

TEACHERS' NEEDS: AN IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR LONGER-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF CROSS-CULTURAL INSET PROGRAMMES

Chunmei Yan

Introduction

For three decades, in-service teacher training (INSET) or continuing professional development (CPD) has grown in importance and status and has developed as a global trend. It has been viewed by many countries as the key element in strategies to raise the quality of educational provision (Hayes 1997:1).

There exist accounts of not only of successes, but also failures in CPD initiatives. Valuable experiences and insights have emerged which would contribute to the future practice of CPD. At the same time, a number of problems and issues have also arisen. From some observers' perspectives (e.g. Tisher and Wideen 1990), the drawbacks have generated a pessimistic picture of teacher education. Fullan (1982) has concluded that much of the research in the late 1960s and 1970s on attempts to implement innovation indicated that the initiatives undertaken have sometimes failed to produce actual changes in practice. Cooley (1997) recently lamented that innovations 'tend to be highly visible at the surface, but do not affect what's going down in the lower depth'.

Likewise, Guskey (2000) contends that educators themselves frequently regard professional development as having little impact on their day-to-day responsibilities, which in turn has caused, among some teachers, a sense of apathy towards CPD. Some teachers doubtless even consider it a waste of their professional time. They may participate in professional development primarily because of contractual obligations. It is little wonder that when faced with budgetary constraints, one of the first items considered for reduction typically is funding for professional development. Therefore, to ameliorate the practice of CPD initiatives it is vital to understand the general reasons for the disparity between the substantial resources invested and the much less tangible returns and outcomes.

In addition to the drawbacks in the practice of CPD initiatives, there are also limitations in the literature, despite far-ranging research undertaken on teacher education. Guskey (2000: 32) found that for decades, researchers have tried unsuccessfully to determine the true impact of professional development in education. He observed that although in-service education and staff development endeavours in their various forms continue to be enormously popular and highly valuable, we still know relatively little about what difference they make. Some have surveyed the vast professional development literature to isolate salient factors (Massarella 1980; Sparks, 1983). Others have analysed studies and reports to identify elements related to successful programme implementation (McLaughlin and Marsh 1978). Still others have used research summaries to offer guidelines for more effective practice (Showers et al 1987; Wood and Thompson 1983). Sometimes, the solutions posed by different researchers are contradictory. And even those that are clear are sometimes so general and theoretical in nature that they offer little help for practically minded educators who want specific answers and workable solutions. Definitive answers continue to be elusive.

The vacuum in the literature calls for in-depth studies of the initiatives for teachers' CPD, instead of a snapshot of the situations. It demands scrutiny of the real-life contexts in a naturalistic manner. Ostensible features as well as less tangible characteristics merit investigation to obtain a realistic and full picture of the reality.

This study intends to unravel and understand teacher trainees' perspectives about major problems in cross-cultural CPD initiatives by examining a cross-cultural teacher training programme in China. It seeks to yield insights into factors influencing the longer-term sustainability of projects of this kind, which could, it is hoped, contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of such

initiatives and enhancing the likelihood of success.

Background of the study

In this investigation a Sino-British INSET initiative in Hubei Province in central China was chosen in order to pinpoint factors that contribute to and hinder the impact of the project and prospects for longer-term sustainability of projects of this kind.

Hubei Province was chosen for two major reasons. Firstly, it falls mid-way between the more prosperous provinces of the east and the under-developed provinces in the west. As a result, whilst it has an infrastructure to support developments in education, many of its educational institutions are under-resourced and need to be up-graded. Secondly, Hubei Province's central location has led to an increase in the numbers of foreigners in Hubei. The English language has become a lingua franca for trade and service industries in the area and many employers regard skills in English as important in indirectly facilitating the competitiveness of their enterprises.

It was envisaged that the project could provide an opportunity to contribute to the economic development of Hubei Province. By strengthening the ability of the adult education institutions (AEIs) to meet the demand for English for specific purposes (ESP), the project was likely indirectly to support the growth of commercial teaching of English and the development of a market in ESP. The project's outputs were expected to be a portfolio of ESP and ELP in-service courses for teachers and professionals, a materials bank, a cadre of staff equipped with the skills to deliver the courses, and sustainable mechanisms for on-going management and development. To achieve these goals three parallel objectives were specified:

- to upgrade the English proficiency of English teachers from adult education institutions (AEIs);
- to develop teachers' teaching methodologies; and
- to enhance teachers' expertise in ESP and ELP course design.

The programme was based in a middle-ranking university in Hubei Province. It delivered one-year full-time training only for English teachers

from AEIs between 1997 and 2000. The training covered three components: English proficiency improvement, general English teaching methodology and ESP course design.

This project was intended to be a well-conceived training programme, involving various levels and groups of stakeholders, including two governments, implementing institutions, AEIs and teacher trainees from AEIs. An intensive, meticulous feasibility study was conducted before the start of the course. However, despite considerable efforts on the part of all parties concerned, particularly the highly committed project team, the project faced a recurrent predicament of low recruitment. In 2001, in response to the low enrolment, it started to open part-time courses during summer and winter vacations, when teachers' availability was less of a concern. Additionally, its targets expanded from AEI teachers to primary and secondary English teachers who were keen to upgrade their English proficiency and to enhance their competencies in general English teaching methodologies and ESP course design. The recruitment remained rather satisfying up to the time of investigation.

Data collection

A mixture of complementary methods was employed, including questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documentation to achieve triangulation of sources of information, or in Burgess' terms 'to pursue a particular line of inquiry and to maximise the validity of the data collected' (1984: 156). Both part-time and full-time teacher trainees were involved in the data gathering. The part-time trainees were secondary English teachers from two neighbouring provinces. They came on the programme in 2001. The full-time trainees included the four cohorts between 1997 and 2000, who mainly came from tertiary vocational institutions. Their years of working as teachers varied, ranging from a couple of years to more than ten years. Most of the part-time trainees were three-year-diploma holders (lower than BA qualification); whilst most of the full-time trainees obtained BA in English language before their training.

In total, 53 questionnaires were administered to full-time trainees and 172 questionnaires to part-time trainees. 15 group interviews (4 to 7 interviewees in each group) were conducted, 11 with the full-time trainees, and 4 with part-time

trainees. The questionnaires and interviews were concerned with the trainees' expectations and experiences on the project, the benefits they derived from the project and their views on the longer-term sustainability of the project. Documentation was utilised to collect factual information about the project to add objectivity, validity and reliability to the investigation. In Burgess' terms (1984: 146), the aim of using different methods is not only to see different approaches used alongside one another but also to see them integrated within the course of an investigation.

Findings

The findings were generated from questionnaires and interviews concerning the trainees' expectations and their views about the programme.

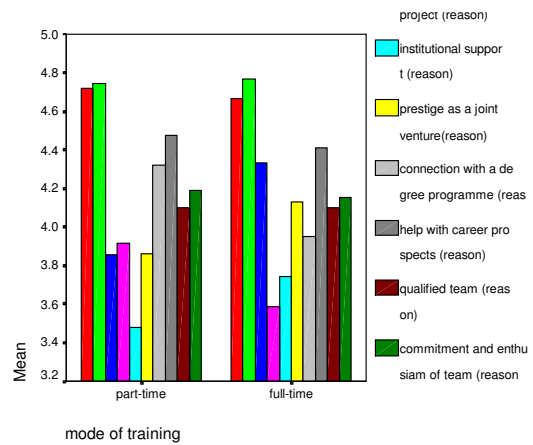
Questionnaire findings

Factors that made the trainees decide to come on the course

As Figure 1 shows, there was a consistently high endorsement of the ten aspects: the scores on the ten items were all high for both groups of trainees, being well above midpoint. The numbers of items that scored above four for the part-time teachers and full-time teachers were, respectively, six and seven. The most influential factors for both groups in their decision to come on the course were: improvement of teaching, improvement of English, its potential help with career, qualified team, commitment and enthusiasm of the team.

In addition to these commonalities, some differences (though not substantial) emerged in the degree of importance of some factors. 'The connection of the project with a degree programme' was considered by the part-timers as more important than by the full-timers. 'To use up-to-date resource materials' was perceived to be more influential by the full-timers than by the part-timers. 'The prestige of the project as a joint venture' was seen as a more important consideration by the full-timers than the part-timers. For the part-timers, institutional support was the last factor; while for the full-timers, the location of the project was the last.

Figure 1 Full-time and part-time trainees' expectations of the programme (N of FT = 53; N of PT = 172)



Trainees' expectations of the ESP component of the programme

As displayed in Table 1, the trainees' major interests in ESP were in academic reading and writing and international trade. More than half of both groups showed their endorsement of academic reading and writing (part-timers: 61.6%; full-timers: 56.6%) and international trade (part-timers: 56.4%; full-timers: 52.8%). Neither group endorsed tourism particularly highly (part-timers: 37.2%; full-timers: 22.6%), nor science and technology (part-timers: 14.0%; full-timers: 15.1%).

Table 1 Full-time and part-time trainees' expectations of the ESP component of the programme

Areas of ESP	PT (N = 172)		FT (N = 53)	
	N	%	N	%
Tourism	64	37.2	12	22.6
International trade	97	56.4	28	52.8
Science and technology	24	14.0	8	15.1
Academic reading and writing	106	61.6	30	56.6

Most interesting course topics for the trainees

As Table 2 shows, the majority of the teacher trainees were interested in the four language skills and ELT methodology training. However, their endorsement of the ESP component differed. About half of the full-time participants were interested in ESP training, while less than one-

third of the part-time participants displayed an interest in this area. There was also some divergence of opinions on research training. About one-third of full-time trainees were interested in research training, while only one out of ten part-time participants were keen on this.

Table 2 Interesting topics to full-time and part-time trainees

Interesting topics	PT (N = 172)		FT (N = 53)	
	N	%	N	%
Speaking	147	85.5	38	71.7
Listening	131	76.2	35	66.0
Reading	95	55.2	36	67.9
Writing	104	60.5	33	62.3
ESP training	46	26.7	27	50.9
ELT methods	117	68.0	41	77.4
Research training	16	9.3	18	34.0

How far their general expectations were met

As Table 3 shows, the trainees' overall opinions about the extent to which their expectations had been fulfilled were broadly positive. About one-quarter of part-time trainees felt the course had fulfilled or exceeded their expectations, and about a little under half of full-time trainees had the same opinion. More than 70% part-time trainees thought the course had partly met their expectations, and more than half of full-time trainees expressed the same opinion. Very few part-time trainees felt the course had not met their expectations at all, and none of the full-time trainees shared this perception.

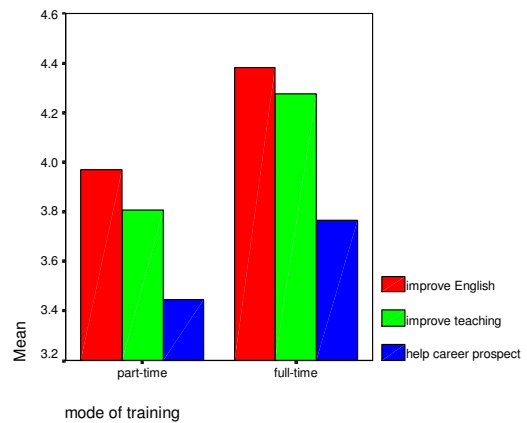
Table 3 Extent to which full-time and part-time trainees' expectations were met

Extent to which their expectations were met	PT (N = 172)		FT (N = 53)	
	N	%	N	%
Didn't meet my expectations at all	3	1.75	0	0
Partly met my expectations	121	70.3	28	52.8
Fulfilled my expectations	34	19.8	19	35.8
Exceeded my expectations	8	4.7	5	9.4

Trainees' views about the benefits of the course for them

As Figure 2 shows, both part-time trainees and full-time trainees were positive about the benefits they obtained from the programme in three aspects: improvement of English, improvement of teaching and the project's help with their career prospects. It also shows that the full-time trainees felt stronger about these benefits than the part-time trainees.

Figure 2 Full-time and part-time trainees' opinions about the benefits of the course (N of FT trainees = 53; N of PT trainees = 172)



As summarised in Table 4, a minority of both group of trainees was very satisfied with their benefits in ESP from the programme. Less than half of both groups felt they had benefited in academic reading and writing. About one-third of them acknowledged that they had benefited from international trade. Few of them were positive about tourism; and very few about science and technology.

Table 4 Full-time and part-time trainees' opinions about their areas of benefits from the programme

Areas of benefits	Groups			
	PT (N = 172)		FT (N = 53)	
	N	%	N	%
Tourism	10	5.8	14	26.4
International trade	53	30.8	20	37.7
Science & technology	4	2.3	5	9.4
Academic reading & writing	81	47.1	24	45.3

Trainees' perspectives about the programme

Trainees' perspectives about the programme may be summarised as follows.

- The full-time trainees gave consistently higher ratings to those features concerned with the five aspects of course features (course design, teaching methodology, course materials, course evaluation and assessment) representing their high distinctiveness and effectiveness.
- More than half of the part-time trainees held moderate opinions about those features with the exceptions of 'English as a main medium of instruction', 'provision of fieldwork in some ESP courses', 'much use of blend of local and imported textbooks', and 'much use of handouts',
- 'English as a main medium of instruction' enjoyed a high endorsement by more than half of both groups of trainees as a highly distinctive feature. However, more than half of the full-time trainees felt it highly effective, whilst less than half of the part-time trainees had the same opinion.
- There were disparities in connection with the distinctiveness of the programme features from the five points of view. The proportions of the part-time trainees who considered course design, teaching methodology and course materials low in distinctiveness were consistently larger than those of the full-time trainees with the exception of 'relaxed and supportive classroom atmosphere', 'emphasis on

designing meaningful tasks', and '(materials) based on British life and culture'. The proportions of the full-time trainees who saw course evaluations and assessment to be low in distinctiveness were consistently larger than those of the part-time trainees.

- There also emerged divergent opinions about the effectiveness of the programme features in the five aspects. The percentages of full-time trainees who rated four areas low in effectiveness (i.e. course design, teaching methodology, course evaluations and assessment) were consistently higher than those of part-time trainees who held the same view with the exception of 'learner-centredness of course design', 'language skills as one focus', 'English as a main medium of instruction', 'emphasis on developing integrated skills', 'provision of fieldwork in some ESP courses'. The effectiveness of course materials was the only area where there was a higher proportion of part-time trainees who felt them low in effectiveness. In other words, there was a larger number of full-time trainees who considered course design, teaching methodology, course evaluations and assessment as ineffective; while there was a larger number of part-time trainees who found course materials ineffective. The difference of opinion may be to do with the different professional and academic background of the teachers, or to do with the variations of the course content and methodology for the part-time trainees.

An independent-samples T-test was conducted to confirm that the consistent differences between the part-time and full-time trainees' opinions about the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the programme features were significant. The mean scores of the full-time trainees were found to be consistently higher on all these features than those of the part-time trainees. The significance levels for twenty-four items out of the fifty were below .05. The items where the differences were significant are presented in Table 5. It can be hypothesised that the divergence of opinions of the two groups on those features was attributable partly to the evolving characteristics of the programme in the two different delivering modes, and partly to their backgrounds and expectations.

Which dimension overrides the other needs further confirmation through the support of evidence from the interview data.

Table 5 Features where the differences between full-time trainees and part-time trainees were significant (all < 0.05)

<i>Item</i>	
Distinctiveness	Effectiveness
Team-made syllabi	Learner-centredness in course design
Learner-centredness in course design	Teaching methodology as one focus
Teaching methodology as one focus	English as a main medium of instruction
ESP as one focus	Opportunities for discussions
English as a main medium of instruction	Provision of fieldwork in some ESP courses
Pair/group work	Up-to-date materials
Opportunities for discussions	Integration of skills
Provision of fieldwork in some ESP courses	Focus on activities and tasks
Up-to-date materials	Little inclusion of grammar
Use of graphs and visual aids	
Use of handouts	
Integration of skills	
Focus on activities and tasks	
Little inclusion of grammar	
Priority given to testing memorization	

Interview findings

a) Trainees' expectations of the programme

It was found that, despite variations in expectations, the trainees had extrinsic and intrinsic motivations in participating in the perceived high-profile project. Their expectation of enhancing their professional competence existed alongside external pressures from their institutions and educational authorities and their

concern about higher qualifications.

The principle required teachers under the age of 40 to pursue masters' degrees. (Ft02)

We received a notification from the educational authorities about this teacher training programme. The demands on teachers are increasingly higher. (Pt01)

It's necessary to get a bachelor's degree. A bachelor's degree is a must to live up to the social standards. With this purpose in mind, I came here. (Pt01)

It would be great if we could improve our English because the teachers were so good. It would benefit us. But the main one was a degree. That was my major expectation, MA. (Ft01)

Yes, (I expected a degree) but it was secondary. The primary one was to improve my abilities. (Pt03)

For me, degree is just secondary, learning is primary. (Pt02)

b) Trainees' views about the impact of the project

Four dimensions were identified concerning trainees' views about the project impact: realised impacts achieved thus far, unrealised impacts, contributing and inhibitive factors.

The perceived impacts by the trainees were mainly on their professional development in a variety of aspects after a process of acclimatisation. Teaching methods were felt by both full-time and part-time trainees to be very distinctive and effective. The training experience, as noted by some full-time trainees, had built up their confidence and brought about better career prospects for them. While the part-time trainees perceived the project as a trigger of their reflections on their teaching in terms of their teaching methods, affective dimensions and skills development in their teaching.

What I've learned here is more than I could have in two or three years elsewhere. Especially your personality, your attitudes towards students. (Pt02)

I used to be very traditional in my teaching. ... After one year's study, my teaching has been improved. My teaching methods have been greatly improved. My language skills have also been improved. I can use English exclusively now. I used to use a blend of English and Chinese. (Ft03 T2)

At that time I didn't understand what was task-based teaching, but now I understand it. We used to be teacher-centred. Teachers explain. Now teachers are facilitators and organizers. The

techniques were very helpful... My experience on the course has been very helpful to my teaching. It has updated my ideas in teaching. (Ft03 T3)

The biggest benefit from the course, I feel is that I have devolved the 'burden' to my students. Before I came here, I used traditional methods. I lectured and the students took notes. Students did what I asked them to do. After my training, this situation has been totally changed. Learning is not teachers' task, but students'. Some of my colleagues asked me why my voice was still fine after teaching four hours. Now I just briefly go through the main points, put the language points on the blackboard, I rarely talk. I ask the students to explain, to talk about the language points and main ideas of each paragraph. Then I provide them with my feedback and corrections if necessary. In this way, the students' learning is easier. (Ft03 T5)

From the trainees' point of view, the quality of course delivery was a major contributing factor, which involved a multiplicity of qualities about the courses: the supportive and committed project team, the up-to-date resources, advanced teaching methods, relaxed English environment and relevant course design.

The teachers were very friendly to everybody. They had very good personality and profound knowledge. They were very approachable. We didn't need to stand up to answer teachers' questions. I was very impressed with teachers' modesty. (Ft01 T1)

The immersion in English was very good. Sometimes I dreamed of speaking English. At times we joked with each other in English. Some expressions will stick in our mind permanently. (Ft01 T4)

The course was very distinctive in its teaching methodology. Teaching methods were incorporated in all the language skills courses. Various methods were presented in the four language courses. (Pt01)

Trainees' perceptions of constraining factors referred to obstacles that trainees encountered in coming on the programme on the one hand, and barriers to their innovative attempts in their own teaching contexts on the other. Lack of institutional support was perceived by both groups of trainees as one of the major disincentives. Besides, the nature of the programme originally as a non-award bearing programme as well as insufficient publicity were also perceived as causes of the project's underachievement.

What I regretted about the course was business English. I've just learned a smattering of knowledge in business English. (Ft01 T4)

The course design is not that much needed. Current textbooks have course design incorporated. Teachers don't need to do that. (Ft01 T2)

After I came back, I realised that it would have been better if we had had more content knowledge. I plucked up courage to deliver the course. I know it doesn't live up to my students' expectations. I know I'm not qualified enough, but I have to carry on. I will need to learn by doing. (Ft01 T1)

I don't think English is equally valued as other subjects. An English class of seventy to eighty students requires a lot of time. (Pt02)

They don't inform us of funded training programmes. On the whole English teachers' training is very limited. There are more opportunities for training in other fields, like computer, mandarin, once in every three years. (Pt02)

My school allows you to go, but you have to pay yourself. Some institutes even don't release their teachers. It would cause lots of trouble like swapping classes with other teachers. Because shortage of staff is a common problem, if you apply personally, it would be very difficult. Teachers' status is very low. ... They don't expect us to learn and to improve. They think improving is our own business. Your improvement will be beneficial to your own future. They mainly look at your qualifications, the hardware qualities. (Ft03)

As far as the hindrances to trainees' application of new methods in their own institutions are concerned, lack of support was considered to be an essential factor, which involved resistance from administrators, colleagues and students due to its tension with existing conventional practice and its demands on resources.

Because our students don't have an English environment. They are concerned about their exams to be upgraded to senior high schools. Their concern is to get a high mark. (Pt01)

In our teaching we must use one textbook. Handouts would be difficult to be implemented. This is what my institute is like... The students were not used to my teaching methods at first which I had learned from the project. I generally did some warm-up activities. Many students were quiet. It was impossible to engage them in the communication. I make a lot of effort to make the classroom atmosphere lively. (Ft02 T1)

Teacher-made course design is very good, but would be unrealistic in normal contexts. Because of the existing system. Teachers are not involved in course design. My institute is relatively flexible. Some institutes are even more rigid. (Ft02 T2)

My teaching revolves around exams. I rarely speak English in class because my students

wouldn't be able to understand difficult English. Their vocabulary is very limited. So gradually I have forgotten the vocabulary learnt at the university. (Pt01)

Our inspector didn't understand English teaching, so he thought we were having fun. He thought the amount of information was insufficient. If the inspector is not satisfied with your teaching, you will lose 30 points, then the remaining 70 will be in the low rank. Then you will lose your bonus. (Ft01 T4)

Group discussions would make the class chaotic. It would cause criticisms from some colleagues. It's hard to control the class. From the administrators. (Pt02)

c) Trainees' views about the project's longer-term sustainability

Trainees' views about the project's longer-term sustainability highlighted the effort to be made by the project team and relevant departments at both horizontal and vertical dimensions. The effort of the project team, in the trainees' view, entailed ongoing follow-up support and provision of alternative award-bearing programmes. External support from various levels was considered as a *sine qua non* in achieving sustainability.

Discussion

This study echoes Hayes' argument (1997: 70) that personal concerns are likely to affect teacher motivation and may act as 'affective filters' (Krashen 1982) or barriers to development, thereby decreasing the likelihood that teachers will engage in activities that demand effort. Such concerns need to be acknowledged if any kind of development or engagement is to take place. It also supports Roberts' argument (1997: 222) that teachers' needs vary, and the challenge for INSET is to identify and respond to needs that vary between individuals and change in individuals over time. As a result needs assessment and evaluation are of central importance in sustaining INSET (Roberts 1997: 231). They enhance the continuity of INSET programmes in the face of forces that oppose it – funding changes, teachers moving on, staff leave. They enhance relevance because they monitor teachers' needs insofar as they evolve over time. A number of important features stand out from this study.

Firstly, there arises a need for the course providers to adjust the course content to meet the needs of the teacher trainees. As the findings show, some of the important features of the

programme were not warmly welcomed by the trainees. For example, ESP course design, international trade and tourism were not highly recognised by the trainees, either the full-timers or part-timers. 'English as a main medium of instruction', 'Provision of fieldwork in some ESP courses', 'much use of blend of local and imported textbooks', and 'much use of handouts' only received moderate ratings. Instead, English language development and teaching methodology were two primary needs for the teachers. Additionally, part-time teachers had some different interest areas from the full-time trainees. These needs require attention from the course providers, which would otherwise undermine the attraction and recruitment of the programme.

Secondly, the study suggests a need for the course to exercise more flexibility in terms of recruitment and delivery mode. Since availability was an issue for a large number of teachers, especially primary and secondary school teachers, part-time programmes would be more practicable for many teachers. Courses delivered during weekends and vacations might receive higher popularity than full-time courses. Targets could be expanded to teachers at various levels (primary, secondary and tertiary levels) in other provinces.

Thirdly, funding should be on the agenda of the course providers since it emerged as a problem for the majority of the teachers, especially the part-time tutors. Full funding from their home institutions was almost impossible. It might be an ideal solution for the several parties to provide financial support, i.e. the programme, the home institutions and the educational department to alleviate the financial burdens of the teachers.

Fourthly, certification is an important issue to address. It was found that the trainees expected not only to enhance their professional competence, but also to obtain a higher qualification. This pragmatic incentive, as a crucial consideration would directly undermine the viability of the programme if taken lightly.

Fifthly, follow-up support by the project team to the trainees and institutions in various forms will be necessary. 'Supplying up-to-date information about the project', 'publishing a journal with contribution by project participants', 'helping trainees with their practical problems in their teaching', 'setting up a website, email system or a hotline to strengthen communication', and 'creating an English saloon for trainees to practise

speaking and exchange their ideas'. Networking around the project would be of great help to teachers.

Finally, the study highlights the importance of government support to both the project team and teachers (and their institutions). Provision of resources and facilities would enhance the day-to-day operation of the programme. Government support might induce more institutional support to teachers. Public backing in accreditation and recruitment would help boost enrolment.

Conclusion

This study has looked at the trainees' perspectives on a cross-cultural INSET initiative in China. Trainees' expectations of the programme and their views of the programme were investigated. It was found that a training programme needed to take into account teachers' practical needs to enhance its longer-term sustainability. Good quality of training would depend on the degree of fitness between the course itself and the expectations of trainees. Therefore, training programmes need to constantly adjust their delivery mode, course content and methodology to suit teachers' needs. In Hayes' terms, we miss much by focusing only on courses, we will miss less if we also consider the school context of implementation, but we will only arrive at anything like a full understanding of the processes of in-service teacher development if we consider the teacher's personal biography, situated within its socio-educational context. To illustrate this in a down-to-earth way, the analogy of a restaurant (Yan 2005) seems to be appropriate. The preferences of customers count more than the flavours and tastes of the dishes. If customers' likes and dislikes are disregarded, the food, however tasty, will be disappointingly unwelcome. As a result, the expectations and preferences of customers, which have inevitably resulted from their own long-established dieting habits need to be taken into serious consideration. It should be acknowledged that the sensible attitude towards teachers' 'practical-mindedness' is to face it head-on and invite them to speak for themselves by sponsoring their voice (Goodson 1994: 31). It should also be acknowledged that in order to satisfy teachers' needs entails roles and actions of the project team in terms of flexibility in course delivery and follow-up support on the one hand, and financial and political support of the

two governments to both the project team and teachers (including institutions) on the other hand, otherwise training programmes would fail to serve their purpose.

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