

NEW PERSPECTIVES IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

As the language education reform is in progress in Ukraine, it sets high expectations on its stakeholders (learners and teachers, teacher educators and teacher trainers) in terms of raising the quality of language learning and teaching [1]. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine states that the introduction of the State Standards for primary and secondary education, the new national curricula, ICT integration in learning and teaching, studies of a foreign language since first grade and of another foreign language since fifth grade require a profound reconceptualisation of the content of and the approaches to the linguistic and methodological training of pre-service and in-service EFL teachers at the institutions of higher education in Ukraine [2, p.5].

Thereby appear new perspectives in continuing professional development (CPD) for primary teachers of English who are particularly responsible for starting “the ball” of English language education rolling in the right direction [3, p. 9]. One of them is being shaped by an innovative CPD programme initiated by the members of the Chair of the English Language and Primary ELT Methodology in Ivan Franko State University at the rise of the language education reform (September 2012). The results of a survey they conducted among ELT professionals about potential difficulties awaiting primary school teachers of English revealed an urgent need for teachers, teacher educators and trainee teachers to collaborate in dealing with emerging professional issues. That led to the idea of setting up a CPD programme as a platform for ‘caring and sharing’.

The CPD programme was launched in January 2013 on the premises of the Institute of Pedagogy with the strategic objective to foster collaboration within the local teaching community and to consolidate it as a learning community, to establish strong links between the pre-service and in-service teacher training and to provide multiple CPD opportunities for all participants.

The data obtained through the survey also helped to specify four major CPD areas to focus on: 1) ICT integration in foreign language learning and teaching in primary school contexts; 2) innovative techniques of early English language learning and teaching; 3) classroom action research supervision; 4) English for primary teachers and CPD.

Within the first CPD area, the urgent need for ICT integration into professional contexts has been addressed through the following collaboration formats: group participation in the British Council online professional development courses (for example, *Steps to Success*, *Primary Essentials*, *Learning Technologies*), conducting seminars and workshops on educational technology (for example, using multimedia support and online resources), materials design using Microsoft Office (MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, MS Publisher), authoring tools (Hot Potatoes, My Test), online tools (Board Game Makers, Test Makers, Voki), graphic, audio and video tools (Paint, Audacity, MovieMaker), lesson planning with ICT and sharing ideas and resources on the New Generation School Teacher website www.ngschoolteacher.wix.com.

The second CPD area - innovative techniques of early English language learning and teaching – is to be strengthened through class visitations in cooperating schools in order to search for innovations as well as through methodological workshops conducted by university teachers, CPD programme participants, local and international guest speakers. Among the most popular topics in 2013-2015, there have been learner autonomy, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, techniques for teaching language and culture, etc.

Within the third CPD area, the participants focus on classroom action research issues by familiarizing themselves with the lesson study group cycle, doing peer review of teaching materials for publication, keeping reflective journals and making presentations on the results of their classroom action research.

In the fourth CPD area, the emphasis is laid on encouraging the participants to keep up to date with their English. Some of the best practices include the Reader's Theatre, keeping a video log, keeping a professional portfolio and participation in virtual teacher forums (for example, FLTEACH)

Yet we think there is still a long way to go as new challenges in teaching English to young learners are constantly emerging. Learning is what can help us to meet them.

So, the CPD programme under consideration can create new perspectives in continuing professional development of three professional cohorts: practising school teachers, language teacher educators and prospective foreign language teachers. The issues of applying the results of professional growth for the benefits of language learners in secondary schools are outlined for further research.

REFERENCES

1. «Круглий стіл» на тему: «SPEAK GLOBAL – GO GLOBAL: англійська мова в системі середньої освіти [Електронний ресурс]. Режим доступу: <http://iportal.rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/111218.html>
2. Шкільний вчитель нового покоління. Допроєктне базове дослідження (березень 2013 – березень 2014). - К.: Ленвіт, 2014. – 60 с.
3. Going forward: Continuing professional development for English language teachers in the UK. (2011) London: British Council. – 18 p.