

Helping teachers become action researchers through (despite?) teacher education

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Despite teacher education?

- Academic requirements can “transform teacher research into an exercise driven by largely instrumental goals” (Borg, 2010, p. 406)
- Action research (if focused on developing understandings & improving life experiences in a sustainable way) should have the potential to intrinsically motivate in-service teachers

Through teacher education...

- “Where a teacher is able to stay in their teaching context, enriched by reading, reflective teaching and action research, the experience usually leads to sustained development” (Mann, 2005, p. 108)
- My focus today: how intrinsic motivation was encouraged on a particular course

My experience in Oman

- University of Leeds BA TESOL Programme for experienced (4+ years) in-service teachers, who were:
- Diploma-qualified, had a level of English proficiency, taught a ‘teacher-proof’ curriculum (Al-Issa, 2006), were inspected

Prior to the course...

- Teachers lacked autonomy and self-confidence
- “I tried (to adapt materials), but I couldn’t justify my work” (*Waleed* in Wyatt, 2011)
- “I didn’t feel like a real English teacher” (*Mariyam* in Wyatt, 2010a)

How did the three-year course help them to become researchers?

- From the beginning, reflective skills were developed (Al-Sinani, Al-Senaidi & Etherton, 2009)
- Reflective skills, such as noticing, listening, analysing, problem-solving (Malderez and Bodóczy, 1999), are also needed by researchers

How were reflective skills developed?

- Experiential teacher education sessions, when reflection was modelled
- ‘loop input’ activities (Woodward, 2003), i.e. when the process and content of learning were aligned
- Teachers valued this “reflective model of teacher education” (*Mariyam* in Wyatt, 2010a)

How were reflective skills developed?

- Opportunities to try things out in their own classrooms (while teaching 4 days per week)
- “When I learned something new, I always tried to relate it to my classroom” (*Rashid* in Wyatt, 2010b)
- School visits included mentoring (Wyatt, 2014)
- A changing climate with regards teacher supervision (Wyatt and Arnold, 2012)

How were research skills built on reflective skills?

- The first assignments required practical classroom research (Al-Sinani, Al-Senaidi & Etherton, 2009)
- Research experiences were recycled across modules
- Research experiences were shared by regional tutors & graduates of earlier cohorts
- Formal input was provided from halfway through the course

How were research skills built on reflective skills?

- Sensitive supervision, e.g. encouraging ownership (Todd, Smith and Bannister, 2006)
- Tailoring support to needs (‘autonomy-supportive’ - Lamb, 2009)
- Time and space were provided for research
- Tasks were manageable (proposal, oral presentation, thesis)

Outcomes were positive

- Teachers were more autonomous, had greater professional self-confidence (Freeman, 2007)
- Evidence of intrinsic motivation (Wyatt, 2010c)
- Interesting research was produced; capacity-building took place
- Not all teachers chose action research, but those who did believed (Al-Sinani, Al-Senaidi & Etherton, 2009; Wyatt, 2014)

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