Teachers Managing Change

Durham

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What brought me to this….?

- General professional background

- Most recent University-based experience

- 'I think he is ready to work on the PS now.'

- MA studies!

Dissertation

- Mind the Gap: an investigation into teacher experiences of stepping from a General English to an EAP context with particular reference to how teachers managed the change
and the extent to which the skills and attitudes identified in that management are or could be a feature of the BALEAP TEAP competencies.

Data

- Face-to-face interviews with teachers from a General English background who have moved into EAP.
- Questionnaires

Research I'm looking at

- Change Management
- Teacher Beliefs/ Teacher Cognition

Some responses of particular interest so far.

- <u>Factors which allow teachers to change their teaching to suit a new context.</u>

1. An ability to notice
2. A basis of self-efficacy
3. A commitment to professional development
4. A willingness to take two steps back
5. Access to resources and support

An ability to notice

'if you care about what a student is trying to do and needs to do, then you notice things...'
'I noticed differences in the quality of the presentations given by other teachers' students. I looked at them critically so I could analyse them and make sure my students achieved the same or better.'

A basis of self-efficacy.

- 'Not being too fearful of asking the questions you need answers to.'

- 'Determined that no-one would find out' –feverishly reading up on EAP/ looking through materials for information and inspiration and having faith that they could do so.

- Trusting in feedback from students and staff : 'It was encouraging to have approval for the approach I thought was best for me and right for the students.'

- Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy 'are more open to new ideas and are more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students.' Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. 2001:1)
- Authors make reference to Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE): teachers beliefs in their own teaching capabilities which has a strong positive influence on student performance and on 'the amount of teacher change' possible.

A commitment to professional development

- 'You've got to want to teach it as well as you can and be prepared to accept: I don't know anything so I'm going to try to learn as much as I can to be able to teach it as well as I can…'
- 'Can you make it better and how can you make it better-I'm always seeking ways to try to do that.'

A willingness to take two steps back

'I just trusted in the course and what it was trying to deliver and I tried to fit into that I suppose.'

'You've got to be prepared to accept: I don't know anything so I'm going to try to learn as much as I can to be able to teach it as well as I can.'

'I approached teaching EAP with a certain sense of modesty because, you know, the skills people have acquired over years of teaching EAP need to be respected.'

- Alexander, O (2012) Exploring beliefs in teaching EAP at lower proficiency levels Journal of EAP 11 99-111
- '..teachers with considerable general CLT experience sometimes report feeling deskilled (Ding, Jones & King, 2004) when they first move to EAP, effectively reverting to pre-service status in relation to this specialist type of language teaching.'

Access to resources and support

- 'I had <u>an observation</u> on the second day which was very positive so that helped a lot and in terms of what I was doing in the class, things seemed to be going well.'
- 'I <u>spoke to X</u> and found it very reassuring and encouraging'
- 'Some teachers could be a bit 'precious' about their knowledge but it was important to <u>have easy access to help from peers and colleagues</u>'
- 'I was busily <u>reading EAP coursebooks</u> to get ideas for my classes'
- 'I just thought: <u>I'm going to make the effort to find out for myself.</u>'

- Hoban, G, (2002) Teacher learning for educational change OUP
- Hoban describes a framework for teacher development or a 'Professional Learning System' which includes various optimal conditions including: 'a sense of community ..so that teachers trust each other to share experience' as well as 'a variety of knowledge sources.. to extend the experiences of the participants.'

Description of Teacher A in Woods (1996:294)

- This teacher described her change in teaching as a 'gradual progression' and Woods adds: 'implying that the central aspects of her approach and character were at no time threatened...' ***(sense of self-efficacy)***

- 'It seemed that the initiation and the readiness for change was both internal and external. The internal element included both an interest in change ***(Commitment to and desire to change)*** and a conceptual readiness for change... In addition, there seemed to a be a social motivation to change. The social system of 'teaching culture' of which the teacher was a part provided both models of and support for the changed state. It seemed for the change to take place, the characteristics of the new state had to be desirable, available, plentiful, and highlighted in her environment ***(Access to resources to facilitate a move from less-skilled to more skilled)*;** they had to be non-threatening to the central aspects she identified with; and they needed time to be absorbed' (***this is the one which is problematic with regard to early EAP experiences which tend to be PS***).

Questions for Discussion

- What qualities do you look for when recruiting novice EAP tutors?
- What kind of course should they start on?
- What type of support should they receive?
- In your early EAP career, what type of support did you receive on what kind of courses?
- What role should the BALEAP TEAP competencies play in a novice EAP teacher's development?

References

- Alexander, O (2012) Exploring beliefs in teaching EAP at lower proficiency levels Journal of EAP 11 99-111
- Hoban, G, (2002) Teacher learning for educational change OUP
- Woods, D, (1996) Teacher Cognition in Language Teaching CUP
- http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=C0xXi c3A1yJkp1jduITq4M3NZHmEIpJBm6dXRPIf8A4_ 3d