Facilitating EFL Teacher Learning: Trends and Issues

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Abstract

Systems for facilitating teacher learning lie at the heart of the curriculum development process. It is therefore vital that they are as well-developed as possible. This paper uses a simple three-part conceptual model to review a number of aspects of the current state of research and theorising in ELT in this area. It does so in relation to the learning needs of the largest and most representative section of the ELT teacher constituency, i.e., non-native speaker teachers of EFL who are intending to or are already working in local, state-sector educational institutions.

Work in the following areas is described and discussed: first, in terms of 'course-based' teacher learning, i) the development of new 'formats' at the MA level, ii) the application of a 'socio-cultural' approach to teacher learning and, iii) current tendencies to downplay the importance of teachers' knowledge of and about language; second, with respect to 'school-based' teacher learning, some of the practical issues involved in effecting it, as well as the need for further development, particularly in terms of 'mentoring' structures; and, thirdly, the importance of and ways in which more teacher learning-friendly educational innovations might be developed by 'parent' education systems. The paper concludes by indicating some of the directions which future 'R & D' in this area might usefully take.

Introduction

We live in a world where educational innovation has become the norm. These reforms are usually expressed in terms of new teaching ideas, especially ones aimed at putting the learner at the heart of the learning process. But, in fact, everything depends in the end, not so much on teaching and learners, but on *teachers*, as only through them can the ideas be put into practice. In other words, the quality of student learning depends on the quality of teacher learning. But teachers are only likely to learn new teaching ideas if there are effective systems of teacher learning to help them do so. Ultimately, thus, the driving force of curriculum reform is its system for facilitating teacher learning (cf., e.g., Fullan 2001b).

Focus

In this paper I will look at the current state of systems for attempting to foster teacher learning in ELT. I will do so mainly in terms of how we can best attempt to facilitate learning by the largest number of teachers of EFL, teaching in the most typical kind of EFL situation (cf. Holliday 1994b). By this I mean I will be focussing on the pre- and in-service teacher learning of non-native speaker (NNS) teachers of EFL who are intending to or are already working in local, state-sector educational institutions. And in doing so, I will be asking and attempting to answer two main overall questions about teacher learning systems aimed at such an audience, i.e., i) what have been some of the recent developments? and ii) what seems to require further attention? I will end by also considering some of the implications that arise for further research and theorising in this area.

A framework for teacher learning systems

I begin by first of all presenting the model of systems for facilitating teacher learning (Fig. 1) that I will be using as my overall 'heuristic', one which is based on ideas in Waters 2002, Adey 2004, and so on.
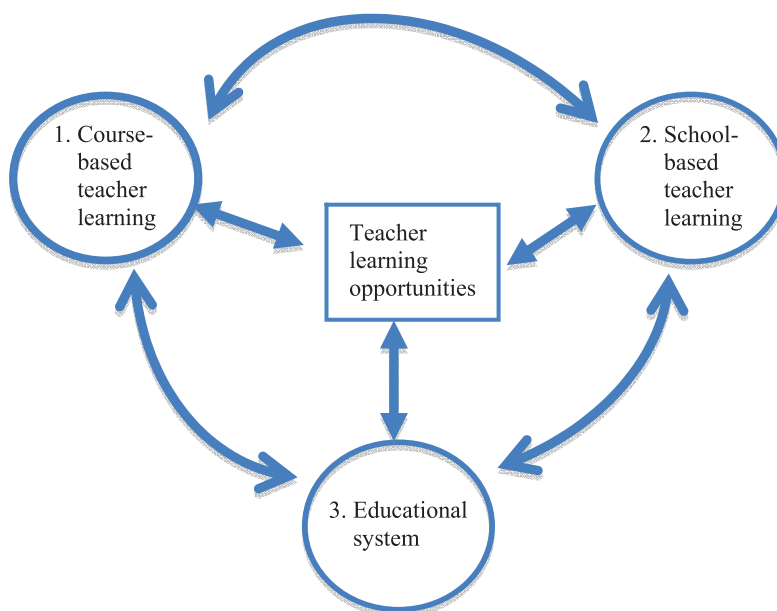

Fig. 1: <u>An EFL teacher learning system model</u> (based on Waters 2002, Ch. 4, Adey 2004, etc.)

As can be seen, the outer part of this model consists of three main components.

    1. The first one represents course-based forms of teacher learning, which

can consist of anything from a half-day workshop to a 3- or 4-year B.Ed./BA in TEFL programme or an MA.

2. The second component represents a 'practicum' (teaching practice) or other form of school-based teacher learning, which may exist on its own or be used to try to put into practice the teaching ideas studied in the course-based part of the system.

3. The third part represents the possible involvement of the 'educational system' in the teacher learning system, in creating the teaching ideas which the rest of the teacher learning system attempts to implement, and also in providing the resources for its operation.

It should also be noted that, as the arrows in the diagram indicate, the three elements can all interact with each other, and they collectively result in the creation of – though not necessarily the uptake of - various kinds of teacher learning opportunities. This model is, of course, an oversimplification (though not, I hope, a falsification) of a much more complex and varied picture. I will nevertheless be using it because I feel it is satisfactory for the purposes of this paper, i.e., it provides a means of clarifying the main features of what I want to focus on.

1. Developments in course-based teacher learning

1.1 New formats

I come then first of all to the first part of the model – the course-based teacher learning component. Here, one obvious recent trend has been the development of new MA programme '*formats*', such as ones which are aimed at the pre- rather than the in-service level, or which take a distance learning or 'e-based' form.

Pre-service MAs: Traditionally, most MA TEFL programmes have required applicants to have at least 2-3 years of prior teaching experience. However, over the last 10 years or so, especially in countries such as the UK, a number of 'pre-service' MAs have started up, catering for students with little or even no prior ELT experience. Such programmes typically differ in terms of their content from their 'parent' model – the 'in-service' MA – by being located further towards the 'practice' end of the theory-practice spectrum, as shown in Fig. 2.

THEORY ⟵━━━━━━X━━━━━━━━━━X━━━━━━⟶ *PRACTICE*

in-service MAs   pre-service MAs

Fig. 2: Focus on pre- vs. in-service MAs

However, our own experience at Lancaster indicates that, while it seems potentially helpful that graduates of pre-service programmes may in this way get a more advanced and theoretical picture of the field earlier in their careers than might otherwise be the case, there is also the danger that, for some students, there will be insufficient linking of ideas to practice, since such programmes are still primarily an academic form of teacher learning, and, because many of them take place in international rather than national centres, it is often difficult for them to include a meaningful 'practicum' component.

Distance learning/E-based MAs: A further variant on the traditional MA format, stemming back over the last 20 years or so, are 'distance' MAs of one kind or another, nowadays increasingly delivered in a form which takes advantage of the capabilities of the Internet for promoting so-called 'e-learning'. Once again, in addition to the obvious advantage of such programmes of students being able to save money and increase their job security by remaining in employment while studying, our experience at Lancaster indicates that there is also greater potential for students to apply the teaching ideas covered in the programme to their normal work context, especially in the dissertation component. On the other hand, combining work with study requires greater stamina and motivation; and the interaction with classmates, both formal and informal, from which much further learning and enjoyment can stem, will usually be much more restricted than in a 'F2F' programme. Furthermore, there are likely to be very few opportunities for language and cultural learning in a native-English speaking environment when studying in this format, which our experience at Lancaster indicates many non-native speaker teachers, especially at the pre-service level, often regard as also being an important part of the MA programme experience.

Given enough space and time, a good deal more could be said about various aspects of both these developments. However, suffice to say that, in particular, given what seems to be a relative dearth of recent research, it would be good for further light to be shed on whether or not pre-service MAs, despite their current upsurge (in the UK, at any rate), run the risk of putting the theory cart before the practice horse, and also on the effects on teacher learning from the use of the more sophisticated forms of e-learning methods nowadays available in comparison with earlier forms of distance learning.

1.2 Course-based teacher learning methodology

A further area of development in course-based teacher learning in recent years has been in the *methodology* side of course-based teacher learning. The key idea here is 'socio-cultural learning theory' (SCLT) (Vygotsky 1978). According to this view, learning is strongly influenced by the kinds of social situations in which it occurs. Thus, in attempting to facilitate learning, it is argued that various supportive 'social structures' should be used. One well-known example is 'scaffolding' - where teachers collaborate closely with learners, and learners with each other, to provide the support needed to reach the next level in the learning process.

Because the socio-cultural view of learning has become increasingly influential in educational thinking, it has led to the view that, just like other forms of learning, *teacher* learning should be collaborative, interactive, personalised, and so on (see, e.g., Fullan 2001a; Hargreaves & Fullan 1992). This approach has recently been given prominence in ELT via papers such as Freeman and Johnson (1998) and Johnson (2006), being referred to by them as the 'socio-cultural turn' in teacher learning. I want to go on to look next at a couple of examples of attempts to put this approach to teacher learning into practice.

Thus, first of all, Gallagher (2007), in her PhD thesis, reports on her study of the use of a socio-cultural approach in a new B.Ed. TEFL programme in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). She explains how the methodology of the course-based part of the programme involved lots of use of small group work, collaborative, problem-solving tasks, formative assessment, and so on. Student feedback on these techniques was generally positive. The programme also included a practicum, which took place in local schools. However, these schools had little involvement in the B.Ed. programme, other than to be 'test-beds' for its teaching ideas. They were not involved in the development of the B.Ed. teaching ideas, nor did they have any real responsibility for the students during their teaching practice. Thus, the socialisation of the schools into the workings of the programme and of the teachers into the culture of the schools did not occur to any significant extent. The socio-cultural approach was confined to the course-based part of the programme only.

In reality, thus, this situation does not seem to be very different from the one which is described in Richards and Pennington (1998), where a similar lack of meaningful involvement of local schools and their personnel in a more traditionally-structured B.Ed. programme in Hong Kong resulted in very little carry over of the students' learning into their post-programme teaching practices.[1] In other words, it can be said that, while the UAE programme adopted an 'internal' sociocultural teacher learning approach, this was not the case 'externally', i.e., in terms of the interface between the programme and the local school system it was nevertheless intended to serve and prepare students to work in. The extent to which the UAE programme was truly 'sociocultural' can therefore be seen as actually rather limited.

A further application of SCLT to teacher learning is described in Wright and Bolitho [(2007)]'s recent book about the methodology of the MA programmes that they run in the UK. They explain that in these programmes they feel it is important to focus first and foremost on inductive, consciousness-raising activities, which help to bring to the surface teachers' underlying beliefs and attitudes, strengthen their individual identities and so forth. They also take the view that formal input and other more academic forms of information should be used as sparingly as possible, and only to strengthen teachers' own developing professional understandings.

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[1] As far as is known, there has been no follow-up study so far of the extent to which the UAE B.Ed. trainees put into practice the teaching techniques they learned on the programme, once they began to teach on a regular basis in local schools.

However, Tarone and Allwright (2005) argue that an approach of this kind can be seen as an attempt to impose an on-the-job, 'learning by doing' model on an 'off-the-job' learning situation. They regard it as based on the '"noninterface fallacy", the fallacy of doing away with academic content courses and trying instead to make the teacher learning situation identical to the target teaching situation' (12), on the grounds that 'declarative'—or theoretical—knowledge of the kind studied in course-based teacher learning programmes cannot be converted into the 'procedural'—or practical—knowledge which teaching also requires. As they go onto explain, however, 'one needs more than the ability to speak the language fluently to manage the classroom if one is to be an effective second-language teacher: One must be able to think analytically both about the structure of the language itself and the learning processes of the students to make decisions about course content that meet student needs' (13). Also, as Wright and Bolitho themselves admit, participants usually come to their MA programmes with an expectation that the methodology will take a more conventional academic form, but then often experience a good deal of frustration and difficulty in trying to learn to cope with the more personalised and group development-oriented approach that is used.

The problem here seems to be that a sociocultural approach to teacher learning has been *over-applied*, rather than blended appropriately with other approaches so that an appropriate balance is achieved. In other words, so far, in overall terms, we therefore have a case where, firstly, a sociocultural approach to teacher learning might have been applied more extensively and, secondly, one where perhaps it has been applied too extensively. On the other hand, we come next to a case where, too frequently, a sociocultural approach is missing altogether!

Innovation projects

All the examples of course-based teacher learning discussed so far have been concerned with degree-level courses of one kind or another. At the same time, however, of course, non-degree-level forms of course-based teacher learning are also very common, such as the short in-service course – i.e., the seminar, workshop and the like. These kinds of courses often occur in association with large-scale educational reform initiatives. When this is the case, their main purpose is to introduce serving teachers to new teaching ideas, and to try to get them to put them into practice.

In contrast to the other examples we have been looking at, however, these kinds of courses appear to continue to take a largely input-oriented and top-down, 'cascade'-based form, as the references in the slide indicate [Hayes 2000, Karavas-Doukas 1998, Goh 1999, Carless 1999, Lee 2007, Waters & Vilches 2008, Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison 2009, Godfrey et al. 2008]. Unfortunately, it is well-known that such an approach to teacher learning in courses of this kind tends to be relatively ineffective [see, e.g., Harland & Kinder 1997, Oldroyd & Hall 1991, Fullan 2001b, Wedell 2009]. This is because it doesn't provide a sufficient number of opportunities for teachers to make the new teaching ideas personally meaningful through discussion,

collaboration, reflection and so on – in other words, the necessary 'socio-cultural' orientation to the learning is frequently missing.

Also, however, there is evidence that the teaching ideas themselves which curriculum innovation projects attempt to introduce are often in any case unsound from an innovation theory point of view (see e.g., Fullan 2001b, Wedell 2009, Wall 1996). As a result, they are often very difficult for teachers to understand and accept, *whatever* teacher learning approach is being used. I will return to this issue in the final section of this paper.

1.3 Course-based teacher learning content: knowledge *of* and *about* language

So much for some of the trends and issues on the methodology side of course-based teacher learning. Let's finish this section by looking at the *content* – the subject-matter side of the matter as well. The main issues I want to focus on here are to do with teacher learning *of* and *about* the language being taught.

First of all, knowledge *of* the language. If you look at recent research into attempts to implement new ELT approaches, especially, it seems, when it comes to projects involving teaching young learners (TYL) (see, e.g., Chakrakodi 2009; Desveaux In progress, 2009; Davies 2009; Prapaisit de Segovia & Hardison 2009), it is clear that levels of EFL teacher language proficiency in some parts of the world are often inadequate for the demands made by the new teaching ideas.

Part of the problem here, in my view, is the role of the ELT 'professional discourse'. By this term I mean the overall 'message' received from the dominant elite in our field about which teaching ideas they approve and disapprove of, and the reasons for these views. In my view, a good deal of this discourse currently tends to downplay the importance of language proficiency in EFL teaching, and, instead, it focuses more on teaching methodology (see, e.g., Holliday 1994a: 71-73). As a result, it often appears to be assumed that EFL learners in the kind of situation we are concerned with here will somehow 'acquire' knowledge of language, regardless of whether they receive adequate classroom input from the teacher, so long as they are actively engaged in problem-solving tasks and so on. This view of learning, however, doesn't seem to be supported by the necessary empirical evidence (see, e.g., Swan 2005).

Secondly, the issue of teachers' knowledge *about* language, i.e., their ability to analyse and explain how the language system works. This is once again an aspect of teacher learning which some parts of the professional discourse nowadays tends not to emphasise so much, for similar reasons to the relative neglect of language ability. This is because a number of currently fashionable teaching approaches, such as task-based learning, are based on the view that *using* rather than analysing and practising language is the primary way that learners learn. It therefore seems to be assumed that teachers' explanations of grammar and so on are largely ineffective, or even unnecessary.

However, this once again seems to be a questionable assumption, to say the least of it, especially in the EFL kind of ELT setting in question, and strong counter-arguments exist (see, e.g., Lantolf 2009; and cf. Tarone & Allwright 2005). Thus, in overall terms, there are good grounds for arguing that, in some programmes of course-based teacher learning at least, the importance of properly developing teachers' knowledge *of* and *about* English should be given greater prominence.

2. <u>School-based learning</u>

I now move on to the second main part of the diagram, the school-based learning component. In terms of ELT, probably the most significant feature of this aspect is that EFL teacher learning systems have traditionally been predominantly course-based, in contrast to traditions in other subject areas in many parts of the world.

Furthermore, especially outside ELT, research shows that linking course-based to school-based teacher learning is vital for the successful implementation of teaching ideas (see e.g., Waters 2002, Lee 2007). This is because, first of all, such ideas can only be fully understood on a 'learning by doing' basis, and secondly, because the 'sociocultural' context of the school has an important effect on to what extent and in what form teaching ideas can be put into practice (Roberts 1998; cf. Johnson 2006).

So I'm going to go on to discuss some of the findings of my own research into developing ways of linking course-based and school-based teacher learning in ELT at the in-service level.

2.1 Facilitating 'follow-up'

The research of this kind that I am going to talk about was done in connection with the Philippines ELT (PELT) Project, in the late 1990s (Waters 2006). This project was concerned with trying to upgrade the teaching skills of English teachers working in state secondary schools in the country. The teacher learning system project involved two main elements, a course-based one, and a linked, school-based one.

First of all, one of the main findings of my study was that, to make *school-based* teacher learning effective, first and foremost there actually needs to be an adequate amount of *course-based* learning beforehand. Thus, the research data showed that one of the main reasons teachers in the PELT project said they had difficulty in carrying out the school-based part of their learning was because the course-based part of the programme hadn't always been long or thorough enough. So, although in some ways it seems like a bit of a paradox, one of the keys to effective school-based teacher learning is the quantity and quality of course-based learning that comes first (cf. Tarone & Allwright 2005; Tomlinson 1988).

Secondly, my data also indicated that effective follow-up requires new teaching ideas to be available to be put into practice in a relatively

straightforward way. Thus, a number of the PELT teachers also said that, though they liked the project teaching ideas, they didn't always have the time, energy and expertise to be able to put them into practice. Many of them therefore expressed a desire to be given ready-made teaching materials which included the project teaching ideas. In another study I did in the Philippines a few years later, with Marlu Vilches, of a nationwide curriculum innovation project, many teachers also expressed very similar views (Waters & Vilches 2008).

However, of course, the general tendency in the ELT professional discourse is to see such requests by teachers as evidence of their lack of ownership and creativity (see, e.g., Kumaravadivelu 2006). But this attitude underestimates the demands on teachers in having to both attempt to design and implement new teaching ideas (Fullan 2001b: 21-24, 78-80), and for which usually no extra time is provided, or training in the skills required, and so on. It also involves a fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between most teachers and ready-made teaching materials as it sees them all as automatically slaves to the textbook. In fact, as research of the kind in Hutchinson and Hutchinson 1996 indicates, teachers involvement with textbooks can lead to 'reskilling', and not, as is commonly assumed, just 'deskilling', since their research showed that, in practice, 'teachers and learners do not follow the textbook script' (319). In other words, the materials are just as likely to give them the framework to make their teaching not less but *more* creative.

2.2. 'Training' and 'school' system collaboration

A third important feature of attempting to ensure successful linking of course-based and school-based teacher learning that my research in the Philippines also identified is the need for proper orientation of people in the school system by the training system (cf. Richards & Pennington 1998; Adey 2004). The PELT project included a programme of 'Orientation Meetings' for 'ELT managers' (i.e., 'school system' people, such as subject advisers, heads of department, and so on) in order to help them to learn about the project teaching ideas. The intention was that the ELT managers would have the main responsibility for overseeing how well the teachers put the ideas from the course-based teacher learning component into practice in their schools. However, my study showed that many of the ELT managers felt the Orientation Meetings were not long and thorough enough to prepare them properly for supervising their teachers' implementation efforts, so the importance of course-based learning enters the picture again here, this time in connection with the needs of school system people.

Also, fourthly, the PELT project policy was for the trainers who delivered the course-based part of the programme to deliberately avoid direct involvement in the school-based teacher learning, on the grounds that this would encourage the school system to have more 'ownership' of the training ideas. In practice, however, my study also showed (Waters ibid) that the school system personnel and the teachers would have welcomed the trainers also being closely involved in the school-based implementation stage, in order to attempt to ensure the

necessary level of understanding of the teaching ideas had been achieved, to create greater integration and overlap between training and school system people's roles, and so on.

The PELT Project was, of course, an in-service one. A final point that might be made in this section, therefore, and one that goes beyond my own research, concerns school-based teacher learning at the pre-service level, i.e., what is usually referred to as the 'practicum' in a B.Ed. or BA TEFL programme.

In addition to the gap that can exist at this level between the teacher learning system and the school system that has been noted earlier on, in connection with the UAE and HK B.Ed. TEFL programmes (Gallagher 2007, Richards & Pennington 1998), in many situations (see, e.g., Medgyes & Malderez 1996), there is a tendency in such programmes for the course-based teaching methodology element that feeds into the teaching practicum to be handled by educational theoreticians rather than ELT subject specialists. As a result, in such courses, the more specific kind of understanding of how to put EFL teaching ideas into practice may not always be developed fully enough to prepare the students adequately for their school-based teacher learning. In other words, here too, there may be inadequate course-based provision of course-based learning as a preparation for school-based learning. As a corollary, it also often appears to be the case that the amount of teaching practice provided in such programmes is in any case relatively little – typically only 8-12 weeks out of a 3- or 4-year programme of study, and often with infrequent or inadequate levels of observation and feedback (see, e.g., Roberts 1998). These are therefore further issues in this area that also need more attention.

Finally as far as this section is concerned, it should also be mentioned that probably the most fully-developed general concept for linking course- and school-based teacher learning at both the pre- and in-service levels is, of course, 'mentoring', i.e., the use of a cadre of specially designated school-based teacher learning facilitators, who work hand in glove with personnel in the other parts of the teacher learning system to monitor and support their teachers' efforts to implement new teaching ideas (see, e.g., Adey 2004). However, although there has been some growth in the literature on this topic in ELT in recent years (see e.g., Malderez & Bodóczky 1999; cf. Wedell 2009), and there has been for some time a well-established tradition of practice in this respect in non-ELT circles, the idea does not yet appear to have caught on in ELT to the extent that it might (but see Medgyes & Malderez 1996). This is therefore another part of our field that is ripe for further development.

3. Educational system involvement

Finally, I come to the third part of the diagram, the educational system component. Here also there are unfortunately often gaps of connectivity of various kinds that can have a negative effect on teacher learning (Wedell 2009).

First of all, as I have already mentioned, educational systems frequently introduce new teaching ideas which are unsound from an innovation theory

point of view (Fullan 2001b; cf., e.g., Henrichsen 1989; Wall 1996; Markee 1997; Wedell 2003; Waters & Vilches 2008). Innovation theory shows that it is usually only by building slowly and gradually on existing practices that new teaching ideas have any chance of succeeding (Fullan 2001b; Markee 1997; Wedell 2009). However, unfortunately, instead, educational systems often attempt to bring about major and sudden change. As a result, it is very difficult, if not impossible, for the rest of the teacher learning system to change teachers' beliefs and practices in the way that is necessary for implementing the new ideas.

It is therefore important that the new teaching ideas which teacher learning systems are supposed to implement should be designed by education systems in such a way that they support rather than hinder their teacher learning efforts. One approach to innovation development for this purpose is the Linkage Process model of Havelock (1969) (cf. Gorard, Roberts & Taylor 2004), as shown in Fig. 3.

This model can be seen as a way of attempting to develop new teaching ideas in an *evolutionary* manner, which, as I've already indicated, is the approach recommended by innovation theory. The diagram is best read from right to left. In the right hand circle, the user system – that is, teachers and others in the school system – send messages to the left hand circle about teaching problems.
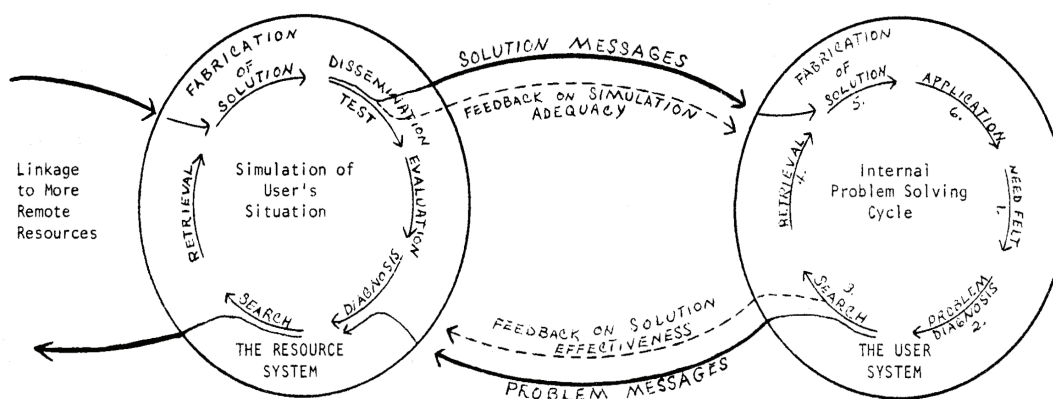

Fig 3: The Linkage Process (Havelock 1969: 11-16)

The left hand circle is the Resource System. This is like, e.g., a Curriculum Development centre. It uses a simulation of the user's situation to try to design solutions to the problems and sends them to the users to be tried out and evaluated.

As a result of these back and forth cycles involving different 'problem' and 'solution' messages, new teaching ideas of a teacher learning-friendly kind are gradually developed and refined, i.e., in an evolutionary (rather than revolutionary) manner.

As can also be seen, the model includes a connection on the left to 'More Remote Resources'. These can consist of professional literature, external consultants and so on, i.e., ways of widening the range of possible solutions that are considered, thereby lessening the risk of the system being too inward-looking and conservative. A well-documented example of an ELT innovation project which makes use of such an approach can be found in Markee 1997, Part II (cf. Kennedy 1987, Goh 1999).

Now, of course, in large-scale (e.g., nationwide) educational innovation projects, the overall, macro-level framework for reform may, of necessity, have to be largely top-down and one-way in orientation (Kennedy 1999).

However, as Lee 2007 points out (cf. Kennedy & Kennedy 1998), as a result of his PhD research into the development of the SMART curriculum in Malaysia, there is no necessary contradiction between hierarchical educational structures of this kind—the sort that are typical in the ELT world—and the dynamic, interactive, 'socio-cultural' picture of the educational innovation process in Havelock's model.

Rather, as Lee argues, the authority and power of such systems can be used to ensure development processes of the kind in the model occur just as much as— and instead of—the more typical input-oriented and uncommunicative ones.

In other words, it needs to be recognised that the education system will always wish to set the *overall goals* of the reform and oversee their achievement. However, the *means* of doing so can nevertheless involve a process of socio-culturally-oriented, participative problem-solving. In such a way, teaching ideas might be developed which the rest of the teacher learning system has a good chance of implementing (unlike, sadly, so much of current practice).

Conclusion

To conclude: what implications might the foregoing have for further research and theorising in this area?

First, the effects on teacher learning of recent developments in the format of MA programmes seem to be currently rather under-researched, and are therefore an area that obviously merits further investigation.

Second, it seems important for further work to be done on looking at the potential and limitations of the use of a socio-cultural approach to teacher learning. This is currently a major focus in the professional discourse on ELT teacher learning. However, we need to be clearer about in what situations it seems to work well, and vice-versa.

Third, we also need more information about the kinds of language knowledge required by teachers in typical language teaching situations, in order to cope with recent innovations such as TYL. As a corollary, it would also be good to have much more data about language teacher proficiency levels in various parts of the world, benchmarked against internationally standard yardsticks, such as the Common European Framework.

Fourth, there is clearly a need for further development and investigation of attempts to link course- and school-based teacher learning, both at the pre- and in-service levels, in order to throw more light on what main variables affect success or lack of it in this area. In particular, it would seem that much could be learned from non-ELT teacher learning systems about the potential for using mentoring structures in this respect.

Fifth and finally, the study of how more teacher and learner learning-friendly teaching ideas can be developed within large-scale and politicised educational structures, such as national educational systems, is clearly an important further priority.

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