Autonomous Continuing Professional Development for Algerian University Teachers of English

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Abstract

The educational landscape in Algeria has been undergoing significant changes in recent years. Increasing globalisation of academia, economy and culture has highlighted the need for learning English as a tool for education, academic research and publishing, as well as economic and political activities. Efforts to promote the learning of English language cannot overlook teaching quality as an important contributing factor. Yet, the issue of continuing professional development (CPD) that should empower teachers to tackle current as well as new challenges may be receiving little attention in Algerian higher education. There have been attempts to bring the topic to the fore as Algerian universities have started to initiate some work towards quality assurance. Before resources are invested in promoting CPD for teachers of English, we certainly need some systematic analysis and description of the current situation. This paper reports on a survey of sixty-three teachers of English from fourteen Algerian universities. The purpose of this research is to identify: 1- current CPD policies, forms, and stakeholders' attitudes, 2- strategies to enhance CPD for better quality ELT and 3- strategies to promote *autonomous* CPD. On the basis of the findings from the analysis of data collected via a thirty-four-item questionnaire and a focus group, the researcher assesses the current situation of CPD for ELT teachers in Algerian higher education especially in the departments of English and makes some suggestions for improving it. The researcher discusses the challenges and opportunities in current CPD and then attempts to make a case for a CPD that is primarily initiated and managed by the teacher and that this model would be much more effective than institutionally-based models.

*Key Words***:** continuing professional development, autonomous, English teaching and learning, higher education , Algeria

Introduction

In the last two decades, there has been a strong drive towards higher effectiveness and achievement in education. There is a tremendous body of literature emerging especially from governmental institutions that push educational institutions towards demonstrating a significant return on the investment in education (cf. SEDL, 2000, SHEEO, 2005). Starting in the 1980's, the accountability trend which appeared strongly in the USA (especially with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) and then the United Kingdom has now become an international trend surfing on the waves of globalisation. The ranking of national educational systems and universities (PISA, Shanghai Ranking, etc.) in most countries has certainly ignited unprecedented competition between higher education institutions and countries. A strong but easy-to-use tool has hence become available to anyone (specialist and lay people) to discuss the effectiveness of universities.

This research is an attempt to assess the current teachers' professional development policies, forms, and stakeholders' attitudes towards them in Algerian departments of English. Then, the researcher discusses strategies to enhance CPD that can lead to a better teaching quality. Challenges and opportunities in current CPD are discussed and recommendations made for an autonomous CPD managed by the teacher, which might be a model that is more productive than others.

1. Literature Review

The Algerian educational system has become an area of substantial reforms in recent years. The requirements of a globalised academia and economy have highlighted the need for developing English language as a tool for learning, academic and economic communication. Success in achieving this goal requires higher teaching quality. In the following section, the researcher discusses the link between higher quality in English language teaching and learning, the preparation of teachers to teach, their in-service professional development and the role of teacher autonomy as a potential solution to challenges facing CPD practice.

1.1 Goal of Education: Effective Quality Learning

One thing that all stakeholders should agree on is that one major role for education is to aim at *efficient* learning. Efficiency can be defined in simple terms as the achievement of optimal learning with available and/or minimum financial, human and time resources. In their effort to increase their effectiveness and hence ranking among other institutions, many universities have been undertaking systematic self-examination of the different factors that determine the quality of their performance. A lot of literature (cf. Ellis, 1993; QAAHES, 2000; Eurydice, 2006; Martin, 2007; HEA, 2008; Badrawi, 2009) discusses quality assurance policies and tools.

1.2 Role of Teaching / Teacher in Achieving Quality Learning

The success of any educational institution can be measured by a number of parameters which include and are not limited to: how well learners are trained, the degree of learners, teachers and other employees' satisfaction, the rate of learners' success, etc. Achievement in these areas is determined by the contribution of university managers, teachers, learners, parents and material resources. Teachers are key contributors to the degree of a university's achievement. Therefore, as Simerly decades ago noted, universities started initiating programs for the professional development of their teachers (1976, p. 1).

Whether we adhere to the approaches that see teachers as the source of knowledge and skills to be acquired by students or to those for which they are facilitators of learning, teachers have key responsibility for the learning of their students. Research (cf. Eysan et al., 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Salinas et. al., 2006; Wong, 2007) has shown that teachers can foster or undermine learners' academic achievement. Eysan et al.'s investigation found that students perceive that teaching method and teacher behaviour as main causes of their academic failure (1996).

1.3 The Requirement of Teaching Skills

Teachers can make a positive contribution to their learners' achievement if they possess the necessary skills. Although there may be different views about what teacher preparation and development need to focus on (cf. Simerly, 1976, p. 2), it is still possible to have some agreement about some skills. To be able to foster optimal learning in their students, teachers of English as a foreign language need to be equipped with the required teaching skills as

1. sufficient proficiency in English,
2. ability to prepare, plan and present lessons,
3. ability to manage classes and deal with disruptive behaviour,
4. ability to communicate efficiently with colleagues and learners,
5. ability to assess learners' learning,
6. ability to use of modern tools like ICT to enhance teaching

1.4 Necessity of Good Pre-service Teacher Training

The above list of teaching skills is of course not exhaustive; but it is quite representative of the skills necessary to enable teachers to contribute optimally to their learners' academic achievement. Although some dispositions for teaching can be believed to originate in personality, character and education of teachers, many of the skills for teaching require and/or are better developed through training. There is a general belief that teachers must be prepared for teaching and that the quality of teacher training determines the quality of their teaching and consequently their learners' achievement (cf. Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2009). Data collected over a six-year period by Darling-Hammond et al. showed that teachers with a formal teaching preparation produce significantly higher achievement gains with their students than uncertified teachers do (2005).

1.5 Necessity of Good Continuing Teacher Development

Whether with a comprehensive quality preparation for teaching or with insufficient training, teachers should probably carry on developing their teaching skills throughout their careers. This requirement is quite reasonable considering that teacher training can do a lot to prepare teachers for teaching but cannot reasonably prepare them for everything. Besides, changes that occur in the syllabus, characteristics of the learners, working conditions, etc., produce new demands in terms of skills and knowledge that were not covered in the teacher training period. Therefore, teachers are required to update and maintain their teaching skills (as some skills can suffer attrition). Continuing efforts to develop and stay as efficient teachers are necessary to ensure a sustainable teaching quality.

Professional development must meet a number of quality conditions to be worth the investment of tightening human, time and financial resources. According to a study by the U.S. Department of Education Professional Development Team,

> [Quality professional development for teachers] (1) focuses on teachers as central to student learning; (2) focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement; (3) respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of individuals within the school community; (4) reflects best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership; (5) enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, and technology; (6) promotes continuous inquiry and improvement; (7) involves collaborative planning; (8) requires substantial time and other resources; (9) is driven by a coherent long-term plan; and (10) is assessed by its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning (1994).

> Besides, quality teacher preparation and development should empower teachers with

1. Capacity to make decisions, engage in self-directed action and development
2. Awareness of the range of options available, alternatives to current teaching practice
3. Awareness of their beliefs; which is the first step to make reform possible. Understanding behaviours requires understanding beliefs.

1.6 Challenges to Good Continuing Teacher Development

Despite the widespread adherence to the importance of investment of time, money and human resources in projects and activities that are meant to foster the professional development of teachers, reality - even in the richest countries of the world - does impose some limits to what can be done in this area. Major challenges to good continuing teacher development include the following:

1. *Financial resources* are often fewer than needed due to the international economic crises. Many oil producing countries like Algeria have recently begun to feel the fall-outs of lower oil prices. Even in the world's largest economy, the Unites States of America, many sectors including health and education have been mandated to cut expenses. In these circumstances, education cannot ask for bigger or even similar budgets allocated in better economic conditions. Education has to function with whatever is available in financial and human resources. Some CPD forms like going on scholarships in English speaking countries to enhance English proficiency and hone teaching skills demand considerable financial resources.

2. *Time*: Many teachers would complain that time is not available for activities like action research, reading about teaching methods, learning new technologies to use in teaching, attending colleagues' classes for peer observation, participating in conferences, etc.

3. *Negative Attitudes:* The attitudes of people towards engaging in continuing professional development determine significantly the extent to which they are going to oppose or support CPD policies and activities. In other words, little can be done to engage teachers who believe they are good or experienced enough to make any further learning or CPD futile.

1.7 Overcoming Challenges for Good Continuing Teacher Development

Most of the challenges cited above can be alleviated by a model of continuous professional development in which the individual teacher has the main leverage in selecting goals and forms of CPD, planning actions, mobilising the resources and assessing the outcome of these. The model can be called **autonomous** CPD. Teachers as autonomous learners and autonomous persons are probably needed as role models for students. Autonomous teachers always seek ways to improve themselves and influence their learners in a positive way and do not wait for opportunity to be granted to them (self-empowerment). For Lamb, an autonomous teacher learns how to develop autonomously through critical reflection (2008).

In an autonomous model, the teacher enjoys the freedom and responsibility to actively seek to develop their teaching skills using the resources (time, energy, materials, and human) that are available to them when and where it is most suitable to them. He/she can / must choose the CPD activities that suit the resources that they can mobilise without adding excessive load to their professional and social responsibilities. These forms - suitable for an autonomous CPD model - are illustrated under *Implications* below.

To be able to manage their own professional development, teachers need to be empowered with attitudes and skills that are required for autonomous development. Webb examined teachers' exercise of autonomy. He found out that the participants exercised autonomy by adapting mandatory curriculum and assessment policies to the needs of their learners in order to improve student achievement. The teachers' ability to do so relied on their professional expertise, prior teacher preparation, and research (Webb, 2002, p. 47). During teacher training especially, teachers need to be provided with opportunities to develop their professional skills to exercise autonomy in adapting their teaching to their learners' needs. Those needs change across generations, geographical contexts, etc.

2. The Study
2.1 Background of the Study and Research Questions

Algerian higher education has been going through significant changes in recent years. The architecture of degrees has changed to match European standards based on the Licence – Master – Doctorate (L.M.D) model. New modules have been designed with often new contents to teach. In the field of English language teaching and learning, increasing globalisation of academia, economy and culture has highlighted the need for promoting the learning of English as a tool for academic performance, and economic and political communication. Efforts to achieve this goal must aim at developing better teaching practices in ELT as they represent an important factor. Yet, the issue of teacher preparation and continuing professional development (CPD) that should empower teachers to tackle old as well as new challenges seems to have received little attention in Algerian higher education. There have been attempts to bring this issue to the fore as Algerian universities have started to initiate some effort towards quality assurance. To inform policies and investment of financial and human resources in promoting CPD for teachers of English, there is certainly a need for some systematic analysis and description of the current situation. This research aims at contributing to the literature about CPD for Algerian ELT teachers in higher education. It reports on a survey of sixty-three English teachers from fourteen Algerian universities. The purpose of this research is to answer to the following questions:

1. What are the current CPD policies, forms, and the stakeholders' attitudes?
2. What strategies can be implemented to enhance CPD for better quality ELT? And
3. What strategies can be implemented to promote **autonomous** CPD?

2.2 Rationale of the Study

Research similar to the present study is needed because continuing professional development is essential for promoting and maintaining good standards for teaching/learning. Besides, decisions and projects concerning CPD must be informed and guided by sufficient data about the current situation of the field. Another reason for this study is that there seems to be little research about the issue in the context of Algerian higher education.

2.3 Participants

This study aimed to survey a random sample of a thousand teachers in Algerian departments of English. More than a hundred and fifty (150) teachers (about 10 per cent of the total population) were approached by email and thirty (30) face-to-face to participate in the study. Sixty-three teachers returned the completed questionnaire.

The participants teach in the four regions in Algeria; which may make the sample rather representative of the whole population. The respondents come from fourteen (14) universities:
- North-Centre of Algeria: Thirty-eight (38) teachers from the universities of Algiers 2: Six (06), Blida 2: Twenty-six (26), Medea: Two (02), and Tizi Ouzou: Four (04)
- Southern Algeria: Three (03) from the universities of Adrar: One (01), Laghouat: Two (02), - Eastern Algeria: Sixteen (16) from the universities of Annaba: Eleven (11), Bejaia: One (01), Guelma: One (01), Oum Al Boughi: One (01), Sétif: Two (02)
- Western Algeria: Six (06) from the universities of Mostaghanem: One (01), Oran: Three (03) and Tlemcen: Two (02).

In terms of experience in teaching EFL, of the sixty-three (63) teachers who returned the completed questionnaire, 31.75 % have been in ELT from 1 to 3 years, 28.57 % from 4 to 10 years and 39.68 % over 10 years. The respondents are experienced enough in the field with an average teaching experience of 10.50 years. 68% of them have worked in Algerian departments of English for more than four years and thus can be expected to know well the CPD situation in Algerian universities.

Teachers are the main stakeholder as far as CPD is concerned. Nevertheless, an extension of the present study should survey more management. About 20 % of the informants were or are currently holding managerial positions (Head or Deputy Head of university English departments).

2.4 Data Collection Instruments and Data Analysis

2.4.1 Focus Group

The British Council organised two ELT conferences in Hammamet, Tunisia in February 2013 and in Marrakech, Morocco in February 2014. ELT practitioners from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya convened to discuss professional development for ELT teachers in their respective countries and exchange experiences. A team five (5) EFL teachers from five Algerian universities held intensive discussions to reflect and analyse the current CPD situation for ELT in Algerian higher education. The researcher took notes of the ideas and conclusions discussed by the participants. Those notes informed the design of the **survey questionnaire** described below.

Data from the focus group are also used along side questionnaire data to discuss the research questions.

2.4.2 Survey Questionnaire

To collect primary data in order to answer the three research questions formulated above, the researcher designed *Professional Development for University Teachers of English – Questionnaire* (see Appendix A). The questionnaire consists of three parts and thirty-four (34) items. The respondents were invited to select a scale out of nine to inform the researcher about:

1. Their and other colleagues' attitudes towards CPD at university (Part 1 of the questionnaire) with scales ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 9 = 'strongly agree';
2. The CPD activities they have been using and how often (Part 2); with scales ranging from 1 = 'I have not tried this activity yet' to 9 = 'I regularly do this activity'; and
3. Their opinion about the teaching skills that CPD should develop in EFL teachers with scales ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 9 = 'strongly agree'.

The closed-ended question type was selected to encourage participants to complete the questionnaire. Besides, to elicit more insights from them, they were invited to add more input concerning CPD activities and skills for EFL teachers not listed in the questionnaire and their own recommendations to improve CPD at university.

The participants' responses were converted into a Microsoft Excel sheet. The average response for each questionnaire item was calculated to let emerge any existing tendencies. For the same purpose, the responses were turned into percentages for two categories by tallying the percentage of informants who responded towards disagreement (scales 1 to 4) and those who said they agree (scales 6 to 9). The full statistics of the results are presented in tables under Appendix B below.

3. The Findings - Discussion

Before reviewing the main findings of this study, it is useful to consider some limitations in assessing the evidence upon which the conclusions are made. Then, the data collected are combined from both instruments used in this research to discuss the first research question: "What are the current CPD policies, forms, and the stakeholders' attitudes?" The findings are presented around the following points:

3.2.1 The stakeholders' attitudes towards the current CPD policies and forms
3.2.2 The CPD forms currently offered to / used by ELT university teachers
3.2.3 Key Characteristics of CPD for university teachers of English

3.1 Limitations to the Study
1. Self-report accuracy of information needs to be checked by other measures; which pose a big challenge as many teachers may seem too busy and not participate in research.
2. The number of participants needs to rise to make conclusions with more confidence. Research needs to overcome at least two hurdles; a low rate of returned questionnaires (below 50% in this study) and difficulty to reach participants. There is still no contact list for all ELT teachers in Algerian universities.
3. Difficulty to measure quantity of actual CPD; and

4. Difficulty to evaluate its impact on learning

3.2 Key Findings of the Study

3.2.1 What are stakeholders' attitudes towards the current CPD policies and forms?

Participants in the focus groups held long discussions to analyse the current CPD situation for ELT teachers in Algeria. In Algeria, similarly to Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, the stakeholders' attitudes seem to be mixed and vary especially along roles (teacher or managers) and number of years of teaching (novice vs. more experienced teachers). The participants believe that for many managers in the educational sector, CPD does not seem to be high on the agenda. The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education does pay lip service to the importance of CPD; a considerable budget is allotted every year to CPD abroad / local study days, conferences, and research teams. Most managers, according to 89.09 % of the teachers who completed the questionnaire, do not provide *enough* opportunities and support for teachers' CPD (See Appendix B).

As for teachers, many of them seem to accept CPD. 52.83 % of the questionnaire respondents said most teachers are willing to participate in CPD. The data indicate a strong adherence to professional development among the informants as 93.55 % believe CPD activities are important for teachers and learners' success. All the participants in the focus group voiced concerns that some teachers with more teaching years tend to see CPD as a burden and unnecessary intrusion in their routine activities. A lot of novice teachers, however, tend to be more willing to go on CPD. One justification for the observed lack of interest stems from the fact that CDP events may fail to have a positive effect on the advancement of the teachers' career. The other reason relates to reluctance some teachers show, especially to certain types of CPD formats like action research, demonstration classes and class observation. Such forms do require expertise and time resources and sometimes may be construed by some teachers to question their professional competence.

3.2.2 The CPD Forms Currently Offered to / Used by ELT University Teachers

A big array of CPD formats appear to be utilized by Algerian university EFL teachers. Focus group data seem to indicate that the current major forms of CPD are coordination meetings of teachers, study days, conferences, debates, and informal conversations with peers. To a much lesser extent, only a few teachers benefit from scholarships and fellowships in English speaking countries and participate in online webinars, etc. Questionnaire data show the most frequently employed CPD activities; 94.74 % of the teachers said they quite regularly review their lessons to improve them; 90 % of them said they observe and reflect on their own teaching; and 89.29 % reported experimenting with new teaching techniques and solutions to problems they have noticed in their courses.

Questionnaire data also indicate that some CPD activities are rarely used by the surveyed teachers. The least frequently used CPD forms come as follows: team-teaching (According to 90 % of the respondents); then, giving and attending model lessons with colleagues (68 %) with an average frequency of use of 3.62/9 (9 = 'always'); Finally, 69.09 % reported never going on scholarships / fellowships abroad. The average frequency of use for the eighteen (18) CPD forms in the questionnaire is rather considerable at 5.60/9, which means the respondents seem to use most of the forms.

3.2.3 Key Characteristics of CPD for University Teachers of English
Focus group and questionnaire data also indicate that the current continuing professional development activities for EFL teachers in Algerian higher education present the following key features:

1. *Quantity* vs. *Quality*: Emphasis is put on the quantitative aspect of CPD more than qualitative parameters. Managers and teachers' attention appear to be focused on meeting the requirement for holding activities for professional development. Little attention seems to be devoted to how well these activities are conducted and their impact on the quality of teaching.
2. *Assessment*: 76 % of teachers said that the impact of CPD activities on students' learning is rarely evaluated with an average frequency use of 3.80/9. And for 56.86 % of them, those activities are not followed up to ensure that the knowledge and skills gained are implemented by teachers.
3. The focus group identified a key characteristic which is that the focus of CPD activities at university seems to be on developing *specialist knowledge* not on teaching methods and skills.
4. Opportunities offered by universities (scholarships, conferences and study days) are rather *top-down* (vs. *bottom-up*); decisions are mostly made centrally by management with reduced participation of teachers. Yet, 66.67 % of teachers said CPD is rather voluntary (vs. compulsory).
5. *Costly*: Focus tends s to be on institutional CPD forms that require financial, time and administrative resources (especially scholarships abroad, team research projects and conferences). Therefore, only 30.91 % of the respondents have frequent access to scholarships abroad because of the high cost (travel and hotel expenses).
6. More *individual* than *collaborative*: 60.42 % of teachers said CPD is mostly an individual endeavour. The most frequently used forms of CPD mentioned above are done individually (See Appendix B: The highest regular use for items 5, 8, 14 and 15 in part 2 of the questionnaire)
7. CPD is still largely done in the traditional *face to face* mode. Yet, using ICT and *on-line* activities on the Internet, social media, email, etc., seems to be picking up, especially with younger teachers. 54.55 % of the questionnaire respondents reported sharing teaching resources and experience with colleagues online; and 61.82 % said they watch videos and/or/ listen to pod casts about teaching methodology.
8. Some CPD is *inquiry-based.* 78.57 % of the participants said they do research on issues related to teaching; and 77.36 % reported reading about teaching methodology. In Algeria and in many other countries, higher education teachers' research is now the single most important factor in promotion (*The publish or perish paradigm*).

In summary, the data collected seem to reveal different attitudes held by the stakeholders towards engaging in continuing professional development at university. The data also show the variety of formats used in various degrees of frequency. The analysis of the data from the focus group and the survey questionnaire has let some characteristics of CPD emerge. Based on these findings, the following section puts forward some strategies to enhance CPD for better quality ELT with a particular emphasis on an *autonomous* model as a possible solution to overcome the challenges to CPD discussed above.

4. Implications

This section discusses some implications on the basis of the data presented above under the review of the literature and the study. This discussion is structured around the second and third research questions, i.e. 2. "What strategies can be implemented to enhance CPD for better quality ELT?" And 3. "What strategies can be implemented to promote **autonomous** CPD?"

4.1 Strategies to Enhance CPD for Better Quality ELT

In the previous sections, the researcher has made a brief characterisation and analysis of the current situation of CPD for ELT teachers in higher education in Algeria. Based on this analysis, a few suggestions are considered for improving this situation. With regards to the challenges discussed above and related to limited resources especially time for teachers, and for CPD actions to be more engaging (and therefore more successful), CPD should better *offer maximum flexible* opportunities and the least time and space *constraints*. Better CPD actions should

1. *Be efficient*: Clearly offer maximum return on investment (the more benefits are visible to teachers the higher their engagement will be to attend, initiate and follow up CPD projects); they should also benefit a maximum number of teachers as higher efficiency leads to higher sustainability over time.
2. Require minimum resources (time, travel, energy and money) which will increase chances of projects getting up and running quickly;
3. Require no or minimal top management approval and support as the latter is often slow to respond and sometimes resistant to initiatives;
4. Require minimum number of action performers (people responsible for planning, running and following up CPD activities); The smaller the number the easier to carry out tasks and the necessary coordination;
5. Be *reciprocal*/collaborative with no threats to the face of participants hence reducing adversity, anxiety and animosity and improving collegiality and collaboration; CPD success stories should be shared for emotional support.
6. *CPD-Convenient time table*: Abdal-Haqq remarked that school schedules generally do not offer sufficient time for CPD activities during the school day (1996). 69.08 % of our questionnaire respondents complained that time is not available for CPD work (tight teaching time tables). Rényi calls for restructuring work schedules to incorporate CPD in the teachers' daily work (1996). Development opportunities should be made available during school hours. For instance, if teachers with common courses, learners, etc. are scheduled on the same days, chances are that they will meet and collaborate more.
7. *Creating favourable conditions for CPD to occur*: One free slot every teaching day will probably increase opportunities for teachers bumping into each other, meeting, holding informal conversations, sharing experiences and collaborating on mini projects for CPD. Simple sharing of successes and challenges will boost collegiality and morale (So! I'm not the only one struggling with the issue!). Rooms needed that are inviting to teachers (comfort, enough chairs, tables, coffee, water and tea, etc.) will attract teachers to the same place. Provision of simple tools is important. 83.33 % of teachers said necessary tools for CPD like appropriate rooms are *not* sufficiently provided.
8. Making CPD *more productive* by extending benefits to the community by sharing the outcomes of CPD events in all available means (handouts, emails, social media, etc.).

9. *High Quality: Evaluation of CPD impact* and a regular review of current CPD forms to ensure *quality* of actions;
10. *Develop more teaching skills (vs. specialist knowledge)*: 82.83% of the questionnaire respondents suggested that university teachers of English need to develop more their teaching techniques, especially assessment skills (98.28 %) and class management skills (93.44 %).
11. Give *incentives* especially career promotion for active and productive participation CPD activities.

4.2 Autonomous CPD as a Feasible Solution to Overcome Constraints

The belief or fact that teacher preparation and development is not top of the agenda for many university managers makes the need for *autonomous* CPD critical. 89.09 % of the questionnaire respondents complain that most managers do not provide enough opportunities and support for teachers' CPD. With little or no support from their institutions, some EFL teachers are confronted to worries about finding resources especially time and money and left to wonder: *What can I do to support my own professional development?* In these conditions, it may be more efficient to consider oneself (the teacher) as the main initiator, manager and resource provider for one's CPD. Teacher preparation should help foster teacher autonomy and develop their ability to manage their own professional development. 94.83 % of the questionnaire respondents agree that EFL teachers need to improve their capacity to manage their own professional development.

The Hub Model: The proactive teacher will stand as a *hub* for CPD activities and initiate, organise, mobilise resources, support, etc., for himself/herself and for a community (may be a small team) of other willing teachers. If the 'hub teacher' succeeds in convincing his/her team of the great personal and professional benefits of the activities, they will probably become hubs themselves and move on to attract other reluctant teachers; Hence an exponential expansion of participation. *Autonomous* CPD, however, will be successful if it meets certain conditions:

1. *Collaboration*: Autonomous professional development should not be confused with individualistic work. Teachers can and should learn a lot from their peers through department, local, national and international networking. Simple *sharing of resources and opportunities for CPD* and the wealth of resources for CPD available on-line with an ELT community via the Internet can bear considerable benefits. Collaboration and mutual help will foster collegiality which, according to Shah, "plays a vital role in augmenting teacher professional growth and development, job satisfaction, organizational and professional commitment as well as school quality and student performance" (2012, p. 1242).
2. *Pooling Resources*: Autonomous CPD is more effective when resources (intellectual, time, material) are combined. Subject and department-wide coordination on curriculum, teaching and assessment, debates and informal conversations with peers, adapting or adopting solutions/materials devised by others will generally produce more benefits than working in isolation. The resources of the community/team are almost always richer than the individual's.
3. *Demystifying CPD*: Fostering a broad awareness among teachers that many CPD forms are very accessible to them and cost effective (time and other resources) and do not require managers' approval. For example, they can engage in informal chats with colleagues about issues and solutions, new ideas, etc., watching selected webinars or their audio while

travelling, selecting new teaching resources from open access wealth available on the web, etc. Teachers simply need to know that there is a lot they can do for their own professional development.

Conclusion

Algerian higher education is undergoing profound changes. But there seems to be little discussion of teaching quality and much less of teacher development and training. The training of university teachers in particular seems to be taken for granted or simply overlooked. The literature on teacher training and development in Algerian contexts confirms this impression by its striking scarcity. However, economic imperatives are exerting pressure on universities for higher quality and performance. Algerian universities have started to initiate some institutional effort towards quality assurance in recent years. Assuring quality in Algerian departments of English goes certainly through quality teaching which is an important factor in students' academic achievement.

In order to contribute to gathering data necessary to inform decision-making about CPD policies and practice, this study investigated the Algerian context using a focus group and a survey questionnaire of sixty-three teachers of English from fourteen Algerian universities. The purpose of this research was to identify: 1- current CPD policies, forms, and the stakeholders' attitudes, 2- strategies to enhance CPD for better quality ELT and 3- strategies to promote autonomous CPD. On the basis of the findings from the data analysis, the researcher assessed the current situation of CPD for EFL teachers in Algerian higher education and made some suggestions for improvement. The researcher discussed the challenges facing CPD and then attempted to make the case for autonomous CPD. According to this recommendation, CPD should be primarily initiated and managed by the teacher to alleviate constraints. Teacher preparation should promote in future teachers an *attitude* that accepts and seeks life-long learning and build their *capacity* to manage their own professional development.

As the challenges teachers face ask for innovative ways to overcome them, continue to develop professionally and thrive, it is hoped that these recommendations will encourage more teachers to engage in effective CPD to develop professionally in order to continue to experience success and a higher sense of career satisfaction.

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Appendix A: Professional Development for University Teachers of English – Questionnaire
Dear colleague!
CPD or *Continuing Professional Development* includes **any** activity that is meant to maintain or improve teachers' teaching and ultimately students' learning. This questionnaire aims at exploring your experience, opinions and recommendations concerning **professional development for Algerian university teachers of English**. **Information provided here will strictly be used anonymously for research purposes.** Thank you for accepting to complete this questionnaire!

Mr. Maamar MISSOUM – Lecturer, Department of English, University of Blida 2
Biography: I have been teaching English at university for ____ year (s) as a part-time teacher and _____ year (s) as a permanent teacher at the university (ies) of ……………………………….. I have taught the following courses: ………………………………………………………………….

NB: If you work or have worked in other sectors like secondary schools, please consider only professional development activities initiated by universities and for university teaching.

Part One: *Attitudes towards CPD (Continuing Professional Development)*

What is your opinion about the following statements related to CPD in your university? (Please circle a number from 1 to 9; **1 means 'I strongly disagree'** ………. **9 = 'I strongly agree'**)

N	Statements	strongly disagree…strongly agree
01	Most teachers are willing to participate in professional development activities.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
02	Most department, faculty and university managers provide enough opportunities for and support teachers' professional development.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
03	CPD activities are important for teachers and learners' success.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
04	Current CPD activities have improved my teaching skills.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
05	Necessary tools for CPD like appropriate rooms, computers, data show, etc. are sufficiently provided.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
06	Time is available for CPD activities (teaching time tables are adequate).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
07	CPD is mostly voluntary (teachers are free to do/attend or not)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
08	CPD is mostly individual (teacher alone)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
09	The impact of CPD activities on students' learning is evaluated.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10	CPD activities are followed up to ensure that the knowledge and gained are implemented by teachers.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Part Two: Your CPD Activities *(Current CPD Situation (The CPD activities ELT teachers are engaged in)* How often have you been undertaking the following activities? (Please circle 1 number from 1 to 9; **1 means 'I have not tried this activity yet'** …… **9 = 'I regularly do this activity'**). Other activities can be added in the empty lines below.

N	Activities	How often?
01	I share teaching resources and experience with colleagues face to face.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
02	I share teaching resources and experience with colleagues online.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
03	I take part in the design or review of course programs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
04	I take part in teaching workshops.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
05	I observe myself and reflect on my teaching.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
06	I keep a journal to record and reflect on my teaching experiences.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
07	I do (alone or with others) research on issues related to teaching.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
08	I review my lessons (to improve them).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
09	I do team-teaching (teach a class with colleagues).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10	I collaborate with colleagues to design exam papers.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
11	I attend study days and conferences on teaching methodology.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
12	I watch videos / listen to pod casts about teaching methodology.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
13	I give / attend a model lesson.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
14	I reflect on the objectives, content and exams of courses I teach and how well my students have learnt from them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
15	I try out new teaching techniques / solutions to problems I have noticed in my courses.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
16	I read documents about teaching methodology.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
17	I attend coordination meetings of teachers of the same module.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
18	I have been on scholarships / fellowships abroad.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
19	*(Left empty to allow respondents to add other activities)*	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Part Three: Recommendations for Improvement: In my opinion, the areas university English teachers need to develop more are… (Please circle a number from 1 to 9; **1 means 'I strongly disagree'** ……….. **9 = 'I strongly agree'**)

N	Statements	
01	Teachers' teaching techniques	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
02	Teachers' communication skills with colleagues and learners	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
03	Teachers' assessment skills	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
04	Teachers' use of modern tools like ICT in teaching	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
05	Teachers' class management skills	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
06	Teachers' ability to manage their own professional development	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
07	Other?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Other recommendations to improve the CPD of university teachers of English: …………….
....

…….