

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THEIR ACTUAL TEACHING PERFORMANCES

A Case Study of English Preparatory School Teachers' Perceptions
in Eastern Mediterranean University of North Cyprus

Bengi Sonyel
M.A in Professional Studies in Education

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of
Education in Teacher Education to the School of Education
University of Nottingham
United Kingdom

February 2010

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved father Hasan Sonyel, who is not physically alive but spiritually will forever live with me deep inside, for giving me the chance to experience and fulfill the meaning and desire of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I do not know how to start my words to explain this journey both challenging and at the same time very valuable. I started this journey of mine with a lot of excitement and determinism. However, things towards the end did not turn out to be the way I wish it to be. I resemble this to human beings' 'destiny'. It is like, on the one hand, you are the master of your own destiny but on the other hand, certain things are beyond your control which only happens by God's will.

In this difficult phase of my life, firstly from the bottom of my heart I would like to thank my main supervisor, Dr. Do Coyle. She was not only in the place of a supervisor but also a guide, supporter, giver - in short my light to survive in the dark tunnel of this journey. Secondly, my sincere gratitude goes to Mr. Tony Fisher, who also helped me out a lot when I felt so desperate in not only writing up the thesis but also catching up the latest technological improvements too.

Thirdly, my genuine gratitude goes to the Chair of the Department of Educational Sciences, Asst.Prof.Dr. Hüseyin Yaratana, Dr. İlkey Gilanlloğlu, who scanned all my appendices on voluntary basis, the system administrator Halil Yaver, PhD student Bayram Güzer, who helped me a lot in all stages to organize the thesis via using technological advancements, Dr. Mark Anthony Minott, who shared a lot with me as critical friend, Dr. Sami Fethi and Dr. Salih Katırcı who professionally supported me during the analyses of the data, Dr. Hamit Caner who guided, supported at every stage of the thesis, and Senior Instructor Canan Perkan Zeki, who supported me as a critical friend and shared a lot during the research study. Many thanks also go to my colleagues, who contributed and participated in this research.

Finally, deepest gratitude goes to my mother Zehra Sonyel, who devoted her life to us concerning our education and career development. Last but not least, my deepest gratitude goes to my husband, Çetin İnalöz, who not only physically but also psychologically supported me in every sense throughout this journey of mine.

After all I wholeheartedly believe, value and treasure every single second, moment I spent on this research.

"The most beautiful moment of my life was when I realized that every moment of my life was the most beautiful moment of my life..."

ABSTRACT

This research is carried out to explore teachers' perspectives upon their teaching practices with respect to the in-service training program, C.O.T.E. they had been through. Teaching and in-service training have always been my interest area. Besides, after having informal conversations with the administrators from the Ministry of Education and owing to my observations, in North Cyprus the current education system needs to be reformed considering main themes such as curriculum, in-service, pre-service training, material and curriculum design, lifelong learning, duration of school hours, financial issues and so forth.

In this qualitative research, two major research questions guided this study. As a researcher the constructivist philosophical stance has been employed due to the fact that the purpose is to investigate teachers' perspectives and in order to achieve this teachers themselves constructed their own perspectives on their teaching practices. Questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, video recording methods were used to gather the data. Questionnaire is used at the beginning of this research to grasp the general picture and at the same time to determine the number of participants. Then, semi structured interviews as pre and post were used to grasp a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives and video recordings were used to reflect teachers' perspectives on their actual teaching practices.

I finalized the research study by analysing and triangulating the participants'

responses in relation to two major points as follows:

- The effectiveness of the programme on teachers' practice as evidenced through video recordings and discussions of their teaching.
- Teachers' perceptions of C.O.T.E with respect to the effectiveness of the training programme in course design, materials and practical experiences.

I ended the research with the voice of the participants by underlying the significance and effectiveness of in-service training programs in general. The limitations of this study with the recommendations for further research are suggested at the end.

DECLARATION

I confirm that this dissertation is my original work. It does not include material previously presented for the award of a degree in this, or any other University.

Signed

B.SONYEL.....

Bengi Sonyel

February 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Setting the education context for this research	1
1.2 Focus on C.O.T.E.....	5
1.3 Research areas.....	8
1.4 Self as a researcher.....	12
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1 Research questions.....	15
2.2 In-service training.....	16
2.2.1 How is in-service training explored in the literature?.....	16
2.2.2 Current issues in English Language Teacher Education.....	17
2.2.3 Issues concerning English Language Teacher Education.....	23
in relevance to the context of this research from the researcher's perspective	
2.2.4 Professional development and lifelong learning.....	29
2.3 Teachers' perceptions.....	31
2.3.1 Exploring teachers' perceptions.....	31
2.3.2 The role of teachers' perception on course design and materials.....	32
2.3.3 The role of teachers' perceptions on teachers' practical experiences.....	34
2.4 The significance of teachers' perceptions in relation to in-service training.....	35
2.4.1 The role of teachers' perceptions considering teachers' knowledge.....	37
2.4.2 The role of voice on teachers' perceptions.....	38
2.4.3 The way teachers learn.....	39
2.5 The impact of in-service training programs on teachers'.....	42
lifelong development	
CHAPTER 3. RESEARCHER'S PHILOSOPHICAL STANCE	45
3.1 Epistemological issues.....	45
3.2 Theoretical perspective.....	50
CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH DESIGN	55
4.1 Introduction.....	55
4.2 Case study.....	55
4.2.1 Validity and reliability.....	57
4.2.1.1 Validity.....	57
4.2.1.2 Reliability.....	60
4.2.1.3 Triangulation.....	62
4.2.1.4 Intersubjectivity or ethical issues.....	63
4.3 Method of data collection.....	66
4.3.1 Questionnaire.....	66
4.3.1.1 Ethical issues in using questionnaires.....	67
4.3.1.2 Designing and administration of questionnaires.....	69
4.3.1.3 Types of questions on the questionnaires.....	69
4.3.1.4 Piloting questionnaires.....	71
4.3.1.5 Evaluating the questionnaire.....	72

4.3.2 Interviews.....	73
4.3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews.....	76
4.3.2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of different types of interviews.....	77
4.3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews with the participants at E.M.U.....	79
4.3.3 Video recordings.....	81
4.3.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of being a non interventionist researcher..	83
4.3.3.2 How was the analysis carried out?.....	84
4.4 Constraints in data collection.....	85
4.4.1 Administrative issues.....	85
4.4.2 Time.....	86
4.4.3 Interpersonal relationships.....	87
CHAPTER 5. THE RELATIONSHIP OF REFLECTION, CLASSROOM PRACTICE AND MATERIALS IN PRODUCING A “NEW” TEACHER.....	89
5.1 Teachers’ reflective diaries.....	90
5.2 Interview analysis of teachers’ perceptions on their practices.....	104
CHAPTER 6. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS.....	124
6.1 Introduction.....	124
6.2 Findings and analysis.....	124
6.2.1 Statistical interpretation of questionnaire’s results.....	124
6.2.1.1 PART I.....	125
6.2.1.2 PART II.....	126
6.2.1.3 PART III.....	130
6.2.2 Semi-structured interviews.....	135
6.2.3 Reflections of the participants’ video recorded.....	138
CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION.....	142
7.1 Implications and recommendations.....	148
REFERENCES.....	151
APPENDICES.....	158
Appendix 1 Questionnaire.....	159
Appendix 2 C.O.T.E Semi structured interviews.....	165
Appendix 3 Letter of permission.....	167
Appendix 4 Letter of permission for questionnaire.....	169
Appendix 5 Research questions.....	170
Appendix 6 Coding framework.....	171
Appendix 7 Questionnaire analysis	173
Appendix 8 Questionnaire analysis One-way Anova and Independent Sample t- test.....	182

