



**The impact of continuing professional development on EFL teachers employed in
federal universities in the United Arab Emirates**

Submitted by

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Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Naziha Ali Raza", written over a dotted line.

Date: 1st October 2009

DEDICATION

To both my parents without whose presence none this would have been possible. There are no words to express my utmost gratitude to my mother and father whose sacrifices, understanding, support and faith in me made the arduous journey to completion possible.

Thank you for being there always.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this thesis is to explore the continuing professional development (CPD) of expatriate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers employed in the foundation English programme of federal universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In order to understand the phenomenon of CPD from the perspective of experienced teachers in the context this study explores their perceptions about CPD; along with their choice of CPD initiatives and the reasons and factors which impact on their choice. It also explores teachers' suggestions about improving CPD in their context. It is expected that the results of this thesis will create awareness of these aspects among experienced EFL teachers, their institutions, local CPD organisations and as well as the community of experienced expatriate tertiary teachers of EFL. It is also expected that the study will raise implications to consider for improving the CPD experience of teachers in the context.

Data was obtained using face to face individual and focus group interviews with volunteers who were foundation EFL teachers with a minimum of five years teaching experience in the context. Results revealed that participants in the study valued CPD as lifelong professional evolution that resulted in evident change. High preference emerged for participation in learning through participation in activities that provided opportunities for dialogue and collaboration. However, participants experienced less empowered and without a voice in the implementation of the institutional CPD agenda. Similarly disillusionment was experienced with CPD organisations' standardized initial teacher education focused CPD.

The study highlights how when teachers feel less empowered in their existing professional and occupational communities, they exercise their agency in finding alternative means of professional development. One result of this situation is the emergence of teacher initiated communities where learning takes place in an environment of mutual shared understandings. This also illuminates the existence of untapped expertise in the context which if exploited can benefit federal institutions; their teachers, CPD providers and subsequently others in the context. The main implication arising from this study is for federal universities, teachers and CPD providers to work in tandem and attempt to establish teacher learning communities of practice within the institution for situated learning within the context of practice.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABP	Academic Bridge Programme
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
CEPA	Common English Proficiency Assessment
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DELTA	Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults
DVD	Digital Video Disc
EdD	Doctor of Education
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
GED	General Education Division
HCT	Higher Colleges of Technology
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
ICDL	International Computer Driving License
IELTS	International English Language Testing Systems
ILA	Independent Learning Activities
INSET	In Service Education and Training
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LTE	Language Teacher Education
MERC	Magrudy's Educational Resource Centre
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
PD	Professional Development
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
SIG	Special Interest Group
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL Arabia	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages in Arabia
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAEU	United Arab Emirates University
UCPN	University City Professionals' Network
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
ZU	Zayed University