge of foreign language by using information communication technologies there have been opened the great opportunity before professional continuous development (CPD). There are plenty of ways to keep up your continuous professional development in ELT. If a number of these activities are combined into a planned, interlinked programme, with monitoring and evaluation, even if only by the teacher him or herself, there can be real, satisfying results for teachers wishing to keep up and improve their professional development.

In addition, it's good if a teacher can keep up to date on relevant literature, theory and practice; have thoughts on their own role as a change agent; and keep developing.

It is known Teacher Training can be seen as the process of equipping an individual with the means to carry out the job of teaching. This is normally done by means of a course of training that presents the individual with a series of skills that meet the requirements of different aspects of teaching. In the specific field of language teaching, these would consist of skills and techniques to teach grammar, lexis, pronunciation, reading, writing, listening and speaking, plus the more general skills involved in classroom management.

For the most part it is fair to say that Teacher Training is a process that comes from "outside" – from a course and from a trainer or group of trainers. Teacher

Development, on the other hand, comes from within the individual and requires a commitment from that individual to move forward in some way as a teacher.

Adrian Underhill's definition of Teacher Development is particularly succinct:

"Teacher development is the process of becoming the best teacher one is able to be, a process that can be started but never finished" [1]

Lifelong learning and continuous professional development in our opinion are much the same thing. Undoubtedly if many people would say that learning throughout one's life is not a good aim to have. However, as far as Continuing Professional Development goes, it's always disheartened to see how some teachers are happy to go on much as they always have done, doing a reasonable job but not developing to any great extent. Meanwhile, others strive to push their boundaries and actively create challenges for themselves, learning from their experiences and adding to their skills and their self knowledge, often in their own time.

A change of the system of foreign language education mostly depends on quality of teacher's readiness and awareness.

At the 21st Century Literacy Summit in Berlin in 2002 has observed, the following competencies become more and more difficult to succeed in our economic world:

- technological competence
- information competence
- creative competence
- social competence

Hence this article is devoted to a discussion on ways to maintain continuous professional development for foreign languages teachers.

Let's analyze every competence in detail and try to point out the ways of Continuing Professional Development for foreign languages teachers in Kazakhstan. Perfecting the system of improvement qualifications and methodical work with teachers in intercourse period, as its integral part, needs reorientation of methodical services activities for providing professional growth connected with competent teacher's role of modern educational institution. In connection with it, issues of professional self-development become very actual.

We think, all competences are connected to a level of enthusiasm, belief and commitment of teachers that is very common in our profession:

- technological competence is the ability to get information in order to communicate with others;
- information competence is the ability to collect information by all possible means, to organize data, to select whether information is relevant or

trustworthy and to process it in order to acquire a qualified opinion on a broad level;

- creative competence is the ability to produce and offer information. It means that teacher will look at ways of working creatively with texts, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and areas such as storytelling, music, poetry, drama and movement. This is practical with the focus on learning through enjoyment and creativity. Teachers encourage experiencing ideas and materials adapting them to the needs and special interests of their own learners.
- social competence is the ability to realize the social consequences of the new info and to develop the appropriate responsibility, physical and mental stamina, and good management skills. The capacity to engage participants, relates to them both one to one and in groups, and find out what they know. A good understanding of the content you teach and an ability to transform it into
 - clear, succinct messages and
 - practice via tasks and materials;
- emotional competence is the ability to realize good classroom skills – for example, the ability to hold attention, question, wait, listen well, make good quality interventions, explain, demonstrate, negotiate learning that is meaningful and relevant for participants, monitor group work and synthesize everyone's offerings. The ability to get on with colleagues and those above, to the side and below you in your context [2].

This competence is quite new for teachers but it is very urgent. Hence emotions influence all our decisions and actions. The emotional competence means the process of realization of our condition so that to understand how emotions influence us. On the one hand, to control emotions doesn't mean to depress or conceal one's emotions; on the other hand, emotional competence also doesn't mean to express one's emotions anytime. On the contrary teachers get an opportunity to realize a right choice, really estimating their own actions, and diminish stress influence on [3].

When we really realize the origin of our emotions, we can protect our feelings and our perception against misrepresentation. And it gives a splendid opportunity for foreign languages teachers to improve and develop their own relations with another teachers or different categories of social society to a considerable extent.

As you have noticed we add one more competence – emotional, so we propose new extension for Continuing Professional Development which was mentioned above.

This last competence is not just enough to be able to teach any more. You'll now have to have a good understanding of what you can do in a classroom, who with or to, when, how, and why. In other words, you've got to get meta – that is, look over and behind all you do from a professional viewpoint so you can comment on it lucidly and provide shortcuts for others.

Now we'd like to enumerate only some ways of Continuing Professional Development available to foreign languages teachers in Kazakhstan. Though CPD is still in its infancy and is being applied across a wide range of professions.

1. Experts - There is a lot to be learnt through taking advantage of all the experienced and expert practitioners in the field of ELT, by attending sessions they may give at practical scientific-methodical conferences of any educational institutions or, if teachers are lucky, talks that are available in their vicinity. Reading readily-available articles and books written by 'experts' and participating in online events or blogs with invited professionals is an alternative if 'experts' are not available in the flesh somewhere near you.
2. Workshops - Similar to the above, but not necessarily with known ELT professionals. Often teachers get a lot more out of smaller, more intimate workshops where there is the opportunity to discuss and debate ideas and opinions and take away ideas for classroom activities and to reflect on.
3. Online communities - These may include an interactive virtual conference such as the annual IATEFL online conferences sponsored by the British Council, or the blogs on the TeachingEnglish website, or other forums and discussion boards set up to encourage participation around ELT topics by teachers from all over the world.

For instance we can name only some of the useful internet resources:

- a) BBC. Learning English. www.bbc.co.uk
 - b) teachingenglish@britishcouncil.org
 - c) onestopenglish.newsletter@macmillan.com
 - d) namma13259561@subscribe.ru
 - e) YouTube English teaching lessons.
4. Talking informally - Joining other teachers in the staffroom discussing their next lesson or the materials they are using is one of the easiest and most effective ways of developing, especially if you borrow the ideas and try them out in your own classes.
 5. Individual reading - Another easy way to learn that can include internet materials and journals as well as actual books, which can be expensive and difficult to obtain in some parts of the world. We can read anywhere in any short piece of snatched free time.

6. Reading groups - While reading is done individually, what is learnt can be formalized in discussion in a reading group? Set a text to read and come together with colleagues a few weeks later to discuss its content. So much can be learnt through sharing of impressions and discussing issues the reading material raises.
7. Programmed action research - You may be lucky enough to have a head of department or principal who wants research results which shed light on what is going on in his or her institution, and is prepared to provide time for teachers to provide the evidence. This is one interpretation of programmed action research, though there are lots of others, and teachers cannot help but learn from the experience and the results.
8. Individual action research - Similar to the above, but teacher-directed and not 'imposed'. Often very small scale, nevertheless so much can be learnt from studying your students or yourself in the classroom, and there is a huge range of aspects of teaching which you can put under an action research microscope.
9. Giving sessions - This can range from a small in-school meeting where teaching ideas are shared right through to a session at a large international conference, for example, NATEK, KATEK. All conference speakers started small and all teachers have something to say. This is a particularly effective way to develop due to the planning and research which takes place before the session as well as the discussion and feedback which it provokes.
10. Writing - Similar to the above, writing ranges from short articles right through to books. Keeping a diary and reflecting on your teaching is a good way to start and there are plenty of models out there to learn from, while the preparation and research necessary teaches you as much as the writing and rewriting itself.
11. Doing a formal course - This is often the first thing people think of when they think about professional development. But it is often the most prohibitive due to time and expense, and often courses do not provide exactly what is needed. If you are lucky enough to be able to follow a course, however, make the most of the time you have laid aside for thinking and learning, because doing a course is a great way to develop.

Thus Teacher Development can be regarded as more or less a voluntary activity but Continuing Professional Development is much more a requirement for any educational organization, the aim of which is to benefit not only the individual but also the organization and, ultimately, the profession as a whole. In order to implement CPD the individual teacher makes a commitment to develop and move

in some way and that commitment is endorsed and actively supported by the organization. There are numerous ways in which a teacher can develop and the active support of the organization will greatly expedite this process. Some of these modes of development may involve teacher training, others will simply involve discovery. Concrete examples of such development might be attending external events such as workshops, seminars or conferences, following a specialized training course, getting a higher qualification, becoming a member of English Teacher Association, leading in-house and external workshops and seminars, writing teaching materials, publishing articles, becoming more informed about current literature on language teaching and linguistics, and observing other teachers and being observed oneself.

With the active support of the institution many of these goals can be achieved. We think that a motivating factor introduced by some institutions is to have a "points system" or "rating" where points are awarded for different developmental activities. Attaining a specific points total over a given period of time will indicate to the current employer or to a potential employer that a particular teacher is in the process of active Continuous Professional Development. And as a result this teacher will be more employable and more eligible:

1. for more responsible posts within any educational organization,
2. engaging in new professional activities,
3. trying out different methods/approaches in class,
4. being trained up as a teacher trainer,
5. completing an online course to be an e-tutor,
6. participating in projects in a group with fellow professionals,
7. forming a local group: to discuss issues and take turns to lead sessions.

In the future the results of this proposed competencies and their active Continuous Professional Development will promote creation of more effective system of professional self-development of foreign languages teachers in Kazakhstan, achievement their competent growth, and preparing for activities in the conditions of new model of education.

References:

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2. Tessa Woodward. Ways of Working with Teachers. 2005. T W Publications.
3. Федоренко Е. Ю. Тренинг-семинар: Эмоциональная компетентность — как ресурс эффективной коммуникации. Красноярск, 2010

