Extended Abstract

Background
The English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC), part of the University of Sheffield, employs over 60 teachers (mostly full-time) and 7 senior members of staff. It mainly provides general and specific EAP classes, but there are also management, general English and examination classes. The centre also has a teacher training and a dyslexia unit. Teachers at the ELTC have a variety of backgrounds and experiences with many teachers studying for a higher degree or a diploma. Therefore, in order for the both the centre and teachers to remain professional there is a need for an expanded teacher development programme.

Teacher Development (TD) at the ELTC
The TD programme at the centre in quite varied and includes input sessions, observations and distributing information about events and conferences. Workshops, which are not compulsory, tend to take place during term time but an increasing number are also run during non-teaching weeks. Peer-observation is encouraged, while all teachers are observed by their line managers once per year as part of their appraisal. Once a week, one – three articles from magazines or journals are disseminated to teachers either electronically or as paper copies available in the main resources room. Teachers are supported if their wish to present, write articles, or do research. Conference and events such as BALEAP PIMs are also promoted.

Promoting the programme
This programme is promoted in a variety of ways to ensure that as many teachers as possible are able to develop professionally. Firstly, we have a Teacher Development team who are able to spend time promoting the programme. Secondly, workshops and other training events tend to take place on afternoons when few teachers are teaching, or during non-teaching weeks. Thirdly, teachers are given TOIL for attending conferences and other external training events. Finally, teachers with special interests are encouraged to attend PIMs, lead workshops and to take further qualifications (which are paid). At the end of each academic year, teacher development, especially observations, forms part of each teacher's yearly appraisal.

Lingering problems
However, it tends to be the same teachers who make the most use of the opportunities available for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). As training events such as workshops are not compulsory, there is often quite poor attendance. When teachers do make use of training opportunities, it is always the same teachers. Those teachers not interested in professional development tend to give a variety of excuses. Firstly, they state they have no time, which to a certain extent is true as most teachers have heavy teaching timetable and they are not given time in lieu for attending training events. Moreover, since we are not an academic department, teachers are not given time to carry out research, present or write articles. Many teachers also state that they have no interest in research and so believe they do not need to read articles or attend conferences; although this is refuted by Ur (2012). Finally, many teachers seem to believe that EAP is the same as general EFL or IELTS and since they have over 20 years of teaching experience, they do not need to be involved in development. This leads to what Argent (2012) states is 'a restricted view of what EAP involves'.

Questions
I was interested in sharing experiences of promoting programmes of CPD within an EAP context; especially how we can convince teachers that teacher development is something to embrace rather than avoid, and that teaching EAP is not the same as teaching general English. I proposed the following questions:

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- What should a programme of CPD in EAP look like?
- How can we apply the TEAP framework?
- How do we convince teachers that EAP is not the same as EFL/IELTS?
- How do we convince teachers that PD is not optional?

Participants' comments
During the discussion stage of this talk the following comments were made:

Observations:
These should be a two-way process.
Observation feedback should take the form of a developmental dialogue and should be flexible.

Teacher Development workshops:
Workshops could be shorter: pithy and to-the-point.
The purpose of the workshop (both beforehand and during) should be clear.
There is a need to 'sell' workshops.
Workshops might be more attractive if visiting lecturers/speakers were involved.
Discussion questions during training sessions could be more focused.

Disseminating articles:
Online tools such as Twitter and Jing could be used to distribute articles and teaching ideas.

Other:
Teachers could be remunerated for attending training events such as workshops or conferences.
A portfolio could be used as evidence of teacher development (for a teacher's annual appraisal or for applying for a job).
Teacher development could be more formal.
Themes of training sessions could be taken from the wider university context.

References:

Argent, S. (2012) 'Pathways in EAP.' *British Council*
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Ur, P. 2012. 'It's all very well in theory, but…' *IATEFL Conference Talk*
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