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Investigating the effectiveness of the training procedures employed in Greek EFL state induction teacher education courses

Διερεύνηση της αποτελεσματικότητας των επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων οι οποίες εφαρμόζονται στα ελληνικά εισαγωγικά προγράμματα επιμόρφωσης των νεοδιόριστων καθηγητών αγγλικής γλώσσας

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This paper focuses on the investigation of the effectiveness of the training procedures employed in Greek state induction teacher education courses for the newly appointed English language teachers. This investigation deals with a rather uncharted area in the Greek context, which makes it a contribution to the established knowledge in its field and responds to the increasing need for enhancing the effectiveness of induction training programmes. In particular, the research is intended to identify the presence of training procedures regarded to be conducive to teacher development in these education courses, the extent to which the novel ideas manage to impact trainees' beliefs and practices and the critical link between them. Results indicate that the induction programmes under investigation, mostly fail to bring about both conceptual change as well as change of teachers' actual classroom practices. In addition, the findings shed light onto the strong and weak points of the procedures employed in these courses so as to qualify as effective. Finally, pedagogical implications are presented and it is suggested that induction teacher education courses should employ specific strategies and training procedures that are likely to create conditions for integration of novel ideas in the teaching practice so as to enhance their effectiveness.

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Το άρθρο εστιάζει στη διερεύνηση της αποτελεσματικότητας των επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων οι οποίες εφαρμόζονται στα ελληνικά εισαγωγικά προγράμματα επιμόρφωσης των νεοδιόριστων καθηγητών Αγγλικής γλώσσας. Αυτή η διερεύνηση αποτελεί μια, ως επί το πλείστον, αχαρτογράφητη πτυχή της Ελληνικής πραγματικότητας, συντελώντας ως πηγή γνώσης στον επιστημονικό τομέα και ανταποκρίνεται στην επιτακτική ανάγκη ενίσχυσης της αποτελεσματικότητας των εισαγωγικών επιμορφωτικών προγραμμάτων. Ειδικότερα, η έρευνα αυτή έχει ως στόχο να προσδιορίσει την ύπαρξη επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων στα

εισαγωγικά προγράμματα που συμβάλλουν στην εξέλιξη των καθηγητών, το βαθμό επιρροής των καινοτόμων ιδεών στις απόψεις και πρακτικές των επιμορφούμενων χρησιμοποιώντας και την καθοριστική μεταξύ τους σχέση. Τα αποτελέσματα καταδεικνύουν ότι τα συγκεκριμένα εισαγωγικά προγράμματα, ως επί το πλείστον, δεν επιτυγχάνουν να επιφέρουν αλλαγές τόσο στις αντιλήψεις όσο και στις πρακτικές διδασκαλίας των καθηγητών. Επιπλέον, μπορούμε να διαπιστώσουμε ποιες είναι οι αδυναμίες των επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων που εφαρμόζονται στα εισαγωγικά προγράμματα ώστε να εστιάσουμε στον επαναπροσδιορισμό της αποτελεσματικότητάς τους. Τέλος, γίνεται μνεία σε παιδαγωγικές διαπιστώσεις που οδηγούν στη διατύπωση προτάσεων για τα εισαγωγικά επιμορφωτικά προγράμματα. Σκοπός των προτάσεων αυτών είναι η εφαρμογή συγκεκριμένων επιμορφωτικών μεθόδων και δραστηριοτήτων που προάγουν την αποτελεσματικότητα δημιουργώντας τις κατάλληλες συνθήκες για ενσωμάτωση των καινοτόμων ιδεών στην διδακτική πράξη.

Key words: Teacher education, teacher training, teacher development, training procedures, teachers' pre-existing belief system, teacher change, reflection, group work, observation, loop-input, microteaching

1. Introduction

The present article deals with the investigation of the effectiveness of the training procedures employed in Greek EFL (English as a foreign language) state induction teacher education courses, which are organized by the Greek Ministry of Education and the Pedagogical Institute and are conducted at Regional Education Centres (R.E.C.s)¹ throughout Greece. More specifically, the paper is intended to cast light on the presence of training procedures regarded to be conducive to teacher development (Freeman, 1989) in these training programmes. In addition, it investigates the extent to which the novel ideas introduced in these courses manage to impact trainees' beliefs and be implemented in their everyday teaching practice.

The article is divided into four sections, which briefly refer to the following issues. Firstly, the theory surrounding this topic is delineated. Secondly, the method, sample and instrument used for the collection of data are discussed. Next, a detailed presentation and critical discussion of the results is attempted. Finally, statistically significant associations between the variables of the research instrument and accompanying implications are presented. The last section of this article focuses on the pedagogical implications of the study and suggestions for changes.

2. Theoretical background

Serious doubts exist about the effectiveness of teacher training in affecting the end goal of all types of initiatives, that is, improving teachers' practices in classrooms (Tenti, 1997; Navarro and Verdisco, 2000). Therefore, the investigation of the effectiveness of the aforementioned teacher education course will be grounded on evidence of teachers' conceptual change (Kubanyiova, 2006) as well as evidence of change in teachers' actual classroom practices (Wang, 2008). It will also be examined to what extent the changes result

from the presence of training procedures necessary for increased teacher awareness and integration of novel ideas in the teaching practice (Manolopoulou-Sergi, 2005).

In this light, the theory surrounding this topic will be delineated through the discussion of the concepts of teacher education, the conceptualization of teacher change and the exploration of the role beliefs, reflection, and training procedures play in enhancing teacher change.

2.1. Teacher education, teacher training and teacher development

In Freeman's (1989) view, teacher education constitutes a superordinate term that encompasses both teacher training and teacher development as different strategies by which teachers are educated. Training is based on a process of direct intervention, leading to the mastery of specific knowledge and skills and is based on external criteria for assessing teachers' change. On the contrary, teacher development implies an idiosyncratic and individual process of influence encouraging some sort of increase or shift in teachers' awareness, which can be non-evaluative by external criteria. Therefore, any course focusing on the education of teachers should feature elements of both training and development in order to bring about some sort of change in teachers' beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices.

2.1.1. Teacher change

Investigating the extent to which the R.E.C. induction teacher education course manages to bring about language teachers' change is our central focus, as already mentioned. It implies cognitive, affective and behavioural change processes in teachers, whereby they get to alter aspects of their belief systems and practices as a result of a new input (Kubanyiova, 2007).

The alternative normative-reeducative perspective of teacher change (Richardson & Placier, 2001) suggests the evaluation of the impact of teacher education courses in terms of the teachers' understanding of the training content and its value and how this leads to the development of reformed practices. It also focuses on how and to what extent the teachers' practice changes as a result of a teacher education course. This view of teacher change places emphasis on the mental state of teachers and their concepts, since teachers' teaching practice and decision-making is largely informed by them. This, in turn, leads to conceptual change being the first term to define what constitutes teacher change.

2.2.2. The role of beliefs and prior experiences

Richardson, (1996, 2003) summarizing much of the research about teachers' beliefs shows that participants come to teacher education courses with prior experiences, values and beliefs and with specific expectations about the subject matter they will learn. These beliefs, having been accumulated from a variety of sources including past experiences as students, family background, observations and teaching as well as coursework in their teacher education program (Levin & He, 2008) lead teachers to develop tacitly held images about teaching and learning. Thus, the teachers' pre-existing belief system, or schema, operates as a sort of filter inhibiting or adjusting new information coming in, accounting for Pennington's (1996) cognitive-affective filter to be opened and become permeable to new intake. If trainees manage to analyze and synthesize it into a new understanding, it becomes uptake and can influence the teachers' classroom behaviour, namely, the teaching output (Pennington, 1995), as can be seen in Figure 1.

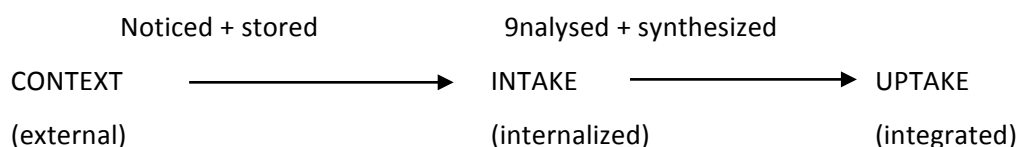


Figure 1. A model of the relationship between context, intake, and uptake in teacher change (adapted from Pennington, 1995).

2.2.3. Reflection in teacher education

The role reflection plays in enhancing teacher change is an intrinsic one since teachers cannot develop themselves unless they learn to develop their critical self and be able to reflect critically upon what they do in their classrooms (Liu & Fisher, 2006). This shows that “learning and reflection are interrelated,” as Brandt (2008, p. 42) argues, and that “reflection requires a recapturing of experience in which the person thinks about it, mulls it over, and evaluates it”. In addition, it encourages them to take greater responsibility for their own professional growth and look for ways of becoming more autonomous professionally.

2.2.4. Strategies and training processes for promoting teacher development

In order to bring about significant change in participants’ teaching practice, we need to take into consideration several conditions identified by research on teacher cognition and development when designing and implementing teacher education programmes.

Firstly, consideration of adult learning principles (Kokkos, 1998) seems to be of utmost importance in a teacher training course since adult learning is believed to be experiential and follows learning cycles. Theory and practice integration is another effective teacher development process since a strong theoretical background is valuable but inadequate on its own to lead to effective teaching. Moreover, rather than a single, one-shot event, training must be seen as a continuous process which employs continual monitoring of teachers’ implementation practice along with feedback on their implementation progress (Navarro & Verdisco, 2000) and follow-up support. Finally, the following modes of teaching add to a trainer’s repertoire of training methods and constitute training processes conducive to teacher development (Freeman, 1989): *Groupwork*, *Microteaching*, *Loop-input* (Woodward, 1991), a demonstration procedure, presenting trainees with content not only on their language level but also about the activity they are experiencing, involving them as learners in the procedure and *Observation for development* (Beaumont, 2005). The last one has nothing to do with the evaluation purpose and can take the form of self-observation or peer-observation.

3. Method and sample

The inquiry described below, intends to test the hypothesis that state induction teacher education courses though abundant and varied in content, are likely to display a significant lack of training processes necessary so that they can qualify as effective. Quantitative research enabled the use of statistical analytical tools to answer the following research questions.

- a. What strategies and processes were employed during the induction course educational activity?
- b. What are the understandings of Greek English Language teachers regarding the impact of the induction programme on their teaching beliefs and practices?
- c. How much do they consider it enough to change their everyday teaching practice?

Therefore, a questionnaire was constructed, centred on the study of variables that capture common experiences of this group of people. In particular, the use of the Microsoft Excel 2007 data processing programme accounted for the descriptive nature of this research. In addition, "Chi-Square test of independence" which allows us to look at two variables and evaluate the strength of their relationship or association with each other took place with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 228).

The sampling plan for this project involved two stages and yielded a total of fifty questionnaires. In the first, a criterion sampling strategy was adopted, the purpose of which was to target a group of English teachers who had attended the induction teacher education course quite recently at regional centres throughout Greece, through the Ministry of Education. The second stage of this process involved snowballing sampling (Dörnyei, 2007). In this way, these colleagues were asked to recruit subjects from among their acquaintances via e-mail that would also fit the sampling requirements.

3.1. Instrument

Information was elicited through mainly closed-ended item types using factual, behavioural and attitudinal questions. In effect, Part I aims to build a profile of the respondents who participate in this research (see Appendix questions 1-7). Part II focuses on the induction teacher education course itself as well as the presence of training procedures regarded to be conducive to teacher development (see questions 8-17). Finally, Part III seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the induction course itself. This is done through the tracing of teachers' conceptual change (questions 18 and 20), change of teachers' actual classroom practices (questions 19, 21 and 22), provision of continuing training support to enhance teachers' ongoing utilization of knowledge (Stein and Wang, 1988) as well as means of ongoing professional development (questions 23 and 25). In conclusion, question 24 aims at an overall evaluation of the induction course.

4. Presentation and discussion of results

In this section, a detailed presentation and critical discussion of results is attempted, following the research method described and the theoretical framework delineated above.

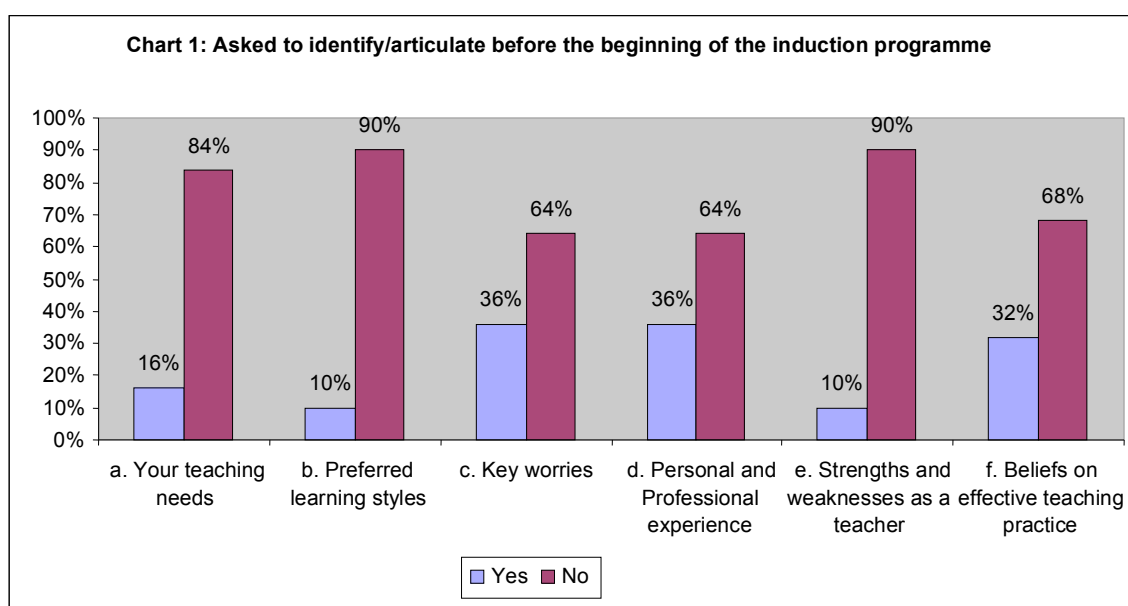
4.1. Personal and professional data

The vast majority of the respondents (80%) are newly-appointed teachers, able to report their recollections of the R.E.C. induction course. Another 18% have been teaching between 6 and 10 years in state schools and only 2% for more than 11 years. As far as the city where their induction programme took place is concerned, 16 regional centres were reported. This further contributes to the quest for achieving a sample who has attended the course at regional centres throughout Greece, ensuring thus, heterogeneity and representativeness. In particular, the big urban centres of Athens (36%), Tripolis (32%), Pirgos (28%) and Heraklion (24%) come first, followed by Pireaus (16%), Chios and Kalamata (12%), Rhodes, Patra, Rethymnon and Zakynthos (8%), among others. Concerning their educational background, 42% hold a post-graduate degree and another 22% are studying for a post-graduate degree.

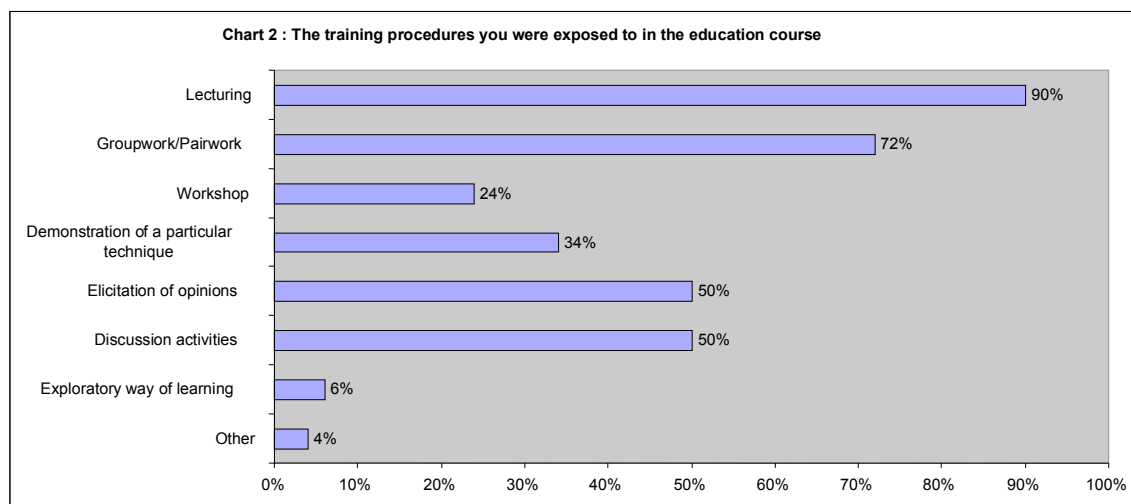
4.1.1. Induction teacher education course strategies and training procedures

The second part of this presentation focuses on the induction teacher education course itself, in terms of the presence or absence of strategies and training procedures regarded to be conducive to teacher development.

As can be seen in Chart 1 below, the overwhelming majority of participants were not involved in the identification and articulation of their preferred learning styles (90%) as well as their strengths and weaknesses as teachers (90%) and their teaching needs (84%) before the beginning of the induction programme. This is obviously not compatible with adult learning principles and learner-centred approaches. Similarly, 68% stated that they were not asked to express their beliefs and personal practical theories on effective teaching practice, while 64% did not engage in discussion of their worries as well as their personal and professional experiences. It is not surprising then, that a significant 48% of the participants state that the topics covered corresponded to their needs a little. The lack of relevance of the training content is also depicted in a significant 70% who claim that no special distinction was made between teachers of the primary and secondary education. This obviously constitutes an issue to be addressed in these courses.



Concerning the training procedures employed, the methods the trainers used to provide data as well as the presence of experiential elements enhancing the effectiveness of training courses, the situation depicted leaves a lot to be desired too. More specifically, Chart 2 shows that an astonishing 90% of the participants state that lecturing was the main input style, which, as Manolopoulou-Sergi (2005) argues, is a useful mode of disseminating theoretical knowledge but cannot become a role model for trainees.



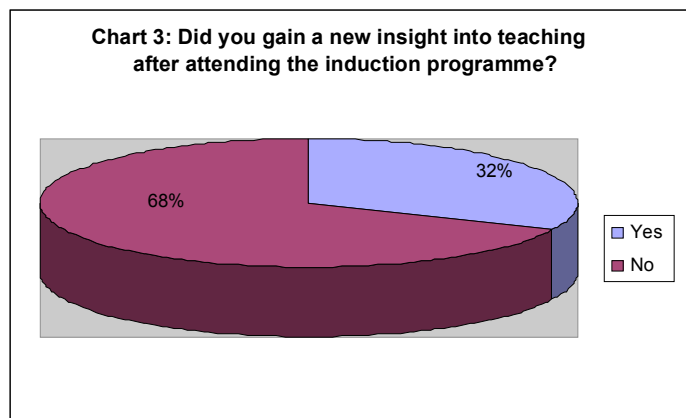
Engagement in groupwork/pairwork is reported by 72% while demonstration of a particular technique or loop-input is reported by only 34%, depriving the majority of the trainees of the opportunity for modelling desired behaviours. In addition, regarding the employment of experiential elements, 48% of this sample state that they were involved in observing experienced teachers teaching real classrooms, only 36% engaged in microteaching and 10% in watching videos with recordings of lessons taught in similar contexts. Furthermore, 26% of the participants clearly stated that they were not involved in any experiential activity whatsoever.

Finally, as far as the issue of theory and practice integration is concerned, 66% of the participants stated that the usual training method was that of the trainer giving a lecture and trainees asking questions at the end. The second most popular method experienced by 20% of the participants, involved presenting trainees with theory and asking them to practise what was taught. From the situation described in this sample, the majority of the courses fail to view theory as coming out of practice (Taylor, 1985) as well as being found in practice, in order to enable trainees to see the rationale behind the experience and lead them towards effective implementation. Moreover, training was followed up by thinking and reflecting about it in 50% of the cases. Reflective strategies (Hussein, 2007) such as thinking questions (34%), collaborative and cooperative environment (24%) and opportunity to stand critically towards the process experienced (24%) helped in this direction. In addition, 52% of the participants stated that opportunities for practice of a new approach were scarce.

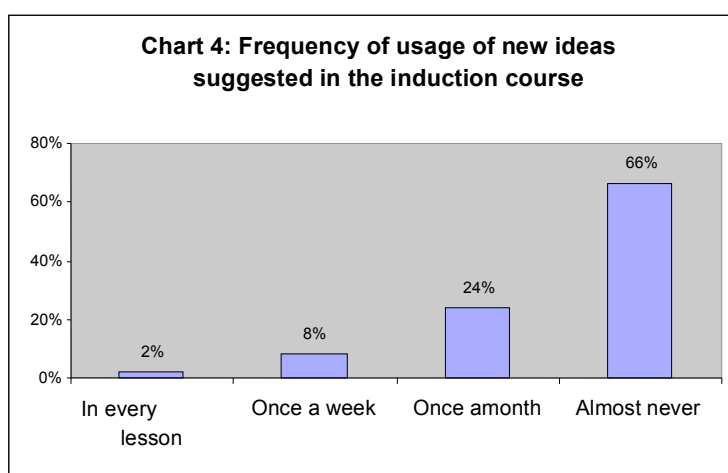
4.1.2. Teachers' attitude and practice

This section centres on a measurement of the trainees' perception of the impact the training course had on their beliefs and everyday practice as well as the trainees' attitude towards the training experience overall.

With reference to the effectiveness of this course in terms of conceptual change, the findings in Chart 3 below show that 68% believe that they did not gain any insights into teaching. In addition, 34% share the view that this programme was a loss of time, while 30% express the opinion that although it helped them raise their awareness, their original beliefs remained in place.



Considering the effectiveness in the light of change of teachers' actual classroom practices, 66% state they never make use of the new ideas suggested followed by another 24% answering once a month (see Chart 4). Moreover, when asked to specify one thing they totally changed in the teaching routine as a result, 46% of them left the space empty, unanswered, followed by another 36% clearly stating that they changed nothing.



Regarding the reasons they provided for the lack of change in practice, a significant 44% admitted needing more follow-up training in order to feel more confident, followed by another 26% stating that they do not know how to put the ideas into practice.

Finally, the findings show that 90% of the participants were not provided with follow-up training on the issues approached with an overwhelming 98% clearly stating that they are in need of continuing training support to enhance their knowledge. Furthermore, 30% are not

sure about the value of the programme whereas 26% clearly state that they would not recommend it to a colleague.

4.1.3. Statistically significant associations

The final part of this presentation and analysis of data is based on a cross-tabulation (Chi-Square) test which allows the researcher to conduct tests of independence between the variables of the research instrument, through the significance of the Pearson Chi-square value (Dörnyei, 2007). In particular, if the p-value of the table is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, we can claim that the two variables under statistical analysis are not independent but they are statistically and significantly associated. In this light, the statistically significant index ($p\text{-value} = 0,002 < \alpha = 0.05$) of Table 1 below enables us to draw the conclusion that the variables examined in questions 10 and 18 (see Appendix) are not independent, but they are statistically associated. In particular, out of the 18 participants who answered that the topics covered corresponded to their needs to a good extent, 11 (61.1%) stated that they did gain a new insight into teaching after attending the induction programme, as can be seen in Table 2.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15,022 ^a	3	,002
Likelihood Ratio	17,003	3	,001
Linear-by-Linear Association	13,737	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 4 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,32.

Table 1

		Question 18		
		Yes	No	Total
Question 10	A great deal	1	0	1
	Up to some extent	11 (61,1%)	7	18
	A little	4	20	24
	Not at all	0	7	7
	Total	16	34	50

Table 2 (Cross-tabulation/ Chi-Square test of independence between questions 10 and 18)

This bit of information seems to be in accordance with Bax’s (1995) argument that content addressing the trainees’ needs maximizes the relevance and interest factors. These are considered to be indispensable for the training content not to be put aside as irrelevant and valueless (Tillema, 1995) and facilitate change of attitudes and beliefs. This suggestion is further corroborated by the test of independence depicted in Table 3 below, which establishes an association between the relevance of the topics covered and reported change in the actual classroom practice.

		Question 19				
Question 10		In every single lesson	Once a week	Once a month	Almost never	Total
	A great deal	0	1	0	0	1
	Up to some extent	0	2	10(55,6%)	6	18
	A little	1	1	2	20(83,3%)	24
	Not at all	0	0	0	7	7
	Total	1	4	12	33	50

Table 3 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 10 and 19)

From the table above, we can conclude that participants, who stated that the topics covered actually corresponded to a good extent to their needs, tend to answer that they use the ideas suggested more often in their classrooms (55.6%) than those who were not satisfied with the relevance of the topics. In contrast, 83.3% of the trainees whose needs were only a little addressed in this course clearly stated that they do not make use of the ideas suggested. In addition, raising of awareness and critical consideration of the teaching practices is reported by 38.9% and 55.6% respectively of the participants who were satisfied by the topics covered. In contrast, 41.6% of those who answered that the topics corresponded to their needs only a little clearly stated that it was a loss of time.

As far as the training procedures employed are concerned, groupwork and pairwork tend to be effective in leading to conceptual change (38.9%) and raising of awareness (33.3%), according to Table 4. In contrast, 64.3% of the participants who were not involved in either groupwork or pairwork tend to answer that the whole experience was a loss of time.

		Question 20				
Yes	Not convinced of the value of the approaches suggested	It was loss of time	Although it helped...my original beliefs remained in place	It helped me a lot to think about my teaching practices ...	My pre-training beliefs changed...	Total
	1	8	12(33,3%)	14(38,9%)	1	36
	2	9(64,3%)	3	0	0	14
Total	3	17	15	14	1	50

Table 4 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 11_2 and 20)

Similarly, involvement in workshops seems to be associated with knowledge restructuring, a prerequisite for conceptual change and real teacher development (Manolopoulou-Sergi, 2005). In this light, 58.3% of the participants support that they did gain a new insight. Demonstration of a particular technique in the form of loop-input also seems to enhance the effectiveness of the training course at a percentage of 58.8%, as depicted in Table 5.

		Question 18		
Question 11_4		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	10(58,8%)	7	17
	No	6	27(81,8%)	33
	Total	16	34	50

Table 5 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 11_4 and 18)

In addition, involvement of trainees in a context-sensitive teacher education course built on trainees’ needs (Atay, 2008) also seems to be closely related to knowledge restructuring. In particular, the participants for whom no special provisions were made in terms of level of working context tended to be negative in reporting gaining of a new insight at a rate of 77%.

Regarding the relationship between the presence of experiential elements in the training course and the enhancement of effectiveness, the findings stated below also seem to be in line with the relevant literature on the issue (Bax, 1995). In particular, 50% of those who were involved in microteaching report raising of awareness about their teaching practices. Observation of other teachers also seems to constitute an awareness-raising practice, as an invaluable tool for trainees to gain insights into other teachers’ perceptions of effective lessons, while initiating reflection on their own techniques and practices (Beaumont, 2005). In this light, 50% of the trainees who were provided with the opportunity of observing other teachers, report gaining of a new insight.

It is also remarkable that out of the 13 participants who report not taking part in any of the experiential activities mentioned in the questionnaire (see Appendix), all of them answered not gaining a new insight into teaching.

As it can be seen from Table 6 below, 69,2% of the trainees who were not involved in experiential practices express the belief that the whole induction programme was a loss of time, a percentage not to be ignored by course designers. On the contrary, statistically significant percentages of trainees who were involved in some kind of experiential activity indicate awareness-raising (35,1%) and critical reflection of teaching practices (32,4%).

Question 20						
	Not convinced of the value of the approaches suggested	It was loss of time	Although it helped...my original beliefs remained in place	It helped me a lot to think about my teaching prices ...	My pre-training beliefs changed...	Total
No	0	9(69,2%)	2	2	0	13
Yes	3	8	13(35,1%)	12(32,4%)	1	37
Total	3	17	15	14	1	50

Table 6 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 14e and 20)

Furthermore, lack of theory and practice integration as a result of the lecture mode, seems to fail in bringing about some kind of knowledge and belief restructuring at a percentage of 78.8%. Similarly, a significant 48% of the trainees who were involved in some kind of reflection after each training experience, maintain that they gained a new insight into teaching.

Finally, data suggests the dependency between teachers' conceptual change and change of their classroom practices as well as between continuing training support and their attitude towards the course after its completion. In particular, Table 7 shows that out of the 16 participants who reported gaining of a new insight into teaching, the majority (9) answered that they actually integrate new ideas in their teaching practice once a month, followed by another 18,8% responding once a week. In other words, the vast majority of those claiming some kind of knowledge and belief restructuring tended to report implementation of new knowledge more often than those who stated that no gaining took place.

		Question 19				
Question 18		In every single lesson	Once a week	Once a month	Almost never	Total
	Yes	1	3(18,8%)	9	3	16
	No	0	1	3	30	34
	Total	1	4	12	33	50

Table 7 (Cross-tabulation / Chi-Square test of independence between questions 18 and 19)

In a similar vein, the majority of the trainees who reported knowledge restructuring tended to be more positive in their attitude and evaluation of the induction course. More specifically 68.8% of them state that it helped them to reconsider their teaching practices. Accordingly, 87.5% of the trainees reporting gaining of insight into teaching, tend to be more positive in evaluating it, as they clearly state that it partly deserves attending and recommending. In contrast, participants responding negatively in knowledge gaining are not so sure about recommending it (41.2%).

Additionally, data shows that out of the 17 participants who admitted implementing the new ideas in their classroom practice, 15 of them tend to be more positive in their attitude towards the course. Finally, dependency between provision of follow-up training on the issues touched upon and general attitude towards the induction course seems to be established from the results. In fact, out of the 5 participants provided with follow-up support, 3 (60%) report raising of teaching awareness. The remaining 2 admitted being helped to reconsider their teaching practices and that their pre-training beliefs underwent substantial change.

5. Implications and suggestions

The findings of this study leave no doubt that in order to enhance the effectiveness of induction teacher education, there seems to be a need for teacher development courses to bring about conceptual, generative, significant and worthwhile change in trainees. This is not only reflected in new conceptual understanding of teaching but, above all, in classroom practices which are transformed by the new understanding and lead to improved conditions

for learning. In this light, a number of principles for the design, organization and implementation of the R.E.C. induction teacher education course for English teachers emerge.

Enhancing the relevance of topics is associated with both conceptual change and change in the actual classroom practice. In particular, deriving content from trainees themselves so as to involve them in a context-sensitive teacher education course built on their personal needs, seems to be conducive to teacher development as shown in Chart 1 above. In addition, an exploration of teachers' personal practical theories and beliefs (Levin, 2008) at the pre-training stage helps to induce dissonance by finding ways to destabilize teachers' established beliefs and knowledge base, and should be incorporated in every course of this kind (Tables 2 & 3).

The evaluation of the impact of a teacher education course must be informed by the teachers' understanding of the training content and value as well as by how it leads to development of reformed practices (Richardson & Placier, 2001). Dependency was found between teachers' conceptual change and change of actual classroom practices as well as between conceptual change and positive course evaluation but also between implementation of novel ideas and general attitude towards the course (p. 20 above). In this light, the employment of specific strategies and training procedures is suggested when designing and conducting teacher education programmes. Procedures such as more restricted use of the lecture mode for presenting new information and theory and practice integration can foster effective teacher development (p. 19 par.1).

In addition, *experiential elements such as micro-teaching, self and peer-observation as well as demonstration techniques such as loop-input, clearly contribute to gaining a new insight* (Table 5). In fact, course designers and teacher educators should see to the exploitation of cooperative learning through groupwork and pairwork as well as exploratory way of learning through workshops, which facilitate knowledge restructuring, raising of awareness and critical reflection of teaching practices (Tables 4, & 6). Moreover, they should incorporate various presentation techniques in training courses such as video recordings and modelling of desired behaviours which help to enhance their effectiveness as depicted in Table 5. Furthermore, micro-teaching and observation of other teachers' teaching constitute awareness-raising practices which facilitate conceptual change (p. 17 par 2).

Finally, *dependency was found between continuing training (through follow-up meetings and e-mail exchanges) and teachers' general course appraisal*. Combined with the overwhelming demand of this sample for their training to be followed up in a more consistent way, it makes implications for the role these courses should play as a characteristic of effective professional development (p. 20 par. 4)

6. Conclusion

The present article has attempted to investigate whether Greek EFL state induction teacher education courses manage to have an impact on teachers' beliefs and actual teaching practice as a result of the presence of training procedures necessary for increased teacher awareness and integration of novel ideas in the teaching practice. The analysis and discussion of data that was collected shed more light on the strong and weak points of the procedures employed in these teacher education courses. It further illuminated the fact that they mostly fail to bring about both conceptual change as well as change of teachers' actual classroom practices. Therefore, a number of suggestions for the improvement of the current

situation have been made in terms of the employment of specific strategies and processes that are likely to enhance the effectiveness of teacher education courses.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the conclusions drawn from this research necessitate further investigation of the issue in question. Usage of bigger samples and a “mixed methods” design as well as examination of a more holistic picture of variables that play a role in the process, should be addressed in future projects.

Finally, it is strongly believed that the investigation of effectiveness of induction teacher education courses necessitates both the undivided attention and unreserved support of teacher education policy makers, teacher trainers and teacher trainees themselves. Provided that this input is given proper attention and is examined in a more constructive way, it can lead to the design of more effective induction teacher education courses and contribute to the upgrading of both teaching and learning processes respectively.

Notes

1. R.E.C.(s) is the acronym for Regional Education Centres and is used throughout the dissertation referring to the compulsory induction training programmes.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Part I. Personal and Professional data

1.	Sex	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Current position of work	Primary school <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High school <input type="checkbox"/> Senior High school <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Vocation school <input type="checkbox"/> Second Chance school <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify)
3.	a. Teaching experience in state schools	0 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> 11+ years <input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Teaching experience prior to your appointment	0 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6 – 10 years <input type="checkbox"/> 11+ years <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	How many years have passed since you attended your induction programme?	0 – 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 – 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 6+ years <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	In which city did the induction programme take place?
6.	Do you hold a post-graduate degree?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Studies in progress <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Have you attended any special training courses on didactics?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> One-day seminars only <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Part II. Induction Teacher Education course

8.	Which of the following topics did you cover during your induction course? (PEK) (You may tick more than one box)	Current instructional methods <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher’s role <input type="checkbox"/> Management of students’ individual characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Principles underlying didactics <input type="checkbox"/> Observation of other teachers’ instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Utilization of educational technology <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion of problematic issues in classrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify)
9.	Were you asked to identify/articulate the following parameters before the beginning of the induction programme? a. your teaching needs? b. preferred learning styles?	a. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> b. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

	<p>c. key worries?</p> <p>d. personal and professional experience?</p> <p>e. strengths and weaknesses as a teacher?</p> <p>f. beliefs on effective teaching practice? (e.g. forms of giving feedback, meaningful and motivational activities, learner autonomy)</p>	<p>c. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>d. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>e. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>f. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
10.	To what extent did the topics covered actually correspond to your needs?	<p>A great deal <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Up to some extent <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A little <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not at all <input type="checkbox"/></p>
11.	Which of the following training procedures were you exposed to in this education course? (You may tick more than one box)	<p>Lecturing <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Groupwork/Pairwork <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Workshop <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Demonstration of a particular technique <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Elicitation of opinions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Discussion activities <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Exploratory way of learning <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(Please specify)</p>
12.	Which of the following ways of providing data did your trainer use? (You may tick more than one box)	<p>Video recordings of actual lessons <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Transcripts of lessons <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Journal articles <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Lesson plans and outlines <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Case studies <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Samples of students' written work <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>ELT textbook materials <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(Please specify)</p>
13.	Were special provisions made for teachers of different school grades? (primary and secondary education)	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
14.	Were you involved in any of the following experiences? (You may tick more than on box)	<p>a. designing and presenting mini-lessons to peers <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>b. observing experienced teachers teaching real classrooms <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>c. Watching videos with recordings of lessons taught in similar contexts <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>d. being demonstrated teaching techniques using yourselves as participants/learners <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>e. No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
15.	Which of the following statements best summarizes the usual method the course employed? (Please tick one box only)	<p>. The trainer gave a lecture and trainees asked questions at the end <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. The trainer presented trainees with theory and asked them to practise what was taught <input type="checkbox"/></p>

		<p>. The trainees were asked to perform various activities according to the prevalent methodology <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. The trainees experienced an activity as participants (learners) themselves and were presented with the theoretical principles underlying the activity later <input type="checkbox"/></p>
16.	a. Was each training experience accompanied with thinking and reflecting about it?	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
	<p>If your answer is positive please answer the following question</p> <p>b. What kind of help were you provided with so as to guide you towards your reflection? (You may tick more than one box)</p>	<p>. opportunity for detailed description of the events experienced <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. thinking questions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. keeping journals <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. reflective lesson plans <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. ample time for reflection <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. collaborative and cooperative environment <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. opportunity to stand critically towards the process experienced <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>. opportunity to stand critically towards your own practice <input type="checkbox"/></p>
17.	To what extent were you provided with opportunities for practice of a new approach?	<p style="text-align: right;">A great deal <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Up to some extent <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">A little <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Not at all <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Part III – Teacher’s attitude and practice

18.	Did you gain a new insight into teaching after attending the induction programme?	<p style="text-align: right;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
19.	How often do you use the new ideas suggested in the induction course used?	<p style="text-align: right;">In every single lesson <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Once a week <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Once a month <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Almost never <input type="checkbox"/></p>
20.	Read through the statements below and tick one box which best represents your attitude towards the induction course after its completion.	<p>I was not convinced of the value of the approaches suggested. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>It was a loss of time <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Although it helped me raise my awareness, my original beliefs remained in place <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>It helped me a lot to think about my teaching practice and the main approaches to teaching <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>My pre-training beliefs underwent substantial change after the induction course <input type="checkbox"/></p>
21.	Can you specify one thing you totally changed in

	your teaching routine as a result of the induction programme?
22.	If new ideas are not used, this is because.....	. It is nice in theory but I don't know how to put it in practice. <input type="checkbox"/> . It does not work for my classes <input type="checkbox"/> . I feel uncomfortable experimenting with new ideas <input type="checkbox"/> . I need more follow-up training so as to feel confident about it <input type="checkbox"/> . I do not like them <input type="checkbox"/>
23.	a. Were you provided with follow-up training on the issues approached after the completion of the induction programme? (follow-up meetings, e-mail exchanges, peer-directed meetings etc.)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Would it be useful for your training to be followed up in a more consistent way?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
24.	Would you recommend a colleague attending this training programme if it were not obligatory?	Yes, by all means <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, some of its parts <input type="checkbox"/> I am not so sure <input type="checkbox"/> Absolutely no <input type="checkbox"/>
25.	Which ways of professional development do you usually employ at present? (You may tick more than one box)	My daily teaching practice <input type="checkbox"/> Observing other teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Studying <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping updated in my field reading journals <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting classroom research <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating with other teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Attending training courses <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify)

Thank you for your time!

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