Towards an enhancement approach to (language) teacher education

EASA
OVSA

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My Contrasting Classrooms

- I have had the opportunity to work with young people in two distinct types of contexts, namely in the UK and in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and to understand the specific sets of issues that teachers have to deal with in their day-to-day practices

- I have also been involved in teacher education is SSA, Europe and South East Asia and have learned about teachers' contextual challenges and the affordances these give them to generate pragmatic solutions to these challenges
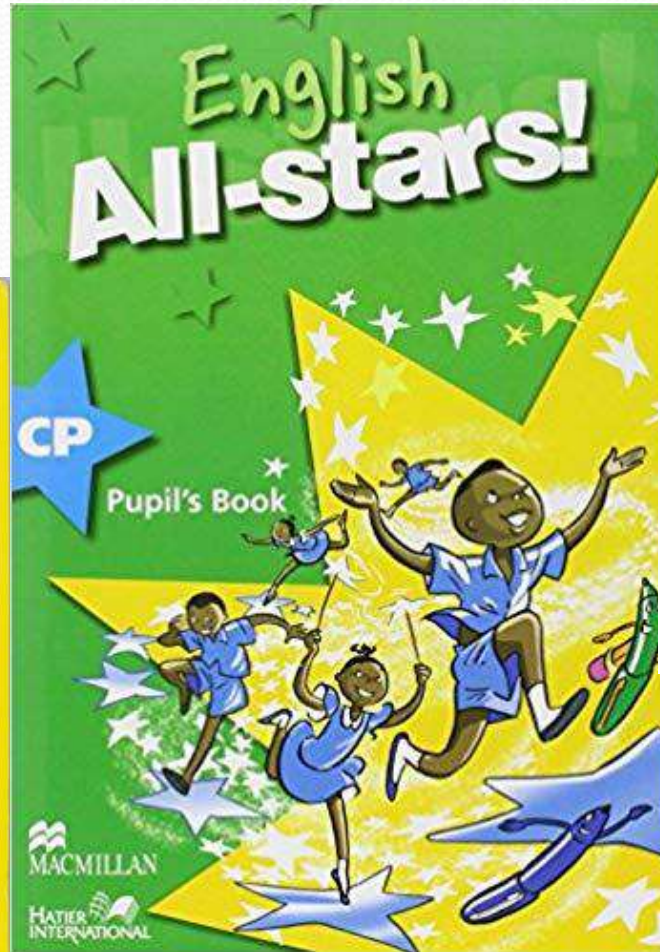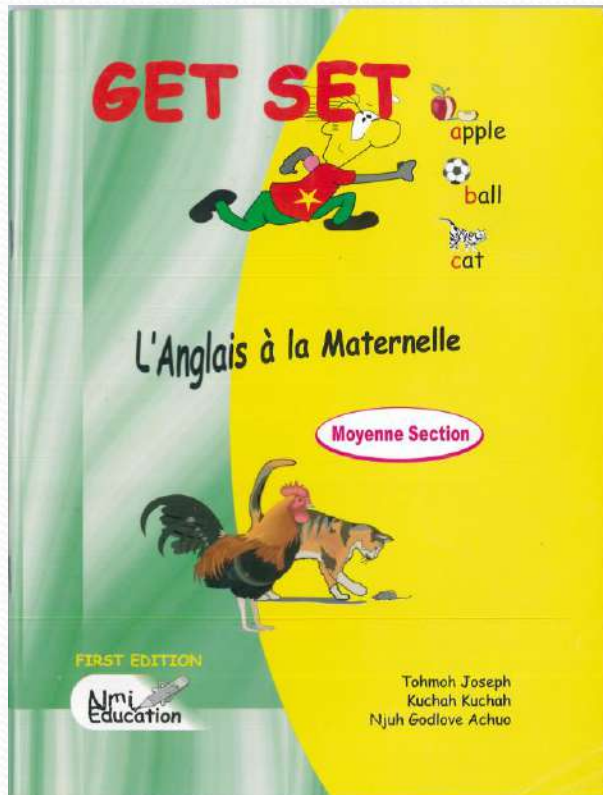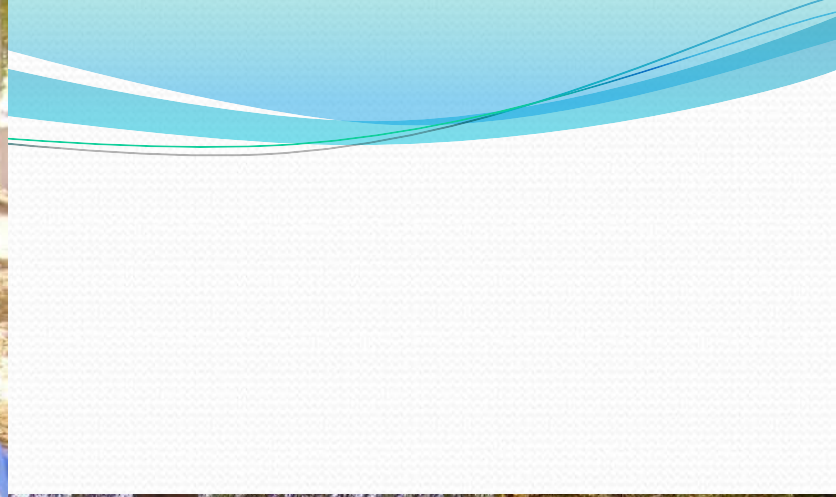
My involvement in developing coursebooks has also been useful in refining my thinking about what teachers and learners really need to know.

Kuchah, K & R.C. Smith (2011) 'Pedagogy of autonomy for difficult circumstances: from practice to principles' *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching.* 5 (2), 119 – 140

Education in the diverse world…

- "…a huge amount of [education] in the world today takes place in situations that are far from the ideal world of pedagogical excitement and innovatory teaching that western [education] researchers and practitioners would like to think they inhabit."

(Maley, 2001)

School resources and learning environment in Africa

Key results from a regional survey on factors affecting quality of education (August 2016)

Our educational educational landscape

- Home to more than half of out-of-school children of primary age
- 1/3 of lower secondary age and half upper secondary age youth, not in school
- Poor infrastructure & low quality education are barriers for schooling and learning
- Crowded classes hinder learning
- Early grade, most crucial and yet most crowded
- Lack of resources/textbooks
- Teacher attrition
- Poor access to basic services: toilets, sanitation, drinking water, electricity etc

UIS, 2016

Our pedagogic landscape

Methodological overload

- Project based pedagogy
- Hands on/ minds on
- Concept pedagogy
- Objectives Based Pedagogy
- Mastery learning
- Discovery learning
- NPA
- Pedagogy of integration
- Objectives based Pedagogy
- CBA

The focus of teaching/training …

- Traditionally concerned with:

  - Teaching methods and techniques
  - Teaching theory
  - Materials
  - Curriculum/syllabus design
  - Classroom conditions
  - Technology

….what about the learner?

- **Learner** is master of learning!

  - learner motivation

  - involvement and agency.

Teaching or Learning?

Lydia: This is my best lesson…I had a zero in the exercise.

Harry: So it was your best lesson because you had a zero?

Lydia: No, because [the teacher] did not tell us what to do, so I had zero. But after, my friend explain to me what I was supposed to do, and I know it very well now.

Harry: Wait a minute. Who helps you to understand more? Your friend or your teacher.

Lydia: I understand better when my friend explains to me.

Teaching or Learning?

Jemia: The story was not even interesting […] if he ask us, we will have written a better story.

Harry: But that is what is in the textbook.

Jemia: We know, but it is not interesting. And many children in our class do not have the book […] we are not children, we can make it more interesting.

Harry: What do the others think?

[…]

Lydia: If you like it, give us a topic and we will write it very interesting and you will like it, I swear.

What got me started…

1.   Numerous and conflicting methodological recommendations imported from western contexts and imposed on teachers by ministry officials.

2. Teachers face challenges of large under-resourced multi-grade and multilingual classes and employ survival teaching strategies, some of which do not respect ministry recommendations.

3. There is potential to learn from what is actually happening in the classrooms.

What 'Context', what pedagogy?

Project One:
Working with Teachers and learners

What I wanted to find out

1. What are learners' perceptions of the practice of their teachers?

2. What do teachers perceive as appropriate teaching practices within their working context?

3. How can engaging with these perceptions inform teachers' conceptions of context appropriate teaching practices?
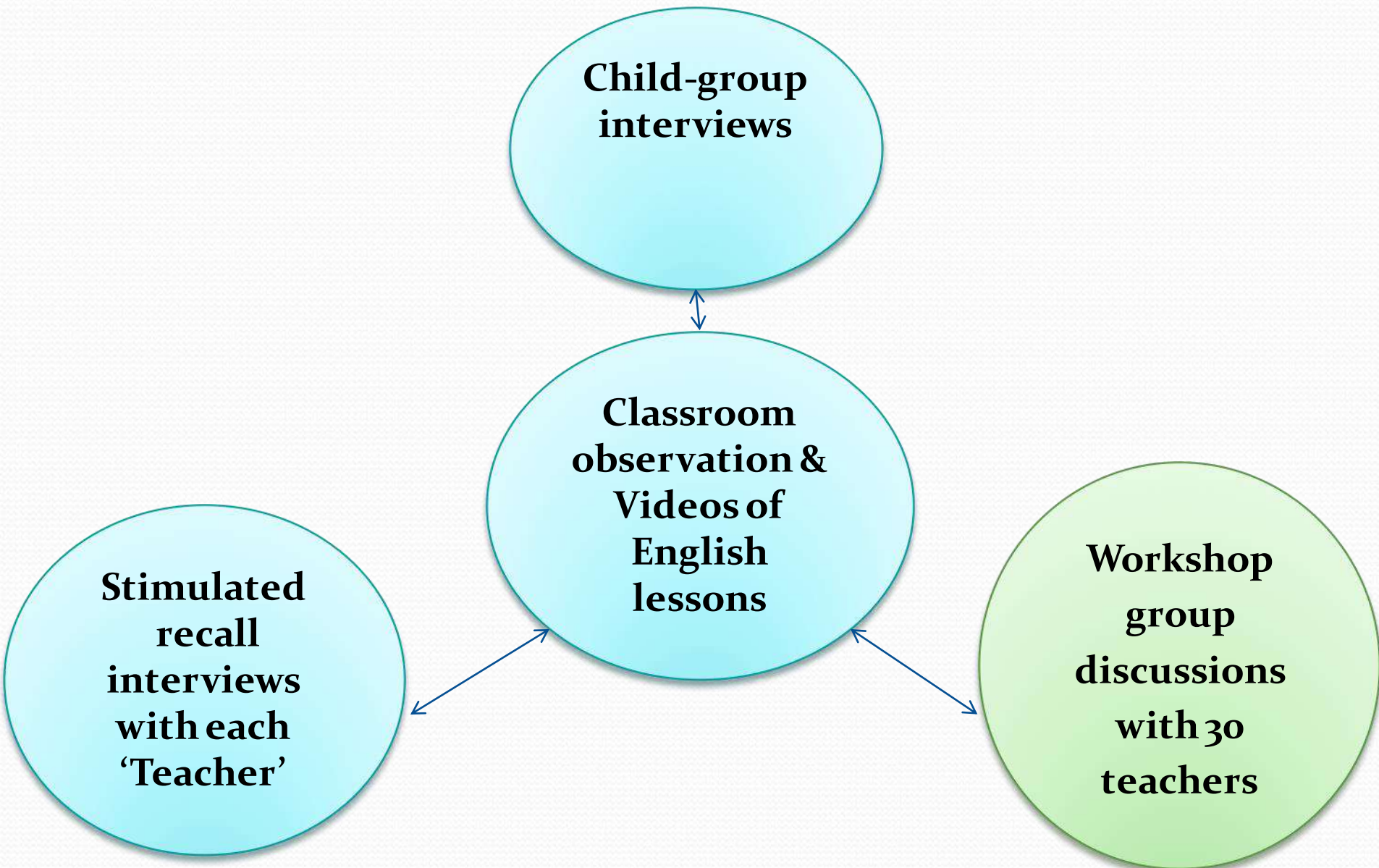
Finding the right people…

- Recommended teachers from EM schools in Anglophone and Francophone regions

- Children from the classes of these teachers

- Other teachers to watch videos of classes and respond in focus group style.

Going about my business…

Finding the right information…

Child-group interviews

Classroom observation & Videos of English lessons

Stimulated recall interviews with each 'Teacher'

Workshop group discussions with 30 teachers

Ts' definition of appropriate Pedagogy…

- a combination of three main factors:

  1. that a particular aspect of practice is good

  2. that it is do-able

  3. that it is worth doing

What I learned from this…

- Teachers and their learners possessed shared, but also - in some respects - divergent notions of appropriate pedagogy

- Some of these notions were largely different from MoE policies.

- It is these notions (not what the MoE said) that had the biggest impact on classroom practices.

Tissue Rejection…

'They [inspectors] try to force us through a procedure that we can avoid by using our own means from our understanding of the nature of my classroom; the backgrounds of my learners, the needs and difficulties of my pupils. I think it is my knowledge of my learners that should be the deciding factor in the methodology I adopt, not a set way of teaching.'

Tissue Rejection…

- **T2**: What I think is that we write these [lesson plans] but when we are presenting lessons in class, we do not follow the lesson plan; we follow the introduction-presentation-evaluation model.

- **Harry:** So why then do you write lesson plans that you will not follow?

- **T4:** We write all of that to satisfy the head teachers and inspectors who check our lesson plans because they insist on seeing those stages.

Critical reflection on own practice…

From Harry's report of what children said concerning group work, I really agree with them, that is, the children. […] I think it is wrong for us to presume that the children are not able to work in groups; we have seen a good example of how well they can develop very good ideas and even good English when they work together. That class is even bigger than most of our classes so I don't think we have any excuse for not doing group work.

Learning from peers…

'The lesson on irregular verbs; I just told my colleague that when I go back to my school, I will teach that lesson again and analyse it the way the teacher did it; I feel that I was unjust to my children'

'I have gathered a lot of inspiration in the sense that in every class, we can add group work and it will enhance the teaching and learning process.'

Learning from peers…

'…watching the lessons of my colleagues has made me much more aware of some of the key aspects that I don't implement in my class [...] for example group work [...] I used to underestimate my pupils and thus keep them away from some tasks, but from here I believe my pupils will do a much more greater [sic] part of the job than before.'

Project Two:
Handing over to teachers

Teacher Association (TA) Research

- '…systematic inquiry which is derived from members' expressed priorities and officially endorsed by a TA, and which engages members as active participants in what they see as a collective project to improve understanding and practice.' (Smith & Kuchah 2016: 215)

CAMELTA (TA) Research….

Cameroon: Practical concerns…

- General dissatisfaction with conditions of primary and secondary school teaching.

- Perceived need to understand the nature and extent of difficulties, as a basis for proposing improvement.

- Unlikelihood of most CAMELTA members being able to carry out individual research.

Possible advantages…

- Gathering a large amount of data from within the association;
- Sharing of appropriate possible local solutions to local problems;
- Collective development of research skills;
- Increased confidence of participants in their own ideas, serving as a preparatory basis for future projects, including more individual or small-group research;
- (hopefully) resulting relative persuasiveness of the research to those in authority.

CAMELTA Research Priorities

1. How can you make students interact actively in English during English language lessons?
2. What strategies can be used to engage students in English lessons in a multilingual society?

Student participation

3. How can teachers cope with the lack of textbooks on the part of learners?
4. How can teachers produce materials to bridge the gap created by inadequate materials?

Low resources

5. What methods of teaching are appropriate in teaching a multi-grade class?
6. How can students in a large class be managed, motivated, taught and assessed effectively?

Large/MG teaching

Collecting narratives of practice...

1. Please tell the story of a recent successful experience in your teaching - what was successful and what made it successful, do you think?

2. What are the major problems you face in your teaching situation - what is problematic and why?

3. Please describe anything you have done to address (some of) the problems in (2) above. Was this successful? Why / Why not?

Section C: Please write freely below if you have any comments about this questionnaire.

(Smith & Kuchah 2016)

Feeding back and moving on…

- IATEFL ReSIG-CAMELTA analysis (Kuchah 2015)

- Conference plenary presentation (2015, 2016,)

- Publication (Ekembe 2016)

- Student-teacher Dissertations (4)

- Birth of CAMELTA Research Group (2016)

The CAMELTA Research Group…

- encouraging teachers to reflect on and interrogate their practices;

- coordinating teacher research based on autonomous and collaborative inquiry;

- testing new grounds in the classroom and reporting them to peers in monthly meetings;

- cultivating the spirit of Action Research and enhancing professional development within the framework of CPD

Ekembe & Fonjong 2018: 29

Group Activities

1. **Teacher-Teacher partnership**
   - WhatsApp and F2F meetings
   - Identify common priority areas
   - Brainstorm: motivational practices
   - Brainstorm: investigating priority areas(motivation)
   - Article discussions
   - Lesson planning, teaching, and critical appraisals
   - Reporting success stories
   - Training workshop on AR and EP,
2. **Teacher- student partnerships**
   - Mobility scheme

From Traditional teaching to…
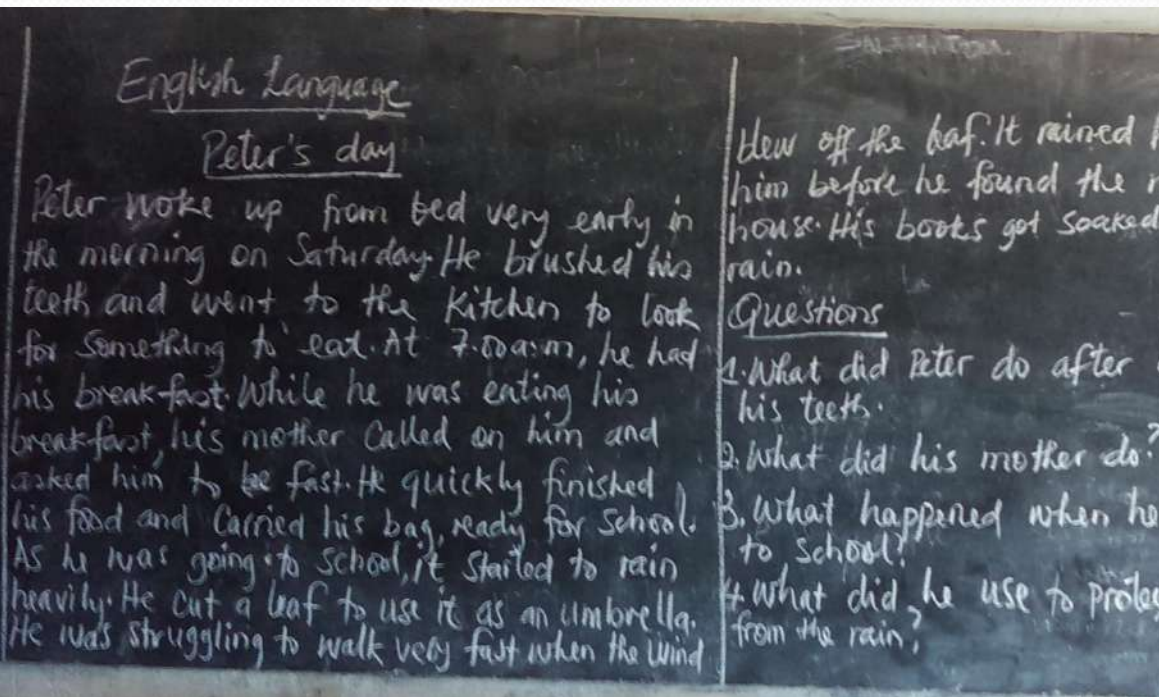
Change in practice…

The mayor,
The yaounde IV Council
Dear sir,

Some proposal solutions to keep the environment Clean.

I am writing this letter to you, to propose some solutions to keep our environment Clean. This is because in some Communities they do not have dustbins and are conform to throw dirts in goters, water bodies Which pollute our environment. So I propose you to provide dust bins in all Communities also provide more means to the waste management Company, set a date for general Cleaning every week and sensitize the population on keeping a clean environment.

With all my sincere respect, I thank you for your leisure time taken to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Ngong Larry

Protecting the environment

Ngong Larry
Form 2 A
G.B.H.s Nso
12/12/2016

The mayor,
Yaounde IV Council
   Dear Sir,
A request for permission for proposal of solutions
On how to keep our environment clean
          With all the respect I have for you, I am
asking infront of your high authority the permission
/ to propose solutions on how to keep our environment
clean. The following are the solutions I want to propose
to you; • There should be provision of trash cans for
          quaters.
          • Sentize the population on keeping a clean env-
          ironment.
          • Provision of more means to the waste manag-
          ement compagy (HYSACAM)
          • Recycling of non-biadegradable objects.
          • Setting a date for general cleaning every week.
ati This is because of the poor disposal of waste in
our various communities.
     I promise by all means to stop the poor disposal
of waste in our various communities.
I Look forward for hearing a response from you.
Yours sincerely,
   N.L.
Ngong Larry

Who can name 10 irregular verbs?

Who can tell us a short story?

Benefits to teachers

'… the activities we have had so far have given me the skills to analyse classroom practices and coach younger colleagues in my department.'

'…one of the most amazing benefits to me is that through this group, I am growing professionally and I feel like I am able to improve on ELT by empowering other colleagues.'

Benefits of to teachers

- I have learned a lot through this group. First of all, I have learned that as a teacher, I need to be reflective in order to improve on my classroom practices. Secondly, I have learned that through Action Research, I can become a better teacher. I have also learned to share my shortcomings as a teacher and have learned from other colleagues. I have become more confident in preparing and delivering my lessons, moving from teacher-centered lessons to learner-centered lessons. I have also become conscious that I could document my lessons. Above all, I have become a better teacher and still strive to continue to grow personally.

Other outcomes…

- Improved Self-confidence >>> local & international conference presentation
- Publications in newsletters and book chapters
- Involvement in Pre-SETT
- Supporting transition from PreSETT to INSETT
- Sync/partnerships with MoE and College of Education
- Recognition by TESOL as 'Change Agents'

Identity mutation…?

'I used to just follow the advice and instructions of inspectors and more experienced colleagues…I know why I do what I do in my class now.'

Pulling thoughts together…

- It would seem that teachers are more likely to accept pedagogic innovation when it is seen to emanate from, or be endorsed by their peers and students. This is because teachers are too used to being blamed for the failure of pedagogic policies when such policies are enacted and handed down by different official bodies with little or no consideration for those who are called upon to implement them in the classroom.

(Kuchah, Djido & Taye, 2019)

An enhancement approach…

- Creating an enabling environment for teachers

'This is the first time in my career that I attended a workshop for two full days and was not reminded that I have to follow instructions. I did not even feel at any point that there was a national inspector in this room; everything happened as if I was talking with my friends who share the same experiences like me.'

'…the facilitator, though a national inspector, brought down himself to a primary school teacher that I am; he was indeed like an inexperienced primary school teacher learning from us. This made learning very simple and interesting.'

An enhancement approach…

- Creating the right enabling environment for teachers

- Incorporating students' & teachers' perspectives

- Consolidating (and enriching) convergence

- Negotiating divergence through (critical) reflection

- Focusing on the positive

An enhancement paradigm

Thank You !

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