UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS
ON IN-SERVICE PROFESSIONAL AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT

SURAYA BT. SULYMAN.

FPP 2005 2
ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS’ REFLECTIONS
ON IN-SERVICE PROFESSIONAL AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT

By

SURAYA BT. SULYMAN

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2005
Teacher development (TD) is important in Malaysia. However, there is a lack of detailed study on teacher development specifically one that focuses on the self-development of individual teachers. The usual in-service training (INSET) evaluation questionnaire gave little indication as to the effectiveness of the teachers’ development. Hence, this study is an attempt to show that reflection could be a more effective means to encourage teacher development. Reflection has been claimed to raise teachers’ awareness of their own development and practice, but in general, rarely practiced. The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the ESL teachers’ reflections on their reflective practice and experiences during the in-service training for smart school in promoting their self and professional development. Three research questions constructed to guide the study are: 1) How do ESL teachers describe themselves as being reflective teachers? 2) How do their reflections on the 12-week in-service training for smart school promote the teachers’ self-development? 3) How do they relate their self-development to their professional development?
Five ESL teachers from secondary schools from the states of Selangor Darul Ehsan and Federal Territory had participated in the study. They were selected based on the number of years teaching English and their participation in a 12-week INSET for smart school. The primary research tools employed were interviews and journal writing. An interview protocol was constructed to guide the researcher. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed in verbatim. Observation of the training was carried out and recorded as field notes. A set of questionnaire to gather background and preliminary information was given to the respondents.

The findings discovered that the respondents were aware of the importance of reflection and how it affected them positively in their self and professional development. However, the practice was infrequent and unsystematic; the respondents’ analytical capability was limited in which the scope and depth of their reflection appeared narrow and shallow respectively. The contents of their reflections were predominantly descriptive with a few instances demonstrating dialogic reflection.

The 12-week INSET for smart school activated teachers’ reflective characteristics and enriched their personality making them more caring and open-minded; enabled them to reinforce the skills and knowledge and to re-evaluate the effectiveness of their practice; the respondents preferred formal to informal teacher development activities to internalise new input; to learn new skills and acquire relevant materials for teaching; to communicate and share experiences and emulating the strategies used by the trainers. In the course of
learning, they grew more self-confident, vocal, generous with their knowledge and skills and ready to lead. The teachers’ desire to develop generally encouraged them to achieve better academic and professional positions.

The respondents were independent English language learners whose interests, resourcefulness and involvement in extracurricular activities had shaped their beliefs and behaviour. Self-development to some extent has led to professional development. Consequently, each teacher has developed his or her own teaching style, refined personality and consistently enhancing their professional responsibilities. Incidentally, the study also uncovered external factors such as school culture, which involves teachers’ working relationships and attitude, can both facilitate and obstruct the teachers’ professional development. Overall, the findings of the study points that ESL teachers need to develop reflective habit in order to reflect constructively, one that will result in a more lasting development. This can be done through systematic training by integrating reflection exercises in all INSET courses and encouraging reflective practice in the workplace by creating positive and supportive conditions in schools.
1) Bagaimana guru-guru Bahasa Inggeris menggambarkan diri mereka sebagai guru-guru yang reflektif? 2) Bagaimana amalan refleksi semasa mengikuti...
1) Bagaimana guru-guru Bahasa Inggeris menggambarkan diri mereka sebagai guru-guru yang reflektif? 2) Bagaimana amalan refleksi semasa mengikuti KDP 12-minggu Sekolah Bestari memajukan pengembangan kenderi guru-guru tersebut? 3) Bagaimana guru-guru menghubungkaitkan pengembangan kenderi dengan pengembangan profesyenal mereka?


Kursus 12-minggu Sekolah Bestari dapat mengaktifkan ciri-ciri guru refleksi pada diri responden serta meningkatkan personaliti: membentuk responden menjadi lebih mengambil berat, berfikiran terbuka, memberi peluang untuk mengukuhkan kemahiran dan pengetahuan dan menilai keberkesanan amalan pengajaran mereka. Dapatan menunjukkan pemilihan terhadap aktiviti-aktiviti pengembangan guru yang terancang dan formal untuk faedah-faedah berikut: memperolehi dan menguasai input dan kemahiran baru; mendapatkan bahan-bahan dan strategi pengajaran yang relevan; berkomunikasi dan berkongsipengalaman.

Secara am hasil dapatan merumuskan perlunya guru-guru Bahasa Inggeris menanam sifat refleksi supaya dapat melakukan refleksi konstruktif yang menghasilkan pengembangan yang lebih kekal. Ini boleh dilakukan melalui latihan sistematik dan berkesan dengan mengintegrasikan latihan refleksi di dalam semua kursus dalam perkhidmatan serta menggalakkan amalan refleksi di tempat kerja dengan mewujudkan persekitaran yang positif di sekolah.
Acknowledgements

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the individuals who have contributed in one way or another towards the completion of the research. First, I would like to express my special thanks to Dr. Arshad Abdul Samad, for his comments and excellent ideas. His tolerance and understanding has helped me greatly throughout the duration of the study. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr Khairuddin Idris for his time, concern and thoughtful suggestions. I truly appreciate his willingness to share his views and learning experience with me. My utmost gratitude goes to Professor Sharifah bt. Md. Nor for her support and constructive criticism since the topic of the study was made known to her. Her insightful comments and fruitful ideas have contributed tremendously to the study. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Turiman b. Suandi for his courteous help and advice extended to me generously. I would also like to record my appreciation to the course lecturers for their precious input.

I am particularly indebted to these teachers - Cassie, Mariah, Sarah, Adam and Jesse, for their contribution without which this study would not be possible. They have shared many of their thoughts with me, some of which could not be revealed. I am thankful to all the course trainers who have consented to my presence in their training classes. The greatest appreciation goes to my friend and colleague, Raja Mazuin bt. Raja Abdul Aziz, for her continuous support.
and encouragement. Thank you for restoring my confidence and enthusiasm when they are waning and for being my constant source of inspiration. I am truly grateful to the library staff of Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas for their unstinting help. To my colleagues who had helped and shown concern and understanding, thank you to you too. I would like to thank the Ministry of Education, particularly the Teacher Education Department and Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas for the opportunity to embark on this educational venture.

I extend my undying gratitude to my parents for their understanding and patience all these years. Without their encouragement and support, I would not have the courage to attempt such arduous task. Finally, I thank Allah, the Almighty for the blessings and love bestowed upon me, and for the challenges put my way so that I came out a better person.

Alhamdulillah.
I certify that an Examination Committee met on 9 September 2005 to conduct the final examination of Suraya bt. Sulyman on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "English-as-a-second language teachers' reflections on in-service professional and self-development" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1981. The Committee recommends that the Candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

Kamariah Abu Bakar, PhD
Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Malachi Edwin a/l N. Vethamani, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Fauziah Hassan, PhD
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Zulkifli A Manaf, PhD
Professor
Faculty of Education
Universiti Malaya
(External Examiner)

ZAKARIAH ABDUL RASHID, PhD
Professor / Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 16 FEB 2006
This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee are as follows:

**Arshad Abdul Samad, PhD**
Lecturer  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairperson)

**Sharifah Md. Nor, PhD**
Professor  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Khairuddin Idris, PhD**
Lecturer  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

---

**AINI IDERIS, PhD**  
Professor / Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 09 MAR 2006
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

SURAYA BT SULYMAN

Date: 13.2.06
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>xviii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

1. **INTRODUCTION: EFFECTIVE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT**
   - Background of the study                                             1
   - The goals of education in Malaysia                                  4
   - Education and The Language Policy                                   6
   - From Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS) to the Smart School Programme 7
     - KBSM English language syllabus – The smart school edition         12
   - The smart school programme                                          15
     - The 14-week INSET for smart school                                16
     - The 12-week INSET for smart school – English language teacher    19
   - Educational change and teacher development (TD)                    20
   - Teacher development and change                                      23
   - Teacher development: current practice                               26
   - Statement of the problem                                            31
   - The purpose of the study and research questions                     34
   - The significance of the study                                       35
   - Operational definitions                                             36
     - Teacher development                                               36
     - In-service teacher education and training (INSET)                 37
     - Reflective teaching                                               37
     - Collaborative teaching                                            38
     - The Malaysian Smart school                                         38
   - Secondary schools utilizing smart school syllabus                   39
   - Summary                                                             39
The issue of trustworthiness 160
Gaining access to research site 162
The preliminary study 164
  The significance of the preliminary study 166
to the current study
Summary 169

IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
The descriptions of the reflective teacher 170
  Systematic 171
  Experiential learner 175
  Responsive 178
  Analytical 185
  Advocator of beliefs 217
Reflections in the INSET promotes teachers' self-development 219
  Caring 220
  Insightful 226
Self-development affects professional development 237
  Self development 249
  Professional development
School culture 258
  Teacher working relationships 259
  Teachers' attitude 262
  Additional factors 264
Reflection and teaching 268
Summary 276

V CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Introduction 279
Summary of findings 280
Conclusion 283
Implications 287
Recommendations 294

BIBLIOGRAPHY 304
APPENDICES 319
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR 358
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Reflective practice model of professional education / development</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>The elements of a cycle for the process of reflective teaching</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Elements of professional reflection</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>The model for collaborative teaching</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>The conceptual model of the study</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Methodological triangulation</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Summary of respondents' particulars</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>The research process of the study</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Data collecting procedure and data analysis</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Types of writing in the journals</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Modified conceptual framework</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>The INSET reflection practice model</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Continuing Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSS</td>
<td>Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSET</td>
<td>In-service training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBSM</td>
<td>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEP</td>
<td>National Education Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMR</td>
<td>Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah (Lower Secondary Examination)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysian (Malaysian Certificate of Education)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TD</td>
<td>Teacher development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TESL</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Second Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Target language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPD</td>
<td>Teacher Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, which encompasses a brief background information on educational changes and teacher development (TD), research on TD and the current practice of TD in Malaysia, the problem statement, purpose, research questions and the significance of the study. Brief information on education in Malaysia, the model commonly used for in-service training (INSET) implementation in the education system and the evolution of the 12-week INSET for smart school is also included.

Background of the study

The rapid changes taking place in today’s world economy, international relations, and information and communication technology have resulted in teacher development being seriously considered as an international issue in the teaching profession (Collins, 1991). The move towards globalisation combined with the technological revolution present new demands on education especially on schools and teachers to produce competent workforce capable of meeting these changes. Pupils need to learn and think for themselves, need to be resourceful and competent in their area of learning and be able to adapt to a flexible working environment. Teachers too are required to equip themselves with skills that will enable them to inculcate elements or qualities of cooperative
learning, emphasising on initiative building and adaptability since interdependence is the core feature of any service industry. Hence, teachers need to be resilient to change or they “will not be able to cope constructively with those changes either in relation to themselves, their pupils or the wider society” (Collins, 1991: p. 13).

The educational innovations that took place since Malaysia’s Independence were always to fulfil the national goal and aspiration and as reaction to external forces. During the early years, the goal of education was to realise the country’s vision for development and social integration among the various ethnic groups. In the 1980s the aim of education has slightly shifted to produce competent and knowledgeable workforce, able to face future challenges. More recently, in response to the international changes, Malaysia launched Vision 2020 in 1991 comprising nine challenges that are viewed to pave the way towards a developed country. Two of those challenges that appear to have immediate implication to education are “establishing a scientific and progressive society which is forward looking” and “establishing a prosperous society with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient” (Mahathir Mohamad, 1991).

Since education is the backbone to social change, the smart school programme was conceptualised and launched in 1999. Several innovations in teaching and learning were introduced in this programme to cope with the new demands. Firstly, the programme aimed at pupils’ self-directed, individually-paced, continuous and reflective learning which is made possible through the provision
of multimedia technology and worldwide networking (*The Malaysian Smart School: The Conceptual Blueprint, 1997*) to produce autonomous and constructive learners. Secondly, it aimed at fostering closer ties among major stakeholders, which include the private sector, the community and the school.

In fulfilling these aims the role of teachers has moved from classroom teaching to include other outside classroom responsibilities. Teachers are now becoming more of "guides on the side", facilitating and encouraging students to take charge of their own learning (*The Malaysian Smart School: The Conceptual Blueprint, 1997* p. 92). They are instrumentally essential in creating conditions that facilitate and encourage students to take responsibility of their own learning. Providing psychological support is also becoming increasingly important. Simultaneously, the smart school programme emphasises on teachers as being reflective and collaborative in their teaching. They are urged to acquire new skills 'in listening, in explaining and justifying practice and negotiating' (Collins, 1991) since they will regularly come into contact with the community in the decision-making process regarding their children's education.

In order to play their role effectively, they need to actively participate in teacher development (TD) activities so as to acquire new input and enhance their professional skills. The on-going reforms require teachers to continuously develop professionally.

English language teachers in particular need continuous professional development in order to cope with the innovations made in the English language
curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning to satisfy the demands of the nation.

Why do English language teachers in Malaysia need continuous professional development? In order to answer this question one needs to understand the goals of education in Malaysia and the recent English language policy innovations in the education system.

The Goals of Education in Malaysia

Planned and systematic educational innovations began in Malaysia as soon as it was granted independence. The goal of education has always been to fulfill the country’s vision for development and social integration among the various ethnic groups.

Hence, the dynamism in education. In the early years of independence, the aim of education was

to establish a national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, having regard to the intention to make Malay the national language of the country while preserving and sustaining the growth and the language, and the culture of the communities living in the country.

( Source:Report of the Education Committee, 1956: p. 1)

‘Education was used as a means of correcting inter-ethnic economic
imbances’ (Awang Had Saleh, 1992: p. 103) in the 1970s as a larger strategy towards creating national unity.

By the 1980s the education system had somewhat consolidated and was firmly rooted with the release of the philosophical statements of Malaysian education goals in 1989, entitled ‘Falsafah Pendidikan Negara Malaysia’. This document now reads:

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion in God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving high levels of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and the betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large.


With the recent introduction of Smart Schools, the philosophical statement was amended to include the “... harmony and betterment of the family,...” The inclusion indicates a re-emphasis on the role of education in sustaining the existing harmonious condition and its importance in strengthening the family institution.

As the nation is forged, the country now looks towards economic progress and social improvement. The aim of education has slightly shifted to produce competent and knowledgeable workforce able to face future challenges (Noor
Avni Ibrahim, 1999). And to achieve this goal, education is used as the platform.

**Education and The Language Policy**

In the Malaysian multi-cultural context, "education is an instrument to realize national aspirations of socio-cultural integration, unity, identity and development through a common language and curriculum whilst accommodating individual needs and societal demands." (Dato’ Haji Ahmad b. Hj. Saleh, 1981: p. 2). It is based on these goals that educational innovations are shaped. Consequently, in relation to the language policy, the move towards nation-building had the English Language replaced by Bahasa Melayu (Malay language) as the official language and the medium of instruction in all national primary and secondary schools. “National-typed” schools retained their vernacular language as the medium of instruction. By the late 1980s, the Malay language gradually became the medium of instruction for all subjects except those linked to science and technology at undergraduate level and some graduate level in all tertiary institutions. Presently, English language remains the second important language since it is used internationally and viewed as a tool to access world knowledge. International relations, commercial transactions and political negotiations are still conducted in English.

In schools, English language is a subject to be learnt for only 200 minutes a week allotted in the school timetable. It is not compulsory for learners to pass the subject at Form 3 external examination (PMR or Lower Secondary