SemLang Summer University

Common Evaluation Frameworks for Language Teachers

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Introduction

This paper will examine the complex issue of teacher evaluation frameworks by looking at the wider context that generated the need for such frameworks. Issues of professional learning and quality assurance combine to highlight the need for common evaluation frameworks and at the same time to enable us to analyse the complex array of aspects underpinning the drafting of such frameworks.

The need for continuous professional learning has been emphasised in many attempts to discuss the implications for teachers of living and working in a knowledge-based society. The notion of knowledge is widening with the classic notion of knowledge broadening to regard knowledge as an integrative ability. Knowledge development happens in increasingly varied settings with individuals increasing their knowledge by participating in the process of knowledge development. These developments are creating new expectations as regards learning and learning provision. These expectations relate both to content needs and to new career standards that tend to be accompanied by a set of broader competencies. While there is a clear need for enhanced learning opportunities, quality of academic provision must also improve.

Usually associated with assessment and evaluation, quality assurance, both as a concept and a set of practices, has many practical implications. I will argue, therefore, that quality assurance should be analysed in connection with the process of managing quality. I will highlight the need for a process approach to quality assurance and will discuss both personal and institutional implications.

The need to manage quality challenges educational institutions to become learning organisations while teachers are themselves expected to be constantly learning. Therefore, evaluation frameworks based on competencies and skills can be a useful development guide for teachers, as well as a transparent evaluation tool. Although generic frameworks of teacher competencies have shaped teacher education programmes, it is still difficult to define the range of competencies that underpin teaching as a social activity. The way practitioners conceptualise the idea of quality is of prime importance and the paper will argue that evaluation frameworks can usefully incorporate teachers' own understanding of the competencies and skills that they need to develop. The results of a small piece of research on definition of competencies by Romanian higher education lecturers will also be reported.

1. Professional learning in the post-modern society

In my view, professional learning is one of the key concepts that underpin the approach to conceptualising and drafting evaluation frameworks.

The European Profile for Language Teacher Education (2004) proposes a wide base for teacher education programmes and a very comprehensive frame of reference which acknowledges the need to enhance teacher education with new competencies and skills. It acknowledges the widening range of competencies and skills teachers are expected to or wish to develop in order to respond to and cater for the complex needs of their students. Although evaluation tends to be associated with some externally imposed judgemental processes, I will argue that such evaluation frameworks serve self-development purposes through encouraging reflection on one's own abilities as well as on the wider context of teaching. As pointed out by the European Profile for language teacher education, they also serve as a means of ensuring quality in language teaching.

1.1 Focus on continuous learning

Current debates in education and particularly in educational innovation and management place a strong focus on the value of learning in society as a means to cope with the challenges that working in a changing and increasingly complex environment present to people in the professions (Fullan, 1993; Drucker 1995, 1999; Wells and Claxton, 2002). The economic, social and organisational changes in a post-modern world are altering the structure of experience. The educational issue of learning becomes of utmost importance and creates a distinctive disciplinary space for itself at the centre of social sciences research. Learning involves new knowledge or skills, but its deeper significance lies in its formative potential, in the understanding of what we are and how we can develop. That is why an exploration of how people learn in different contexts and settings can contribute to identifying a coherent theory of learning. Research that places learning at the centre of educational studies and explores its processes and institutional conditions in different learning contexts can make a contribution to understanding some of the key issues of our time.

Obviously, the kind of learning we are talking about is the one which involves the mind as well as *'feelings and personal meanings'* (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994). The elements involved in meaningful learning, as identified by Rogers and Freiberg, are: the cognitive and emotional involvement of the person, self-initiated involvement in the sense of '*discovery, reaching out, grasping and comprehending'* which come from within, pervasiveness or the difference it makes in the behaviour or attitude of the person, the learner's evaluation of the event in terms of relevance to their needs (Rogers and Freiberg, 1994:36).

Teacher learning and development are usually and justifiably considered in the context of classroom work, but I believe it is equally justified to analyse them within the context of a teacher's whole professional life. From this point of view, teacher development can be understood as a sort of professional attitude, a kind of flexibility and open-mindedness about one's profession, a recognition of the fact that methodologies and students change and that we need to be responsive to new challenges and take benefit of new opportunities for learning. Apart from solving classroom problems or puzzles (Allwright, 1992; 2003), teacher development means a constant revision and readjustment of the principles that guide one's teaching through a permanent attitude of inquiry. This kind of professional attitude refers to the work teachers do as individuals and as a group, as well as to how teachers get the most from a beneficial professional context and develop a professional identity which, in its turn, reflects itself in the life of individuals.

An expanded view of professional learning requires a diversification of teachers' learning opportunities leading to better understanding of goals and processes of education. Building a more complex professional identity requires development opportunities that go beyond support for acquisition of new skills and knowledge to comprise opportunities for teachers to reflect critically on practice and shape new knowledge and beliefs about the learning environment (Lieberman, 1996; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin,1996;).

'Professional development must embrace a range of opportunities that allow teachers to share with one another what they know and what they want to learn, as well as to connect their learning to the contexts of their teaching …to actively engage in experiences with others that are sustained over time, to reflect on the process as well as the content of what is actually being learned.' (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1996:206)

It seems that there are two sets of implications of this trend towards increasing teacher professionalism: on the one hand, there is a need for institutional and environmental support that promotes the spread of ideas and provides opportunities to engage in learning, on the other hand professional groups and cultures acquire great importance and so does the interest in processes of collective learning. If teacher development means more than skills in pedagogy and relates to personal mastery (Fullan, 1993) then learning is a lifelong venture that is based on developing and maintaining individual and collective vision as well as building collaborative relationships. Therefore organisational support is needed to create, communicate and maintain socially constructed visions.

1.2 The meaning of practice

The meaning of 'practice' is essential in any discussion of teacher learning. Is practice confined to classroom teaching or is it a wider concept, covering other aspects of teachers' professional activities, like testing, curriculum and course design, research, teacher training, etc.? Answers to these questions may indicate the widening range of competencies that teachers need to develop. Such competencies will necessarily inform design and use of evaluation frameworks.

The role of teachers seems to be increasingly more complex and involves out of class activities as well. Research is not excluded by any means from a teachers' professional life whether it focuses on classroom problem solving in the form of action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988), takes a more reflexive stance as exploratory practice (Allwright 2003) or involves educational aspects outside classrooms (Freeman and Johnson, 1998).

'*Practice is a good deal more than the technical things we do in classrooms – it relates to who we are, to our whole approach to life … the interactive practices of our classrooms are subject to constant change. …We need to look at the full context in which teachers' practice is negotiated, not just at the technical implementation of certain phenomena within the classroom.*' (Goodson 1995:55)

Teaching is embedded in sociocultural environments which teachers need to explore in order to conceptualise their own approach to teaching, in the same way in which they need to explore their own assumptions and beliefs.

1.3 Professional cultures

The usefulness of professional cultures built on emotional as well as intellectual strengths has been recognised by researchers. (Hargreaves, 1993; Fullan, 1993, 1999; Goodson, 1995). Hargreaves and Evans (1997) call for educational authorities to build professional communities of teacher learning within schools and across them.

'*Some of the most valuable forms of professional learning teachers can get are those that involve connecting with colleagues in other schools, receiving feedback and ideas from consultants or 'critical friends' outside their institution, and generally having access to other practices, ideas and advice that provide a point of comparison for and a source of reflection on their own accustomed ways of working in their own immediate setting.*' (1997:11)

Research evidence (Hargreaves, 1994; Wells, 2002) suggests that collegial support leads to increased confidence, greater readiness to take risks and commitment to continuous development. However, genuine collaboration is not easy to build and people need to learn to work with each other in a way which benefits themselves and the institutions they belong to. Although collaboration and collegiality are often discussed as if they are fully understood, the true meaning of collaboration remains unclear. Hargreaves (1994) opposes truly collaborative cultures to contrived collegiality and balkanization. Contrived collegiality is administratively regulated, compulsory and aiming at the implementation of externally-originated change. Balkanized cultures, or collaboration that divides, describe situations when teachers are separated into isolated and often competing subgroups within the same institution.

1.4 Communities of practice

Apart from its intrinsic value which still needs to be researched, collaboration is a form of engagement in social practice and thus a potential source of learning. Wenger (1998) develops the notion of 'communities of practice' as contexts in which participants generate meaning through mutual engagement. Communities of practice address all levels of experience; they '*include the practical and the theoretical, ideals and reality, or talking and doing.*'(1998:48). Practice in this sense is not to be opposed to theory.

'Even when theory is a goal in itself, it is not detached but instead is produced in the context of specific practices. Some communities specialise in the production of theories, but that too is a practice.' (1998:48)

In this sense, communities of practice are types of activities whereby people engage in developing, negotiating and sharing their theories and ways of understanding the world and in doing so they engage in continuous learning. Communities of practice are not formal entities but social structures where participants design and improve their practice and learn '*not a static subject matter but the very process of being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice.*' (1998:95).

Wenger proposes a view of learning as fundamentally social and experiential which depends on opportunities to contribute to the practice of communities and to use our abilities to participate and to negotiate meaning. Such a view of learning as social engagement necessarily combines individual and institutional aspects and indeed the wide-spread interest in cultures of collaboration brings to attention the need for institutional/organisational support and for a new role of teachers. More responsibility for teachers and organizations and more space for the teachers' voices are key issues that accompany discussions of teacher development and professionalism.

Building a more complex professional identity requires development opportunities that go beyond acquisition of new skills and knowledge to comprise opportunities for teachers to reflect critically on practice and shape new knowledge and beliefs about the learning environment.

Research is not excluded by any means from a teachers' professional life, whether it focuses on classroom problem solving in the form of action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988), takes a more reflexive stance as exploratory practice (Allwright 2003) or involves educational aspects outside classrooms (Freeman and Johnson, 1998). Involvement in research can encourage teachers to examine their own practice more closely, to develop their thinking and professional approach as well as to develop a new set of professional skills.

2. Quality assurance processes

The need to enhance, diversify and consolidate professional learning at all levels brings to the fore the issue of quality. Quality assurance and enhancement are essential processes in all learning environments. As Kelly and Grenfell (2004) point out, European-level evaluation frameworks are developed in order to increase mobility and to promote higher quality levels in foreign language teacher education in Europe.

A lot of work has already been done on quality assurance in language teaching.
In this section I will articulate and communicate my own view of quality management and I will argue that any work on quality assurance needs to start from teachers' own perceptions and opinions about what quality means in their specific teaching contexts.

2.1 Defining quality

Quality assurance can be regarded from two main perspectives:
-   as evaluation and assessment of quality, externally or internally driven;
-   as management of quality , involving institutions and individuals;

The need to manage quality justifies taking a process approach to quality assurance. Such a process equally involves individuals and institutions as the need to manage quality relates to several levels. Various approaches to defining and managing quality coexist. Following the work of the Council of Europe in the field of quality assurance, I will briefly discuss these approaches (Heyworth, Mateva, Muresan and Rose 2007)

Quality can be regarded in terms of measurable results whereby student performance is an indicator of teaching quality. Although this may seem a straightforward approach, teaching has started to be understood more in terms of teachers' thinking and therefore more space is now given to teachers' voices and understanding of their profession. This recent development emphasizes the complex nature of teaching which cannot always be understood and valued in terms of student results.

Client satisfaction as a result of all needs and expectations of clients having been met is another way of looking at quality. This may seem more appropriate in private teaching contexts but not exclusively. Learners can be considered as clients in most educational settings.

A process approach to quality undertakes an analysis of quality at all stages in delivering a service. Such an approach requires awareness of the main components of particular services and should look at individual and institutional aspects of the process.

In line with the new concern for teachers' voices and perspectives on teaching there is a personal development model of quality based on the motivation and perceptions of the people involved. I would argue that whatever framework we take, quality assurance needs to include a personal development component. What is more, quality assurance that is responsively undertaken cannot avoid addressing the personal development level.

As part of a wider framework which acknowledges the fact that education has a moral purpose (Fullan 1992) and communicates values there is a value-driven model of quality.

Whatever approach we take, we need to decide on the criteria to be applied to quality in our context of activity. That is essentially a reflective process that starts, as pointed out by Heyworth (2007) with questions like:

   'Are we teaching effectively?
   Does the curriculum provide the right framework?
   Are we using resources efficiently?
   Do we enable each student to achieve his/her full potential?'

The understanding of participants in the quality assurance process of the features of effective/good language teaching is essential in all situations that involve evaluation and enhancement of quality.

2.2 Key features

Whatever view we take of quality assurance, we need to regard it as a complex and dynamic phenomenon which is influenced by changes in the environment as well as by individual perceptions and attitudes. Any successful attempt at enduring quality of educational processes needs to take into account both the wider framework (policies, systems, institutional priorities) as well as perceptions of the individuals involved. The range of potential stakeholders is potentially vast because quality assurance processes also affect individuals, institutions, the wider environment. There are complex implications at work as any commitment to quality relates to personal and institutional values as well as to practical managerial processes.

In order to point out the link between issues of quality assurance and the process of drafting evaluation frameworks for teachers, we need to point out the fact that evaluation frameworks are standard-setting and therefore need to be underpinned by common understandings and acceptance of core values. Quality is one of these values. While quality can be approached and discussed according to the concepts outlined above, the issue of how teachers define quality continues to be paramount. Teachers should be called on to conceptualise and articulate their own understanding of quality.

My key point is that quality management needs to start from a personal definition of quality. And that means personal definitions of all teachers in a certain educational context that are hopefully blended into an institutional vision. If we are talking about coherent quality management and assurance, then personal and institutional definitions will have to meet somehow. If there is a big divide between them, then management of quality is unlikely to be successful. A lot of negotiation and communication will be involved among all stakeholders, which brings me to the conclusion that quality assurance is a process rather than a state we reach at any one time. And if it is a process, the management of that process is essential.

2.3 Formative character of evaluation frameworks

The final idea in the previous section brings out into the light yet again the importance of research. All the approaches discussed above need to be informed by data, be it data on student exam results, student perception of their learning experience, use and relevance of resources, management of service provision, personal perceptions and development plans.

If we have in view the need to develop common evaluation frameworks for language teachers as a means of describing quality in language teaching, then teachers need to be consulted in the process of

developing evaluation criteria. Any attempt at developing quality assurance standards and drafting evaluation frameworks needs to be preceded by extensive research on teachers' perceptions about their own professional life. Moreover, I would argue that teacher direct involvement in the process of undertaking such research can only be beneficial for their own development leading to better understanding of their profession, of the role of such evaluation frameworks and finally to acceptance of evaluation frameworks.

Data collection and analysis will inform the development of measurable indicators to enable us to decide on the need to improve or to understand where we stand in relation to other learning environments.

Data analysis leads to setting standards. Standards, as defined by Hayworth (2007) represent '*a definition of the operational objectives we set in order to meet the criteria and the ways in which we will assess our performance'.*

Standards need to be accepted and if possible 'owned' by key stakeholders. Here lies the complex implication of quality assurance at the level of institutional stakeholders. As I mentioned earlier, implications lie at both personal and institutional levels. In the following section I will discuss briefly institutional implications.

2.4 Ownership and institutional implications

In terms of management, quality means a process of setting standards based on data collection and analysis. Which brings me to another key point in my argument, i.e. the strong research element of quality assurance. If we agree that quality assurance is dynamic as it takes account of changes in the environment and in its turn generates changes, then the need to give it a strong research base is obvious. We need to record the key features of the learning environment in order to be able to manage and evaluate quality.

Another reason why I believe quality assurance is so closely related to data collection and analysis: we want teachers to 'own' the process of quality assurance and ownership is not easy to achieve. Teachers' perceptions of quality criteria and standards do matter and they will affect the chances of implementing successful quality assurance systems.

'Ownership cannot be achieved in advance of learning something new. Deep ownership comes through the learning that arises from full engagement in solving problems…. Ownership is a process as well as a state.' (Fullan 1992)

My doctoral research has shown that ownership comes from the learning that arises from full engagement in solving problems and professional tasks that are perceived as meaningful, from participation in decision-making, the chance to use the results of new learning or innovation. Feelings of ownership generate the need to keep up established performance standards; therefore building ownership does matter from a quality assurance point of view.

If we speak about the role of people in building and maintaining quality, and about ownership then we speak about a quality culture, which can be defined as a reflective and self-critical learning culture in which all members of an institution are involved. Ownership is evidence of a quality culture.

The implications for institutions lie in the need for them to become learning organizations. The concept has been widely used in corporate discourses, but I think it can be justifiably used in relation to educational institutions as well. I also believe that in spite of being widely used, the concept of learning organization remains elusive. Some of its key features seem nevertheless to be generally accepted.

2.5 Learning organisations in post-modern times

Descriptions of postmodernity place strong emphasis upon learning as a condition for personal and institutional growth. Such a perspective has developed out of an acute awareness of overwhelming instability and unpredictability of the environment in all its dimensions. Innovation looks more like a necessity than a choice. Most researchers concerned with organisational performance will actually consider learning as a condition for survival. Argyris and Schon (1978) point out that learning becomes a basic requirement rather than a sophisticated solution:

'The requirement for organisational learning is not an occasional, sporadic phenomenon, but is continuous and endemic to our society.' *(1978:9).*

Apart from the need for learning, the post-modern condition recognises that knowledge is local rather than universal and gives status to a multiplicity of voices and truths. Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell (1997) point out the exploratory and collaborative nature of learning and seem to share the perspective of Hargreaves (1994) discussed in the previous chapter.

'... the conditions of our times point to the increasing redundancy of universal ideologies as the primary means for enabling organisational and social cohesion.... Ironically, at a time of prolific globalization and yet because of it, what is becoming increasingly visible is that knowledge is a local and a social phenomenon. It comes out of the way people do things, work out what is the next step, how they go on together in given communities - whether those communities are separated by time, geography, function

or purpose.' (1997:216).

The concept of 'Learning Organisation' has emerged attempting to define and describe the learning process for both individuals and organisations, recognising the fact that organisations cannot learn unless their members do.

Learning organizations enable people to learn and develop, formally or informally (through engaging in problem solving, through collaboration, etc). Such institutions are capable to capitalise on staff learning and use the knowledge, skills or competencies. Therefore, one of the main challenges for such institutions is to turn personal learning into institutional learning. Finally, reflecting on and evaluating their own practices, acknowledging the fact that managerial processes are or should be regarded as enabling processes, not as ends in themselves are other key tasks for learning organizations.

2.6 Focus on research

Research informs both the setting of standards in quality assurance as well as the monitoring of quality in educational processes. As pointed out by Muresan (2007) research processes involve:

- gathering evidence and data relevant in relation to the goals set;
- analysing and interpreting the data so as to take informed decisions;
- taking effective action for improvement and remedial work;
- on-going monitoring of processes and checking on the effect of action taken;
- revision of institutional goals and systems.

Some of the recommended research instruments to be used in connection with analyzing quality comprise classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, surveys based on questionnaires, study of documentary evidence, diaries. I will only point out the value of classroom observation as a research instrument and a development tool.

Classroom observation is indeed a powerful tool in language education, serving various purposes. In terms of strategic management, it can be carried out regularly in order to monitor professional practice in a certain department /school and identify areas for improvement. In terms of human resource management, classroom observation is linked to recruitment and induction processes, or the on-going monitoring of quality. It is also an important developmental tool when it is carried out collaboratively as part of action research projects

2.7 Self evaluation

Self – evaluation is a key element of quality assurance but also a key element of development and learning. The existence of self-evaluation tools at personal and institutional level is evidence of an organisation's self learning. It can be done with the help of a variety of instruments such as diaries and self-evaluation questionnaires but also with more dynamic tools like engaging in action-research. Any instrument or activity that involves reflection is essentially a self-evaluation instrument with a high potential to foster learning.

Action-research is one such tool which enables practitioners to reflect on and analyse practice with the purpose of understanding/changing/improving it.

Action research invites you to engage in a continuous process of learning, reflection and disciplined inquiry into your perspectives and behaviour, and how these influence working life and other activities. Action research is often conducted in collaboration with others. This participative active learning style helps you engage reflectively with challenging, controversial and potentially disturbing aspects of responsibility, business, and working life, enabling you to think and act in new ways.

3. Teacher perceptions of professional competencies

I have discussed earlier the value of research on teacher thinking and perceptions about the range of competencies that underpin their profession and on teachers' formulation of the meaning of quality. A piece of research I am currently undertaking in my own institutions – The University of Economics, Bucharest – has produced the following list of competencies as identified by 12 respondents, lecturers in the department of foreign languages. Research has only been initiated and at this stage it is impossible to report on results. I am only taking a brief look at the list of competencies identified by my respondents, a list whose value for the purposes of this paper is to point out the wide range of professional and personal competencies that teachers believe underpin their profession. When asked to list the key competencies related to their activity as members of a university language department, the respondents have come up with the following list:

1. knowledge of the language
2. confident use of the language
3. communication skills
4. teaching methodology, ability to transmit knowledge to students
5. awareness of changes in the teaching environment (new methods, new developments in the field)

6. self-evaluation

7. student evaluation

8. foster independent thinking and learning with the students

9. be receptive to student evaluation of us

10. research abilities

11. team spirit

12. inquisitive mind/analytical thinking

13. sensitivity towards learners' needs and learning context

14. course and materials design abilities

15. planning the teaching process

16. classroom management skills

17. professional confidence

18. be a good listener

19. refined presentation and public speaking skills

20. time management

21. interdisciplinarity in our profession

22. sensitivity towards learners and peers as persons

23. prioritizing professional and personal actions

24. skills for dealing with administration and bureaucracy

25. knowledge of the field where the students will use the language

26. awareness of cultural issues/dimensions

27. enabling students to interact harmoniously with other cultures and appreciate their own culture

28. teacher training skills

29. ability to raise the students' level of motivation

30. ability to give constructive feedback

I am very well aware that it would be entirely unsatisfactory for a raw list such as this to be reproduced in a research report. It needs to be analysed (for example by grouping competencies under various categories and themes) and interpreted in the context of the whole research instrument. However, for the argument expressed in this paper, the range of competencies perceived as constituent of the role of teachers as members of a university language department sheds light on the complex nature of the teaching profession and the value of gathering language teachers' views of their professional role (for questionnaire and preliminary results see Appendix 1).

4. Concluding remarks: value of evaluation frameworks

Based on the discussion so far, we can confidently point out that evaluation frameworks are powerful tools for monitoring quality and promoting professional learning.

They offer:
- A roadmap for novice teachers
- Guidance for experienced teachers
- An institutional structure for focusing improvement efforts around shared purposes and mutual goals.

All frameworks need common elements and descriptors based on common understanding of language competence, teaching competence and additional competencies and skills (e.g. leadership and managerial skills, research skills, IT skills)

Evaluation frameworks also encourage reflection and therefore have a strong learning function. They approach foreign language teacher development as an ongoing process in line with the prevailing themes in the teacher education discourses: teachers need to become life-long learners themselves if they are to enable their students to become life-long learners.

Teachers need to be consulted in the process of developing evaluation criteria.
Any attempt at developing quality assurance standards and drafting evaluation frameworks needs to be preceded by extensive research on teachers' perceptions about their own professional life. Because research results need to be used to the benefit of the community that generated them, I would say that research results need to be fed back to teachers and subject to discussion.

The need for wide teacher consultation to underpin establishment of evaluation criteria results from the need for such frameworks to be 'owned' by teachers and to be relevant for both individuals and institutions. Policy-makers and educational institutions will hopefully acknowledge the specific features of language teachers' work.

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Appendix 1

Research in progress – Teacher perceptions of professional competencies

1. List the key competencies related to your activity as members of a university language department.

1. knowledge of the language
2. confident use of the language
3. communication skills
4. teaching methodology, ability to transmit knowledge to students
5. awareness of changes in the teaching environment (new methods, new developments in the field)
6. self-evaluation
7. student evaluation
8. foster independent thinking and learning with the students
9. be receptive to student evaluation of us
10. research abilities
11. team spirit
12. inquisitive mind/analytical thinking
13. sensitivity towards learners' needs and learning context
14. course and materials design abilities
15. planning the teaching process
16. classroom management skills
17. professional confidence
18. be a good listener
19. refined presentation and public speaking skills
20. time management
21. interdisciplinarity in our profession
22. sensitivity towards learners and peers as persons
23. prioritizing professional and personal actions
24. skills for dealing with administration and bureaucracy
25. knowledge of the field where the students will use the language
26. awareness of cultural issues/dimensions
27. enabling students to interact harmoniously with other cultures and appreciate their own culture
28. teacher training skills
29. being able to raise the Ss' level of motivation
30. ability to give constructive feedback

2. To what extent has pre-service education helped you develop those skills/competencies?

Pre-service training relevant to language development and less so to teaching methodology and wider professional skills.

3. To what extent has in-service education and activity helped you develop those skills/competencies?

Usefulness of in-house training courses;

Usefulness of teacher training courses run by UK trainers

In-service training relevant for development of wider professional skills/competencies - teamwork, sensitivity to students' needs, course and materials' design, research.

4. *What other sources of learning apart from formal education and teaching environment have helped you improve professionally and personally?*

- ✓ Pursuit of other professional activities, working in a company or as a translator and contact with various fields has deepened knowledge of specific professional language and has increased awareness of the target professional situation for which we prepare students.

- ✓ Relevance of personal interests/hobbies - interest in film directing (wanted to study film directing as graduate study) have contributed to understanding how to manage role playing and classes in general.

- ✓ Travelling for study purposes (survival skills, informal meetings with local people, cultural events, spending time in libraries, incidents)

- ✓ Working together with more experienced peers (in pairs or groups)

- ✓ Informal discussions with peers

- ✓ Observing and being observed

- ✓ From my students (especially content knowledge, but not only: IT skills)

- ✓ Studying towards and delivering teacher training courses- intercultural competence and flexibility

- ✓ Participation in training courses delivered by UK trainers

- ✓ Involvement in educational projects

- ✓ Textbook writing activity

5. *What competencies do you need to improve?*

Research abilities

Sensitivity towards learners' needs and future professional contexts

Awareness of changes in the teaching environment (new methods, new developments in the field)

Critical thinking

Being able to raise the Ss' level of motivation

Organising events

6. *What sort of institutional support do you need in order to develop those competencies?*

- support for participation in conferences, workshops and seminars
- enabling stages in other universities
- job shadowing
- a better updated library with access to professional and academic journals

- wider and sustained provision of in-service training delivered by trainers from other EU countries in order to increase awareness of standards in other contexts;
- more contact with professionals from various fields of economics
- access to international conferences
- workshops on wider professional competencies, not necessarily teaching methodology
- training in critical thinking
- more time for independent study
- seminars/discussions on development, enabling us to understand what works for us, less focus on 'how to do' issues.

DG Éducation et culture

Programme pour l'éducation et
la formation tout au long de la vie