

credit course.

The implications of this study are for the Education Ministry to integrate workshops with the curriculum of teacher training centre known as Farhangiyani University in Iran as the result clearly evidences the need and suggested their effectiveness in helping students teachers become more competent.

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source to the current internship course since most of them confirmed the statements such as workshops supplement their internship course and without workshops, the internship course feels lacking.

The student teachers answers to questions number 2, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 14, succinctly indicate the fact that teaching workshops have had positive effects on their teaching competence because most of them feel that their ability to put

Macpherson (2011) studied the teachers who had taken part in instructional workshops and the findings indicated that besides the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes; the participants felt that they became more aware of their personal beliefs, intentions and actions. They adopted and adapted some innovations from the workshops and transferred them to their classrooms

the theories into practice have improved, that changes have taken place in their teaching methods, that they have specified their objectives and that finally they have become more competent.

The 10 interviewees of the 40 participants gave more in-depth information about the main three questions. The results of the interviews were nearly the same as those of the questionnaire. Discerning the elicited

comments of the interviewees signals that most of them consider workshops as a development programme which helped them manage their classes better, get the students actively participate in the class discussions by making a friendly atmosphere with purposive language games and other interactive activities, adopt CLT principles and adapt them to the context and are better in control of how to overcome the incompatibility between the theories and their correspondent practices. They also hint at time and place as barriers which used to make likely difficulties in attending the workshops which were approximately eliminated when KELTA started to hold the workshops in their universities to avoid any overlap with the student teachers' class time.

Conclusion

In summary, most of the studied student teachers had positive attitudes towards the teaching workshops they had attended. They were satisfied with the workshops. They contend that these workshops kept them up with the innovations of language teaching. They further pointed out that the effects are desirable enough to be introduced as a beneficial development programme due to the fact that most of the participants believed they had become more competent.

In terms of the need for these noncredit teaching workshops to patch up the shortcomings of the credit internship course, they feel that workshops can truly supplement their internship course since more examinations and reflections on their teaching methods will be provided. To sum up, most of them were unanimous that in the absence of workshops; the internship course could not meet their needs and that they hoped to attend workshops as a

Tsble 2. The effects of workshops on student teachers' competence

No	Items	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
2	I feel I can put the theories in practice more than before.	10 (26.3%)	20 (52.6%)	5 (13.2%)	1 (2.6%)	2 (5.3%)
4	I have become more competent in teaching.	11 (28.9%)	14 (36.8%)	10 (26.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (7.9%)
6	I reflected on and revised my teaching method.	15 (38.5%)	13 (33.3%)	7 (17.9%)	1 (2.6%)	3 (7.7%)
7	I asked my supervisor, assistant teacher and classmates to evaluate my method.	13 (33.3%)	13 (33.3%)	9 (23.1%)	0 (0%)	4 (10.3%)
9	I see some changes in my teaching method.	11 (28.9%)	17 (44.7%)	7 (18.4%)	0 (0%)	3 (7.9%)
14	I specified my instructional objectives.	12 (30.8%)	11 (28.2%)	13 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	3 (7.7%)

Tsble 3. The frequency and percentages of workshops as a supplement to the internship course

No	Items	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
3	Attending workshops besides internship is beneficial.	17 (43.6%)	13 (33.3%)	5 (12.8%)	1 (2.6%)	3 (7.7%)
8	I believe that workshops supplement the internship course.	11 (28.2%)	17 (43.6%)	8 (20.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (7.7%)
17	I need to participate in teaching workshops regularly.	12 (31.6%)	15 (39.5%)	7 (18.4%)	1 (2.6%)	3 (7.9%)
18	Without teaching workshops, the internship course feels lacking.	14 (35.9%)	12 (30.8%)	8 (20.5%)	2 (5.1%)	3 (7.7%)

The three questions which were supposed to be answered are as follows:

1. What are English student teachers' attitudes towards teaching workshops?
2. Is there any need for teaching workshops to supplement the current internship course?
3. What is the effect of teaching workshops on English student teachers' competence?

The questionnaire items number 1, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 20 were designated to provide us with the student teachers' attitudes toward teaching workshops. As presented in Table 1, most of the studied student teachers stated that they utilized the ideas in workshops, they consider workshops to be effective, they like to participate in workshops more than before and urge their classmates to do so. All in all, the percentages given to the items which studied the attitudes of the student

teachers' towards teaching workshops hold true for the idea that they are delighted with these workshops and have positive attitudes towards them.

Just a passing glance on the results of questions number 3, 8, 17 and 18 is in table 3 enough to conclude that the participants are surely for the idea of teaching workshops as a supplementary

The history of instructional workshops goes back to 1978 when Professor Douglas Kerr from the Vancouver Community College developed them for the instructors in British Columbia to improve their instructional skills (Pattison and Day, 2006)

Since 1978, the effects of workshops on teachers' competence has been emphasized by many educational researchers

disagree to strongly agree) questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was adopted from Edwards and Kissling's (2006). Participants were asked to give their degree of agreement and disagreement to the statements about the workshop they had attended. The questionnaire was uploaded to Google and its link was sent to all the participants.

The participants for the semi-structured interview were also selected non-randomly. They were ten male student teachers and the interviews were conducted in the dormitory of Pardis Rasool Akram of Ahvaz. Every interview was recorded by a digital recorder to ascertain the accuracy of data collection and data analysis.

Data analysis

The questionnaires' responses were analysed with Google Document programme since the questionnaire was uploaded there. The data were analysed with descriptive statistics; that is the percentage of each response was estimated. The percentages summarized the data on student teachers' attitudes towards workshops, the need for workshops to supplement their internship course and the effects of workshops on their competence.

The interviews were analysed through focusing on the key words of the participants' answers on their attitudes towards workshops, the need for workshops to supplement their internship course and the effects of workshops on their competence.

Results and discussion

In this section, the results of the questionnaire are presented in three separate parts each of covers one of the three main questions.

Table 1. The frequency and percentages of student teacher answers' to the questionnaire items

No	Items	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
1	I utilized the ideas presented in the workshops.	15 (37.5%)	12 (30%)	7 (17.5%)	1 (2.5%)	5 (12.5%)
5	What was presented in the workshops is connected to my instructional activities.	14 (35.9%)	12 (30.8%)	9 (23.1%)	1 (2.6%)	4 (7.7%)
10	I urge my classmate to take part in teaching workshops.	13 (33.3%)	13 (33.3%)	9 (23.1%)	1 (2.6%)	3 (7.7%)
11	I like to participate in the teaching workshops more than before.	13 (33.3%)	15 (38.5%)	6 (15.4%)	1 (2.6%)	4 (10.3%)
12	The notes I took in the workshops were useful.	15 (38.5%)	14 (35.9%)	6 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	4 (10.3%)
13	I made use of the books and sources which were offered in the workshops.	11 (28.9%)	12 (31.6%)	10 (26.3%)	1 (2.6%)	4 (10.5%)
16	What I learnt in the workshops was useful.	16 (41%)	15 (38.5%)	5 (12.8%)	0 (0%)	3 (7.7%)
20	I believe that the teaching workshops in which I have participated so far are effective and useful by and large.	13 (34.2%)	12 (31.6%)	9 (23.7%)	1 (2.6%)	5 (7.9%)

graduate students go through and their correspondent practices; some universities in Canada developed workshops based on student needs. The aforementioned workshops were designed “to discuss and digest, in depth, issues related to teaching and learning in higher education. Further, students had the opportunity to practice their teaching skills in multiple micro-teaching sessions” (Harris & McEwen, 2009). As pointed out above, it is noteworthy that needs of participants must be taken into consideration in designing workshops. This is what was emphasized by Najafi (1990) that active participation of teachers and the scientific measurements of their needs are necessary for developing any in-service programme. Equally, Saeedi (1996) pointed out that the instructional programmes are not designed based on the needs of the participants and that is what strays them away from their goals. Ghoshuni (1995) stated that in-service instructional programmes are lacking and not suitable in terms of time, place and educational facilities. The above quoted statements attest to the conclusion that to enhance the quality of workshops and tailor them to the needs and requirements of the participants, it is necessary to study their post-workshop assessments.

The attitude which comprises one of the main parts of this study is believed to be the usefulness of something we have perceived (Zhao and Cziko, 2001). Suja (2007) confirms this point by stating that experience has a direct impact on our attitudes. In this respect, the conclusion one could draw is that the usefulness workshops, as perceived by the participants, builds their attitudes towards the workshops. This means that the participants' attitudes are not haphazard,

but rather they are experience-rooted and reasonable.

Research Methodology

The methodology of the present study consists of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Sampling

The sampling of this study was purposive since the participants were selected purposively from two teacher training centres of Ahvaz namely Rasool Akram and Fatemeh Al-Zahra pardis. 23 male and 17 female student teachers whose ages ranged between 21 to 24 participated in the study. The total number of the participants was 40 and they all were BA English students in their last year of university. All of the participants had passed four courses of internship during which they had watched, written reports and practiced their teaching skills; beside each of the participants at least had attended teaching workshops more than once.

Instrumentation

The instruments of the study were 5-point Likert Scale (ranging from strongly

participate in class discussions and ideas for learning evaluation which can be adopted and adapted to be used in the classroom (Johnson, 2016).

Since 1978, the effect of workshops on teachers' competence has been emphasized by many educational researchers. As mentioned above, taking part in instructional workshops provides the participants with the opportunity to adopt the innovations which seem to be feasible and suitable for their classrooms. Macpherson (2011) studied the teachers who had taken part in

instructional workshops and the findings indicated that besides the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes; the participants felt that they became more aware of their personal beliefs, intentions and actions. They adopted and adapted some innovations from the workshops and transferred them to their classrooms. In their beliefs, workshops encouraged them to reflect on and adapt the new strategies and this statement is Consonant with what has been already mentioned in the previous parts of this paper. Similarly,

Pandachuck et al. (2004) studied the effects of teaching- enhancement workshops on the participants' teaching performance as their students rated them after the workshops. The conclusion they drew showed that teachers assessed workshops to be useful and effective. In the same way, their students stated that their teachers became more competent

after taking part in the workshops. This means that both teachers and students were on the same wave length about the point that teaching workshops were helpful.

More recent studies have been done on the impact of workshops on instructors' approaches to teaching. Cassidy and Ahmad (2013) maintained that graduate students who took part in non-credit workshops got the tendency towards transformative learning and reflective practice which shifted their approaches toward more student-centredness. Others added that besides the shift in teachers' approaches, the workshops affect student learning positively (Parsons, Hill, Holland

Smith and colleagues (1983) stated that in order to reach the acceptable level of competence compatible with the innovative teaching methods, teachers need to spend time on reading and reflecting on their own teaching practices; Moreover, some teaching workshops are held which are usually run by more experienced teachers

& Willis, 2013). In this respect, one may conclude that workshops serve both the teachers and their students.

Recently it was recognized that preparation of graduate students for their professions is of high significance (Shannon, Twale, & Moore, 1998). To build a bridge between the theories

- attitudes towards teaching workshops?
2. Is there any need for teaching workshops to supplement the current internship course?
 3. What is the effect of teaching workshops on English student teachers' competence?

Review of Literature

The instructional workshop is a meeting in which a group of teachers gather to give one another feedback as to how teaching practices can be modified to help better learning. The history of instructional workshops goes back to 1978 when Professor Douglas Kerr from the Vancouver Community College developed them for the instructors in British Columbia to improve their instructional skills (Pattison and Day, 2006). These sorts of workshops that have different timetables

in different countries and associations basically are designed and run to improve and develop teachers' levels of professionalism and their development as teachers. During the instructional workshops teachers give demos of how they normally teach and receive verbal, written and even video feedback and suggestions from their counterparts who have been taking part in the workshop as students. In other words, teachers are fostered to examine and reflect on their normal teaching practices during the instructional workshops accompanying feedback from the participants who often focus on the learning process rather than what is taught. Normally the participants go through theories and the correspondent teaching practices, tips for choosing appropriate learning objectives and lesson plans, techniques to get the students



that teachers feel that CLT is not fully implementable in the classroom. They are of the view that there is incompatibility between CLT innovations and the context. Teachers also complain about the inconsistencies between CLT principles and the newly-published English text-books, it was for this reason that Khuzestan English Language Teachers Association (KELTA) started to design workshops focusing on CLT method.

Simultaneous with this plan, Farhangiyān University, previously known as Teacher Training Centre, was reopened and as reported by the Ministry of Education over twenty five thousand students got admitted. By 2014, all these student teachers were sent to schools for a credit course called internship (Karvarzi) among whom were English student teachers who would soon encounter with the same problems which their older counterparts had already faced. To help English student teachers fill the gap between CLT theories and their correspondent practices and get more prepared for their career, KELTA in association with Rasool Akram Pardis (Ahvaz branch of Farhangian University) held non-credit workshops as a supplement to their internship course since the students complained that internship course by itself could not meet their needs.

As workshops have a crucial role in the professional development of teachers, this study aims to investigate English student teachers' attitudes towards teaching workshops.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were as follows:

1. To investigate English student teachers' attitudes towards the teaching

workshops.

2. To determine if there was a need for teaching workshops to supplement the current internship course.
3. To identify the effect of teaching workshops on English student teachers' competence.

Research Questions

1. What are English student teachers'

Students should take part cooperatively in class activities and with the help of their teachers, make the class environment interactive in which case subconscious learning is more likely to happen (Rashtchi and Keyvanfar, 2007)



the main cornerstone of conducting the present research. As Nozari (2011) pointed out, post-workshop assessments by the participants are necessary to identify the merits and drawbacks of the workshops. In this way, we may improve the workshops which are designed to enhance teachers' competence. Similarly, the present study aimed at investigating English student teachers' attitudes towards the workshops they had attended, the effects of these workshops on their teaching competence and the need for them as a supplement to the current internship course.

Background of the Study

In 2012, Iranian educational authorities introduced Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the new approach to teaching English at schools. The goal of this approach similar to audiolingualism is to make students able to communicate in the target language yet how this method gets students to achieve communicative proficiency is at odds with Audio Lingual Methods. The advocates of CLT opine that the best way to achieve communicative

proficiency is communication itself – that is students ought to immerse in real-life interaction and communication in order for them to be able to choose what to say and how to say it (Freeman, 2011). Abiding by the rules of CLT, students' role changes from a passive to an active one. Students should take part cooperatively in class activities and with the help of their teachers, make the class environment interactive in which case subconscious learning is more likely to happen (Rashtchi and Keyvanfar, 2007). Similarly, teachers are no longer models of the target language. The teacher is truly a facilitator; walking around in the class and among his/her students observing their needs, interests and proficiency levels in order to choose appropriate materials to present (Rashtchi and Keyvanfar, 2007).

The problem with the newly-adopted approach is

Abstract

Teaching is neither an innovation nor a fleeting vogue. It has been with human beings throughout history. Recently and in the wake of the revolution of new teaching methods and theories, competence of teachers in adopting the new methods has become appealing to many educational researchers. Eventually, it is maintained that taking part in teaching workshops and watching others' teaching practice could be of a great help. Correspondingly, this study aimed at investigating student teachers' attitudes towards teaching workshops and their effects on their competence in adopting the new methods. 40 student teachers who had some experience of attending such workshops were given questionnaires and to gain more in-depth data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten of them. The findings of this study indicate that most of the student teachers had positive attitudes towards taking part in teaching workshops. Moreover they opine such workshops are effective and satisfactory. The findings of the present study leads us to the notion of necessity for teaching workshops as a supplement to the current internship course.

Key Words: teaching workshop, internship, competence, student teacher, attitude

INTRODUCTION

The education sector as a vital part of our lives has never been thought to be static. It has always been considered as dynamic. As Chastain (2007, p.15) puts it, methodologists consistently try to come up with new teaching approaches and methods for different reasons one of which is enhancing the level of quality of the educational experiences and making them harmonious and compatible with the daily needs. On the other hand, some others underline the setbacks which come along with the English Language Teaching (ELT) innovations and believe that not all these innovations are put into practice as they should be (Carless, 2007). Therefore,

Recently and in the wake of the revolution of new teaching methods and theories, competence of teachers in adopting the new methods has become appealing to many educational researchers

teachers if they are really determined to improve learning and reach the goals of the new approaches they encounter with, they had better be ready and willing to accept new ideas and experiment with them (Chastain, 2007, p.145). As a solution, Smith and colleagues (1983) stated that in order to reach the acceptable level of competence compatible with the innovative teaching methods, teachers need to spend time on reading and reflecting on their own teaching practices; Moreover, some teaching workshops are held which are usually run by more experienced teachers. Those workshops are designed and held in order to help teachers become more competent and proficient. Thus suffice it to say that workshops can be of great help to enhance teachers' competence.

Although the participants of workshops are normally considered to be less experienced, they are not supposed to be passive. Clearly speaking, teachers' assessment of the workshops they have attended can help improve the current state of workshops. This idea which is less accentuated by researchers comprises

“Practice
Makes
Perfect”

The Effects of Workshops on Student Teachers’ Competence

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چکیده

در سال‌های اخیر و با شروع تحول در روش‌های نوین تدریس، چگونگی بهبود و افزایش شایستگی و توانایی معلمان در کاربرد آن روش‌ها مورد مطالعه بسیاری از پژوهشگران آموزشی قرار گرفت. به طوری که برخی از پژوهشگران بر اهمیت و اثر حضور در کارگاه‌های آموزشی در زمینه افزایش شایستگی معلمان در به کارگیری روش‌های نوین تأکید کرده‌اند. بدین ترتیب، هدف این مطالعه بررسی نگرش دانشجومعلمان در زمینه احساس نیاز به شرکت در کارگاه‌های آموزشی به عنوان برنامه غیردرسی و تأثیر آن بر شایستگی آن‌ها در به کارگیری روش‌های نوین است. به منظور کسب داده‌ها و اطلاعات در زمینه مورد مطالعه، پرسش‌نامه تحقیقاتی بین ۴۰ دانشجومعلم که تجربه شرکت در کارگاه آموزشی داشتند، توزیع شد. به دلیل محدودیت موجود در پاسخ به پرسش‌نامه مذکور و برای کسب اطلاعات و داده‌های دقیق‌تر، با ۱۰ دانشجو از ۴۰ دانشجو معلم شرکت‌کننده، مصاحبه‌ای نیمه سازمان‌یافته برگزار شد. نتایج مطالعه حاکی از آن هستند که اکثر دانشجومعلمان میل و گرایش به شرکت کردن در کارگاه‌های آموزشی خارج از برنامه درسی را دارند. با بررسی دقیق یافته‌های این مطالعه، می‌توان به احساس رضایت و خرسندی دانشجومعلمان، از تأثیر شرکت در این کارگاه‌ها، بر شایستگی خود پی برد. علاوه بر این، اکثر دانشجومعلمان باور داشتند که کارگاه‌های آموزشی، مکمل مناسبی برای دوره کارورزی می‌باشد که هدف آن آماده‌سازی بیشتر آن‌ها برای ورود به عرصه تدریس است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: کارگاه آموزشی، کارورزی، شایستگی، دانشجومعلم، نگرش