

تأثير التدريب أثناء الخدمة على ممارسات المعلمين في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية  
كلغة أجنبية في الفصول الدراسية وتصوراتهم للاحتراف

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## The Impact of In-Service Training on EFL Teachers' Classroom Practices and Their Perceptions of Professionalization

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**Key words:** In-service training, EFL teachers, professional development, Teachers Professionalization.

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### Abstract

This study examines the contribution of ICT in-service teacher training on the EFL teachers' practice in the classroom, and on their views towards the process of professionalization. It sets out to investigate how in-service training alters the instructional strategies employed by the teachers, their ability to deliver instructional content, and how they perceive themselves as professionals. The necessary information was collected using a mixed-methods approach to achieve the objectives of the study effectively. The quantitative component aims at determining the extent of change in the classroom practices of the teachers and their career growth while the qualitative section seeks to relate how the teachers trained in-service programmes perceive and experience them. Combining these methods makes it possible to expand data sources, obtaining not just statistically processed results but also detailed explanations of descriptive nature that help in explaining the data. The study showed that after the teachers received the training professional

identity, use of advanced technology and their teaching practices changed for the better. On the other hand, the integration of technology and adequate support still remain a challenge.

### ملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة دور تدريب المعلمين أثناء الخدمة في مجال تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات على نجاحهم في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الفصول الدراسية، وعلى آرائهم تجاه عملية الاحتراف المهني. تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف كيفية تأثير التدريب أثناء الخدمة على استراتيجيات التدريس التي يتبعها المعلمون، وقدرتهم على تقديم المحتوى التعليمي، وكيفية تصورهم لأنفسهم كمهنيين. تم جمع المعلومات اللازمة باستخدام منهجية تجمع بين الأساليب الكمية والنوعية لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة بفعالية. يركز الجزء الكمي على تحديد مدى التغيير في استراتيجيات المعلمين في الفصول الدراسية وتطورهم المهني، بينما يهدف القسم النوعي إلى استكشاف كيفية إدراك المعلمين الذين تلقوا تدريباً أثناء الخدمة لهذه البرامج وتجاربهم فيها. يتيح الجمع بين هذه الأساليب توسيع مصادر البيانات، حيث يتم الحصول ليس فقط على نتائج احصائية، ولكن أيضاً على تفسيرات وصفية مفصلة تساعد في شرح البيانات. ووجدت الدراسة أن هوية المعلمين المهنية، واستخدامهم للتكنولوجيا المتقدمة، وممارساتهم التدريسية قد تحسنت بعد تلقيهم التدريب. ومع ذلك، لا تزال تحديات دمج التكنولوجيا وتوفير الدعم الكافي قائمة.

### 1. Introduction

In-Service training is key for the growth of teachers, especially those who teach English as a Second Language (EFL). As the school scene shifts, teachers are more and more needed to enhance their classroom ways and seek job growth. gnalan and Gurso (2020, p. 374) argue that in-Service training programs aim to meet these needs by boosting teachers' teaching knowledge, class control skills, and teaching methods; allowing them to handle varied and changing learning settings well.

In particular, common challenges faced by EFL teachers involve the issue of linguistic diversity within a single class, a multilingual composition of classes, and new technologies integrated into teaching. Borg (2018, p. 27) states that these challenges need to be matched with creative tools and novel strategies that would support the in-service teachers. The Ministry of Education's recent move toward CBLT from pure content-based approaches in secondary schools in Tanzania has raised many questions concerning in-service teacher training. Jones, Mooney, & Harries (2002, p. 99) argue that the success of this reform is



## The Impact of In-Service Training on EFL Teachers' Classroom Practices and Their Perceptions of Professionalization



highly pegged by the understanding and translation by teachers of the curriculum in practice in the classroom. This study investigates the influence of in-service training on the actual classroom practices of EFL teachers and on their perceived professionalization process in relation to the implementation of competency-based language teaching reforms. It looks at how such programs bring about change in instructional methods taken up by teachers, and the confidence felt by the teachers in delivering the content.

### 1.1 Significance of the Study

This study is important for several reasons. Firstly, it provides valuable insights into the ways in which in-service training influences EFL teachers' classroom practices and aids in their professional growth. Desimone (2009, p. 192 ) argues that effective professional development, particularly through well-targeted in-service programs, is essential for enhancing teaching effectiveness and improving student outcomes. By exploring the connection between professional development and teaching effectiveness, the results can guide the creation of future programs that are specifically designed to meet teachers' needs.

The study also highlights gaps in the existing literature concerning teachers' views on professionalization, particularly in settings like Iraq, where reforms such as CBLT require significant changes in teaching methods. There is a lack of research evaluating the direct effects of these programs on teachers' knowledge and practices. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing teachers' responses to in-service training programs.

Moreover, the research carries important implications for policymakers, teacher educators, and school leaders. It emphasizes the need for ongoing investment in high-quality in-service training programs to promote lifelong learning among teachers and enhance language learning outcomes for students. Such investments become paramount, considering that earlier programs have identified several challenges including a lack of resources and inconsistent training sessions.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

In these circumstances of rapid change in educational contexts propelled by technological development, learners' increasing diversity, and new curriculum standards, EFL teachers in different contexts-which include Tanzania-continue to be challenged by demands to cope. Yet, too often, teachers fail to obtain adequate professional development opportunities necessary for dealing with such challenges.

While in-service training programs are highly regarded as one of the vital means for improving teaching quality, Borko (2004, p. 33) discusses that the manner by which such courses actually improve classroom practices and promote teachers' professional development remains questionable, . Furthermore, little is known about how such courses influence teachers' perceptions of their professional identity. The issue at hand is crucial in countries like Tanzania, where reform initiatives such as CBLT require a complete break from old methods and approaches to teaching.

The current study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the effects of in-service training on EFL teachers' classroom practices and their perceptions regarding professionalization. This research will also investigate how such training programs can actually achieve meaningful changes in teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- 1- To what extent does in-service training influence EFL teachers in regard to their classroom practices?
- 2- What is the perception of EFL teachers regarding their professionalization after taking part in in-service training?
- 3- To what extent do in-service training courses satisfy the practical and professional needs of EFL teachers?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

- 1- To explore the effects of in-service training on the classroom practices of EFL teachers.
2. To explore EFL teachers' perceptions about professionalization based on their experiences with in-service training.
3. To determine the sufficiency of in-service training programs in responding to practical and professional needs as assessed by EFL teachers.

### **2. Literature Review**

In-service training has become an indispensable component of teacher professional development, especially EFL teaching. Since educators are under increasing pressure in adapting themselves to rapidly developing educational scenarios, such as diversifying needs of school students, rapid development and updating of technology, as well as curriculum updating, Borko (2004,p. 24) emphasized the importance of continuing professional development. This review thus looks into the literature that currently exists in regard to the importance of in-service training, the effectiveness enacted, and challenges faced within its practice, with the focus on CBLT.





### **2.1. In-Service Training and Its Role in Professional Development**

In-service training is an effective strategy for enhancing teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge.

Research has called for the preparation of teachers with student-centered teaching methods, authentic learning materials, and assessment strategies for effective language teaching practices. Gouédard, et al. (2020 p. 8-10) acknowledges that whether reformist initiatives in language education, like CBLT, actually work or fail depends on how teachers understand both the curriculum content and suitable methodologies . The final point to note, taken up from King (2014, p. 90), is that significant changes in the classroom practices of teachers cannot occur without significant changes being effected in their knowledge, skills, and attitude .

### **2.2 Characteristics of Effective Professional Development**

The most relevant factor that enhances the practice of EFL teachers and fosters their professional growth is effective professional development. Penuel et al. (2007, p. 922) suggest that development should be intensive, sustained, and content-focused, with coherence and strategic focus. Strong theory of action, careful planning, and clear models of instruction are included in high-quality professional development . According to Hiebert and Grouws (2007, p. 372), effective professional development should make provisions for the use of empirically validated instructional materials and curricula . Furthermore, Borko (2004, p. 24) states that the motivation, belief systems, and capacity of the teachers play a vital role in translating professional development into good classroom practice . The continued collaboration between schools and consultation with specialists also increase the delivery of professional training. Finally, Richardson & Placier, (2001, p. 933-6) suggest that the better practices of the teachers, as assured by professional development, contribute to student achievement, therefore relating teacher development and student success .

### **2.3 Competency-Based Language Teaching and the Need for Training**

CBLT has become a groundbreaking method in language education, focusing on practical communication skills and a student-centered approach as was discussed by Awan (2018) "teachers should only facilitate, guide or motivate the learners instead of explaining each and every aspect of language in detail" (p. 1526). Shifting from content-based to competency-based teaching necessitates that educators embrace

innovative instructional strategies, effectively manage their classrooms, and apply suitable assessment techniques (Jones, Mooney, & Harries, 2002, p. 97). Nevertheless, Desimone (2009) argues that the rollout of CBLT in places like Tanzania has exposed shortcomings in teachers' preparedness and understanding of curriculum changes, emphasizing the necessity for specialized professional development initiatives, (p. 192).

## **2.4 Conceptual Models and Frameworks for Professional Development**

Recent studies underline the conceptual frameworks that guide the study of professional teacher development. Among many, Desimone (2009, p. 190) conceptualizes five core features of high-quality professional development: content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation . She also discusses an embedded model with which to study the relationship between professional development itself and effects for educators and students. This model helps explain two very important theories; Wayne et al. (2008, p. 472) assures that the change in teacher knowledge, beliefs, or practices-and instructional change, which investigates how better teaching affects student performance .

Desimone's model thus acts as a guide to empirical investigation and points out those factors that influence the outcomes of professional development. It calls for a non-linear interactive approach to understand the dynamic interaction between the components of professional development, teachers' belief system, classroom practices, and students' success. This kind of conceptual framework goes a long way to shed light on how in-service training programs can bring about a change in school culture, teaching methodology, and improvement in students' learning skills.

## **2.5. Effectiveness of In-Service Training Programs**

In-service training programs are represented differently in literature, showing varied results about their effectiveness. Borko (2004, p. 5-6) states that well-structured training can lead to significant improvements in teachers' subject knowledge, teaching skills, and classroom practices that benefit student performance .

Adler (2000) argues that teacher learning “is usefully understood as a process of increasing participation in the practice of teaching, and through this participation, a process of becoming knowledgeable in and about teaching” (p. 37). This process unfolds across various dimensions of professional practice, encompassing the everyday instructional





activities within their classrooms, collaborative interactions and shared experiences within their school communities, and engagement in formal professional development opportunities such as workshops and training courses. These diverse contexts collectively support teachers in refining their teaching strategies, adapting to evolving educational needs, and enhancing their understanding of pedagogical principles (ibid).

## **2.6. Challenges in Implementing In-Service Training**

These in-service training programs are very important, although they are facing quite a number of challenges like resource constraints, inconsistent scheduling, and inadequate coverage.

Despite the training, Gautam (2016) observes that teachers are struggling to translate the knowledge into the achievement of the students academically. He, therefore, adds that the teacher training programs in Nepal have had little to no effect on the performances of the students. No improved performance is recorded from the students. Whereas many factors may impede students' performance, teacher training is one critical factor that should ideally change exam outcomes.

Regarding this, Gautam (2016, p. 46) identifies another issue in his article by citing that the application of the training skills in the classroom is an issue still persisting in the contemporary teacher training programs. He points to the fact that it might partly be due to "the existing modes of teacher training are lecture dominated and classroom centered" (p. 46). This suggests that, perhaps the very methodologies in the training themselves may be inadequate to ready teachers for the translation of theory into practice.

## **2.7 Gaps in the Literature**

Although research recognizes in-service training as one of the integral components of professional development, only a few studies have researched in-service training with regard to teachers' conceptualization and realization of CBLT reforms. Few studies have looked into how such training programs affect teachers' perception of their professional identity or assessed its effectiveness over a longer period of time. Moreover, the scarcity of systematic assessments of in-service training initiatives points to a significant lacuna in the existing literature. The available literature highlights the crucial contribution of in-service training in improving EFL teachers' skills and helping them cope with changes in education.

However, the complexities and constraints involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of such programs make it intrinsically worthy of a much broader perspective. The present research explores the



impact that in-service training has on classroom practices among EFL teachers and on their professional growth, answering, therefore, the general question of education for language teachers.

### 3. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design that investigates the impact of in-service training on EFL teachers' classroom practices and their perceptions about professional development. A mixed-methods approach allows for an in-depth examination of the research problem through the integration of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. This chapter presents the research design, participants, instruments, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques.

#### 3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was therefore chosen to overtly fulfill the purposes of this study. The quantitative element is supposed to measure the level at which changes occur in teachers' classroom practices and their professional development as this method prioritizes objectivity, measurement, and statistical analysis to quantify phenomena and draw conclusions about their nature and behavior (Creswell, 2014), while the qualitative inquiry explores teachers' perceptions and experiences that relate to in-service training courses as this method is helpful in exploring subjective experiences and gain insights into underlying social structures and processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This thus integrates the numerical data with rich descriptive insights, developing a comprehensive outlook on the findings.

#### 3.2 Participants

The targeted respondents are EFL teachers in Iraqi secondary schools who have participated in in-service training courses. Participants will be sampled purposively while applying inclusion criteria. Quantitative phase: A total of 20 teachers will be invited to participate in the survey. Qualitative phase: Only 5 teachers will be randomly selected to take part based on their consent and ability to give substantive information regarding their experience.

#### 3.3 Instruments

##### Survey Questionnaire:

A structured survey is designed to collect data on teachers' classroom practices, their perspectives on professionalization, and the effectiveness of in-service training programs. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."





# The Impact of In-Service Training on EFL Teachers' Classroom Practices and Their Perceptions of Professionalization

## Semi-Structured Interviews

An interview guide is developed based on the participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges of in-service training. Open-ended questions provide for in-depth discussions whereby the participants are able to share their personal and professional views.

## 3.4 Data Collection Procedures

### Quantitative Phase:

Surveys are distributed to participants who were allowed two weeks to complete the survey, providing sufficient time for thoughtful responses.

### Qualitative Phase:

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a selected group of participants identified from the survey phase. These interviews take place face-to-face. Each interview lasts about 15-30 minutes and is audio-recorded for accuracy, with the participants' prior consent.

## 3.5 Data Analysis

Survey data are examined through descriptive and inferential statistics to uncover trends, relationships, and the overall effects of in-service training. Statistical tools like SPSS or Excel facilitate calculations and visual representations.

Interview transcripts undergo thematic analysis to pinpoint recurring patterns and themes. Coding is done manually to ensure a thorough interpretation of the data.

## 3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study follows ethical research guidelines. Informed consent is secured from all participants, and confidentiality is upheld by anonymizing responses and interview data. Participants are made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Impact of In-Service Training on Classroom Practices

#### Survey Results:

Survey Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Lesson Planning	30% 6	50% 10	10% 2	5% 1	5% 1	4.05	0.88
Teaching Strategies	25% (5)	50% (10)	15% (3)	5% (1)	5% (1)	3.95	0.83



## The Impact of In-Service Training on EFL Teachers' Classroom Practices and Their Perceptions of Professionalization



Addressing Diverse Needs	20% (4)	50% (10)	20% (4)	5% (1)	5% (1)	3.80	0.88
Use of Technology	15% (3)	50% (10)	20% (4)	10% (2)	5% (1)	3.55	0.94
Classroom Management	35% (7)	50% (10)	10% (2)	5% (1)	0% (0)	4.15	0.73
Confidence as Educators	40% (8)	50% (10)	5% (1)	5% (1)	0% (0)	4.25	0.72
Professional Development Needs	25% (5)	55% (11)	10% (2)	5% (1)	5% (1)	4.00	0.83
Professional Identity	35% (7)	50% (10)	10% (2)	5% (1)	0% (0)	4.15	0.73
Motivation for Further Development	20% (4)	50% (10)	20% (4)	5% (1)	5% (1)	3.80	0.88
Collaboration and Networking	25% (5)	50% (10)	15% (3)	5% (1)	5% (1)	3.95	0.83
Program Structure	30% (6)	55% (11)	10% (2)	5% (1)	0% (0)	4.15	0.73
Relevance of Training Content	25% (5)	55% (11)	15% (3)	5% (1)	0% (0)	4.00	0.83
Adequacy of Training Duration	15% (3)	50% (10)	20% (4)	10% (2)	5% (1)	3.55	0.94
Follow-Up Support	10% (2)	40% (8)	25% (5)	15% (3)	10% (2)	3.05	1.12
Recommend the Training to Others	35% (7)	50% (10)	10% (2)	5% (1)	0% (0)	4.15	0.73

The average ratings for each item suggest that teachers generally viewed the training program favorably, particularly in aspects such as classroom management (mean = 4.15), confidence as educators (mean = 4.25), and professional identity (mean = 4.15). The standard deviation for most items is relatively low (ranging from 0.73 to 0.94), indicating a shared agreement among teachers regarding the effectiveness of the in-



## The Impact of In-Service Training on EFL Teachers' Classroom Practices and Their Perceptions of Professionalization

service training in these areas. The lowest mean score was for follow-up support (mean = 3.05), suggesting that teachers felt the training did not provide enough follow-up, which is consistent with the findings from the interviews.

### 4.2 Interview Results

All the interviewed five teachers reported to have internalized at least one new teaching method into their practice. Three mentioned that they now use more interactive activities and approaches which focus on the student, though they learned through training. Two explained that some strategies were hard to be put in place because of limited resources. Four mentioned that this training gave them the feeling of professionalism and furthered their reflective work. One responded that, though it helped, the training did not meet her expectations as to the solving of concrete teaching problems at hand.

Three respondents felt that if the length of the training were longer, more practical work could be covered. Two teachers mentioned the absence of follow-up support as a big challenge and highlighted that mentoring or support should be extended after the training.

### 5. Discussion and Analysis of the Results

The findings in this research shed light on how in-service training has affected the classroom practices of EFL teachers and their view regarding professional development. Based on both survey and interview data respectively, there are a set of significant results that would lead to the bases of discussion here.

#### 5.1 Impact of In-Service Training on Classroom Practices

One of the most important findings in this regard is the positive effect of in-service training on teachers' classroom practices related to lesson planning, classroom management, and teaching strategies. The mean scores of 4.05 and 4.15 for lesson planning and classroom management respectively indicate that teachers perceive the training as being directly beneficial to their teaching practices. Feedback indicates that teachers are most confident that they can effectively organize lessons and manage classrooms in ways that promote student engagement in learning. This supports past research, such as Borko (2004) and King (2014), which found professional development can significantly enhance the pedagogical practices of teachers.

In this paper, respondents reported being in a better position to apply multiple teaching strategies; this might have been attributed to the knowledge and skills imparted by training. Average on Technology Use



is 3.55, meaning technology is an important component nowadays in teaching, yet the teachers are not at a point whereby they are integrating it in their job performance. This can be because of limited resources, a lack of training with the technological tools, or even because they lack confidence in being able to use technology properly in the classroom.

### **5.2 Professionalization Views**

Teachers had generally positive attitudes about professionalization since with regard to their professional identity as educators and their confidence, the average score was 4.15.

This suggests that the in-service training had a significant impact on teachers' professional identity, reinforcing the idea that effective professional development can enhance educators' perceptions of their capabilities and self-assurance (Richardson & Placier, 2001).

The teachers also reported a greater motivation to learn more and expand their capacities and knowledge, which corroborates the findings of Desimone (2009) on the role of professional development in enhancing teachers' sense of professionalism and desire to learn more. The high score on confidence, 4.25 for educators, reveals that the training had raised their self-efficacy. A number of teachers shared that they feel renewed in their confidence to teach well and manage their classrooms and that the training has served to shape their professional image.

### **5.3 Addressing Professional and Practical Needs**

The results of the survey show that while in-service training generally satisfied both the practical and professional needs of teachers, there is further room for improvement. Teachers rated the relevance of the content quite positively (mean = 4.00) and program structure (mean = 4.15), which indicates that both the training sessions were apt and relevant to their expectations. However, for follow-up support, the mean is lower, mean = 3.05, indicating that teachers felt the training was not adequate in giving them follow-up support and follow-through after the first training sessions. Indeed, this was confirmed through interviews with several teachers who, although acknowledging the usefulness of the training, clearly stated that there was a strong need for continuous follow-up support that would help them put what they learned into practice within their classrooms. This lack of follow-through on support points to one of the areas that needs adjustment in the design and delivery of in-service training programs. Indeed, Penuel et al. (2007) argue that effective professional development should include not only initial training





but also ongoing support and collaboration opportunities that allow teachers to continue to refine their use of new strategies over time.

## 6. Conclusion

This study underscores the important role that in-service training plays in shaping EFL teachers' classroom practices and their views on professional development. Teachers noted a boost in confidence, enhancements in their teaching methods, and a stronger sense of professional identity after engaging in the training. Nonetheless, there are still hurdles to overcome, especially regarding technology integration and ongoing support. Tackling these issues in future training initiatives could further support teachers' professional growth and their ability to adapt to the changing educational environment.

### 6.1 Recommendations for Future Programs

These findings imply that in-service training can effectively enhance EFL teachers' classroom practices and their concepts about professional development. However, several aspects in the future training programs need to be focused on to make the training programs even more effective:

1- **Integration of Technology:** While teachers reported a number of aspects that were positively changed in their teaching, they still showed some challenges in integrating technology into their practice. In this regard, future training programs should be more specific about how to use technology in the classroom and emphasize practical applications and tools that would best support EFL teaching.

2- **Follow-Up Support:** A greater follow-up support was deemed to be in need. In-service training should be made to include post-training activities such as mentoring, peer collaboration, and access to resources which could support teachers in their application of strategies in classrooms.

The content in general was relevant to their practice, but the training programs following this should try to make the content more contextualized for teachers from diverse realities. This would include developing content focused on particular subjects, teaching environments, or the technological resources that are available to the teachers.

3- **Ongoing Professional Development:** Teachers expressed a strong interest in having continuous professional development opportunities. It's important to incorporate regular learning experiences into the training program to keep teachers engaged and motivated to improve their teaching practices over time.



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## The Impact of In-Service Training on EFL Teachers' Classroom Practices and Their Perceptions of Professionalization



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