Professional Development Programmes for English Language Public School Teachers: A Comparative Study in Palestine

Mousa Khaldi

Birzeit University, Palestine
mkhaldi@birzeit.edu

Silvia Nassar

Birzeit University, Palestine
Corresponding author: sfmustak@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aimed at comparing and contrasting the currently available professional development (PD) programmes for English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers working in public schools in Palestine. The design of this study was exploratory in nature utilizing a qualitative approach. The research participants consisted of twelve EFL teachers and eleven teacher trainers and programme designers. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. To ensure validity of the study, triangulation was used where data was obtained from the teachers and trainers. Inter-rater reliability was checked giving an 82% of agreement. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. From the analysis, teachers and teacher trainers identified the areas of differences and similarities between the programmes. The study concluded with a set of recommendations for practice and future research. There was a consideration of possible implications of these findings for teacher education in Palestine, and for policy making bodies in Palestine.

Keywords: Professional development, training programmes, Palestine, English Language teachers, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, constructivism

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Research Background

Professional Development programmes in Palestine

Teacher education in Palestine has two main forms. The pre-service and in-service teacher education. The pre-service teacher education is the education that usually results in a Bachelor or a diploma degree for Palestinians who graduate from the Palestinian universities or faculties that offer education programmes. In-service teacher education is offered by three main providers. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) provides compulsory training programmes to public school teachers. The second provider is the United Nations and Relief Work Agency (UNRWA) which focuses on providing workshops and training sessions in its schools, for the teachers. There are also around ten domestic and foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are either funded by Arab or foreign donors, focusing on teacher empowerment in the context of in-service teachers in Palestine (Khaldi, 2010).

Providing appropriate and customised professional development (PD) programmes for teachers is fundamental to providing better education at schools. It contributes to raising the quality of teaching by keeping teachers up to date with pedagogical skills, educational instruments, knowledge of content and much more. EFL teachers working in public schools undergo an obligatory in-service training through the MoEHE. Additionally, there are foreign institutions that offer PD programmes in Palestine. AmidEast, a U.S. non-profit organization, in collaboration with the MoEHE, provides teacher development programmes (https://www.amideast.org/). It also provides PD programmes that are not under the supervision of MoEHE, such as the 'Professional Certificate in English Language Teaching programme' (PCELT), targeting English language teachers and offered in collaboration with World Learning. The British Council (BC), which is a British organisation specialising in international, cultural and educational opportunities, is another foreign institution that offers PD programmes to EFL teachers in Palestine, similar to the 'KidsRead' and 'StoriesAlive' programmes. The British Council, reflecting on their own philosophy in education, has developed and designed its programmes to suit the Palestinian culture and context in order to develop teachers' skills (https://www.britishcouncil.ps).

AmidEast and BC have been involved in English language teaching for over 70 years, including capacity building for teachers (www.amideast.org;

https://www.britishcouncil.ps). Being English language institutions has no doubt contributed to AmidEast and BC having successfully implemented their EFL teacher training programmes in several countries. They have a long history in the teacher professional development field. According to the AmidEast's impact report, PCELT has proven its significant impact on teachers' attitudes towards their jobs and on developing their skills and performance, and enhancing their ability to reflect (Nasrallah, 2015).

On the other hand, the BC programmes have proven their efficiency in delivering high quality PD programmes for EFL teachers worldwide, and have proven their success and positive impact on teachers' development according to their project reports (British Council. 2018/2019. Teaching for Success).

Given the previous facts, it is imperative to explore the programmes of the AmidEast and the BC in order to compare between them and the local ones that are offered in Palestine by the MoEHE, to diagnose the needs of EFL teachers in Palestine and to identify the areas of strengths and weaknesses in what is currently offered.

Research Problem

It is not evident whether and how the currently available PD programmes in Palestine cater to EFL teachers' needs or support and develop their learning. Moreover, it is not clear what distinguishes one programme from the other. Therefore, to address this problem, this study comes to compare and contrast between the currently available PD programmes in Palestine (the ones offered by the MoEHE, the AmidEast and BC programmes) to examine each one's strengths and weaknesses. In order to achieve the goals of the study, the research is guided by the following key question:

How do the currently available PD programmes offered for EFL teachers in public schools in Palestine compare and contrast?

Rationale

As research about PD programmes in Palestine has been very scarce, it is crucial to explore the available PD programmes that are offered to EFL teachers to identify how similar and different they are. Therefore, this study aims to collect in-depth data about the three PD programmes mentioned earlier, the programmes offered through the MoEHE (It is imperative to note that the

programmes studied here are a variety of programmes offered for EFL teachers through the MoEHE), the P-Celt programme, (The Professional Certificate in English Language Teaching (PCELT) programme is a 120-hour programme that is designed on the cycle of experiential learning. It focuses on equipping EFL teachers with knowledge and skills they need. It aims at having learners central to making learning happen) and the BC programme. It aims at collecting data from EFL teachers about their experiences with these programmes to explore the impact of such training on their profession and development in order to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses for each. Moreover, the rationale of this study stems from the scarcity of research about PD programmes in Palestine, in terms of their design, operation and impact.

Theoretical Framework

Professional Development (PD) for teachers is a set of activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 'OECD', 2009). These PD activities need to be sustained, integrated, engaging for teachers, collaborative and class-focused, not just stand-alone activities (Hirsh, 2015).

EFL teachers need constant support and development to overcome their teaching obstacles. Herzallah (2011), showed that financial issues, lack of time, and the heavy workload of teachers are some obstacles. There are different ways to tackle some of these obstacles such as, tailor the programmes to fit teachers' different needs and have teachers take part in the decisions of designing the PD programmes and the activities offered (Broad, 2015). A problem that many teachers who join PD programmes face is that they have to participate in courses they do not need. Ceece-Maurcia, Brinton & and Snow (2013), stated that training programmes have to be designed and planned in ways that are relevant to teachers.

Guskey (2002) suggests that providing appropriate high-quality PD programmes for teachers will result in better education and thus better outcomes for students. According to Richards and Farrell (2010), when teachers are actively involved in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses in their daily teaching practices then learning occurs. This act of raising awareness of teachers' innate skills would subsequently allow teachers to reflect on themselves and develop their skills accordingly. Coburn (2016) investigated the effect of PD on a group of experienced teachers. One of his major findings

was that the lack of follow-up with teachers after a PD course is a drawback to the design of the course. In her study, Yumru (2015), found that most EFL teachers reported that they could learn from their peers' experiences and feedback.

Professional Development Models for EFL Teachers

Hueber (2011) pointed out that there are different approaches and formats to PD programmes of teachers other than the course formats. PD can be formal or informal, individual based, self-reflective, peer coaching or within a group. These programmes can take the form of a webinar, a workshop, a conference, a session or online. They can be focusing on content, pedagogy, curriculum, activities, needs or a mix of all. Finding the suitable activity that fits each teacher or a wide number of teachers is key in developing appropriately.

Designing Teacher Professional Development programmes

Experience is the source of learning, for the isolation of theory and practice would hinder learning (Boud, Cohen & Walker, 1993). Therefore, creating an active learning environment and integrating practice with theory ensure that learning will take place efficiently. In that context, Dewey (1965) believes that genuine knowledge is shaped well when thinking and doing are integrated along with reflecting on the act. Dewey believed that teacher education and teacher training ought to include practical components in it. On the other hand, Kolb (1984) claims that learning cannot take place by experience alone. Yet, there has to be reflective thought and internal processing of the information and that would take place in a cycle. These cycles need to involve real-world action and applications.

Wallace (1991) places emphasis on teachers' reflection and on its impact on causing teachers' learning in any PD programme. Wallace differentiates between three models for teacher learning: the applied model; the craft model; and the reflective model. These three models demonstrate the variation in teacher learning. While the applied science model fits well with novice teachers and the craft model fosters collaboration between and among teachers, the reflective model has an added value in that it exposes student teachers to real life teaching experiences and thus allows more opportunities for them to become active learners and reflect on their own practices.

Methodology

This study is conducted utilizing a qualitative approach. Qualitative approach is a scientific method that includes research problem, analysis of data collection, reporting of detailed views of participants, the results and findings and where the study is conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013).

Participants

The target population for this research were EFL teachers working at public schools in Palestine and teacher trainers who offer training for public school teachers at different private and public institutions in Palestine. The sample of the study consisted of twelve EFL men and women teachers and eleven men and women teacher trainers.

The participating teachers have an average of sixteen years of experience. While all of them have attended the compulsory programmes through the MoEHE, only three took part in the AmidEast programme and three others in the BC programme.

The participating in-service teacher trainers and programme designers were eleven. They had an average of twelve years of experience. Five of these trainers have delivered training at the BC and AmidEast programmes, whereas the rest of them have provided training through the MoEHE programmes.

Instruments

The data collection instruments used to conduct this research were semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers and teacher trainers. The interviews were developed based on the literature review, and guided by the main research question to explore the aspects of the different PD programmes. Moreover, they were constructed based on the constructivist theory and other related findings from previous studies. The questions were organised from general to specific, starting with collecting factual information about the participants. The questions were mainly about the importance of PD programmes, and they aimed to have participants report their experiences and reflect on the outcome of the training programmes they participated in. (Refer to Appendix one - forms A and B that address the interview form in detail).

Validity and Reliability

In this research study, data of the content and processes of the PD programmes were triangulated from different sources, such as from EFL teachers themselves and from teacher trainers and programme designers. A second researcher performed the thematic analysis on the data to check the degree of agreement between our analysis. After agreeing on the process and the coding system, we compared and contrasted our analysis with the other researcher's. The agreement between our analysis was around 82%.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). After reading all the gathered data of the teachers and the teacher trainers' interviews, we looked for patterns and trends within the data to gather similarities and differences and to identify interesting features across the entire data set. After that, all interviews were coded manually in an attempt to generate initial codes (brief phrases), from the interviewees' answers, to identify features of similar data. This was done while creating a table that contains the three main sectors (the MoEHE, the AmidEast and the BC) and gathering similar coded data under each one subsequently. Then, we searched for connections among the similar codes to categorize them while merging some codes together and illuminating others according to patterns shown. Themes emerged from the categories and were defined and given names. Finally, themes were reviewed which eventually led to producing the final report of the study.

Findings

From the analysis of the teachers' responses, the following two main themes were generated:

a. Many categories were addressing teachers' needs and interests so these were gathered under the first theme, 'teachers' specific concerns about PD programmes'.

b. The second theme, 'strengths and weaknesses of PD programmes attended' was gathered from the categories that addressed teachers' opinions about the impact of the programmes, the design, structure,

content, trainers' skills and the processes of reflection, follow up and feedback.

As for the themes generated from the trainers' responses, they were as follows:

a. The first theme, 'the process of preparing trainers to deliver training' was generated from their discussion about their experiences, their role before, during and after the training.
b. The second theme was 'strengths and weaknesses of the PD programmes'. Its categories addressed the content, design, structure and sustainability of the programme. Moreover, it included the trainers' thoughts about the participating teachers and their learning.

The following tables explain the themes generated and the categorization of codes under each one for both the teachers (Table 1) and the trainers (Table 2).

Table 1 - Themes generated from teachers' analysis of interviews (T)

Theme 1: Teachers Specific Concerns about PD programmes - Categories: . Selection criteria/Interest in joining . Needs assessment	Theme 2: Strengths and Weaknesses of PD programmes - Categories: . Strength, weaknesses, favorite & least favorite things . Design, structure and skills of training . Engagement of teachers . Evaluation of trainers . Reflection and feedback . Providing follow up

Table 2 - Themes generated from trainers' analysis of interviews (TR)

Theme 1: The Process of Preparing Trainers to Deliver Training Categories: 1.Experience and roles	Theme 2: Strength and Weaknesses of the PD programmes Categories: 1.Structure/design/goal of programmes 2.Overall evaluation of programmes 3.Selection/interest/active learning 4.Sustainability of programmes 5.Needs assessment for teachers

The findings were divided into two sections; the analysis of teachers' responses and the analysis of teacher trainers' responses.

***Section 1: Comparison and contrast of the available PD programmes as seen
by EFL teachers***

Theme 1: Teachers' specific concerns about PD programmes

a. ***Selection criteria/Interest in joining.*** Teachers working at MoEHE stated
clearly that they were not part of the selection process. Teachers explicitly
stated that these programmes did not relate to any specific needs or interest.
For example, *'they forced me to take such a course, we don't have the choice.' (T2).*
(The teachers interviewed will be referred to as T1, T2, T3, etc.).
Nevertheless, all teachers who attended PD programmes through AmidEast
and BC showed interest and excitement in attending these programmes. They
were eager to learn and develop their skills and knowledge, '*I was very
interested and it actually was the first authentic lecture training in my teaching
experience'* (T9).
Many teachers expressed their frustration from the selection process for not
being involved. What distinguishes the foreign programmes is that the one
offered by AmidEast had certain criteria and a clear but rigorous process for
joining which made teachers feel special. The programmes offered by the BC
had more flexibility in having teachers join based on their interests. Teachers
showed higher interest in attending the programmes offered by foreign
institutions versus the local programmes offered by the MoEHE.

b. ***Needs assessment.*** Several teachers who attended programmes with the
MoEHE commented that their needs were not part of the design of the
programme, for example, T6 commented *'There was no needs assessment, the
programme was just standardized, they applied to everyone.'* (T6). Some teachers
indicated that supervisors observe classes, and based on that, decide what
teachers need. However, many teachers who attended the PD programmes
with AmidEast stated that they filled needs assessment surveys. Meanwhile,
teachers with the experience of engaging in programmes with the BC
emphasized the importance of basing PD programmes on the needs of teachers
and considering content that is relevant.
In summary, the programmes offered by AmidEast and BC attract teachers
more and cover to a certain extent a large area of teachers' needs, which makes
them more satisfying.

Theme 2: The strengths and weaknesses of the PD programmes attended

a. ***Main strengths and weaknesses of the programmes attended.*** Many teachers who took part in PD programmes through the MoEHE stated that they did not see any benefit of it, while a few declared they have learned new skills and ideas while collaborating with peers. However, timing, being under pressure and not choosing content wisely were the things that several teachers highlighted as a disadvantage in the programmes they attended.

On the other hand, teachers who attended the AmidEast PD programme mentioned that having an inclusive programme that merges theory and pedagogy, and includes all four skills in the training, makes for a robust programme. For example, T8 stated, *"the most significant point was that we had to practice teaching, what you have taken in the previous days you apply it right away."* Many teachers remarked that time was used efficiently. Almost all of them pinpointed the high impact the programme had on their teaching career. At the same time, many teachers who attended PD programmes with BC mentioned that it enriched their knowledge. They also remarked about the positive impact of the programme. For instance, T10 noted, *"I have learned many techniques and strategies from this programme that assisted me in various ways."*

To wrap up, the programmes that were offered through AmidEast and BC had a higher impact on EFL teachers on both the personal and professional levels. Learning new skills, having time to apply them, collaboration and practical teachings were the main things that gave strength to the programmes. Yet, forcing teachers to join the programmes and not giving them ample time to practice what they have learned, were the least favourite things for the teachers in the programmes.

b. ***Advantages and disadvantages of the designs and structures.*** Most of the teachers who took the training through the MoEHE felt that the programmes were generally designed. For example (T1) commented, *"It did not target the four skills of English. It was a random programme."* On the other hand, teachers who attended programmes through the AmidEast agreed that there were lots of practical activities where application of theory learned made it effortless to attain the knowledge provided to them. Many teachers praised the inclusion of theory and pedagogy in the programmes, besides getting feedback on their learning.

Teachers who participated in the programme offered by BC stated that it was also structured and focused on the goal it was set for. For example, T12 stated, *"It was well designed, in the three days we learned how to use drama inside our classroom."*

In conclusion, teachers felt more comfortable when the programmes they took part in were well structured and designed with clear objectives. The programmes offered through the foreign institutions were comprehensive, integrated theory with pedagogy, involved practical activities and thus had higher popularity within teachers.

c. *Active learning of teachers: teachers' engagement in the programmes.* Some of the teachers who participated in the MoEHE programmes mentioned that they were lecture based. As for teachers who joined the programme with the AmidEast, they expressed that their learning was active, as T7 stated, *"We were really engaged and we were really cooperative with each other, it was fun, and we were exchanging experiences, it was very useful."* Additionally, most teachers pointed out the authenticity of the programme by actively engaging in practical teachings during the course which made it more enjoyable and rewarding for teachers. Similarly, teachers who engaged in programmes with BC stated that they were so active during the training course.

To summarise, most teachers felt that practical activities and collaborative learning kept them on their toes during the programme and had them cooperate with other teachers and thus learning was more fun and active, and this was evident in the AmidEast and BC programmes.

d. *The role and effect of trainers during the training process.* Teachers who joined programmes with AmidEast and BC acknowledged the trainer's long and deep experience in both the fields of language and training. That has added positively to their learning. In spite of this, teachers who attended programmes with MoEHE had different perceptions about their trainers. Whereas few found them as well-trained but lack some experience, others thought they needed to be more flexible and more well-trained.

e. *Reflection and providing feedback to and from teachers.* The process of providing constant reflection during the training sessions was evident in the programmes at the AmidEast and BC, more than the ones at the MoEHE. Providing constant and systematic feedback to teachers on specific tasks had a high impact on their process of development. While getting feedback from teachers about the programme took place in most of the programmes, it was valued more when it was taken into consideration and acted upon.

f. *Follow up with teachers after finishing the PD programmes*

The majority of teachers who attended the programmes through the MoEHE remarked that there was no follow up with them after the programme was over. As for teachers who participated with the AmidEast programme, many mentioned that they have stayed in touch with their trainers through a social media platform that was updated by the administrators, trainers and teachers. In regards to teachers who attended the programmes of the BC, they commented that the trainers were the ones who checked on the teachers' progress and real application of what they have learned and not the supervisors.

How do the currently available PD programmes compare and contrast per EFL teachers

In an attempt to answer the research question about comparing and contrasting the different available PD programmes as seen by EFL teachers, it was obvious that the programmes offered through AmidEast and BC were better designed and structured. They had more relevant content to teachers, took into consideration a wide need and skills of teachers, involved them actively in the process of learning, opened the ground for collaboration and exchanging experiences in an enjoyable way, and provided constant reflection, feedback and follow up. These programmes attracted teachers more than the MoEHE programmes, where teachers felt less valued, less appreciated, not engaged and just randomly selected to attend a course they had no interest in and no motivation to join. Moreover, the programmes differed in the availability of experts and professional trainers to deliver the training in an adequate time frame in the foreign programmes. The following table (Table 3) highlights the major differences between the three main providers of PD programmes.

*Table 3 - Main differences between the programmes of the three sectors from the
teachers' point of view.*

	MoEHE	AmidEast	British Council
Theme 1: Teachers Specific Concerns about PD programmes	- Supervisors usually select and assign teachers to attend the programmes. - Teachers were not interested in joining any training programme. - Teachers were never asked about their needs prior to taking the programme. - Most teachers agreed that they need more training that integrates all four skills and includes technology and practical teachings.	- Teachers get nominated and go through a valuable process to be selected. - Teachers were enthusiastic to participate. - Teachers' needs were taken into consideration. - Most teachers agreed that they need more training that integrates all four skills, including technology and practical teachings.	- BC leaves it up to the MoEHE to select teachers (for the cascade programmes). - Teachers were enthusiastic to participate. - Teachers' needs were taken into consideration. - Most teachers need more training that integrates all four skills, including technology and practical teachings.
Theme 2: Strengths and Weaknesses of PD programmes Attended	- New skills were learned but not all four skills were targeted. - Timing wasn't well managed or wisely organized since it wasn't enough to practice anything. - Lots of pressure on teachers. - Topics were redundant to university courses. - Content and design weren't related to what teachers actually needed so it didn't add anything to their learning. - Training was mostly lecture-based and teachers were involved in	- A variety of skills were covered. - Timing was sufficient and very well managed and organized. - There was an immediate application of what teachers have learned. - Practical teachings were involved. - A variety of topics were covered. - Lots of practical activities were involved. - Application of what teachers have learned was immediate. - Designs of the programmes meet teachers' needs. - Objectives were clear. - Teachers were engaged.	

	discussions only. - Trainers needed more training and insight about the content and about training skills. There ought to be more focus on using English all the time in the training.	- There was lots of time for collaboration, sharing experiences and exchanging ideas. - Trainers were helpful and full of positive energy. They were caring, flexible and experts in both the language and training fields.	
	- Supervisors were the ones who decided what to reflect on. - A little feedback was given to teachers in some of the programmes. - There wasn't adequate follow up with teachers after the programmes.	- There was constant feedback during and after the programme. - Reflection was at core in the programme. - There was a systematic follow-up with teachers after the programme.	- Feedback was done a lot and systematically. - Follow- up took place after the programmes were over, especially on social-media platforms.

Section 2: Comparison and contrast of the available PD programmes as seen by teacher trainers

Theme 1: The process of preparing trainers to deliver the training

a. Experience of trainers and their role. Most trainers who gave training at the BC had long years of experience. They were experts in both the fields of language and giving training. For instance, TR11 mentioned, *"I have been nearly involved in English language teaching for about thirty years and in training teachers for probably twenty years."* These trainers involved in designing the programmes and thus were more responsible and serious in delivering high quality training that suits the Palestinian culture and context. (The trainers and programme designers interviewed will be referred to as TR1, TR2, TR3, etc.)

The majority of the trainers working with the MoEHE had a variety of experience in the training field. However, they noted that there wasn't enough support from the Ministry to them, especially that they were expected to design their own training for the teachers since the programmes were cascaded to them.

As for trainers working at AmidEast, they were trained intensively by experts and designers of the programme in the skills of training, the materials, the content and the different strategies to use. These trainers were involved in the process of the design and delivering of the programme before they started

providing the training. Many trainers emphasized that they were flexible in adapting the material and adjusting whatever possible to ensure meeting teachers' needs.

To wrap up, it was noted that trainers working at AmidEast and BC had more of a solid experience in both the fields of training and language. Moreover, they were more involved in the details of designing the programmes than the trainers at the MoEHE. They had a role in developing the material, adjusting the content to meet teachers' needs and expectations to raise the quality of the training itself.

Theme 2: Strengths and weaknesses of the different PD programmes as seen by teacher trainers

a. Structure, design and goal of the PD programmes. Some trainers who worked with the MoEHE described the programmes as a focused and structured course. Other trainers described them as either vague in objective or only focusing on certain skills so they had to add more to the programme to clarify it. Many trainers commented that they often run programmes that usually get customized through or with the collaboration of AmidEast or BC, due to the lack of locally designed ones.

On the other hand, trainers working at AmidEast described the programme as the most comprehensive one including skills and knowledge that any teacher needs to excel in teaching English. What distinguishes this programme is that it is designed and based on the Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) and integrates practical teaching within it, *"it includes critical thinking, reflective practice and mainly it is learner centered. It has practice teaching, hands-on workshops, peer and trainer feedback, reflection and feedback." (TR8).*

As for trainers working at the BC, they mentioned that they design and structure the programmes offered based on the four skills of English, ensuring that they are interactive and involving practical implementations. In addition to that, these programmes are based on needs assessment which involves all stakeholders in the process of collecting data to ensure triangulation.

We have a lot of experience in designing teacher educational programmes so we do a lot of work in analyzing teachers' needs. We engage them a lot in the design; we give them a voice at the beginning and throughout the course. (TR10)

In summary, programme designers tried to structure their programmes around the four skills on English and at the same time attempted to include practical teachings in their design of the programmes. The programmes of AmidEast

and BC had clear objectives and were based on research and theory to support them versus the ones offered at the MoEHE.

b. *Overall evaluation of the PD programmes and their impact on teachers.* Although most of the trainers at the MoEHE programmes stated that many teachers resist the training which affects the programmes negatively, a few trainers stated that, in general, they were satisfied with their training programmes.

While trainers who worked at AmidEast highly valued the programme and were content with it, they emphasised the significance of constantly developing and improving it. Ensuring that there was constant reflection during the programme distinguishes it from other PD programmes as T7 highlighted, "*the reflection part teaches them to reflect on their classroom practices and at the same time the lesson planning, it is important for a teacher to reflect on their classroom practices.*"

Closely examining responses from the BC, most trainers associated the positive impact of the training on the teachers as an indicator of the success of their programme.

In summary, the strengths of the AmidEast and BC programmes include having teachers voice out their needs, take action and assume responsibility for their own development to ensure the training is special and relevant to their needs. In addition to that, having the programme in context, mixing theory and pedagogy and making the programmes more learner-centered is key to achieving success.

c. *Evaluation of the trainees in terms of their selection process and engagement.* The vast majority of trainers working at the MoEHE stated that teachers do not join the programmes willingly, thus many of them resist and accordingly do not benefit from it. Several trainers said that as supervisors, they choose teachers based on certain needs that are decided by the supervisors. Discussing the different activities that occur during the PD programmes, some trainers highlighted that teachers were engaged and mostly active when they had to work in groups. According to many trainers, collaboration, engaging teachers and creating a community of learners is evident when teachers are active learners, "*They perform a learning community and try to help each other and exchange experiences.*" (TR6)

Regarding the trainers who worked at AmidEast, they agreed that teachers were very interested and actively engaged from the beginning, "*this is the only programme where I saw teachers were really interested, really.*" (TR8)

As for trainers who gave training at the BC programmes, they used to have supervisors at the MoEHE select teachers for their programmes in the past, however, they are revising this strategy:

"In the past, we have left the teachers' selection up to the Ministry but I think we'll give a lot more guidelines and criteria to them about having an equal proportion of teachers. We want to have a more equal distribution of teachers" (TR10).

In summary, there seems to be a strong connection between the selection method and the motivation of teachers. When teachers were forced to join programmes they did not need, they resisted more and became demotivated. Moreover, programmes that had practical teachings and activities were more engaging for teachers.

d. *Sustainability of the PD programmes.* According to trainers who worked at the MoEHE, many of them showed concern regarding the lack of following up, and they assured that it's something they need to develop and think about. Yet, some trainers mentioned that they will start considering supervisors for the follow-up process to have them check on their teachers and their development. Additionally, many trainers mentioned that there was not adequate reflection taking place during the programmes.

On the other hand, trainers at AmidEast ensured that reflection occurs all throughout the programme and they stated that they stay in touch with their trainees on both the personal and the professional level.

As for trainers at BC, although they did not have enough evidence that teachers continued using what they learned through their programme, they were pretty sure they did. However, following up is something they plan on targeting more in their programme's design instead of leaving it up to the supervisors. Moreover, almost all trainers at the BC emphasized their application of reflection strategies in their programmes.

To sum up, reflection was provided in many of the programmes and in different ways. However, it was not a formal requirement in most cases, especially in the MoEHE programmes. Providing feedback to teachers was mostly done after the practical activities, especially in the programmes that provided them such as the AmidEast and BC programmes.

e. *Discussing the needs assessment for teachers in the PD programmes.* Most of the trainers working at the MoEHE mentioned that sometimes they have to give the training programmes to teachers regardless if they were targeting their needs or interests or not. Yet, some stated that the programmes

are usually based on supervisors' recommendations and on a survey that was done a few years ago. Similarly, trainers working with AmidEast commented that the programmes they offer are addressing teachers' needs already. In regards to the BC trainers, they specified that the needs assessment was done through the MoEHE. However, when they conduct their training they always ask teachers about their needs and get feedback from them.

How do the currently available PD programmes compare and contrast with regard to trainers

Findings of the interviews highlight the main differences between the currently available programmes from the point of view of trainers. It was noted that trainers at the AmidEast and BC programmes held deeper experience in both the language and training fields. Moreover, they were better prepared and more well supported to deliver high quality training than those working at the MoEHE who were left on their own to design and deliver the training. Furthermore, there were some differences in the way teachers were selected to attend certain programmes and in the method of delivering the training where the local ones had lots of lectures and minimum teacher engagement. Maintaining sustainability of the programmes by following up and providing appropriate feedback was more evident in the programmes offered by AmidEast and BC.

The following table (Table 4) demonstrates the major differences between the three main sectors of providing PD programmes in relation to the themes generated.

Table 4 - Main differences between the programmes of the three sectors from the trainers' point of view.

	MoEHE	AmidEast	British Council
Theme 1: The process of preparing trainers to deliver training	- Trainers had fair experience in giving training but not as much in the field of language. - They were not well-supported or well-prepared to deliver the training, - They didn't take part in the design or development of the programme. - They had limited flexibility to change things in the programme.	- Trainers had extensive knowledge and experience in both the language and training fields. - Trainers were highly involved in the design and in developing and improving the programmes. - Trainers were highly supported and very well-prepared to deliver high quality training. - They were very flexible and could adapt, adjust and customize whatever was needed, freely.	
Theme 2: Strength and weaknesses of the PD programmes	- Some programmes were structured with clear objectives and others were not. - Some programmes had both theory and pedagogy in their design and that was seen as a strength by trainers. - One of the drawbacks was in the way teachers were selected to attend. Moreover, not following up with teachers afterwards was a disadvantage to the programmes. - Another drawback was that many programmes did not focus on teachers' needs.	- The programme had lots of advantages that greatly outweigh the disadvantages. - The programme was well designed and structured, based on theory and had a solid foundation. - The programme focused on reflection. - It was very flexible. - It included both pedagogy and theory. - It was based on teachers' needs.	- This programme also had lots of advantages that greatly outweigh the disadvantages. - The programme had clear objectives and was systematic. - It was backed by research. - It involved lots of active learning engagements for teachers. - Teachers' needs were taken into consideration. - There was constant reflection, feedback and

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	- Many trainers noticed that teachers were not interested or motivated to join the programmes. - Trainers felt it is impossible to reflect on everything and follow up with teachers afterwards due to the huge number of teachers/trainees. - Trainers believe it is the supervisors' role to follow up.	- There was constant reflection during the course. - Follow up took place after the programme was over, and a community of learners was created afterwards.	follow up with teachers. - Trainers believe they shouldn't leave it up to the supervisors to follow up with teachers, it has to be their role.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study come in line with other studies. For instance, almost all participating teachers and some trainers expressed that teachers need to be at the core when designing any training programmes, and that was found as a strength in the programmes offered by AmidEast and BC. This result reinforces Broad's (2015) conclusion that teachers need to be part of the decision making of both the design of the programme and the activities involved. This result also comes in accordance with Guskey (2002) who emphasised the importance of providing appropriate PD programmes that cater to teachers needs to result in better quality learning for teachers and thus their students. From our little experience and based on part of the research, we believe that involving teachers in the process of building a programme and designing its activities, enriches the training programmes.

As revealed from the interview analysis, teachers who attended programmes that were tailored to their needs and allowed for interaction and collaboration (such as the AmidEast and BC programmes) left a mark on teachers, as opposed to the ones who attended programmes that were standardized such as the MoEHE programmes. This finding aligns well with Ceece-Maurcia, Brinton & and Snow (2013) who communicated that PD programmes have to be relevant to teachers in terms of their design and planning. We would argue that, outlining the goals of the training programme ahead of time to teachers would ensure that teachers join the programme for the right reasons of developing their skills.

Having a comprehensive and coherent training programme that integrates pedagogy, content, technology and the four main language skills was highlighted as a strength area in the AmidEast programme where teachers were involved in practical teachings. This result is supported by Richard and Farrell (2010), who advocate the necessity to include pedagogy, curriculum, material and content knowledge for teachers as it will add to their teachers' skills, knowledge and background. This finding is also supported by Dewey's belief that teacher education and training has to include practical components in it. Moreover, this is also supported by the study of Boud, Cohen & Walker, (1993) in which they called for a model that integrates both theory and practice and creates an environment of active learning. While results showed some weaknesses in the local programmes that were lecture-based, programmes that had practical teachings and activities were more engaging for teachers.

Some of the weaknesses that were found in some of the programmes were in the way teachers developed their own learning. Providing teachers with the chance of reflecting on their own development, and engaging in peer evaluation, empowers them. This was confirmed by Yumru (2015), where teachers reported that they would learn from peers' experiences and feedback and thus concluded that collaboration is a key to success. This finding of the significance of having reflection in any training course comes in line with Kolb (1984) who mentioned that experience alone is not sufficient to have learning occur, and that learning would take place through reflective thoughts and internal processing of the information. Having teachers engage in activities that activate their metacognitive skills would ensure they learn for life. The constructivist theory (Brown, 2007), which this study is based on, supports this finding. In this context, we believe that learners ought to be provided with the opportunity to reflect on their own learning to ensure their awareness is evoked through developing new ideas and concrete knowledge.

One of the weaknesses that was found in the local programmes was that the programmes did not always have trainers who were as well-trained, experienced and professional as ones in the other programmes. It is also worth noting that most of the local programmes' trainers were supervisors at the same time. While teachers confirmed this point as a weakness, trainers believed they were very well qualified to deliver such training and spoke highly of themselves. On the other hand, trainers at the AmidEast and BC spoke humbly about their skills and knowledge and confirmed that they need to develop themselves constantly. Teachers praised these trainers and their knowledge,

expertise, skills and flexibility. We are more inclined to believe that teachers are closer to reality because of their direct experience and the impact of such training on them, whereas trainers might have a conflict of interest evaluating programmes they administered.

The trainers of the programmes that were offered by AmidEast and BC contextualised the curriculum to suit the Palestinian context. Similarly, many teachers commented that the foreign training programmes introduced new practices and strategies for teaching that they valued highly, while the local ones were rather redundant. The reason could be related to the lack of creativity and out-of-the-box thinking when designing local training programmes. This could be due to the limited knowledge and resources needed in developing suitable content of training programmes that attract teachers. Based on the literature and from our humble experience, we believe it is essential to keep teachers updated with the latest teaching practices and methodologies. Therefore, to ensure that teachers show interest and engage in training programmes, they have to include new updates of theories and practices that teachers would find beneficial and relevant.

Not having adequate follow up with teachers after the programmes were over was seen as a weakness by teachers. This finding matches Coburn's (2016) study, where it was reported that the lack of follow-up with teachers after a PD course is a disadvantage to the design and therefore to the development of teachers. Interviewed teachers assured the importance of following up and their need to be checked on after the training programmes. There are some reasons that trainers do not follow up with teachers after the programme is over. It could simply be that it is not a required task from them. It might also be due to the large number of teachers who participate in PD programmes and the lack of time and resources needed in order to provide systematic follow up with them.

Recommendations

In light of its findings, the study makes practical recommendations and others for future studies as follows:

Practical Recommendations

- Continuously assess teachers' needs and include them as a base in the design and development of the programme.
- Involve trainers in the process of the training and provide them with good preparation and support to deliver the training.
- Ensure trainers follow up with teachers after the PD programme to maintain sustainability and ensure appropriate and systematic change is occurring.
- Include reflection and feedback in the design of the programme and apply it professionally.
- Ensure collaboration and social interaction is planned to occur in the PD programmes.
- Regularly evaluate and assess the degree of success of the programmes offered using valid measurement tools to further improve the programmes.

Recommendations for Future Research

- Conduct more research on EFL teachers' needs assessment in Palestine.
- Conduct research about preparing trainers to deliver high quality training.
- Conduct research about appropriate theories that could be a foundation to design PD programmes on and that suit the Palestinian context.
- Conduct research on methods that motivate teachers to develop their skills.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Interviews for EFL teachers

Form A - Phase 1

Interview Protocol

Research: Exploring Professional Development programmes for English as a Foreign
Language Teachers in Palestine

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of interviewee:

The research aims to explore various PD programmes for EFL teachers in Palestine and their perspectives on each programme. The purpose of this interview is to gain insight about EFL teachers' experiences and feedback regarding the programmes they took part in. The aim is to compare and contrast between the different programmes. Data collected will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Names and details of the interviewee will be kept anonymous. The interview time will be about 25 minutes and it will be audiotaped.

Questions of the interview:

- How long have you been teaching?
- What grade levels do you teach?
- Did you take any PD courses? When? With whom?
- How would you evaluate this training? Give examples of strengths and weaknesses.
- Why did you decide to take it? Was it voluntary or compulsory?
- How interested were you in attending the PD course?
- Tell me your favorite things in the PD course you attended?
- Tell me your least favorite ones?
- How would you evaluate this course?
- Describe the areas that EFL teachers might need to develop in.
- In your opinion, what makes a good PD programme? Describe an ideal PD programme.
- How did these PD programmes influence your teaching /career as an EFL teacher?
- What skills can you offer/share with other EFL teachers?

Thanks for your cooperation and participation.

Appendix Two

Interviews for Teacher Trainers

Form B - Phase 3

Interview Protocol

Research: Exploring Professional Development programmes for English as a Foreign Language Teachers in Palestine

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of interviewee:

The research aims to explore various PD programmes for EFL teachers in Palestine and their perspectives on each programme. The purpose of this interview is to gain insight about the operation and the training methods held by teacher trainers in the different PD programmes. Data collected will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Names and details of the interviewee will be kept anonymous. The interview time will be 30 minutes and it will be audio-taped.

Questions of the interview:

- Which programme did you give training in?
- Describe the programme in terms of the material, methods and goals.
- Which sector were the attendees from?
- How motivated/interested were they to participate?
- How satisfied were you about this training?
- How familiar were you with the process of training and the material?
- How flexible were you with the material used and with the procedures?
- Tell me your favorite parts of the training.
- How involved were the teachers in the training course?
- In your opinion, what improvements could be done on this programme?
- Do you recommend this programme for other teachers?

Thanks for your cooperation and participation.