

The Enactment of Teachers’ Professional Development in The Implementation of CEFR-Aligned Classroom Based Assessment: A Case Study in Malaysian Schools

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ABSTRACT

This past five years has seen a drastic reform takes over in English Language Education. The reform prompts a significant change in the field of teaching, learning and the assessment system. To note, the recent implementation of CEFR-aligned Classroom-Based Assessment (CEFR CBA) demands teachers to be a comprehensive implementer in assessing students within their teaching and learning practices. As this enactment is concerned, teachers’ professional development (TPD) program plays the crucial roles to ensure teachers are well equipped with the content and pedagogical knowledge in the new policy. TPD has become an important professional learning medium for teachers in the aim of increasing their professionalism to enact educational change. Hence, this study was conducted to explore the enactment of teachers’ professional development program within two main contexts which are at the meso (school) and macro (education department) level. This study revealed that the enactment of TPD program for CEFR CBA was largely transmissive but lacking the sense of practicality to ensure the dispersion of knowledge can happened throughout the entire cascade system. Several challenges like the uncertainty to conduct in-house training, non-option teachers, participants engagement and limited time was discovered to become the factors which impede the effectiveness of TPD to serve its purpose in coaching and mentoring teachers to implement CEFR CBA. The findings of this study have the implication on the program designers and providers to better equip TPD which can address the needs of teachers at the micro level.

Keywords: Teachers’ Professional Development, Classroom-Based Assessment, Common European Framework of References

INTRODUCTION

In the age of globalisation, education systems are changing, thus offering opportunities for serious and promising educational reforms. The development of education is increasingly important as it needs to keep up with the constant demand for improvement to be relevant with the current needs of country. In the context of language studies, the English Language Education (ELE) is one of the areas that has been involved in this rapid change. The implementation of Common European Framework of References (CEFR) in ELE curriculum signifies that Malaysia is moving to develop and meeting the demands of international standards (Azman, 2016). The integration of CEFR in ELE curriculum has rummaged the entire system especially on the aspect of how the language assessment was conducted. As CEFR bring an emphasis of moving away from the exam-oriented culture, many high-stakes examination

(*Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3 and Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah*) that were foreground at both primary and secondary schools were abolished starting 2021. Replacing these assessments, a more progressive and continuous assessment system known as CEFR-Aligned Classroom Based Assessment (CEFR CBA) was introduced in ELE curriculum. The changing climate from traditional assessment to CEFR CBA was considered as a quick transition in ELE curriculum. This reform requires teachers to learn new roles and ways of teaching that translate into long-term developmental processes which require them to focus on changing their own practices (Dichaba & Mokhele, 2017). Hence, to meet all this demand, the teachers professional development is recognised as a vital element to enhance the quality of executing the reforms (Haug & Mork, 2021).

The teacher professional development or abbreviated as TPD is one of the essential components in the aim of enhancing the teacher's professionalism (Ngeze, Khwaja & Iyer, 2018). TPD acts as a medium of providing teachers with the professional learning. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) believed that there is a need to conduct TPD on a large scale to effectively engage large number of teachers in tasks of teaching and assessments. Hence, the cascade model was famously adopted in TPD design to engage and shape teacher practices through a social participation process involving communities with similar practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This model lays on the assumption of the knowledge in the new policy (CEFR CBA) is passing down according to the stages of stakeholders in the dissemination model. However, the adoption of cascade model in TPD for CEFR CBA has sparked a heated conflict in educational field. This dissemination system was claimed as a failure system because it causes the knowledge and information to be diluted as it passes the stages or tiers in the cascade (Abeysena, Philips & Poppit, 2016). As a result, Arumugham (2020) justified that teacher practices of CEFR CBA in the current situation still inclined towards exam-oriented assessment even they have been disseminated with the content and pedagogical knowledge in CEFR CBA. Most teachers do not follow the guidelines cascaded to them from the policymakers (Arumugham, 2020). To note, the insufficient materials on the new assessment (Ghavifekr, Kunjappan & Ramasamy, 2016) and lack of training (Arumugham, 2020) have compounded to this problem. Balang Mahamod and Buang (2020) reported that teachers were found to have a limited understanding on enacting CEFR CBA leaving the implementation of this new policy become vague as it did not align to the needs of policymakers. This situation has sparked a contested site to see that even the TPD was conducted for the teachers, however, it does not able to provide insights for them to enact the changes in education claiming that the TPD was ineffective.

To note, many past literatures (Arumugham, 2020, Balang et al., 2020, Acarerdol & Yildizli, 2018) has limit the discussion by addressing the effectiveness of TPD in engaging teachers' implementation of CEFR CBA. However, the types of TPD strategies in the enactment of CEFR CBA has yet to be discovered. Hence, the present study intended to discover the implementation of TPD in two main contexts. This study describes the types of TPD strategies employed by the administrators at the meso (school level) and macro (state and district education department) level. To conceptualise, this study focuses on the teachers' professional development that is job-embedded and contextualised in the enactment of CEFR CBA. The discussion in this study will also elucidates on several challenges that interfered for the TPD program to serve its purpose in the enactment of CEFR CBA.

The Teachers' Professional Development

Researchers long have recognised that the teachers' professional development (TPD) is essential to changing the classroom practice, improving schools, and ameliorating students' learning outcomes (Postholm, 2018). In general, TPD is described as professional learning medium that often takes place in formal settings (Kwakman, 2003). According to Timperly (2011), this formal setting includes the small group interaction and formal coaching and mentoring programs. Besides, the learning process does not only augurs in the formal setting situation. A TPD also engages teachers through informal interaction which can occurs through the peer teaching, collaborative planning and mentoring between colleagues (Little, 2012). The engagement of teachers in TPD program can greatly influence the sense of Community of Practice (COP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991) through the engagement of adult learning theory (Knowles, 1978). The TPD is grounded in the concept that teachers learn from more capable colleagues which can eventually contributes to their learning trajectories in adapting to the new knowledge. Lave and Wenger (1991) clarified that in order for teacher to master the knowledge and

skills in the new practices, the engagement of teachers (newcomers) with the experts is desirably significant to promote the community of practice that shares common understanding and aims in the learning process. Thus, the implementation of TPD is perceived to provide the medium for this type of learning process to take place. Darling-Hammond, Gardner, and Espinoza (2017) addressed seven main criteria for the TPD to function effectively. These criteria include:

1. Is content focused
2. Incorporates active learning utilising adult learning theory
3. Supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts
4. Use models and modelling of effective practice
5. Provides coaching and expert support
6. Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
7. Is of sustained duration

In this sense, there is strong evidence that the TPD is best when it addresses teachers' specific needs in their areas (Darling-Hammond, Chung, Adreee, & Richardson, 2009). Thus, the involvement of administrators in TPD is demanding important to create a learning environment in schools which can nurture teachers' development needs, by encouraging experimentation, finding and allocating resources to support teachers' learning, and by enhancing the implementation of new learning in the policy (Vanblaere & Devos, 2016). The leaders must play important role in ensuring the proper learning conditions are in place at the school which can create a "culture" of learning for teachers. Forte and Flore (2014) assert that there must be an interplay between the structure and culture of teachers are to learn together. The collaboration between teachers produces a number of benefits with significant impact on their professional lives, thus playing an important role in professional teacher development strategy (Vangrieken, Dorchy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015).

Adopting Cascade Model in Teachers' Professional Development

TPD of CEFR CBA was designed in the nature of cascade model. Abeyseena, Philips and Poppit (2016) described the cascade model of TPD as a collective professional learning that is set in 'top-down' design. The cascade model lays on the flow of information from the 'expert' teachers or known as Primary Trainers (PTs) to Secondary Trainers (STs) or multipliers at different levels (Abeyseena, Philips & Poppitt, 2016). This model was adopted in many TPDs as to inform and equip teachers with the fundamental content and knowledge within 'short period of time and ensuring the financial of the training program can be minimised' (Turner, Brownhill & Wilson, 2017). In short, the cascade model takes the approach of "training the trainers" and this process is repeated to lower levels until the target group is reached. Figure 1 below depicts the cascade model of teachers' professional development in the implementation of CEFR CBA.

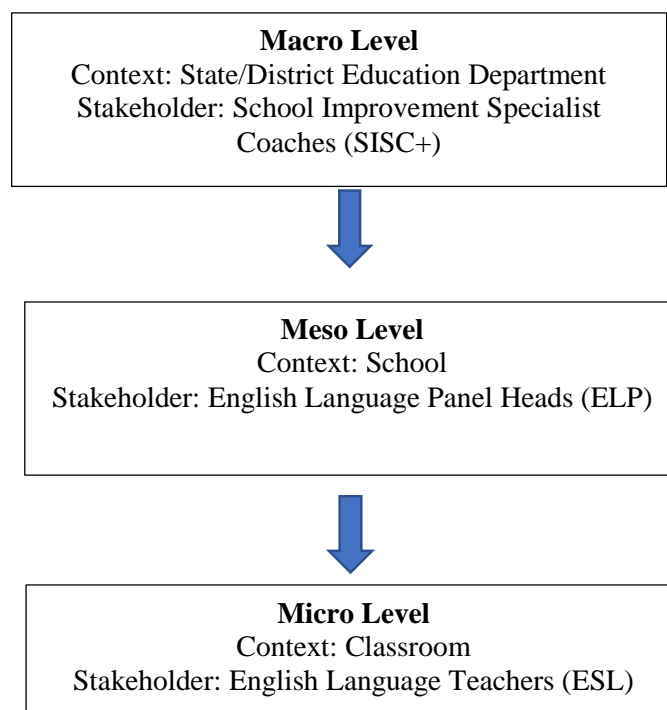


Figure 1 Cascade model of teachers' professional development for CEFR CBA

Based on the cascade model depicted in Figure 1 above, the TPD of CEFR CBA was set accordingly in top-down situation owing to the three layers of tiers which are the macro (state/ district education department), meso (school) and micro (classroom) level. Each of these levels represented by the stakeholders that involves in the implementation of CEFR CBA in educational institutions. From the structure of this TPD model, the SISC+ (School Improvement Specialist Coaches) situated at the macro level are described as the primary trainers (PTs) as they responsible to bring down the knowledge of CEFR CBA from the policymakers through the entire stakeholders in the cascade system. At the meso (school) level, the roles of ELP (English Language Panel) Heads as the secondary trainers (STs) are also incredibly important. The ELP Heads who receive the initial training and skills via workshop from the PTs needs to train other teachers at the micro levels by carrying out the in-house training in their respective schools. However, up to this point, there were no clear guidelines as to how the in-house training should be carried out at the school level. But general understanding was these ELP Heads shared the knowledge that they had gathered from the PTs and transmitted it to the teachers in the school. As the final recipients of this cascading system, teachers are the main agents to determine the effectiveness of the TPD. As the micro implementers, the success of the policy is determined from the ability for them to enact the changes through their practices that is aligned with the needs of the curriculum goals. Hence, it is increasingly important for the trainers (primary and secondary trainers) to ensure the dissemination are effectively done in TPD program.

RESEARCH METHOD

As this study intended to discover the enactment of TPD in the implementation of CEFR CBA, a qualitative approach was utilised to provide a deep insight and comprehensive view (Creswell, 1998) on the aspect TPD enactment. In a more specific context, a case study design was used in this study to rectify the types of TPD strategies carried out by the trainers and at the same time exploring the challenges that interfere the TPD to function effectively. According to Merriam (2009), the case study design can help researchers 'exploring detailed perspectives' of the phenomenon under studied. Hence, the data retrieved for this study are based on the semi-structured interviews with the participants at the meso and macro level who are directly involved in the overall enactment of TPD for CEFR CBA.

Rahman (2014) further supported that the use of semi-structure interview in the qualitative case study is beneficial for the researchers to probe in-depth information on the studied phenomenon.

Sampling Method

This study was conducted in educational institution (secondary schools and state education department) in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. 4 ELP Heads at the school (meso level) and 2 SISC+ members at state education department (macro level) were selected to sit for the interview. These participants were chosen through the Purposive Sampling method. In order to disseminate the sample from a larger population, the criterion-based selection method was used. The ELP Heads must have a minimum bachelor's degree and at least 10 years of experience in ELT field. They are the group of school administrators which conducted the in-house training at the school level and at the same time participated in the cascading workshop conducted by the SISC+ at the macro level. Besides, the SISC+ members participated in this study are considered as the primary trainers (PTs) who must have at least 10 years of experience and master's degree in ELT related field. In the context of TPD, the SISC+ must be from the group of trainers who conducted the CEFR CBA training and mentoring to the teachers in the cascade system. Table 1 below summarises the participants' demographic data. A pseudonym was used to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in this study.

Table 1 Participants' demographic data

| Participants | Age | Gender | Qualification | Experience in ELT field |
|--------------|-----|--------|----------------|-------------------------|
| ELP 1 | 40 | Female | B. Ed TESL | 15 |
| ELP 2 | 48 | Female | B. Ed TESL | 18 |
| ELP 3 | 35 | Female | B. Ed TESL | 10 |
| ELP 4 | 45 | Female | B.A Linguistic | 19 |
| SISC+ 1 | 50 | Male | M.Ed Education | 24 |
| SISC+ 2 | 45 | Female | M.Ed TESL | 19 |

Research Instrument

The participants in this study were individually interviewed through open-ended questions. Longhurst (2003), stated that the use of open-ended questions can help researchers to obtain insightful and specific information as the participants were given the freedom to stimulate their responses by using their own word. This probing technique is helpful for the researchers to derive 'information rich' data needed for the study. The interview protocols were divided into three main sections. The interview protocol was adapted from Rahman (2014) and John (2018). In Section A, participants were required to present their professional background which mainly refers to their qualifications and experiences in ELT field. Whereas, in Section B, participants were asked to state the types of TPD program that they conducted as a mean of coaching and mentoring among the stakeholders in their job-embedded context. Section C was concerned to rectify the challenges in conducting the TPD program in the implementation of CEFR CBA. An interview guide (Merriam, 2009) was used as mean of sustaining the consistency in data collection process and at the same time reducing the biases in reporting this study. The interview was lasted between 15 to 20 minutes for each participant, and it was conducted in English as all the participants are the ELT practitioners. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed and went further thematic analysis through the Atlas.Ti application.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The salient findings of the study are intended to answer two main research questions as follows:

- 1) What are the types of TPD strategies conducted at the meso and macro level in the implementation of CEFR CBA?
- 2) What are the challenges that the trainers (ELP Heads and SISC+) face in training teachers through TPD?

The result of the study was analysed through the thematic analysis. Several codings appear in relation to the research questions mentioned above. Hence, the preceding sections below discussed the findings of the study.

Types of Teachers' Professional Development at the Meso Level

At the meso (school) level, the implementation of TPD was diverted into controlling the quality assurance of CEFR CBA implementation. Hence, the PLC (Professional Learning Community) was used extensively in designing the TPD at the school level. The PLC was introduced in Malaysian schools in the aim of serving the medium and platform for teachers to work collaboratively in the activities that can enhance the quality of teaching, learning, and teachers' training (Salleh, 2020). The coding below elucidates the types TPD strategies that were carried out at the school level by the ELP Heads.

- **School Coaching**

One of the TPD strategies that were foregrounded at the school level is the coaching. School coaching was conducted as a mean of serving the medium for 'professional partnership' among teachers (Ali, Wahi & Yamat, 2018). This coaching system takes over in the PLC where the 'qualified coach' or the ELP Heads conducted the in-house training in their respective schools. As the ELP Heads received the training from primary trainers, school coaching served the medium of cascading information of the micro implementers (teachers). The coaching was carried out as a tentatively in the panel as expressed by ELP 2,

...we carried out a monthly discourse through PLC, sh that teachers can come together and discuss about their classroom assessment... (ELP 2)

An instructional coaching approach (White, Smith, Kunz & Nugent, 2015) was used in the coaching system through the formal talk given by the ELP Heads. In this context, the coaching was conceptualised in traditional and didactic way where it was treated as a formal learning platform in the school. In addition, the peer coaching (Barkley, 2010) was also used in the TPD model at the school. The peer coaching was carried out in the aims of supporting teachers working collaboratively among their peers. Barkley (2010) posited that the peer coaching provides the opportunities for teachers to improve skills and behaviours which lead to the professional and personal success. For instance, ELP 3 assigned the mentors in her school to support new teachers enacting CEFR CBA,

...I appointed some mentors for the new teachers. So that... erm... they can collaborate with their peer because for me they best learn with their friends... (ELP 3)

In this coaching system, the role of mentor is incredibly important to support the community of learning to the new teachers. Mentors' roles cover the process of imparting the knowledge to the new teachers at the same time ensuring the teachers are able to apply pedagogical practices that is aligned to the needs of policymakers. In this sense, it is perceived to support teachers' professional growth (Ali et al., 2018). A study from Wedell (2005) also revealed that the school

coaching has famously used in TPD program in China to ensure teachers are updated with the current needs of their educational system.

- Coordination

Another TPD strategies carried out in the school is coordination. The coordination refers to the process of deciding the common goals among stakeholders to implement the new policy (Castener & Oliveira, 2020). In the context of this study, the coordination refers the decision-making process carried out by the teachers in relation to the implementation of CEFR CBA. At the school level, the ‘top-down coordination’ was carried out to manage the implementation of CEFR CBA. The coordination process was cascade through the Form Coordinators who were appointed by the ELP Heads. In this situation, the Form Coordinators are responsible in managing the enactment of CEFR CBA accordingly to the form they are assigned with as stated by ELP 4,

I appoint the coordinators for each form, erm...so this is easier for me to manage the teachers... (ELP 4)

In the implementation of CEFR CBA at the school level, the coordination was done by standardising the assessment procedures. This includes decision making of the instrument used in the assessment and coordinating the professional judgement among teachers. In short, ‘standardization’ has become the main key for teachers to practice CEFR CBA. There was also a claim from ELP Heads that the coordination was a helpful medium for them to distribute the support towards all teachers in the panel as expressed by ELP 1,

... when we do coordination, erm, I think it is easier for me to distribute the support for all teachers... (ELP 1)

From this claimed, the coordination was treated as a mean of distributing the support to the teachers at the micro level. Castener and Oliveira (2020) supported that, coordination plays an important role in the cascade system of TPD to ensure that the expertise does not only centralise at the top-tiers. This is done to ensure that teachers are well scaffolded and supported to practice the new policy accordingly to the needs and aims of the educational authority.

- Supervision

Supervision is also part of the TPD that was carried out at the school level. The supervision refers to the assistance that comes from the school administrators (principal, heads of department) in the aims of developing teachers’ competencies to achieve the desired curriculum goals (Asyari, 2020). According to Karim, Kartiko, Daulay and Kumalasari (2021) this ‘assistance’ can come in the form of guidance in the educational reform implementation which can involve the selection of learning tools and methods of assessment. In the context of this study, ELP Heads interviewed claimed that the supervision was thoroughly done by the school administrators. For instance, ELP 2 claimed that the supervision was carried out by the Head of Department (HOD) in the school in the aim of avoiding inflated data report in the assessment.

...the monitoring was done by the GK (Head of Department). This is really important for us to ensure no inflated data reported in the transit form... (ELP 2)

The supervision and monitoring carried out by the school administrators signifies that the TPD program at the school inculcate the “whole school” approach. In this context, the TPD was designed by considering the engagement of multiple stakeholders at the school level. It does not only centred to the development of teachers as an individual, but at the same time the TPD was carried out in the aim of enhancing and creating professional learning community that shares a common and mutual understanding of defining the CEFR CBA policy into their practices. The findings of this study seem to correlate with a study from Preston and Barne

(2017) which has revealed that the South African TPD was found to be effective as it inculcates the cross-collaboration between the stakeholders in the school. For good and all, the enactment of TPD at the school level was meant to sustain and maintain the quality assurance in CEFR CBA implementation. It was done as a way of ensuring the practices of teachers are aligned to needs of the curriculum goals.

Types of Teachers' Professional Development at the Macro Level

The macro level, the enactment of TPD was focusing on providing effective training for teachers to enact CEFR CBA. The TPD takes the approach of 'training the trainers' where the SISC+ were tasked to cascade the information of the new policy to the secondary trainers (ELP Heads) at the school level. This was done in relation to the nature of cascade approach that was adopted in the TPD design of CEFR CBA. Hence, the aspect of training and coaching are centred to coach the middle leaders team (MLTs). The middle leaders (specifically the ELP Heads) are expected to cascade the information they retrieved from the trainers to the teachers through in-house training. The preceding section below presents the types of TPD at the macro level.

- **Workshop**
Several workshops were conducted by the SISC+ members at the macro level. The workshops act as a medium of engaging the teachers (ELP Heads) with the formal learning to implement new educational policy. This workshop marks the beginning of the "cascade" or "train-the-trainer" where the ELP Heads participated in several sessions spread out across the school year. SISC+ 2 claimed that the CEFR CBA workshop was conducted in a series.

We conducted the workshop mainly in series... (SISC+ 2)

The ELP Heads who attended the workshop were expected to apply the pedagogical practices and new knowledge that has been cascaded to them. As the secondary trainers (STs), they need to transmit it to their teachers through in-house TPD in their respective schools. However, the workshop was treated as an "event" rather than a "process". It is because SISC+ claimed that the workshop was conducted upon the request from the school.

...by the way, the workshop is conducted upon request. We don't have a specific time on how it happens in a year... (SISC+ 1)

Hence, a Training Needs Analysis (TNA), was conducted by the SISC+ in rectifying the needs for training in the schools based on the request from MLTs group. To note, the workshop in TPD was not comprehensively used by the SISC+ to train teachers in the implementation of CEFR CBA as the nature of organizing a series of these workshops was more inclined to one-off nature. The workshop was only aimed at disseminating information to the STs in the hoped that they are able to apply specific workshop content strategies to conduct the in-house training at the school level.

- **Materials Sampling**
The materials sampling was also one of the approaches that was used in the TPD. Teachers were exposed to the evidence-based practice in CEFR CBA. According to Diery, Vogel, Knogler and Seidel (2020), the evidence-based practice is described as empirical evidence that best constitutes and exemplify source of information which can influence teachers' practices in the classroom. In the context of this study, teachers were exposed to the several materials which exemplify the practices in CEFR CBA. This includes the sample of students' work and instrument to be exposed to the teachers in the aims of providing the insight in enacting the CEFR CBA as expressed by SISC+ 2,

...during the TPD we showed to the teachers with some samples...you know...this mainly related to the students' sample work and some examples of the questions that they can use in their classroom-assessment (SISC+ 2)

Through the modelling of effective practice, teachers are hoped to assimilate the samples given to them to suit to the needs of the students in their respective classroom. Darling-Hammond et.al (2017) further affirmed that in order to the instructional modelling to be effective, it should support the ability for the teachers to “see” on the good practices to implement new strategies in their classroom situation. In general, in order for the modelling of CEFR CBA to be practiced, it is empirical that the materials exemplified to the teachers should become practical in the context of their classroom environment.

- Personal Coaching

Even though the approach of coaching and training at the macro level were centred to train MLTs in school, however, there was a claim from the trainers that a personal coaching was conducted to the teachers. According to Denton and Hasbrouck (2009), the personal coaching acts as one of the TPD practice in which the trainers or “experts” works directly with the teachers by changing and improving the skills. In the context of this study, the personal coaching was carried out as an intervention medium to the teachers who were considered as “low performance educators”. Hence, these teachers were identified through the TNA conducted by the SISC+ in the TPD program. This coaching includes instructional approaches where the SISC+ work hand in hand with the teachers through the classroom observations.

...I also work individually with the teachers. Like I conducted the classroom observation... (SISC+ 1)

Through the personal coaching, the trainers provide more hands-on training to the teachers. This can help teachers to get more specific support that can suit to their needs. For example, trainers were used the personal coaching to identify the problem and discussing the solution in the teachers' assessment practices as claimed by SISC+ 1,

...during this personal coaching, it is easier for me to identify what the matter in teachers view to implement CBA and usually we also discuss how to handle the problem... (SISC+ 1)

Hence, the personal coaching includes the delivery of performance feedback that was done through the classroom observation. The trainers conducted the performance review with the teachers in the aim of helping teachers to increase their professional development.

...I recorded the feedback that I can give to the teachers during the classroom observation so that they know the room for improvement... (SISC+ 1)

According to Van Der Kleij & Adie (2020) the delivery of performance feedback through the classroom observation is helpful to provide learning medium for teachers to know what best constitutes their practices in enacting new knowledge. Hence, through the inculcation of personal coaching in the TPD, it helps teachers to see a milestone on the improvisation that can be done in implementing CEFR CBA. This has been proven in a study conducted by Rodgers (2019) on a TPD program in the southern states in USA. The teachers were observed in a biweekly classroom observation and performance feedback was constructively delivered to them which has able to help these teachers merge into the target behaviour of employing the pedagogical practices. All in all, the TPD program conducted at the macro level are meant to train teachers through coaching and mentoring. The trainers were tasked to design a training program which can help teachers increase their knowledge in the enactment of CEFR CBA. Hence, the next section of this study presents the challenges arises faced by the trainers (ELP Heads and SISC+) to design the TPD program for CEFR CBA.

Challenges in implementing TPD program for CEFR CBA

- Uncertainty to conduct in-house training

The design of CEFR CBA TBD program that grounded on the design of cascade model has sparked many uncertainties among the MLTs (ELP Heads) to conduct in-house training in their respective school. Even these ELP Heads were trained by the SISC+ members through the workshop, but it is just limited to expose them with the policy (CEFR CBA). These ELP Heads were expected to cascade the information to the teachers in the absence of the primary trainers (SISC+) making the training at the school level cannot be properly executed. In fact, most ELP Heads claimed that they have the uncertainty to cascade the information they received from the trainers.

...if I were to be honest, I don't know how to train my teachers in school. I have uncertainty that I might give wrong information to these teachers... (ELP 2)

The cascade model lays on the assumption that these ELP Heads already have a foundational understanding on the training and CEFR CBA. However, delving into the current situation, the ELP Heads posit that they have a limited understanding on enacting CEFR CBA, and hence this can lead to a distorted dissemination at the ground level.

Once you know you are also learning to implement the policy and they expect you to train teachers, it's a struggle. I think it is a process of learning together (ELP 2)

This matter can impede the flow of instructional delivery in the TPD to disseminate the knowledge of the policy to the teachers at the ground level. According to Bett (2016) the cascade model of training can contribute to the "dilution" of knowledge hence halting the TPD to serve its purpose for training teachers. Hayes (2000) further claimed that the dilution occurs in the cascade model happens due to tendency of the information being "adulterated" as it is passing down to tiers and hence leaving the misinterpretation of information. The present finding seems to correspond to the study by Suzuki (2011) which has revealed that the cascade model in Nepal was found to be ineffective as the trainers at the lower level were not able to disseminate information making the bridging of knowledge cannot be transmitter to the implementers.

- Non-Option Teachers

Another demanding challenge of employing TPD at the school level is dealing with non-option teachers. ELP Heads claimed that the emerging huge number of non-option ESL teachers has sparked a challenge for them to design TPD that best suit to the teachers' need and preferences of practicing CEFR CBA. This happened due to limited pedagogical and content knowledge embodied in these non-option teachers, hence affecting the execution of the training at the school level. ELP Heads claimed that most of the non-option teachers were having a limited knowledge in ESL field and language assessment due to the different background. These teachers were forced to teach English in order to fulfil the needs of school organization. ELP 3 claimed that,

... you know it is really tough to teach and train teachers who have a limited knowledge in ESL. I understand they are non-option, but the challenge here is me, I was forced to train them with CEFR CBA in which I'm also still new to this... (ELP 3)

According to Jones and Moreland (2007), the pedagogical and content knowledge are the important key foci in enhancing teachers' planning, teaching, and assessment as it helps to develop the teachers' understanding of subject ideas and how these might be translated to best fit their students. Hence, in enacting CEFR CBA, having the pedagogical and content knowledge in ESL field is important to ensure a proper implementation of this assessment can be enacted. However, in the context of this study, some ELP Heads were forced to train teachers who do not embodied the ESL knowledge, and this has become a real challenge for them to ensure these teachers are equipped with CEFR CBA. For example, ELP 1 expressed that she had to train these teachers with the basic understanding of language assessment to build the conceptual understanding in approaching of CEFR CBA.

...the teachers under me are mostly non-optionist, I only have one optionist teachers. So, I need to approach them from the basic to complicated things in handling English CBA (ELP 1)

In this context, it demands the ELP Heads to build a comprehensive dissemination system for these group of teachers. Plus, the process of employing TPD program was done in the absence of the support from experts has created a demanding challenge for these ELP Heads to create TPD in school which can suit to the needs to the non-option teachers. Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner and Espinoza (2017) affirmed that the coaching or other expert support is important in order to ensure the dissemination model to function effectively in supporting teachers' implementation of new curricula, tools, and approaches. This case contrast starkly with Wedell (2005) investigation on the TPD model in China. It has profoundly revealed that the engagement of teachers and trainers in extended period of TPD program has able to increase the teachers' pedagogical practices in implementing the policy. This has proven that the expert support in cascade model is demanding impactful to ensure the effectiveness of dissemination.

- **Participants Engagement**

The participation of teachers in TPD program is significantly important. As the main intention of cascading was conducted is to equip teachers with new vast knowledge and pedagogical content of the policy, the active engagement of teachers in TPD is undeniably crucial to ensure a proper enactment can happen at the ground level. However, in the context of this study, trainers claimed that the low participation of teachers in TPD has impeded the dissemination process to effectively serve its purpose. Teachers were refused to join the TPD due to having a high scepticism minded to the trainers. This negative perception leading to the downside of the teachers' relationship with trainers and hence affecting the proper execution of the training to happen. SISC+ 1 expressed that teachers often not prepared to be coached and they feel that there are 'eyes' looking at them at the back of the classroom.

When you go into the school you know they have this thought like oh my God. Here she is. But I was there, it's just that I do my job. You do your job? Mm-hmm... (SISC+ 1)

In addition, SISC+ 2 further supported that this sceptic minded embodied in the teachers has affected them to be detached from the training program because most teachers believe that trainers were very authoritative and superior.

...when we are in the position of a trainers, we tend to be seen as superior, we are very authoritative. That's what the teachers see and that's not the point. I always try to erase that from their mind... (SISC+ 2)

Mohamad, Abd Rashid, Yunus and Zaid (2016) posited that establishing the relationship between teachers and the trainers is important in building trust to overcome resistance in dissemination process to take place. In this sense, the trainers need to provide some background

information about their professional experiences in order to establish credibility in the beginning and to gain the trust from the teachers. In fact, training, in many cases, is about trust and building relationships. Some past studies have depicted the importance of trust in the coaching relationship (e.g. Kowal & Steiner, 2007; Brady, 2007; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). For instance, Brady (2007, p.47) stated that trainers need to learn to communicate with teachers in a way that is “non-threatening or offending” when they are providing feedback; and they must be able to establish and maintain the trust and respect of everyone involved at the school. Teachers must be able to work with their coach “without fear of punitive reporting to the principal” (Brady, 2007, p.47).

- **Limited Time**

Another major obstacle faced by the trainers is the allocation of time for professional development that is scarce and limited. Implementing effective TPD demands a prolonged and sustained duration of time for the training to take place (Darling-Hammond et.al, 2017). TPD should possess a medium for teachers to reflect and engage in the training. A one-shot, sit-and-get approach in TPD, no matter how dynamic, is not sufficient to engage teachers in professional learning (Bates & Morgan, 2018). Surprisingly, SISC+ expressed their dissatisfaction that they were only given a limited time to train the teachers. The transition from from the previous assessment system (high-stake examinations) to CEFR CBA was considered as a rapid change. Teachers were forced to accumulate as much knowledge they can to implement this change and hence this has put a challenge for the trainers to design effective TPD in a short and limited time as expressed by SISC+ 2,

Time is limited. Teachers were automatically forced to change their role as CBA was introduced. As a trainer, it's a really challenge to train these teachers in the midst of them having other works to do... (SISC+ 2)

To add, SISC+ 1 also stated that teachers are often burdened with endless duties and chores beside the main task of teaching making the time they can spend in TPD was too limited. The minimal engagement and exposure of teachers in TPD can affect the dissemination process of CEFR CBA.

...yeah they were too busy. Sometimes I have to make an appointment with them to conduct classroom observation and even to give a slot. It was so limiting... (SISC+ 1)

This matter can affect the quality of instructional delivery in the cascading and hence affecting teachers' interpretation to the new policy. As Darling-Hammond et al (2017) suggested that the limited time exposed in the training can affect the chances of teachers to reflect on the new strategies that can facilitates the change in their practice. A study conducted by Thang, Quang and Buyens (2010) revealed TPD to become ineffective if a limited time was given in its implementation as it reduces the engagement of teachers to actively participate in the training, which obviously affect the flow of knowledge to the teachers.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, it can be suggested that the TPD of CEFR CBA was not fully effective. This study revealed that the TPD program was largely transmissive. The knowledge on the philosophy, rationale, and theoretical pedagogical principles of the CEFR CBA was presented in the form of lecture or a briefing, where it relies heavily on the trainers to impart the details of the policy to the teachers through the cascading system. This mode of training was mostly done through one-way communication as it focuses more on the theoretical knowledge of the curriculum than on providing practical experience to the trainees. The dissemination model has lacked the opportunities for the teachers to reflect on the new curriculum and to think how to best to implement the curriculum in the light of their own experience.

Due to several internal and external challenges exists in the TPD program, the training was not successful to enhance deep understanding of the teachers or even to facilitate the implementation of the curriculum. Hence, this study has given the insight for the policymakers and training course designers to look on the certain aspect that they need to consider upon creating the TPD program for teachers. One of the elements that needs to be considered is to ensure the cascading does not only centralize at the top level. The trainers need to ensure the knowledge and expertise related to the curriculum can be dispersed through the entire cascade system. This will help to develop an equal distribution of support and scaffolding for all the stakeholders involved in the enactment of CEFR CBA. Lastly, the TPD program also need to be conducted in a sustained duration where it can give the opportunities for active engagement of teachers in the training. Unless these issues are addressed, designing an effective TPD program will be far and between.

While this study puts forth the perspective of the trainers involved in enacting the TPD program, there are still many questions which merit further exploration. It is recommended that future research examines the views of the teachers who are being coached so that their views can be compared with the trainers' views. It is hoped that the findings of this study will add to the body of knowledge in the midst of providing useful insights into the needs of the trainers and teachers involved in CEFR CBA TPD program. The views shared by the trainers at both meso and macro level is hoped to be useful for the policymakers to consider in designing, developing, and implementing a more thorough cascading system in the country.

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