



**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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv - vii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	viii
LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1 - 6
1 Background to the study	1
1.1 Rationale for the study	2
1.2 The aims and objectives of the study	5
1.3 Significance of the study	5
1.4 Organization of the study	6
CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND.....	7 - 25
2 Introduction	7
2.1 Federal universities of higher education in the United Arab Emirates	7
2.2 English language education for UAE nationals	8
2.2.1 The foundation English language programmes	9
2.3 The role of EFL teachers in the foundation programme	10
2.4 Forms of CPD available to EFL teachers	13
2.4.1 Forms of institutional CPD	14
2.4.2 Forms of external CPD in the UAE	16
2.5 Teachers' engagement with CPD opportunities	21
2.6 Summary	25
CHAPTER THREE: THE LITERATURE REVIEW.....	26 - 66
3 Introduction	26
3.1 Continuing Professional Development	26

3.2	Professional knowledge in TESOL	27
3.2.1	The nature of professional knowledge in TESOL	27
3.2.2	Acquiring professional knowledge in TESOL	31
3.2.3	Imparting knowledge in TESOL	32
3.3	Perspectives on teacher learning that influence/underpin teacher development	35
3.3.1	Teacher learning as skills learning	35
3.3.2	Teacher learning as an individual process	36
3.3.3	Teacher learning as situated and social construction	38
3.3.4	The role of reflection in LTE	39
3.3.5	Collaboration in development	40
3.4	Different approaches to CPD	43
3.4.1	Possibilities in CPD approaches	44
3.4.2	Professional Learning Communities	54
3.5	Factors affecting the actualisation/pursuit of CPD	57
3.5.1	Societal factors	57
3.5.2	Institutional factors	57
3.5.3	Contextual and cultural factors	59
3.6	Current research on teachers' experiences of CPD	60
3.6.1	Teachers' perceptions of CPD	61
3.6.2	Popular CPD activities	61
3.6.3	Factors impacting on CPD	62
3.6.4	Recommendations in the literature to make CPD effective	64
3.6.5	Methodology	66
3.7	Summary	66
CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....		67 - 91
4	Introduction	67
4.1	The research questions of the study	67
4.2	Participants in the study	68
4.3	The research methodology of the study	68
4.3.1	The ontology and epistemology of the study	69
4.3.2	The positivist and interpretivist paradigms	70
4.3.3	The research paradigm for my study	71
4.3.4	Phenomenology	71
4.4	Research methods	73
4.4.1	Individual interviews	73
4.4.2	Focus group interviews	76

4.5	Data collection procedures	79
4.5.1	Sampling	79
4.5.2	Trialling the research instruments	81
4.5.3	Data collection	82
4.6	Data analysis	84
4.7	Research quality	85
4.7.1	Ethical considerations	87
4.8	Limitations	90
4.9	Summary	91
CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....		92 - 151
5	Introduction	92
5.1	Data presentation and illustration	92
5.2	Analysis of data	93
5.2.1	What do EFL teachers employed in the foundation English programme of federal universities understand by the term ‘continued professional development’ or CPD?	94
5.2.2	What kind of CPD do teachers engage in?	99
5.2.3	How do teachers justify their choice of the CPD initiatives that they undertake?	109
5.2.4	What in their views impacts on their chosen CPD?	119
5.2.5	What suggestions do teachers have with regard to improving the CPD within their context?	141
5.3	Summary	151
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....		152 - 170
6	Introduction	152
6.1	A discussion of the key findings	152
6.1.1	Teachers understanding of CPD	152
6.1.2	CPD trends among teachers	154
6.1.3	Reasons for CPD Preferences among teachers	155
6.1.4	Factors impacting on the CPD of teachers	156
6.1.5	Suggestions to enhance CPD	157
6.2	Towards a cultural understanding of foundation teachers’ experiences of CPD	159
6.2.1	Foundation EFL teachers as a micro-culture within the institution	160
6.2.2	Existing tension between the institutions and teachers	162
6.2.3	The effect of alienation from institutional culture of CPD	163

6.2.4	Non-institutional communities of practice	164
6.2.5	Virtual communities of practice	168
6.3	Emerging culture of CPD	169
6.4	Summary	170
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION.....		171 - 183
7	Introduction	171
7.1	Key ideas emerging from my thesis	171
7.2	Recommendations for improving the CPD experiences of teachers in the UAE	174
7.3	Contribution to the CPD of experienced teachers in general	177
7.4	Contribution to/resonance with the existing literature on communities of practice	178
7.5	Ideas for future research emerging from my thesis	179
7.6	Personal reflections	181
	7.6.1 What does this mean to me?	181
	7.6.2 Where is this research and understanding going to take me?	182
7.7	Summary	183
APPENDICES.....		184 - 193
APPENDIX 1: CHAPTER TWO.....		184 - 185
	Figure 2.1	184
	Figure 2.2	185
APPENDIX 2: CHAPTER FOUR.....		186 - 192
	Consent form	186
	E-mail accompanying preliminary survey	187
	E-mail to supervisors	188
	Preliminary (electronic) survey questionnaire	189
	Individual interview schedule	191
	Focus group interview schedule	192
BIBLIOGRAPHY		194 - 203

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 2.1	Details of federal universities in the UAE
Figure 2.2	Foundation programmes offered by federal universities in the UAE
Figure 3.1	Collaborative teacher development
Figure 3.2	Activities for CPD
Figure 3.3	Classification of self-directed CPD activities
Figure 3.4	Classification of other-directed activities
Figure 4.1	Summary of participant selection as it occurred in my study
Figure 5.1	Details of individual and focus group interviewees
Figure 5.2	Themes emerging from interviewees' understanding of the term 'CPD'
Figure 5.3	Responses indicating CPD activities of interest among interviewees
Figure 5.4	Percentage of responses indicating preferred reasons for interviewees to participate in CPD
Figure 5.5	Percentage of responses indicating factors that impact on CPD choices made by interviewees
Figure 5.6	Percentage of responses indicating the suggestions made by interviewees to enhance CPD in their context
Figure 6.1	An illustration of the intersection between the institutional community and the community of EFL teachers and its impact on foundation EFL teachers
Figure 6.2	The interactions between institutional, non-institutional and experienced expatriate teacher cultures of CPD
Figure 6.3	Features of institutional, no-institutional and experienced expatriate teachers' cultures in the UAE

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