



## **Short-Term and Long-Term Impacts of Pre-Service vs. In-Service Reflective Task-Oriented Training on Novice and Experienced Teachers' Mediating Roles**

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### **Abstract**

Teacher training programs in EFL contexts pursue the goal of promoting teaching skills and critical dispositions in prospective and experienced teachers and their ability to reflect on and enhance their mediating roles to maximize learning outcomes. Yet, discrepancies in teachers' roles during and after the programs are not uncommon and accentuate the need to assess outcomes. This quasi-experimental study aimed to provide research-based data on the outcomes of a 60-hour reflective task-supported (RTS) teacher training course, comprising theoretical, observational, and practicum modules, in terms of immediate and delayed changes in the mediating roles performed by 37 pre-service and 40 in-service Iranian male and female teachers. The findings obtained from the structured observation of the participants' teaching demonstrations at the onset and the end of the study and during the first working semester were analyzed statistically through One-way repeated measures ANOVAs and indicated significant improvements in the mediating roles in both groups from the first to the second observation immediately after the training and from the immediate to the delayed observation only in the pre-service group. The findings underscore vitality of in pre-service and in-service training programs and accommodating reflective teaching and observational tasks in enhancing teaching roles.

**Keywords:** Experienced Teachers, In-Service Training, Novice Teachers, Observation, Pre-Service Training, Reflection

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## **Introduction**

Teacher education has evolved in the post-method era in a similar vein as language pedagogy and is now characterized as a fertile research soil. Although the role of individual differences in language learning has been extensively addressed, the impact of teaching differences on the process of language learning has been a rather neglected area of research. Currently, according to Guo, Piasta, Justice, and Kadaravek (2009), there is a worldwide deal of attention focused on ensuring the quality of educational programs through promoting specific aspects of teacher performance and knowledge. Of all teacher traits, teachers' mediating roles in the process of language development (Harden & Crosby, 2000) have been proved to be determinant in the success of any educational program. One substantive way of promoting teachers' classroom roles is through pre-service and in-service teacher training Courses (TTC). Based on Vries, Jansen, and Grift (2013), teacher training programs (TTPs) have been in high demand during the last two decades and the design and dissemination of new TTPs have inspired heated controversy among educators around the world.

Many scholars agree that one of the practical options for professionalism in post method era is reflective teaching (RT) whereby teachers engage in a successive series of reflection and modification of their own teaching practice through self-observation and evaluation to make sure the outcome is satisfactory (Salmani Nodoushan, 2011). Schon (1983) linked reflective practice as to thoughtful consideration of one's own experiences and simultaneous application of knowledge to practice under the supervision of professional coaches. This reflection can be inspired interactively via various tasks to direct the applicants' attention to the crux of classroom teaching and provide them with constructive opportunities to plan, implement and evaluate various lesson segments embodied in various mediating roles. Such tasks are assumed to bridge the gap between education and training and assist novice and practicing teachers enact their conceptions of effective teaching in terms of observable roles.

## **Literature Review**

### *Outcome-orientation in Teacher Education*

Despite different conceptualizations of the teaching processes, there is still consensus over the extent to which qualified teachers can maximize instructional effectiveness and promote learners' achievements (Harden & Crosby, 2000). According to Guo, Piasta, Justice, and Kadaravek (2009), attention is globally focused on ensuring the quality of educational programs through promoting specific aspects of teacher performance and knowledge to optimize outcomes. Yet, owing to the complexity and dynamicity of the qualifications required for teaching, defining or evaluating outcomes is still a contentious issue. This outcome-orientation is compatible with many teacher training and teacher development proposals which,

according to Harden and Crosby (2000), Harmer (2007), and Ingram (2013), strive to offer practical solutions to many of the problems in foreign language teaching (EFL) contexts. Many Asian countries have witnessed a rise of interest followed by a drastic increase in the quality and quantity of various teacher education programs offered as a result of the presence and cooperation of a good number of experts in language pedagogy. The current driving force, according to Cochran-Smith (2001), in teacher education and in TTPs worldwide and in Asia is the same outcome questions that are usually determined and assessed by national or international accredited institutions.

Yet, in contexts where such institutional support is absent, a number of disconnections, as suggested by Metzler and Blankenship (2008), between TTPs and systematic program assessment might impede the generating and presenting of evidence required for program effectiveness. These include

a failure on the part of the teacher educators to derive TTP assessment plans from any of a number of available models, not knowing how to apply the models to their TTPs, and failure to elevate program assessment practice to the level of research on teacher education (Metzler & Blankenship, 2008, p. 1100).

What is actually required for a precise assessment of training programs, as they suggest, is identification of independent variables which are part of the TTPs, theoretical and operational definition of dependent variables which are supposed to change as a result of the training, and employing evaluative devices that allow valid and reliable data collection and analysis. This need might be addressed only if teacher educators have an intention to link the burgeoning field of teaching research with that of program evaluation by designing research studies that not only inform teacher educators about the TTPs but also enhance the generalizability of the knowledge in teacher education. Such programs, according to Day (1999), can improve schools, increase teacher quality, and enhance student learning.

### *Mediating Roles*

Although the delineation of outcomes has proved flexible and highly reliant on dominant educational policies, consensus has emerged about the two-fold nature of outcomes as enhancement of teaching roles to warrant maximal learning (Harden & Crosby, 2000). Hence, a highly efficient operationalization of outcomes for a TTP would be in terms of mediating roles that teachers are to play in the classroom to handle various aspects of the teaching process, and thereby, boost learning outcomes. Thus, an operational definition of good teaching might be in terms of a number of mediating roles that teachers are to play in the classroom and effective teachers as those who mediate learning by effectively performing these roles. Harden and Crosby (2000) identified the institutional roles that practicing teachers usually perform as information provider, the model, the facilitator, the student

assessor and curriculum evaluator, the curriculum, course and lesson planner, and finally, the material creator and study guide. When applied to the confines of a language classroom, however, teachers might be construed as mediators who optimize both the inter-mental and intra-mental development processes of their learners by playing a myriad of various roles at the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD, according to Pritchard (2009) is a theoretical space of understanding just above the individual understands into which he will move next, where the learner will be capable of working effectively with the help of a more knowledgeable supporter who can ease the process of inter-mental learning. As Sewell (1990) suggested, the ultimate goal of various teaching roles is to mediate the learning process and aid the learners pass through the ZPD.

### *Empirical Background*

Plethora of studies have examined different forms of teacher training programs and their effects on the applicants' classroom performance and educational outcomes. Gareis and Grant (2014) investigated outcomes of a clinical training program designed to prepare cooperating teachers for supervising pre-service teachers. Kim, Chang, and Kim (2011) explored the effect of teacher qualifications on early math skills of English language learners. Finsterwald, Wagner, Schober, Luftenegger, and Spiel (2013) introduced evaluation results of a particular type of teacher education program for professional teachers with the objective of fostering lifelong learning in schools. Piwowar, Thiel, and Ophardt (2012) evaluated the effectiveness of a training program for in-service secondary school teachers in classroom management and demonstrated that a teacher training program using lecturing, simulation, and mediated video circles to analyse one's own videotaped teaching would succeed in improving experienced teachers' classroom management competencies. Valli and Buese (2007) examined the impact of federal, state, and local policies on the roles that elementary schools are asked to assume inside and outside of the classroom and concluded that mediation in teaching is likely to be complex and varied.

Based on common experience of many English teachers, most of the problems that Iranian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) face in their language classrooms seem to derive from the way English is taught at public schools and insufficient roles acted out by teachers who feel the need for methodological and pedagogical skills (Safaei Asl & Safaei Asl, 2014). Such deficiencies might be associated with some situational variables like class size and learner heterogeneity that fall beyond the control of the teacher. Nevertheless, teachers' personal experience as learners and teachers and the misconceptions originated from such experiences do exert their influence on their classroom practice as well. The educational system and teachers' adherence to traditional and counterproductive teacher-centered approaches in Iranian public schools leave students and their families with no option but to resort to private English Institutes as alternatives that

might aid them achieve a communicative command of English. Yet, what they normally find at these language institutes is another up-to-date version of teacher-dominated instruction in which the same teachers with similar belief systems tend to apply the unidirectional process of information transfer from the teacher to learners.

Owing to some political and economic restrictions, English teachers and teacher trainers in some countries, including Iran, have been deprived of the opportunity to hold joint international training programs. Moreover, research has shown that English teachers' expectations of the in-service teacher education program may vary in terms of individual differences like teaching experience (Abbasi & Navahi Khosrowshahi, 2018). Hence, inspired by Metzler and Blankenship (2008) argumentation, the present study set out to take a more global perspective and initially define the outcomes in terms of changes in teachers' performance of a limited number of mediating roles and to incorporate a number of reflective modelling, observational, and teaching tasks in a training program. Moreover, a research methodology was also designed to quantify and measure the extent to which the desired outcomes were achieved by the participating pre-service teacher applicants and in-service teachers at a locally noted English educational centre. The teacher training course was designed on insights from a number of sources including Harmer (2007), Ingram (2013) and Larsen-Freeman (2014). It was assumed that owing to the scarcity paucity of studies on practical and efficient TTPs in the Iranian context (Abednia, 2012; Ahmadi & Keshavarz, 2013; Nezakat – Alhossaini & Ketabi, 2012), the findings from this study might prove equally insightful for practicing teachers, student teachers, and teacher trainers. To serve the purpose, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Does pre-service reflective task-supported teacher training have any significant effect on the adequacy of novice English teachers' mediating roles in the short and long run?
2. Does in-service reflective task-supported training have any significant effect on the adequacy of experienced English teachers' mediating roles in the short and long run?
3. Does pre-service and in-service reflective task-supported trainings have differential impacts on novice and experienced English teachers' performance of mediating roles in the short and long run?

## **METHOD**

### ***Participants***

The research sample of pre-service teachers comprised two groups of 37 male and female applicants, within the age range of 19-30, who had applied to teach at Goldis Language Institute. The sample was recruited from a population pool of 100

applicants based on their performance on a selection TOEFL test and an oral interview. The majority of them held a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or a Master of Arts (MA) degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). All applicants were assessed based on their final demonstration (Demo) and if found qualified were invited to teach one class on trial. If proved effective, they would be given more classes and become either a part-time or a full-time teacher at the institute.

The in-service teachers included two groups of 20 male and female practicing teachers who had teaching experience of between two to six years at the same institute and had been employed based on their participation in prior pre-service teacher training courses which were neither reflective nor task-supported. However, owing to the weaknesses observed in their classroom performances, they were required to participate in an in-service teacher training programs to upgrade their teaching skills by engaging in the same tasks and activities as the pre-service teachers. Yet, since these groups already had the experience of teaching and classroom management and were previously involved in a type of teacher training program, they needed fewer theoretical and observation sessions. Therefore, the skills were presented jointly, e.g. reading and listening, and instead of assigning teaching tasks for TPS, the applicants were required to select some of their actual classrooms to be recorded and presented in the class. They were also to observe and analyse two or three selectively recorded sessions taught by other practicing teachers. Thus, the course shrunk approximately to a 30-hour in-service program of identical content and modules running four hours a day and once a week for two months.

Both pre- and in-service teacher training courses were held at the institute and taught by two top members of R & D board who hold PhD degrees in English Language Teaching (ELT) and are certified by British council as qualified teacher trainers.

### ***Instrumentation***

To describe the participant teachers' skills in performing various mediating roles quantitatively, the researcher designed an observation form. The intended observation form was made of five separate sections for the purpose of assessing teacher applicants' and trainees' five different roles of planner, manager, involver, facilitator, and controller in the class. Each of these roles had been depicted via seven statements (See Appendix A) focused on various activities that reflected these five features. The content of the observation form was made up of overall 35 items in the form of the 5-level Likert scales. The form was employed in quantitative appraisal of individual teacher applicants' and trainees' role performances in the short and long runs.

The researcher estimated the content validity and reliability of the observation form in a pilot study. To check the content validity of the observation form, two

experienced and certified teacher trainers, one assistant professor and the other a PhD candidate, with teacher-training certificates from London Trinity College and Teacher Training College, and over seven years of experience, were asked to assess the form. Based on their views, the items were revised.

Further, four teachers who were not among the participants of the study were randomly selected. One class of each was recorded and the four video recordings were observed and evaluated by four different mentors based on the observation form. The data from these 16 observations were analysed to estimate the reliability of the form through Cronbach Alpha. The reliability of 0.99 was found acceptably high and, thus, the observation form was regarded as a reliable device to render accurate information about teachers' mediating roles.

### ***Procedure***

The independent variable in the present study, the RTTP, was an institutionally designed 60-hour training course based on insights from Larsen-Freeman and Richards (1996), Palmer (2007) and Ur (1996). The course comprised 30 hours of training sessions mingled with initial and follow up questions to stimulate students to reflect on the process of teaching, 20 hours of teaching practices (TPs) based on a number of teaching tasks that would allow the participants to practice application of the theoretical issues raised in designing and performing actual teaching acts, and 10 hours of analytic and evaluative observation of their peers and of experienced practicing teachers.

The training sessions focused on theoretical the fundamental concepts of English Language Teaching (ELT), i.e., lesson planning, reflective teaching and teachers' roles and aimed at familiarizing the applicants with the ins and outs of lesson planning lessons and teacher's roles in a single teaching session. The course would proceed with explicit training sessions with a focus on the four language skills and language sub-skills. In these sessions the learners were first encountered some fundamental questions regarding the very nature of the skill in question and how they were taught at school or university. The discussions were directed towards identification of misconceptions and inadequate classroom procedure either experienced or employed by the applicants. Further, the trainer would present a model of standard teaching in the given skill, e.g. speaking, to convince the applicants that it is possible to comply with the norms of standard teaching in Iranian context. Then, in an interactive way the trainer and the applicants would retrospectively analyse the steps taken by the trainer to teach the lesson and come up with a new set of practical guidelines that could inform their presentation of an assigned lesson for the next session.

All the participants would be further assigned similar lessons, or more specifically teaching tasks, to plan for the next session in the form of teaching practice (TP). Four participants were given a chance to present their lessons the following two sessions while the class and the trainer were observing and filling out a “Lesson Evaluation Form”. After the presentation, the trainer would first start with the trainee’s views on the steps taken logically, steps skipped and the effectiveness of the teaching. Next, the teaching procedure would be discussed in whole class culminating in teachers’ final comments on the issues that had remained unnoticed.

At the end of the course, the participants were assigned two different lessons, e.g. a listening and a speaking, and were required to prepare for a final 30-minute teaching demonstration (Demo) within an interval of 4 to 6 day. Final Demos were scheduled for groups of participants. Each group comprised between 10-13 applicants who would present their lesson in a real classroom with other applicants acting as real students and four assessors who would evaluate them based on a structured evaluation sheet addressing the quality of presentation with regard to various stages of teaching, e.g. pre-teaching activities, degree of learner involvement, clarity of instructions, follow up activities, application of the guidelines, etc. (Since the forms and the syllabus are regarded as the institutes’ trade secrets, the researcher, who is among the mentors at the place, is not ethically permitted to provide the syllabus or full details of the course). The observers would negotiate the results of their evaluations at the end of each Demo session and make the final decision whether to employ the applicant or not. The applicants, however, would receive no feedback on the quality of their work while the evaluation sessions were running and the results would be announced within a week and after the assignments like course book evaluation, observation reports, etc. were assessed by the trainers.

## **Results**

Having checked the normality of the data obtained from the application of mediating roles observations form, the three sets of data obtained from the groups’ at the beginning and the end of the program and after a time interval in real classroom contexts were subjected to two One-way repeated measures ANOVAs, including a within-subjects variable of time with three levels and one between-subjects variable with scores on five different mediating roles. The results will be presented with respect to the research questions and the participating groups.

### *The Pre-service Group*

The descriptive statistics of the scores of the pre-service teachers’ mediating roles in three times are presented in Table 1.



**Table 1.** *Descriptive Statistics of Different Mediating Roles for the Pre-service Group*

	Time	N	M	SD
Planner	Time 1	37	1.61	.09
	Time 2	37	2.99	.11
	Time 3	37	4.42	.16
Manager	Time 1	37	1.64	.11
	Time 2	37	3.03	.09
	Time 3	37	4.36	.10
Involver	Time 1	37	1.68	.11
	Time 2	37	2.98	.08
	Time 3	37	4.35	.10
Facilitator	Time 1	37	1.64	.02
	Time 2	37	3.00	.10
	Time 3	37	4.38	.14
Controller	Time 1	37	1.71	.17
	Time 2	37	3.07	.15
	Time 3	37	4.49	.13

To answer the first research question, we submitted the research data obtained from the three observations of the pre-service teachers to a one-way repeated measures ANOVA, the results of which are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Multivariate Tests of Five Different Mediating Roles for the Pre-Service Group*

Effect	M. Roles	Value	f	H. df	Error df	Sig	Partial Eta Square	
Time	Planner	Wilks' Lambda	.010	1786	2	35	.000	.99
	Manager	Wilks' Lambda	.022	774	2	35	.000	.97
	Involver	Wilks' Lambda	.012	1473	2	35	.000	.98
	Facilitator	Wilks' Lambda	.017	985	2	35	.000	.98
	Controller	Wilks' Lambda	.028	599	2	35	.000	.97

H. df = Hypothesis df

M.Roles = Mediating Roles

As shown in Table 3, the time effect yielded by the Wilks' Lambda were statistically significant,  $F(2, 35) = 1786$  for planner,  $F = 774$  for manager,  $F = 1473$  for involver,  $F = 985$  for facilitator, and finally  $F = 599$  for controller. And for all the mediating roles  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta^2 = .9$ . The result indicated statistically significant differences among the performance of the five specified mediating roles by pre-service teachers over time (i.e., the pre-test, the immediate, and the delayed post-test).

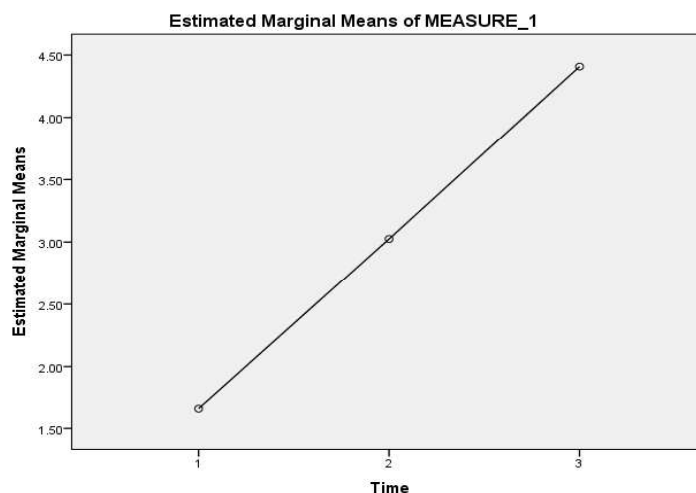
Bonferroni correction was used to pinpoint the exact location of the difference. Table 3 yields the pairwise comparisons among the three times for five mediating roles of the pre-service teachers.

**Table 3.** *Pairwise Comparisons of five Mediating Roles for the Pre-service in Three Times*

Mediating Roles	(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Planner	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-9.35	.551	.000
		Del post-test	-19.70	.326	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	9.13	.551	.000
		Del post-test	-10.56	.585	.000
	Del post-test	Pre-test	19.70	.326	.000
		Imm post-test	10.56	.585	.000
Manager	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-10	.393	.000
		Del post-test	-19.16	.482	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	10	.393	.000
		Del post-test	-9.16	.350	.000
	Del post-test	Pre-test	19.16	.482	.000
		Imm post-test	9.16	.350	.000
Involver	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-9.08	.288	.000
		Del post-test	-18.70	.340	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	9.08	.288	.000
		Del post-test	-9.62	.296	.000
	Del post-test	Pre-test	18.70	.340	.000
		Imm post-test	9.62	.296	.000
Facilitator	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-9.91	.555	.000
		Del post-test	-19.35	.437	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	9.91	.555	.000
		Del post-test	-9.43	.479	.000
	Del post-test	Pre-test	19.35	.437	.000
		Imm post-test	9.43	.479	.000
Controller	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-9.62	.283	.000
		Del post-test	-18.7	.861	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	9.62	.283	.000
		Del post-test	-9.08	.792	.000
	Del post-test	Pre-test	18.7	.861	.000
		Imm post-test	9.08	.792	.000

As shown in Table 4, there were statistically significant differences between their performance in the delayed post-test and the immediate post-test,  $p = .000$ , and between the pre-test and the delayed post-test,  $p = .000$ . Generally speaking, there were significant differences among the performance of the pre-service teachers in three times of the pre-test, the immediate and the delayed post-test regarding five considered mediating role.

Figure 1 illustrates the mean difference of mediating roles' performance for the pre-service group in the pre-test, the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test.



**Figure 1.** The mean differences of the pre-service group’s roles over time  
 1 = Pre-test      2 = Immediate post-test      3 = Delayed post-test

In the pre-test the prospective teachers in this group did not perform very well. The descriptive statistics also indicated the lowest mean for the group in Time1 (the pre-test). The group performance of roles, however, showed a significant improvement after the reflective task-supported teacher training both in the immediate and the delayed post-test. Figure 1 represents such an improvement for the pre-service group over time.

*The In-service Group*

Once more one-way repeated measures ANOVA was run to compare a between-subjects variable (i.e., grouping) with a within-subjects variable (i.e., time including pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test) for the mediating roles.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics of Different Mediating Roles for the In-service Group

	Time	N	M	SD
Planner	Time 1	40	2.74	.15
	Time 2	40	4.63	.08
	Time 3	40	4.65	.07
Manager	Time 1	40	2.78	.11
	Time 2	40	4.64	.07
	Time 3	40	4.64	.08
Involver	Time 1	40	4.69	.31
	Time 2	40	4.66	.04
	Time 3	40	4.62	.02
Facilitator	Time 1	40	2.78	.14
	Time 2	40	4.65	.08
	Time 3	40	4.68	.16
Controller	Time 1	40	2.82	.10
	Time 2	40	4.59	.06
	Time 3	40	4.60	.09

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4 shows that the means of five questioned mediating roles of in-service group in the immediate post-test were better than their pre-test equivalent means. Like the pre-service group, the in-service group showed a significant improvement of all mediating roles in the immediate post-test compared to their means in the pre-test, but unlike the pre-service teachers that made progress over time, the in-service groups' means of these five mediating roles did not show any change from the immediate post-test to the delayed post-test.

**Table 5.** *Multivariate Tests of Five Different Mediating Roles for In-Service Group*

Effect	M. Roles		Value	f	H. df	Error df	Sig	Partial Eta Square
Time	Planner	Wilks' Lambda	.025	727	2	38	.000	.97
	Manager	Wilks' Lambda	.045	400	2	38	.000	.95
	Involver	Wilks' Lambda	.021	867	2	38	.000	.97
	Facilitator	Wilks' Lambda	.089	193	2	38	.000	.91
	Controller	Wilks' Lambda	.030	621	2	38	.000	.97

H. df = Hypothesis df

The time effect yielded by the Wilks' Lambda for the five focused mediating roles, provided in Table 5, were statistically significant,  $F(2, 38) = 727$  for planner,  $F = 400$  for manager,  $F = 867$  for involver,  $F = 193$  for facilitator, and finally  $F = 621$  for controller. And for all the mediating roles  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta^2 = .9$ . The result indicated that there was statistically significant difference among the performance of mediating roles by the in-service teachers over time (i.e., the pre-test, the immediate, and the delayed post-test). However, these results did not clarify the exact place of the difference among the groups.

Post-hoc analysis of Bonferroni type was conducted to determine the exact place of the difference among the times (the pre-test, the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test).

**Table 6.** *Pairwise Comparisons of five Mediating Roles for In-service in Three Times*

Mediating Roles	(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Planner	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-13.7	.354	.000
		Del post-test	-13.4	.356	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	13.17	.354	.000
		Del post-test	-.225	.177	.635
	Del post-test	Pre-test	13.40	.356	.000
		Imm post-test	.225	.177	.635
Manager	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-12.05	.808	.000
		Del post-test	-13.50	.570	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	12.05	.808	.000
		Del post-test	-1.45	1.01	.479
	Del post-test	Pre-test	13.50	.570	.000
		Imm post-test	1.45	1.01	.479

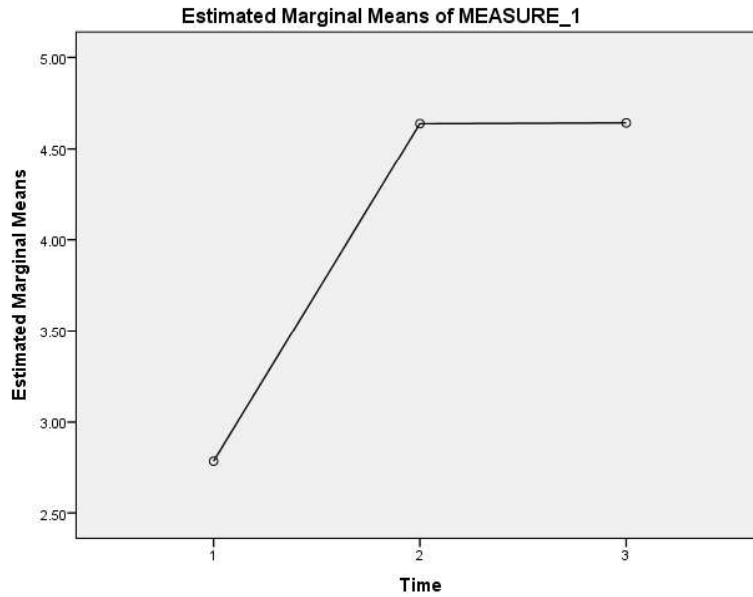
**Continue Table 6.**

Mediating Roles	(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Involver	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-12.95	.370	.000
		Del post-test	-12	.650	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	12.95	.370	.000
		Del post-test	.950	.793	.714
	Del post-test	Pre-test	12	.650	.000
		Imm post-test	-.950	.793	.715
Facilitator	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-12.40	.837	.000
		Del post-test	-12.60	.823	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	12.40	.837	.000
		Del post-test	-.20	1.08	1.00
	Del post-test	Pre-test	12.60	.823	.000
		Imm post-test	.20	1.08	1.00
Controller	Pre-test	Imm Post-test	-12.37	.304	.000
		Del post-test	-11.75	.802	.000
	Imm post-test	Pre-test	12.37	.354	.000
		Del post-test	.625	.804	1.00
	Del post-test	Pre-test	11.75	.802	.000
		Imm post-test	-.625	.804	1.00

Results of the post-hoc analysis (Table 6) indicated a statistically significant difference between the means of the roles in Time 1 (pre-test) and Time 2 (immediate post-test),  $p < .05$ . Results indicated that the in-service group improved their performance regarding the mediating roles in immediate post-test significantly as a result of the training program.

To investigate the effect of training program in long run, the role means of in-service group in immediate post-test was compared with the group's role means in delayed post-test. As shown in Table 6, regarding all five mediating roles the differences between Time 1 and Time 3 were statistically significant,  $p = .000$ ; however, the mean differences between the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test, did not reach statistical significance. Pairwise comparison of mediating roles by the in-service group yields no statistically significant differences among the role performance in the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test (Sig values are more than .05). Therefore, the in-service group failed to show significant change from the immediate post-test to delayed post-test.

Figure 2 provides the mean differences of the mediating roles for the in-service groups in the pre-test, in the immediate post-test, and the delayed post-test.



**Figure 2.** The mean differences of the in-service group's roles over time  
 1= Pre-test      2 = Immediate post-test      3 = Delayed post-test

Like the pre-service group, results indicated salient difference between the means of the in-service group in the immediate post-test. However, no significant improvement was observed by the in-service group in the delayed post-test compared to their mean in the immediate post-test.

*Comparing the Pre-service and In-service Groups*

The third research questions addressed the effect of the TTP on pre-service and in-service teachers' performance of mediating roles. Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of the two groups' performance of the mediating roles in Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3.

**Table 7.** Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups' Mediating Roles in Three Times

	Group	N	M	SD
Time 1	Pre-service	37	1.66	.11
	In-service	40	2.79	.20
Time 2	Pre-service	37	3.02	.07
	In-service	40	4.63	.05
Time 3	Pre-service	37	4.40	.14
	In-service	40	4.64	.04

A glance at the means of the two groups in Table 7 shows different role performances between the groups. While the role performance of the pre-service group improved from Time 1 to Time 2, and then again from Time 2 to Time 3, the role performance of the in-service group did not experience any significant improvement from the Time 2 to Time 3. Moreover, to test the significance of the difference, a mixed between-within subjects analysis of variances (SPANOVA) was conducted to compare the pre-service and in-service groups' role performance scores obtained from the observation form in Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3. Table 8 presents the results.

**Table 8.** *Multivariate Test of the Two Groups' Mediating Roles in Three Times*

Effect		Value	F	H. df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	Wilks' Lambda	.008	4818	2	74	.000	.99
Time * Group	Wilks' Lambda	.023	1596	2	74	.150	.02

H. df = Hypothesis df

The results (Table 8) indicated that the interaction effect for time and group was not significant which is desirable  $F(2, 74) = 1596, p = .150, \eta^2 = .02$ . However, the main effect for time was statistically significant,  $F(2, 74) = 4818, p = .000, \eta^2 = .99$ , with both groups showing improvement in their role performance across three time periods. This result suggests a very large effect size for time within both groups, which is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9.** *Test of Between-Subjects Effects of Mediating Roles*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	2872	1	2872	2341	.000	1.00
Group	56.86	1	56.86	4634	.000	.98
Error	.920	75	.012			

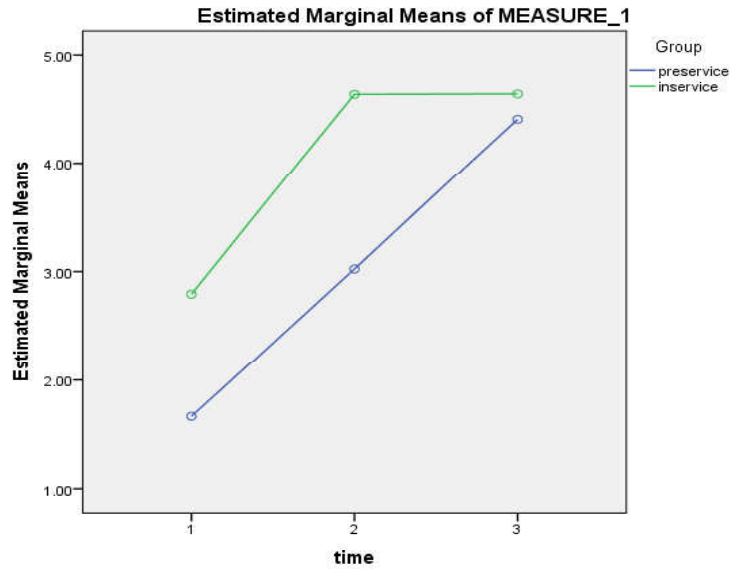
The main effect for between-subjects variable, as shown in Table 9, was statistically significant,  $F(1, 75) = 4634, p = .000 < .005, \eta^2 = .98$ , suggesting significant difference in the performance of the two groups. Nonetheless, to locate the area of difference, we ran a pairwise comparison of Bonferroni as the post-hoc analysis (Table 10). To examine the influence of the training on mediating roles, a comparison was made between the pre-service and the in-service groups in three times.

**Table 10.** Pairwise Comparison of Two Groups Regarding Mediating Roles in Three Times

Time	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Differences (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Time 1	Pre-service	In-service	-1.129	.038	.000
	In-service	Pre-service	1.129	.038	.000
Time 2	Pre-service	In-service	-1.615	.015	.000
	In-service	Pre-service	1.615	.015	.000
Time 3	Pre-service	In-service	-.236	.023	.000
	In-service	Pre-service	.236	.023	.000

The results revealed that in the immediate posttest, there was a significant difference between the pre-service group and the in-service group in performing the mediating roles,  $p = .000 < .05$ . There was also a significant difference between the performance of groups in the delayed posttest,  $p = .000 < .05$ .

Figure 3 illustrates the mean differences of role performance of the two groups of the pre-service and the in-service over time.



**Figure 3.** The mean differences of pre-service vs. in-service teachers' performances

1= Pre-test      2 = Immediate post-test      3 = Delayed post-test

As presented in Figure 3, the groups were not influenced in the same way by the training. While the pre-service group experienced improvement in role performance from the pretest to the immediate and delayed posttest, the in-service group's performance remained stable from the immediate to the delayed posttest.



## **Discussion**

The findings from the present study demonstrated that, both groups' performance of roles, improved significantly on the immediate posttest and from there onto the delayed posttest for the pre-service group. The findings lend support to those of Yan (2008), which reported the positive impact of an adult education English language teaching project based in Central China on longer-term sustainability of cross-cultural teacher training initiatives in China, and thereby, to teachers' professional development in a number of different ways. They are also compatible with those of Nash and Norwich (2010) who outlined the initial training in England within an international context and how these programs prepare teachers for the special educational needs and inclusive education aspects of their future work. The results are also compatible with those reported Finsterwald et al. (2013) whose TTP was found to foster teacher competences and cooperation. The findings are in line with the results of the study by Grammatikopoulus, Tsigilis, Gregoriadis, Bikos (2013) which supported the effectiveness of a teacher training program in improving the quality of Greek teachers' teaching in educational settings.

The findings might be explicated in terms of the task-supported feature of the contextualized teacher training tasks that could have maximized the quality of the pre-service teachers' ability in classroom management and role performance. These features, according to Feez (1998), include process-orientation, meaning-focused interaction and focused on pedagogical effectiveness that can provide opportunities to improve trainees' handling of their mediating roles. Another decisive feature contributing to the success of TTP in this study might have been the reflective element added to various aspects of the program. According to Boyd and Fales (1983) and, Schon (1983), implementation and development of reflective learning in the context of teacher training program is considered to be the centrepiece of professional development. Getting engaged in interactive professional dialogs with partners, the pre-service teachers critically reflected, with the help of their trainers, on their experience and developed understandings of the teaching and learning process. Assisting pre-service teachers to understand their own actions as well as the reactions they stimulate in their partners paved the way for gaining control over the mediating roles and sustaining this ability for a longer term (LaBoskey, 2004).

The findings of this study are in concert with Zeichner and McDonald's (2011) practice-based method of teacher training which enacted a variety of pedagogical approaches in field-based courses, including in-service teachers observing and debriefing with other teachers, university faculty modelling lessons or working with students using specific teaching practices, rehearsing alone or in small groups some of these same practices, and debriefing the teaching and sometimes reteaching. Campbell (2008) reported that where teachers participated in mediated instruction, they developed a deeper understanding of the promoted best teaching practices and were more successful in enacting these practices in diverse schools. All these

confirm the participatory nature of teachers' learning and suggest teacher educators to assist both the pre-service and in-service teachers in navigating a contradictory structural terrain. Teachers ought not to be required to absorb knowledge uncritically rather they should be provided with opportunities to interrogate knowledge and reflect on their own and colleagues' role performance in teacher education.

Teacher training programs, according to Nash and Norwich (2010), provide the teachers with repeated stimulated opportunities to various pedagogical tasks in different contexts. Since in the present study the pre-service and in-service teachers performed TPs for several times in different sessions of the training program and were intimately involved in observing other teachers' TPs and reflecting on their own and others' performance, they could improve their performance in the immediate posttest and sustain their improved performance in the delayed posttest.

The improvement in the groups' performance of mediating roles might also be substantiated in terms of situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) which asserts that learning is situated in a specific context, which is the same context in which it is applied, and is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice. It is the process by which novice practitioners establish membership bonds with a community of practice and aim at full participation in that community. This theory has a particular resonance for adult education and areas like teacher training in which most of the applicants are adults. Based on this theory, the experienced teachers in the in-service group has already become a member of the institutional community in which they were teaching and might not have felt the need to evolve their practice out of the context of the training they attended. To them, learning was situated in the specific context of the in-service program and could be displayed immediately after the program ended. However, they have already been fully accepted as members of the community of practice and felt no need to reconstruct their identity beyond that limit.

### **Conclusion**

Like many other studies in humanities and social sciences, the current enquiry suffered from a number of limitations and delimitations with respect to sample size, methodological and instrumental triangulation of the study and exclusion of individual differences like gender and beliefs that might have had a bearing on the participants' teaching practice. However, with regard to the needs-based nature of the study and the accommodation of training tasks, a number of conclusions might be drawn from the findings.

First and foremost, it can be concluded that though quite ambitious, realignment of language teaching practice in accordance with most recent trends in post-method language pedagogy is not inconceivable if prior to devising any plan for promoting instructional standards, the most significant factors that might

profoundly impact the success of the reform are identified and targeted. It is assumed that teachers are the cornerstones of any educational system and any betterment of the educational system entails a prerequisite evolution of the teachers' beliefs system.

Secondly, as suggested by the findings, Self-initiated and tutorial instruction is hardly conducive to professional enlightenment. Teachers need to first develop a clear understanding of various roles they need to play during a single class session. Inspirational teacher training courses are required to incorporate a number of well-established components in a coherent sequence of modules that can capture the continuum of recognition, comprehension, and production and assist the teachers' recall their conceptions and misconceptions, challenge them and through reflective engagement and interactive discussion feel free to identify and refine misconceptions.

Thirdly, bridging the yawning chasm between perception and performance is a daunting challenge that trainees can rise to merely through task-supported practice enriched by mentoring support. Thus, any teacher training void of teaching practice tasks that are adequately planned by the participants, performed in simulated conditions and evaluated by peers and mentors would prove inadequate.

In conclusion, the findings offer implications for policy makers, teacher educators and teacher trainers. implementation and development of reflection in the context of teacher training program is recognized to be the determinant factor in professional development of teachers (Boyd & Fales, 1983; Schon, 1983). The teacher trainers and educators are, thus, advised to incorporate self-reflection and other-reflection into teacher training programs to empower the participating teachers. Reflection stimulates teachers to understand their own and their colleagues' points of strength and weakness attempting to build on the strong points and to rectify the weaknesses. Moreover, mentoring has been widely approved as a highly reliable method of promoting educational standards and maintaining personal involvement in educational contexts. Therefore, training and employing mentors who can function as sources of consultation and suggestion for novice and practicing teachers seem to hold the key to a more prosperous future in thriving institutes that do not sacrifice the quality of good practice for the sake of lower running costs.

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## Appendix A

### Teachers' Roles Observation Form

<b>Teacher as planner: The teacher</b>		1	2	3	4	5
1	Started the class with a logical lead in activity.					
2	Could display her understanding of the teaching goals in her teaching.					
3	Had a clearly-defined teaching objective for the students to achieve.					
4	Displayed clearly distinguished lesson stages in her teaching.					
5	Reasonably timed each lesson stage.					
6	Used appropriate techniques, AVAs and tasks.					
7	Had planned to involve students in various stages of the lesson.					
<b>Teacher as manager</b>						
8	Called students by their first names.					
9	Raised students' interest and motivation by engaging them.					
10	Was creative in the use of grouping techniques.					
11	Fairly managed pair and group performance in time limits.					
12	Created space for students' thought and reflection					
13	Was confident in her ability to teach the material.					
14	Was calm and rational when the unexpected occurred.					
<b>Teacher as involver</b>						
15	Started the lesson by asking students questions to review what they knew.					
16	Assigned a pair-work lead-in activity to start the lesson.					
17	Used eliciting while pre-teaching vocabulary.					
18	Focused students' attention through clear and simple instructions.					
19	Assigned individual work so students can practice what they'd learned.					
20	Assigned pair/group-work so students can share their experiences and learn from peers.					
21	Involved learners in follow-up error recognition activities					
<b>Teacher as facilitator</b>						
22	Reflected a focus on learning strategies in her teaching.					
23	Introduced learners to reading strategies in teaching reading					

24	Introduced learners to listening strategies in teaching reading					
25	Involved learners in performing different strategies in listening and reading stages.					
26	Underscored the need to guess the meaning of unknown words.					
27	Taught students how to infer from the text.					
28	Introduced communication strategies and encouraged the use of them.					
<b>Teacher as assessor</b>						
29	Emphasized accurate pronunciation in modelling vocabulary.					
30	Took care of accuracy in presenting grammatical meaning and form.					
31	Corrected students' inaccurate forms while they were practicing form.					
32	Corrected students' error while they were answering questions.					
33	Took note of students' errors while they were answering questions.					
34	Corrected students' errors on the spot while they were working in pairs and groups.					
35	Offered error recognition follow up activities to draw attention to form.					

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