‘Tanggap, Tiklop, Tago’
(‘Take, Fold, Put away’):
Perceptions of Best Practice in ELT INSET

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The INSET issue

- In-service teacher training (INSET) often ineffective (see, e.g., Fullan 2001)
- Wide literature on reasons why, BUT:
  - fragmented
  - difficult to access
  - mostly not ELT-specific
- ‘ELTRA’ project:
  - more ‘holistic’
  - practitioner- and policy maker-friendly
  - ELT-specific

ELTRA Project Research Design

- Theoretical framework: effective INSET as involving i) course and school-based teacher learning, ii) relevant content, iii) education system support (see, e.g., Adey 2004)
- Main RQ: what perceptions are there of ‘best practices’ in ELT INSET?
- Setting: Philippines state–sector basic education level ELT (a ‘TESEP’ context – Holliday 1994)
- Sites: metropolitan and provincial

Research design (contd.)

- Participants: ELT teachers, INSET trainers, Elementary School Principals, Secondary School Heads of Department, etc.
- Data–generation methods: interviews, focus group meetings, questionnaires
- Interviews:
  - 4 x Elementary & 4 x Secondary school English teachers
  - 6 x ELT Trainers
  - 4 x Principals & 4 x ELT Heads of Department
  - 4 x others

Research design (contd.)

- Focus group meetings:
  - 4 x Elementary and Secondary school English teachers
  - 5 x ELT trainers
- Questionnaires: c. 250 Elementary and Secondary school English teachers
- Data analysis (excluding questionnaire responses)
  - Transcription
  - Atlas.ti
  - Main and sub–codes

Some main code ‘families’

- Planning
- Trainers
- Trainer training
- Training approach
- Demonstration lessons
- Follow-up
Planning – teaching needs

R4: ... if they are only sent there because of specific topic or specific training and these are not their needs, then they will just occupy the seats and do not participate. And they will just have these three T’s ... Tanggap [receive], Tiklop [fold], Tago, and this is to put them aside, hide it (laughter). So there are several compilations of handouts, actually.

R3: Without reading.

R4: Without reading, yes. Although the seminar itself is very, very good. The teacher – the lectures are very, very good, but if the teachers felt that these are not their needs, these are not their felt needs, then these are not important. (TRFG4: 267–271)

Trainers – main criteria

› Language proficiency
If it’s an English training or seminar workshop, they always look for a trainer who has a facility in the ... English language. (EPI-1: 155)

› Relevant teaching experience
They [trainers] should have practiced what they are preaching. That’s a requirement. (SHDI-1: 289)

› Knowledgeable
If the participants know that this person is an authority ... when it comes to the field of whatever the topic is... Somehow we get confident ... I would consider such [a] trainer to be a qualified one. Sort of an authority in that line. (STI-1: 4-168)

Trainer training

› Importance: There should be a training of trainers first. Because we cannot give what we do not have ... a trainer should be equipped first with the skills, with the knowledge, with the strategies prior to being a facilitator. (EPI-1: 186)

› Approach: we had professional development, then had something for content, and another for skills. So we knew what we were doing, and, you know, we knew how to go about doing it, because the trainers were already provided with the materials. (S1-4: 338)

And in the evening, or after the session, we have facilitators and we do debriefing. We gather, we discuss, we – as we take our dinner, we discuss what went wrong, what did not work well, and what should be done. (TRFG1: 128)

Teacher training approach

› Activity-based: We have to make the participants participative. Meaning, not only for them to listen all the time, but they have to do something during the seminar... Like for example, there are challenges given to them after a certain topic has been discussed...[so] that they could also share their ideas about the topic (EPI-2: 185)

› When there is no activity, the concentration span is only 15 minutes, after which the teachers will not focus anymore. They will talk, they will do other things. On the other hand, when there are activities... they will be interested; they will be inspired, they will participate, ... even old peoples are still eager to participate, and they really feel good if they have things to do and if their efforts are complimented and appreciated or affirmed. (S1 - 3: 201)

Teacher training approach

› Situational relevance: Some of our speakers, when they give lectures, specially on the strategies, good strategies. No question on the strategies that they are giving us, but the question is, do they know the class size? ... most of the strategies that they are giving us are strategies for a class of 30, 40, wherein most of the room is air conditioned. But in our case, that’s why when we go back to our school when we re-echo the things that we have learned, the teachers, “oh, that’s only good for the video. Ask them, how many students do they have?”. So that is the reaction. Because in our case, we have 60-65 students per room ... So you could just imagine if this will be the size of the classroom, and then you will be housing 60-65 students – with only one electric fan (laughter). (TRFG4: 448)
Teacher training approach

- Importance of handouts: For me ... I think if the teacher during the seminar... was able to identify already that this strategy will be used for this, it will be clearer... [when] she goes back to the classroom, she will be able to go over those things given to her like a handout, or a set of materials, rather than have the seminar then you have no handouts, you have no materials that you will bring to the classroom. I think it will be better also. (ETI – 1: 259)

- Rationale for technique as well: We can have an idea why do we do that particular strategy ... they're going to accept readily if they know ... why are they going to adopt the strategy or not... To draw ownership of the strategies, because once they own it, the commitment is deeper. (TRFG3: 642-649)

Follow-up

- Vital: Usually the good teachers are sent to the seminars. But the school administrators usually forget to make these teachers echo what they have learned from the seminars. So that would leave the other teachers who were not able to attend not to learn anything. So it's the end... there is no follow-up, there is no continuity... So no – nothing. (TRFG5: 406-415)

- 'System-wide' involvement essential: because they are behind this. We cannot do it alone. We cannot do it ourselves. So cooperation [is needed] from the higher-ups - from the school administrator to the superintendents. (TEFG3: 1341)

Some methodological issues

- Effect of focus of questioning
- Ethics procedures
- Teacher training confused with teaching
- Difficulty for teachers of conceptualising teacher training
- Trainer training confused with teacher training
- Real confused with ideal
- Atlas.ti as an analysis tool
- Need for further research
Conclusion


✗ The 4 P's: Papungko [to sit], Pamati [to listen], Pamahaw [to eat snacks], Pauli [to go home] (TEFG3: 655–664).

References


Key to transcript acronyms

- TEFG = English Language Teacher Focus Group
- TRFG = English Language Teacher Trainer Focus Group
- ETI = Elementary English Language Teacher Interview
- STI = Secondary English Language Teacher Interview
- SI = Regional or Division English Language Supervisor Interview
- EPI = Elementary School Principal Interview
- SHDI = Secondary School English Department Head Interview
- DSI = Division Superintendent Interview
- HQI = Central Headquarters Personnel Interview