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# In-Service Education and Training (INSET): The Perceptions of English Language Teachers in Malaysia

by

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### Thesis

Submitted to the University of Warwick

for the degree of

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# Acknowledgments

# Declarations

This Thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. I hereby declare that, this thesis has been written by myself, except where otherwise acknowledged, and has not been submitted elsewhere for the purpose of academic degree.

**Elaine Ling Ling Pang**

**Signature:**————————————————————————

**Date:**————————————————————————

# List of Publications

This thesis consists of an overview of the following research publications, which made up some of the chapters of this document.

### Book Chapter

1. Onah, D.F.O., Pang, E.L.L and Sinclair, J.E., (2017) Cognitive Optimism of Distinctive Initiatives to Foster Self-Directed and Self-Regulated Learning Skills: A Comparative Analysis of Conventional and Blended-Learning in Undergraduate Studies. **Submitted**

### Journal Publications

2. Pang, E.L.L, Wray, D. and Baskaran, V. (2017) English Language Teachers' Perceptions of a Blended Learning Approach to an In-Service Course: A Case Study in Malaysia. **Submitted**

3. Pang, E.L.L and Wray, D. (2017) An Investigation of School Improvement Specialist Coaches' (SISCs) Perceptions of INSET for Primary School English Language Teachers in Malaysia: Motivation, Practicalities and Challenges. **Submitted & accepted**

4. Pang, E.L.L. and Wray, D. (2017) A Framework on Exploring Primary School English Language Teachers' Perceptions of their Continuing Professional Development in Malaysia. Athens Journal of Education. Volume 4, Issue1, pages 63-76. February 2017. e-ISSN: 2241–7958. ISSN (print): 2407-9898

## Conference Publications

5. Pang, E. and Onah, D.F.O. (2017) Self - Regulated Learning Strategies in Undergraduate Studies: An ESL Learner's Perspective. **In Progress**

6. Pang, E. and Wray, D. (2017) INSET, Innovation and Change: An Investigation into Educators Perceptions of Collaborative Learning for Primary School English Language Teachers in Malaysia. Paper presented at Innovations in Teacher Development, A Research Symposium at King's College London in Association with Teachers College, Columbia University and Teacher Education Exchange. King's College London, 16–18 June 2017. Published on website of Research Symposium.

7. Pang, E. and Wray, D. (2016) Exploring Primary School English Language Teachers' Perceptions of INSET in Malaysia: Factors which Promoted and Hindered Professional Development. Paper presented at London International Conference on Education (LICE) 2016, London, United Kingdom. 14th–17th November 2016. In Conference Proceedings, pages 107 - 111. LICE-2016 Published by Infonomics Society. ISBN: 978-1-908320-76-6

8. Onah, D. F.O., Sinclair, J.E., Pang, E.L.L. and Jantjies, M. (2016) Exploring the Multi-Dimensional Attainment of Self-Regulatory Learning Skills in Educational Contexts: A Comparative Study. In Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies (EDULEARN16), Barcelona, Spain. 4th-6th July, 2016. Pages: 5970-5979. ISBN: 978-84-608-8860-4. ISSN: 2340-1117. dx.doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2016.0272

9. Pang, E. and Wray, D. (2016) A Framework on Exploring Primary School English Language Teachers' Perceptions of their Continuing Professional Development in Malaysia. Paper presented at the 18th Annual International Conference on Education, Athens, Greece. 16th-19th May 2016. Athens: ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, No: EDU2016-1971. ISSN: 2241-2891

10. Pang, E. and Wray, D. (2015) The Teaching of Phonics: A Follow-Up Study of Primary School English Language Teachers' Perceptions of Exploring a Blended - Mode Approach for INSET in Malaysia. Paper presented at The 22nd Annual Conference of the Association for Learning Technology (ALT2015). Manchester, United Kingdom. 8th-10th September 2015

# Abstract

The national concern to improve the level of education in Malaysia prompted the Ministry of Education to conduct a comprehensive review of the education system and introduce the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) to transform the education system. One of the aims was to upgrade the quality of in-service teacher training for teachers. This has resulted in a reshaping of the type of courses and delivery mode for in-service education for teachers (INSET). CPD providers in Malaysia tend to conduct training using the cascade model due to limited resources and expertise and teachers are hardly consulted about their needs or learning preferences. This is likely to have a significant impact on the quantity and quality of INSET for teachers in a top-down national priority driven system.

This study examines the perceptions of a group of Malaysian English language educators, comprising primary school non-specialist English language teachers and senior teachers who are newly appointed School Improvement Specialist Coaches (SISCs) of their INSET experiences. It covers the areas of their previous INSET experiences and their perceptions of the effect of INSET on their classroom practice. The research also aims to identify their future expectations of INSET in terms of their professional development needs, their pupils' needs, school needs and their views on national needs of Malaysia's education system with reference to INSET.

This research is informed by the qualitative survey approach which establishes variation in terms of values and dimensions that are meaningful within a certain population. The study focuses on diversity in a population of educators who attended INSET programmes on literacy, pedagogy and Language Arts. The methods that were used comprised focus group interviews and individual interviews. The

researcher followed the INSET journey of three groups of primary school educators who were selected using convenience sampling and purposive sampling.

The findings suggest a strong relationship between the educators' educational backgrounds, pre-service training, their knowledge of the English language subject and continuing professional development. These impact upon their teaching as a result of their understanding of the objectives in the Primary School Standard Curriculum document, their priorities and preferences in how to teach the English language, their culture and language. This study identifies gaps in different aspects of professional development especially on INSET needs for subject specific skills, pedagogical skills and collaborative learning through districtwide INSET and school-based INSET in Malaysia.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **AfL** | Assessment for Learning |
| **BERA** | British Educational Research Association |
| **CPD** | Continuing Professional Development |
| **CPDL** | Continuing Professional Development and Learning |
| **CUREE** | Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence in Education |
| **EFL** | English as a foreign language |
| **ELOs** | English language Officers |
| **ELT** | English language teaching |
| **ELTC** | English Language Teaching Centre (Malaysia) |
| **EPU** | Economic Planning Unit |
| **ESL** | English as a Second Language |
| **F** | Female |
| **HOTs** | Higher Order Thinking Skills |
| **ICT** | Information and communications technology |
| **INSET** | In-Service Education and Training |
| **JUs** | *Jurulatih Utama* (State coaches) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **KBSR** | *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah* (New Primary School Curriculum) |
| **KSSR** | *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah* (Primary School Standards-Based Curriculum) |
| **la** | a word spoken in Malay language, often used as a filler word |
| **IAB** | *Institut Aminuddin Baki* (Education Management Institute, Malaysia) |
| **LADAP** | *Latihan dalam perkhidmatan* (In-service training) |
| **LD** | *Latihan dalaman* (Internal training) |
| **LINUS** | The Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS) programme |
| **M** | Male |
| **MBMMBI** | *Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Melayu Memperkasakan Bahasa Inggeris* (To uphold Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language) and to strengthen the English Language) |
| **MoE** | Ministry of Education (Malaysia) |
| **OECD** | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| **PERASA** | *Kursus Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya* (Buddy Support Programme) |
| **PITO** | Intensive Course in English Language Teaching(ICELT-PITO) for Upper Primary |
| **PLC** | Professional learning communities |
| **PPDs** | *Pejabat Pelajaran Daerah* (District Education Department) |
| **RQ** | Research Question |
| **SBA** | School Based Assessment |

| | |
|---|---|
| **SISCs** | School Improvement Specialist Coaches |
| **SJK** | *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan* (Vernacular school) |
| **SK** | *Sekolah Kebangsaan* (National type school) |
| **SKM** | *Sekolah Kurang Murid* (Schools with less than 150 pupils in Malaysia) |
| **SKT** | *Sasaran Kerja Tahunan* (Annual assessment form) |
| **TED** | Teacher Education Division |
| **TEFL** | Teaching English as a foreign language |

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter sets the scene for this study and consists of seven sections. The first section is a background to the study. The second section discusses about my previous work experience and personal interest which led to the focus of this research. The third section describes the education system in Malaysia with an overview of the MBMMBI policy and the KSSR curriculum, the Malaysia Education Blueprint and professional development for teachers in Malaysia. The fourth and fifth sections explain about the statement of the problem and the context of the problem in this research. Section six covers the scope of the study. The final section clearly sets out the structure of this thesis with a short summary of each chapter.

## 1.2 Background

Continuing professional development (CPD) of in-service teachers can be seen as placed along a continuum of two main approaches. The first approach happens when teachers face problems in the classroom and conduct action research to solve these problems to improve their teaching. The second approach takes place during in-service education and training (INSET) programmes which are outcome-oriented. A key part of the process is raising the standards of pupils' learning outcomes. Lately, teachers' professional development has been getting a lot of attention and limelight, especially in countries in Asia such as Malaysia. This is due to the reason that without CPD, teachers' knowledge and pedagogical skills can become outdated.

INSET has helped many in-service teachers from newly qualified teachers, mid-career teachers and senior teachers who have developed their skills to evolve,

grow and develop new skills. It is said that INSET for teachers is for the greater good of pupils' achievement and teachers' careers and to maintain the teachers' professionalism. Teachers who have reflected on their own practice and were more open to giving and receiving feedback and displayed their goals to become better teachers.

Teachers educate many groups of different pupils over the years and they are considered as the teacher's evolving audience. Thus, good quality teaching should be available to all the pupils. INSET is believed to offer better professional support to teachers and is one of the most important factors in raising standards and gaining the confidence of teachers, parents and society.

OECD surveys have reported that English language teachers receive significantly fewer days of professional development than in many countries. Evidence shows that countries that have teacher development strategies based within the education and teaching profession supported by government create opportunities for the improvements of teacher quality and pupil achievement.

One of the factors which contribute to effective INSET is when teachers work collaboratively. In the classroom, teachers can evaluate their teaching with purposeful collaboration. It can be effective especially when they use their knowledge, skills and understanding as well as data relating to students' achievement, thus linking improvements for the student and teacher. It is important to note that teachers do not enter INSET as empty vessels. Instead, they bring a wealth of existing knowledge, skills, practices, perspectives, ideas as well as anxieties about the complexity of teaching and developing as teachers. These are useful resources that can be tapped into during INSET. One important question to consider in relation to INSET is whether professional development is something done to teachers or something done by them.

## 1.3   Previous Experience and Personal Interest

Prior to pursuing my doctoral research at the University of Warwick, I had taught the English language to secondary school students in three schools for a few years in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. As an in-service English language teacher, I was appointed to attend at least one INSET course each year and it was often conducted as a districtwide INSET programme. The INSET course was run off-site at a venue determined by the officers at the State Education Department or at the venue of other CPD providers in Malaysia. Most of these INSET courses consisted of briefings on the curriculum of the English language for secondary school students,

workshops to plan and produce teaching materials as well as courses related to pedagogy and English literature.

After a few years, I embarked on a new role as a teacher trainer for INSET in 2007 and worked at the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) in Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During the next seven years, I worked in small teams with colleagues to plan and develop training modules for INSET courses on literacy, pedagogy and English literature. We were given course titles to work on, where we had to develop an outline for a training module, prepare the framework of the whole course and sent it for the vetting process. Once we received feedback from our Heads of Department, we would then work on writing the module and trainers notes and then submitting the course content for a second round of vetting. After obtaining the second round of feedback, we made the final changes to the INSET modules for training and then the courses would be included in the next training calendar and the trainers would run these INSET courses for about 30 teachers in each state in Malaysia. Upon completion of the INSET programme, our course participants were appointed as state trainers and they returned to their respective districts to conduct the same INSET courses with the materials they received, for other teachers via the Cascade model of training.

In my role as a trainer, I had used a standard evaluation form used at ELTC to collect feedback from course participants about the INSET courses in a few areas such as the course content, the course participants perceived knowledge and confidence after the course, the facilitation approach and general comments. While preparing these course evaluation reports, I realized most of the feedback given by the course participants for every INSET programme always scored highly with more than 85% to over 90% satisfaction for almost all categories related to the course content and facilitation. They also often gave positive and encouraging feedback in the comments section. However, the teachers wanted improvements in terms of the training rooms at the course venues and the meals provided during the duration of the INSET courses. At the same time, some of the teachers I met during the INSET courses have mentioned that they would prefer more INSET courses to help them with their fluency in the English language as well as their pedagogical skills. Some of them shared that they were not keen to attend certain INSET courses as they felt the content was not relevant to their pupils' abilities and levels of English language proficiency.

The insider perspectives that some of the teachers shared made me more and more curious about the teachers who were specialists and non-specialists and what they actually needed help with and how we could provide INSET programmes

which would be more appropriate and benefit them to teach pupils effectively and achieve the targeted learning outcomes. This led me to the area of this study as I wanted to know more about their pupils needs and the teachers' current INSET needs. I was also interested to know if the INSET courses the trainers designed and delivered to teachers were relevant to the KSSR curriculum and what factors should be considered when planning, designing and delivering INSET courses for teachers from urban and rural schools in Malaysia as they teach in very different contexts. I also wanted to find out what was essential for curriculum development in INSET in Malaysia for ESL teachers at primary level, as the realities of their teaching contexts were more similar to EFL classrooms.

## 1.4   The Education System in Malaysia

There have been many changes in the education system in Malaysia since 2010 to date including a new policy on the status of the English language in education in Malaysia, a new curriculum for the English language at primary school level as well as the new Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 which was implemented in stages beginning in 2013. Subsequently, there have also been new steps taken in implementing INSET for teachers including a CPD Masterplan and the promotion for experienced specialist English language teachers to become School Improvement Specialist Coaches (SISCs).

The education system in Malaysia has a particular administrative structure and it is managed by four distinct levels of authority; the federal government, state, district and school levels as explained below.

At the federal government level, the ministry of Education (MoE) Malaysia takes overall responsibility to develop policies on education. The state education department has the role to coordinate and monitor the implementation of national education programmes at the state level. It also plays the role to provide feedback to the ministry on overall planning. The district level is an additional administrative unit in all states. A district education officer is in charge to foster effective links between schools in the district and the state education department. The fourth level, the school, is headed by a principal, who has the responsibility to provide administrative and professional leadership. The Parents' and Teachers' Association (PTA) also plays a distinctive role to foster co-operation between the school board, teachers and the local community.

The four levels of authority mentioned above are also relevant in terms of professional development for teachers in Malaysia. There are many professional de-

velopment programmes planned at these four levels to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills and competence to improve pupils' learning outcomes.

In 2010, the MBMMBI *(Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Melayu Memperkasakan Bahasa Inggeris)* policy which means 'To uphold Bahasa Malaysia (Malay language) and to strengthen the English Language' was introduced by the Ministry of Education (MoE) Malaysia. The MBMMBI policy was implemented through the following steps; increasing the proficiency of the Malay language and the English language by increasing the number of teaching and learning periods, curriculum transformation, increasing the number of teachers and providing more materials and equipment. At the same time, information technology was integrated in teaching and learning.

One of the steps taken towards curriculum transformation is the shift from the KBSR *(Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah)* curriculum to the KSSR *(Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah)* curriculum. It is also known as the new Primary School Standard Curriculum for primary schools and was implemented beginning January 2011 for Year 1 pupils. The KSSR would represent a 'transformation in education' and its aim is to strengthen the command of Bahasa Malaysia and English among primary school pupils, with teaching and learning approaches which will be more interactive and interesting. By 2016, the KSSR syllabus was implemented fully for Year 1 to Year 6 pupils at primary school.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education in Malaysia outlined eleven shifts in the Malaysia Education Blueprint. These shifts needed to take place in the form of steps of changes to realise the goals of the blueprint by 2025. The 4th shift was related to the goal of transform in the teaching profession. One of the main initiatives in the 4th shift was to upgrade the quality of CPD from 2013. The emphasis was on teacher quality as teachers are the key school based factor which will determine the improvement in pupils' performance. Thus, the document emphasised that teachers needed support to achieve their potential to become better teachers. Kelly and Mcdiarmid (2002) stressed that improving teacher quality is an urgent concern now among educational leaders in many countries. Thus, the focus of Malaysia's Education Blueprint was timely.

### 1.4.1 Initial Teacher Training

The Ministry of Education Malaysia has over 410,000 teachers and a workforce which is relatively young in age (MoE, 2013). About two thirds of teachers in Malaysia are under 40 years of age. In addition, the profession does not have as many male teachers as well as ethnic minority teachers (MoE, 2013). There are two main bodies in Malaysia which have the responsibilities to train students for pre-service

education to become teachers. The Teacher Education Division (TED) coordinates the program for the Ministry of Education Malaysia and in universities, the Faculty of Education overseas the pre-service education programmes (Jusoh, 2013).

The Malaysian education system's initial teacher training programmes selects participants based on a range of factors, including one's attitude, aptitude for teaching and personality (MoE, 2013). Previously, candidates who had already completed a degree in another field such as Humanities and STEM education could apply to get into teaching by taking the Postgraduate Teaching Course, also known as the *Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Ijazah (KPLI)*, which is a one-year diploma programme. Since 2007, the Ministry of Education Malaysia raised changed the minimum pre-service training qualification from a diploma to a bachelor degree for primary and secondary teachers. There are minimum academic requirements for candidates to be admitted for entry into teacher training colleges. In order to be accepted for a Bachelor of Education Programme, also known as the *Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Pendidikan*, candidates need to have three distinctions and three credits in the Malaysian O level examinations *(Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia)*. The Ministry of Education has also started prioritising applicants with seven distinctions to create a shift in the profile of teacher trainees. By 2010, 31% of teachers in primary schools had at least a bachelor degree (MoE, 2013).

During pre-service training, candidates specialise in a subject known as their 'option'. These candidates will become specialists in their subjects, such as the English language. The Ministry of Education Malaysia aims to place teachers according to their 'option', however this is not always possible due to circumstances and results in situation where teachers have to teach other subjects and become 'non-optionist' or non-specialists.

### 1.4.2   Professional Development for Teachers in Malaysia

Professional development for teachers in Malaysia was examined in 1995 and a special committee was set up by the Ministry of Education (MoE) Malaysia. The committee was in charge of three areas; teachers' professionalism, professionalization and professional development (Jamil et al., 2011).

Professional development for teachers in Malaysia is categorised into formal or informal experiences. The former refers to teachers attending workshops or professional meetings while the latter includes reading professional publications, and watching documentaries related to any academic discipline (Jamil et al., 2011).

In-service teachers' professional development is an area of interest in many countries, and Malaysia is not an exception. The Teacher Education Division (TED)

in MoE Malaysia oversees teacher education in Malaysia, both pre-service and in-service education. The main goal for in-service education and training is to upgrade the teachers' knowledge, skills and competencies academically and professionally in the subjects they are teaching. The secondary goal is to update teachers with current developments and best practices in education as well as equip them with skills to face the challenges in their daily teaching (Jamil et al., 2011).

The Malaysian government has allocated a sizeable amount for the educational budget every year. The education sector received one of the biggest allocation in Budget 2016, amounting to RM41.3 billion Ringgit (equivalent to 7.5 billion Pound Sterling) making up 20% of the budget to enhance education excellence in Malaysia.

In line with the rapid changes taking place and the transition of the KBSR syllabus to the KSSR syllabus, one of the shifts aimed to upgrade the quality of INSET for teachers. This has led to a reshaping of the type of courses and the delivery mode for INSET on a national level. In 2014, the Ministry of Education (TED, 2014) introduced the CPD Masterplan (*Pelan Pembangunan Professionalisme Berterusan*) which aimed to be implemented together with the shifts outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint.

There is a need to ensure the continuous training of high quality teachers so that they are able to respond to complex educational and social needs. The Structural Policy Country Notes for Malaysia (OECD, 2014) also highlighted that at present, funds for curriculum support and school operations are allocated based on per capita. This is an easy and objective way of administration and monitoring. However, the disadvantage of this method of funding is that it does not distinguish between the urban and rural schools. Therefore, it does not help to narrow the widening gap in student outcomes between the urban and rural schools (OECD, 2014).

### 1.4.3   INSET Programmes for Teachers in Malaysia

In the past, professional development in Malaysia was thought of in the form of short term courses where teachers were introduced to and obtained new information on a particular aspect they needed to include in their teaching and daily tasks. In recent years, professional development for Malaysian teachers has also included long term processes such as regular opportunities and experiences to attend INSET courses. These were based on systematically planned programmes by MoE Malaysia.

A variety of short-term and long-term INSET programmes have been implemented by MoE Malaysia. INSET courses are also offered at the 27 teacher training

institutes in Malaysia. They organise on-going short-term in-service training and development programmes, with a duration usually ranging from one to five days.

The smart teacher training course was implemented in 1988. It expected to train a total of 200,000 teachers by 2010. Teachers who went through this course were encouraged to integrate the use of ICT in their lessons and implement the Smart School Pedagogy effectively (Shaharudin, 2009). These teachers were later appointed as trainers to train other teachers in their schools. A longer INSET programme is the 14 week professional development programme. It was carried out in 2007 and 2008, focusing on a wide range of knowledge and skills in the teaching and learning of ICT. Most of the teachers who completed this course went on to become ICT Coordinators at division, state and national level.

The third INSET programme is a one year specialist training certificate course. Preference was given to teachers who had at least three years of teaching experience and had attended the 14 week professional development programme. This course is offered to primary school teachers. There is also a special degree course for non-graduate teachers which takes one year on a full-time basis at teacher training institutes. This course is also offered through distance learning for a longer duration.

Teachers at indigenous schools and remote schools in Malaysia are not left out in the efforts for teachers' professional development. The teachers from these schools have the opportunity to attend a 4 week course to upgrade their professionalism. Similarly, teachers from remote schools are selected to attend INSET courses.

The examples of INSET programmes mentioned above for in-service teachers in Malaysia are of various durations and they enhance different complementary aspects of teachers' knowledge, skills and competence. MoE Malaysia sees INSET as an integral component to prepare the next generation of teachers to impart 21st century skills to their pupils (Shaharudin, 2009).

## 1.5   Statement of the Problem

Malaysia uses an outcome based education system. The national curriculum document states that by the end of their educational experience, pupils should have achieved the goals set out in the curriculum. In order to train and upgrade the skills of English teachers in Malaysia in a short time to implement the new curriculum, the cascade model of professional development is preferred and Malaysia uses the top-down model of curriculum development.

The aim of this study was to investigate an area related to INSET in Malaysia on the professional development needs of School Improvement Specialist Coaches

(SISCs) and non-specialist primary school English language teachers. In addition, research on teachers' perceptions of their professional development and the factors affecting it has so far been under-researched in a Malaysian context.

This study focused on investigating the INSET needs of SISCs and non-specialist primary school English language teachers in Malaysia. It explores their perceptions on their INSET journey and capture their views on the types of INSET activities they experience based on their beliefs of what good INSET is. Their views are pertinent as they have given suggestions on how the whole process of INSET could be improved to cater to their individual needs, students' needs, school needs and national needs.

This area was chosen because previous research suggests that teachers had to deal with many issues such as the complexity of the curriculum as well as the complexities of professional development and INSET. There are many underlying issues which influences a teacher's performance in the classroom which are unseen by parties and stakeholders who focus and insist on the quality of teachers in relation to pupils' achievement and high performance. It is hoped that this research will be beneficial to CPD planners, INSET providers and to improve the teachers' experiences of INSET based on their perceived needs and their pupils' needs.

## 1.6 Context of the Study

The context of this study was at an in-servce training centre, the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) in Malaysia, a country in South East Asia. ELTC has the role to deliver INSET to in-service English language teachers who are teaching in government schools, comprising national type schools and vernacular (Chinese and Tamil) schools. The centre was set up in 2002 under the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ministry of Education (MoE), Malaysia. The research participants who attended INSET courses for their professional development in this study travelled from all over Malaysia and attended INSET courses in 2015 in one central location, at ELTC Malaysia.

## 1.7 Significance of this study

This qualitative study is one of the first steps to gain insider perspectives from a group of SISCs and primary school non-specialist English language teachers on their perceptions of their previous INSET experiences and their future expectations of INSET in Malaysia. Prior research that has been done in Malaysia on INSET seldom

focused on the teachers as course participants and addressed more quantitative research on policies and students' learning outcomes.

The INSET programmes which were externally-led in Malaysia through a districtwide approach and on a national level adopted a cascade model. The INSET courses were planned with the aims to be effective in generating and supporting teachers towards better teacher quality.

The study shows that the research participants viewed and judged many of the INSET progarmmes they have attended to be a mixture of good INSET programmes and less relevant INSET courses based on their needs and their pupils' needs. The INSET courses which were not seen as relevant were due to little transferability to the classroom, mainly because of the pupils' level of English language proficiency as well as not targeting some learners such as pupils' with special needs. Most of the INSET programmes which consist of short courses were also found to be ad hoc with little follow-up in the classroom and mostly concentrated on INSET for teachers in urban schools.

The CPD planners in MoE Malaysia have started to overhaul the provision of professional development for teachers with reforms such as introducing a more long-term sustainable vision of INSET with the coaching and mentoring model. This is a worthy effort to ensure that teachers are updated with key competencies required in the classroom. This is a positive move towards setting up a decentralized network to provide regional, district level, zone level and school level systems to monitor and support teachers with their current INSET needs. Nevertheless, the research participants have highlighted that after being in their roles as coaches and mentors for over a year, they have not attended INSET programmes to equip them with coaching and mentoring skills. Thus, this needs to be addressed immediately.

Another significant aspect of the findings in this study touches on teacher education reforms and how they need to be aligned with the curriculum and assessment on a national level as teachers have to deal with the complexities of the curriculum, complexities of professional development, complexities of INSET in Malaysia as well as the complexities of identifying changes brought about by professional development and INSET.

The findings in this study highlighted that INSET progarmmes need to move from a mere provision of training which included pre-planned and pre-determined content to various forms of INSET activities which would allow teachers to gain knowledge and skills which are more specific to the user's needs, such as SISCs and non-specialist teachers in this study.

## 1.8 Structure of this thesis

The chapters in this thesis cover the areas briefly outlined below.

## Chapter 1

This chapter presents an introduction and background to the study, the researchers previous work experience and personal interest into the topic of research. It also outlines some information on the education system in Malaysia covering the MBMMBI policy and the KSSR curriculum, Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 and professional development and INSET programmes for teachers in Malaysia. This is followed by the statement of the problem, context of the study and significance of this study. The final section is a summary of each chapter in this thesis.

## Chapter 2

This chapter begins with an introduction. The chapter then presents a literature review covering the seven sections. The first section covers the topics on the definition of curriculum, the complexity of the curriculum and four forms of curriculum which are the intended curriculum, the enacted curriculum, the assessed curriculum and the learned (hidden) curriculum. It is followed by a summary of the complexity of curriculum. The second section of the literature review covers topics on curriculum development, models of curriculum development such as The Tyler Model (Top-down model), The Taba Model (Bottom-up or Grassroots model) and the The Process Model. The third section of this chapter highlights literature on pupils' academic achievement and parental involvement as well as pupils' academic achievement and the school. The fourth section covers the literature on teacher quality and professional development as well as enhancing teacher quality. The next section covers the literature on professional development for teachers and highlights 9 models of professional development and focuses on three models of professional development which are central to this study. The three models are the cascade model, the training model or INSET and coaching and mentoring. The sixth section in this chapter covers the literature on the importance of INSET, the complexities of INSET for teachers and INSET in Malaysia. The last section in this chapter explains how the literature review led me towards my research questions and touches on the focus of this research, the scope of this study and the research questions.

# Chapter 3

This chapter describes the methodology used to answer the research questions. It also presents the research paradigm selected, ontology and epistemology of the study as well as the research design. This is followed by a description of qualitative research and its strengths as well as the qualitative survey approach and its strengths. Next, the context is described with details of the process of obtaining approval to conduct research in Malaysia. This is followed by a detailed description of the sampling of research participants, the information about the three groups of research participants and the INSET course they attended, the use of language and the design of the consent forms and the research methods and instruments used in this study. The last two sections cover the data collection and ethical considerations in this study.

# Chapter 4

This chapter describes the data analysis process and presents the findings. It provides a description of qualitative data analysis, the stages in qualitative data analysis and the six phases of data analysis in this study. This is followed by the presentation of findings from focus group interviews and the findings from individual interviews illustrated using themes and sub-themes drawn from the data analysis process.

# Chapter 5

This chapter discusses the results findings of this study in relation to the literature review and relate it to other studies. The discussion interprets the findings and outlines what they mean with an explanation. This chapter has been organized with an introduction, research objectives and the research questions in this study. The discussion is organized based on the five main themes from the data analysis and findings and they are as follows; the research participants' previous INSET experiences, relevance of INSET courses, professional learning and change, students' needs and teachers' needs as well as the research participants' future expectations of INSET.

# Chapter 6

This chapter presents the conclusions, research contributions, challenges and limitations of the study and provides recommendations for further research directions.

# Chapter 2

# Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

The literature review in this chapter leads to a conceptual and theoretical framework for the research that focuses on curriculum and curriculum development, teacher quality and students' achievement, professional development for teachers, and INSET, as well as relating to the context of Malaysia.

This literature review is divided into four sections. The first section explores curriculum and curriculum development. The curriculum refers to the content material of a specific subject such as the English language which is used as a guide by the teacher to plan lessons for teaching and learning. Pupils' learning is dependent on the curriculum and on the teacher. At the same time, the professional development of teachers has been influenced by curricular changes that have taken place over the years. Thus, there is a relationship between curriculum development and teachers' professional development and this leads us to the second section in this chapter on professional development and in-service education and training (INSET) of teachers. Pring (2011) emphasized that curriculum development and professional development are integral and there can be no curriculum development without teacher development. The third section highlights the importance of the teacher factor in pupils' achievement in school and focuses on teacher quality. Teachers' professional development is viewed as the key factor in school that impacts students' achievement and successful reforms in education (Wiliam, 2013a; Laine et al., 2011). The fourth section is an overview of professional development and INSET for teachers in Malaysia.

## 2.2 Definition of Curriculum

In order to find out if all the stakeholders are referring to the same 'curriculum', it is crucial to understand the meaning of 'curriculum'. It is defined as 'a course of study in one subject at a school or college' (McIntosh, 2013). This is similar to the definition of curriculum by Stenhouse (1989) which explained curriculum as a course, a regular course of study in a school or university. Secondly, it is defined as any programme or plan of activities. According to Abbott (2014), the curriculum also refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives. These definitions show that 'curriculum' is rather complex as it can represent more than one meaning. All the stakeholders refer to one of these meanings of curriculum in their own context.

## 2.3 The complexity of 'Curriculum'

In the context of education, 'curriculum' is more complex than its definitions as it can also be explained from different perspectives. The curriculum is used as a guiding system for all the stakeholders to ensure the curriculum process meets its goals. Porter (2004) explained that curriculum comprises the intended curriculum, enacted curriculum, assessed curriculum and learned curriculum.

### 2.3.1 The Intended Curriculum

In most countries, the intended curriculum is planned from the top level by policy makers and curriculum designers and presented in official documents as the written curriculum. It is also called the official curriculum for education and covers what is taught in a lesson (Lawton, 2012). Other supplementary documents include subject curricula or syllabuses, textbooks and teachers' guidebooks (MoE, 2013).

The quality of education is dependent on the curriculum document to guide all stakeholders, especially teachers. Most countries have a form of national curriculum, a defined set of standards which includes content, attitudes and skills intended for pupils to acquire (Taylor and Sobel, 2001). The intended curriculum is based on precise content, themes or skills which makes sense to the people who planned the curriculum (Taylor and Sobel, 2001).

Kerr (1968) stated the curriculum is to be used in a wider sense, to avoid ambiguity of whether something is part of the curriculum or not and suggested that learning is planned and guided by the teachers in the schools. Thus, the intended curriculum is also present at the school and classroom level (Kerr, 1968). The

teacher is in power to control the selection of content to teach, the methods and strategies to used, how to group the pupils and the intended flow of the lesson. Stenhouse (1989) shared a similar view and sees one form of the curriculum as an intention. It could be a plan or prescription such as a centralised curriculum with an aspiration to improve education for a centralised school system to ensure there is regularity, uniformity and conformity in the curriculum for schools. The intended curriculum leads to the next form of curriculum, which is the enacted curriculum.

### 2.3.2   The Enacted Curriculum

The enacted curriculum takes place when teachers interpret the intended curriculum in the official curriculum documents. According to Lawton (2012), the teacher makes the selection on what is to be taught during lessons as time is limited and the curriculum is actually taught in lessons. Macalister and Nation (2011) agreed that every teacher is a curriculum designer as they make decisions about what and when to teach and decide on their presentation of classroom activities. Thus, the teacher is actively involved in a curriculum designing process. This links to the view by Stenhouse (1989) that a curriculum can be criticized in terms of practicality, as it starts as a possibility in the intended curriculum and moves to an experiment in the enacted curriculum. It should be grounded in practice and is communicated to educators, especially teachers.

According to Maarof and Munusamy (2015) and Abdul Rahman (2014b), teachers in Malaysia faced challenges with the introduction to the new Standard Curriculum for Primary schools (KSSR) for primary level in 2011 which affected their teaching practice, their attitudes towards the new curriculum and their readiness to adapt to change in planning lessons.

### 2.3.3   The Assessed Curriculum

There is a direct link between teaching, the learning process and assessment as all three function together (Wiliam, 2013b). The assessed curriculum is concerned about what pupils learn in terms of achievement. Formative assessment is one of the most powerful ways of improving student achievement and is also referred to as 'assessment for learning' (Heritage, 2010; Wiliam, 2013b). Effective formative assessment takes place when pupils receive feedback about their progress and teachers give them advice on what they need to do in order to improve (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Summative assessment usually takes place at the end of the school term after learning has been completed and gives information and feedback that

sums up the teaching and learning process (Hanna and Dettmer, 2004). It is also known as 'assessment of learning' (Harlen, 2007). Teachers involve pupils in the process as partners and both share the responsibility for learning through per and self-assessment (Heritage, 2010).

Assessment is an important element of the learning process and gives crucial information to the teacher to improve the teaching and learning process and provide support for pupils' learning (Reynolds et al., 2006). In Malaysia, school based assessment (SBA) was introduced in stages beginning 2011 as part of the Malaysia Education Reform (MoE, 2013). Macalister and Nation (2011) stated that every teacher is a curriculum designer and knows what to assess their pupils on. Their decisions are usually based on what happens in the classroom, which are the pupils' learned curriculum.

The intended curriculum, enacted curriculum and assessed curriculum fall under the category of prescriptive curriculum which focuses on the 'what' should happen (Ellis, 2004; Glatthorn et al., 2009). In contrast, the fourth perspective of the curriculum is the hidden curriculum which falls under the descriptive curriculum, which is related to experience.

### 2.3.4 The Learned Curriculum (Hidden Curriculum)

The learned curriculum also known as the hidden curriculum develops from what pupils really learn from a range of complex classroom interactions with teachers and other pupils (Deutsch, 2004). Glatthorn et al. (2009) stated that the hidden curriculum is also identified as the 'unstudied' curriculum and the 'implicit' curriculum. The hidden curriculum is an area that educators are curious about and yet Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) stated that curriculum texts often ignore the powerful influence of the hidden curriculum.

What exactly makes up the hidden curriculum? (Giroux, 1988) explained that the hidden curriculum is made up of three variables which are organizational, social-system and culture variables. Organizational variables include all the decisions on how the teachers are assigned for team teaching, promotions, retention policies, ability grouping and curriculum tracking (Glatthorn et al., 2009). The second variable is the social system which links to the social dimension concerning how the school climate affects positive pupil attitudes and achievement. The third variable is culture which is related to belief systems, values, cognitive structure and meaning. This ties in with Lawton's definition of curriculum as selection from culture (Lawton, 2012).

All the three variables of the hidden curriculum as seen by Giroux and Penna

(1979) are linked to the second view by Stenhouse (1989) that curriculum is the reality of what is happening in the school. Lawton (2012) emphasised that sometimes, the most important aspects of learning are not included as extra-curricular activities. They do not appear in the curriculum and are part of the hidden curriculum.

### 2.3.5   Summary of the complexity of curriculum

With reference to the hidden curriculum, it is undeniable that the teachers and schools have an important role to facilitate pupils' learning and development of skills. Eggleston (2000) emphasized the point in research by Bernstein (1971) which showed that the way that schools make the curriculum available to pupils is one of the main determinants of the pupils' life chances in the future. Eggleston (2000) also comment that Bernstein's work has been presented and explained in great detail in many teacher training initiatives and in-service programmes, but nothing much has changed. This ties in with the point by Gatto (1992) that even on close examination in the best schools, it was found that the curriculum and its sequences showed a lack of coherence full of internal contradictions. Gatto (1992) explained children develop self-knowledge which is part of the hidden curriculum. Therefore, there is a need to reinvent the school curricula where each pupil has a chance to develop self-reliance and a uniqueness in learning. Gatto (1992) believes the 'curriculum of family' forms the heart of a good life. Nevertheless, the role of the teacher is still the most important factor in school which aid pupils' learning (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Wiliam, 2013a; Mincu, 2013).

## 2.4   Curriculum Development

Stenhouse (1989) believes that curriculum development evolves from the relationship of two different views of curriculum study. The first view is as an intention in the intended curriculum and the second view is as reality, in the learned curriculum or the hidden curriculum. Print (1988) emphasised that curriculum is of great importance to teachers as they consider curriculum issues and make decisions related to the aspects of a curriculum. De Coninck (2008) stated that the norm of society believes that curriculum and curriculum development are the responsibility of governments, teachers and parents. However, it is seen as the responsibility of society as a whole, with the pupils learning as the end goal (Fish, 1965).

According to Hussain et al. (2011), a good curriculum is derived through social understanding and provides educational goals which promotes maximum personal development for pupils. It promotes continuity of experiences for effective

learning in the classroom. Similarly, Gherardi et al. (1998) believe learning is a cognitive and a social activity. Lawton (2012) agrees there is a gap between theory and practice and suggests that the gap happens at a few levels, such as planning educational policies, developing a curriculum and the practicality of teaching implementing them. According to Campbell et al. (1989), there are three major stages in planning a curriculum. The first stage is to develop an intended curriculum. The second stage is to implement it and the third stage is to carry out the evaluation of this curriculum in action in a logical step by step process (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2009).

### 2.4.1 Models of Curriculum Development

Lunenburg (2011) defines a model as interacting parts that will guide actions. The purposes of a model are to organize what we already know, assist us to see new relationships and to keep us from being overwhelmed by the complexity of the subject because curriculum is more complex than what people believe it to be (Kelly, 2010; Ponder, 1974). I have summarised three models of curriculum development; the top-down model, the bottom-up model and the process model in the next section.

### 2.4.2 Top-Down Model of Curriculum Development

**The Tyler Model: Four Basic Principles**

Tyler's technical-scientific model is an approach to curriculum and instruction which he outlined in 1949 (Tyler, 2013). According to Nunan (1996), Tyler is one of the most influential curriculum developers and his book is considered the early bible of curriculum design. Tyler's objectives centered model is significant because it stems from an administrative and managerial origin (Glatthorn et al., 2009; Pinar et al., 2008).

Tyler introduced are based on four questions which are key processes in the following order (Tyler, 2013).

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?

2. How can learning experiences which are selected be likely to be useful in attaining these objectives?

3. How can learning experiences be organised for effective instruction?

4. How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated?

In Tyler's model, objectives are vital as the basis for planning a curriculum and looks at the evaluation process in a straight forward process (Fahey, 2012; Pinar et al., 2008; Kliebard, 1986; Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Lawton (2012) simplified Tyler's model to four elements; aims and objectives, content, organization and evaluation. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) stated Tyler's model put forward the best principles for curriculum development in the first half of the 20th century. Tyler's model is considered as the most basic model and systematic model to create a curriculum as the four questions serve as principles with an appeal in its rationality (Kelting-Gibson, 2013; Glatthorn et al., 2012; Ornstein and Hunkins, 2009; Pinar et al., 2008; Nunan, 1996; Print, 1988). However, by the 1970s, Tyler's model was challenged during the period of rethinking and reconceptualization of curriculum models (Travers, 1983).

Giroux (1988) and Sears and Marshall (1990) believed that Tyler's model is an over simplistic model. Nunan (1996) also criticized Tyler's model for implying that the curriculum development process happens in a manner which follows discrete sequential stages. According to Kelly (2010), there is a need to look beyond the content on its own and recognize the purpose and reasons should come before determining the content when planning a curriculum.

### 2.4.3 Bottom-Up Model of Curriculum Development

**The Taba Model: Grassroots Rationale**

Taba introduced the grassroots model with the goal of a thoughtful and dynamic curriculum (Hunkins and Hammill, 1994; Taba, 1962). The most prominent aspects of this model were circular processes, with the emergence of new goals during the process which happens during interactions between the teacher and pupils (Taba, 1962). Taba believed teachers should be included in the process of developing a curriculum (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2009). The seven steps in Taba's model are:

1. Diagnosis of needs

2. Formulation of objectives

3. Selection of content

4. Organisation of content

5. Selection of learning experiences

6. Organisation of learning experiences

7. Determination of what to evaluate and of the way and means of doing it

According to Horn (2002) and Ornstein and Hunkins (2009), Taba's idea was to empower teachers to play a role in the creation, implementation and evaluation process of developing a curriculum. Taba's model had emphasis on a refined description of inquiry-based instruction (Gallagher, 2012). Krull (2003) explained that Taba's model is a more flexible form of curriculum renewal and allows inductive teaching strategies to develop concepts and organization of content on three levels; key ideas, organizational ideas and facts. Krull (2003) and Schon (1973) believed Taba's curriculum model was more likely to be accepted in developing a curriculum as it is initiated gradually with the teachers.

On the other hand, Horn (2002) also criticised Taba's model on the grounds that it was too reliant on the participation of teachers, resulting in it being unworkable. Kelly (2010) stated we must note the inadequacies and inconsistencies of Tyler and Taba's models and stressed that both models do not offer real assistance with the decision of how to choose the content or the aims. Thus, a more comprehensive model was needed and this led to the model by Stenhouse.

### 2.4.4 Process Model of curriculum Development

**The Process Model by Stenhouse**

Pinar et al. (2008) stated that Stenhouse's model influenced research in curriculum development and teacher development. Stenhouse developed a process model also named the process-inquiry model which sets out to organise a curriculum based on logic (Stenhouse, 1989; Fahey, 2012). Stenhouse (1989) described the curriculum as a recipe in cookery and the curriculum happens when teachers and pupils interact together and the content develops during lessons. Stenhouse (1989) justified the process model by stating if one analyses the criteria and structure of teaching learning activities, it will reflect clearly the principles and procedures of teaching.

The process model's strength is it focuses on knowledge and understanding and is viewed as a process which transforms students (Grundy, 1987). Kelly (2010) explained that Stenhouse's model deals more with effects which enables educators to become aware of any possibility of failure and take necessary correctives measures. Another advantage of this model is giving a clear view of the principles in the planning stage of a curriculum (Kelly, 2010). It serves as the main basis for other alterations and modifications over time to the principles without stating learning

outcomes. At the same time, teachers pursue further understanding while teaching their pupils. Thus, this model gives room for teacher quality to be improved (Biggs, 1999; Wiles, 2009).

Brady (1995) highlighted that curriculum development is the central core to professional development for teachers and these two components are sub-components of school evaluation. The relationship between all three are crucial to support pupils' learning. Hewlett (1986) stated there is a need to move towards a curriculum that makes sense and it should maximise to benefit the pupils.

## 2.5   Pupils' Academic Achievement

Pupils' achievement is influenced by many people; their parents, extended family, peers, neighbourhood, schools and other social groups such as clubs or religious organizations. All these parties play important roles in shaping children's progress in learning and educational achievement. The next two sections focus on pupils' academic achievement with parental involvement and the school.

### 2.5.1   Pupils' Academic Achievement and Parental Involvement

Research by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) and Jeynes (2007) found that parental involvement across all social classes and ethnic groups showed a positive impact on pupils' achievement in school. The parents played a vital role in helping children form their behaviour and aspirations, thus motivating them to do better in their education (Fan and Chen, 2001).

In examining the parents' role, it was found that maternal level of education is a key point in the extent of parental involvement and it influenced pupils' achievement (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). It is also interesting to note that the family social class accounts to about one third of variation in pupils' achievement for outside school factors (Epstein et al., 2002).

Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), Epstein et al. (2002) and Harris and Goodall (2007) emphasized that the major impact and strongest influence on pupils' achievement is indeed parental involvement, and it is stronger than the school factor. The forms of parental involvement include the following; good parenting in the home, a secure and stable environment at home, intellectual stimulation by parents, parents and child discussion, parents as good models of social values and high aspirations for personal development (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003).

Similarly, the framework by Epstein et al. (2002) on the role of parental involvement covers six ways of how parents should be involved in their children's

education to have a positive impact. They are good parenting, having a two-way communication between families and the teachers in school, parents' volunteering in schools, children learning at home, families and teachers involve in decision making and collaborating with the community.

Harris and Goodall (2007) agreed that parental engagement with children is powerful to raise their children's achievement in schools as parents have the greatest influence to support and work together to improve learning. However, it is important to note that there is a limited body of knowledge on which aspects of parental involvement contributes the most to pupils' achievement and which component is the most vital (Jeynes, 2005). Harris and Goodall (2007) also agreed on the link to parents' social economic status and level of education influencing pupils' academic achievement. Their research proved that the more parents engage with their children's education, there is a higher possibility of the children to succeed.

### 2.5.2 Pupils' Academic Achievement and the School

Hattie (2009) studied six areas and ranked various influences based on their effect sizes on students' achievement in his work entitled 'Visible Learning'. The six areas studied are the student, the home, school factor, the curricula, the teacher and teaching and learning approaches. Hattie (2009) ranked the list of influences from positive to negative effects on student achievement. The average effect size identified was 0.40. A list of influences which clearly showed that the school and teacher factors do have an influence on students' achievement is seen from the list by Hattie (2009). Some of these are teacher clarity (0.75), professional development (0.72), teaching strategies (0.6), teacher effects (0.32), teacher training (0.11) and teacher subject matter knowledge (0.09).

In view of the school factor, Jürges et al. (2005) explained that a broad general agreement pointed to the fact that pupils' academic achievement can be raised if the quality of teachers improve. This indirectly creates a challenge to improve incentives for teachers to perform better. Teachers need to be motivated to perform well so that they are willing to gain non-monetary gains such as having a reputation as a good teacher and acceptance among parents and the community.

Teachers and parental involvement programmes do work well in the school, nevertheless parental involvement as a factor on its own has a larger impact on pupils' achievement (Jeynes, 2005). Therefore, schools should consider including parental programmes in the school and adopt strategies to enhance parental engagement in children's schooling. Nevertheless, it must be highlighted that parental involvement is an important factor outside a school's control (Rand-Education, 2012).

Research on school related factors on its own has found that teachers really matter and they are the most important factor in the school (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). The quality of teachers is the most critical aspect in schools which influences pupils' achievement. Pupils who are taught by effective teachers have better chances to succeed.

This is also emphasised by a report by Rand-Education (2012) which stated the teacher aspect matters the most to students' achievement compared to any other aspect of schooling. A teacher is estimated to have at least two to three times the impact of other school related factors (Rand-Education, 2012).

Wiliam (2013b) stated that teacher quality is the most important variable at the classroom level. In relation to this, Mincu (2013) emphasized that learners' success is determined by how schools deal with their specific needs, such as including personalization to tailor to pupils' needs in a mixed ability class.

Rivkin et al. (2005) stated that results from research showed that teachers' high quality instruction in primary schools has a high probability to lessen disadvantages related with pupils' low socioeconomic background. In addition, Sammons et al. (2008) stressed that the findings from their research suggests that teachers' classroom practice leads to significant improvement in pupils' academic achievement including behavioural progress.

The importance of teaching has been elevated with the sense of urgency to get more high quality teachers. They are now put at the forefront of change and act as change agents as they interact directly with pupils. Thus, the teaching profession is currently forced to go through continuous changes that benefits all stakeholders and society as a whole (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

## 2.6    Teacher Quality and Professional Development

A teaching and learning international survey reported that teachers' professional development in many countries did not meet the needs of teachers (Pedder and Opfer, 2013). Although teachers' professional development is recognised as dynamic and continuous throughout a teacher's career, one of the problems is the gap between the types of professional development which are disconnected from the classroom and context of learning (Pedder and Opfer, 2013). Bolam et al. (2005) stated professional development should be embedded in a full range of activities and contexts of professional activities in order for it to be effective, involving teachers learning in collaboration.

Research also highlighted the fact that effective professional development which promote advances in teachers' classroom practice can only be achieved based on enquiry based learning and experimenting on practice by teachers (Pedder and Opfer, 2013). Day and Leitch (2007) believe professional development should include opportunities for teachers to focus on subject matter that includes hands-on practice and it should also be integrated into their daily teaching and priorities in classrooms in schools. This would enhance teachers' knowledge and skills and assist them to become more effective teachers.

### 2.6.1 Enhancing Teacher Quality

As explained above, teachers are the most important aspect in relation to pupil achievement than any other aspect of schooling. Research on school related factors show that the teacher's role is key to pupil achievement (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012; Wiliam, 2013b). The success of pupils in their academic achievement is based on the schools' capacity to cater to their specific educational needs (Mincu, 2013). In schools where the students comprised of mixed ability students and low achievers, personalization is important (Mincu, 2013). Thus, there is a need for skilful teachers who are able to cope with the demands in the classroom. In addition, Pring (2011) emphasized that teachers are central to the creation and assessment of the curriculum and the development of the curriculum goes hand in hand with teacher development.

Many policies are designed to promote teacher quality, with a focus on professional development for teachers who are already teaching in schools. Enhancing teacher quality is the step forward towards school reform and it is linked to the quality of initial and continuing teacher education programmes (OECD, 2012). It is a known fact that not all schools and disadvantaged schools have the highest quality teachers, thus policies aim to raise teacher quality and provide targeted teacher education such as professional development to provide teachers with the necessary skills (OECD, 2012). Some of the initiatives that could be taken via professional development are providing mentoring programmes and getting teachers to collaborate and share their skills (Showers and Joyce, 1996). Career incentives should also be given to attract and retain high quality teachers (OECD, 2012).

Teachers' professional development does impact pupils' achievement although it is difficult to identify the exact factors that influence the improvement and how much it contributes to it (Thompson, 2003). Nevertheless, professional development that is effective to enhance quality of teachers is embedded in the analysis of pupils' achievement and expressed teachers' needs (Darling-Hammond, 1997). In addition,

Kempton (2013) emphasized that teacher quality is vital for pupils to achieve good academic performance.

According to Zepeda (2012), it is difficult to separate teachers' professionalism, teacher quality and pupils' achievement. Haycock (1998) also agreed and stated that in order to close the achievement gap among pupils, it is vital to focus on improving teacher quality and developing better quality teachers.

## 2.7 Professional Development for Teachers

According to Wiles (2009), one crucial aspect of curriculum development is curriculum improvement involving staff development. It ultimately links to training teachers for implementation of the curriculum. INSET of teachers connects curriculum and instruction (Gándara et al., 2005). The goal is to improve teaching and learning and provide teachers with a better understanding of their role and of the content, to share better instructional tools and new skills so they can be more effective teachers and facilitate better learning among pupils (Wiles, 2009; Ho et al., 2001).

The role of the teacher has come under scrutiny in recent years and teaching is at the crossroads and more importance is being given to it (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). This has led to an urgency of having more qualified teachers of higher quality in the classroom, in performance and skills (Haycock, 1998). Day (1999) supports this by stating that the quality of teaching will depend on teachers' professional development and continuing to learn. Furthermore, there are changes in the expectation of teachers in relation to the changing contexts in schools and pupils' attitudes (Day, 1999). Zepeda (2012) stated that Professional development should not be seen as a fit-it intervention to address perceived weaknesses of teachers' competencies and should instead be a proactive process. The following section will look at the different models of professional development and the complexities of professional development.

### 2.7.1 Definition of Professional Development

Professional development is a term used to include a broad range of activities to engage teachers in further learning after they have completed their initial training and have become practicing teachers (Craft, 1996).

Neil and Morgan (2005) highlighted professional development can mean different things to different people. Their definition of professional development covers four main areas; the teachers' own CPD, the school's interpretation of policies and

arrangements for CPD, official regulations and recommendations as well as other teachers' interpretations.

Day (1999) defines professional development as all natural learning experiences as well as conscious planned activities which benefits the individual teacher, students, school and the quality of education in classrooms. Teachers will have the opportunity to review, renew and extend their commitment to be change agents.

Professional development can also be defined by the distinction made by Bolam (1993); categorizing it into three categories which are professional training, professional education and professional support. Professional training includes subject based training which are delivered to support strategies to teach the subject. It also includes training in management based activities. Professional education covers longer award bearing programmes such as diploma and higher degree awards. Non-award bearing practitioner research, reflective practice, non-award bearing courses and conferences also come under this category. Professional support comes in the form of formal and informal support from colleagues as well as support from consultants.

The three categories of professional development defined by Bolam (1993) is summarised in the definition of INSET by Day (1999) which stated INSET comprises a planned event, series of events and extended programmes of accredited or non-accredited learning. It is often directly linked to policy and institutionalised contexts.

Eraut (1987) agreed that INSET includes a wide range of activities as seen in all the definitions above but emphasizes that only a few are commonly practised and there is a question on the success rate.

Teachers' professional development is a process which empowers them to take control of their own learning and development. Teachers become thirsty for new knowledge, skills and experiences from CPD which comes in the form of intervention that assist their development (Megginson and Whitaker, 2008).

### 2.7.2   Reasons for Professional Development

There are many reasons for teachers to go through professional development. Craft (1996) stated these include to improve job performance skills, to advance in career development, to increase professional knowledge, to prepare for changes in educational policies and to promote job satisfaction through individual growth.

Craft (1996) explained that the ultimate goal of professional development is to help teachers move forward. It is done by increasing their knowledge and skills and improving their current practices in the light of reported best practices.

Similarly, Eraut (1987) shared suggestions by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of what INSET should do. It aims to maintain the knowledge and skills of teachers with more opportunities to increase their knowledge and educational capacities. It also aims to help teachers to be ready for new situations with their pupils in schools and in society. According to Zepeda (2012), pupils' achievement is the primary focus of teachers' professional development and learning.

Professional development is also used in a narrow context with reference to professional courses (Craft, 1996). The goal is for teachers to be able to gain additional recognition and qualifications as well as develop specialized skills or talents (Eraut, 1987). These courses are planned to raise the professional standards of teachers and strengthen the teaching force with creativity and innovations. The goal of INSET is to provide intensive learning over a limited period of time. Day (1999) explained that it is usually timed to fit in with the demands of the education system, the needs of the teachers to live up to the demands of new policies or for lifelong learning.

Eraut (1987) emphasized that governments are giving more attention to INSET for a few reasons. Firstly, the belief that education needs are related to the community and national needs. Secondly, educational change which includes INSET is likely to be more successful. Thirdly, teachers need continuing education to keep them up to date with new information and changes. The fourth reason is to equip teachers with less basic training than their peers with a pathway for career development.

de Vries et al. (2014) emphasized teachers' CPD aims to improve three areas; increase teacher quality, improve pupils' performance and learning as well as the improvement of overall quality of schools. According to OECD (2012), teachers are at the core of the educational process and have a great responsibility for the pupils' education. The nature of their job demands high quality teachers that engage in continuing professional development throughout their careers. Nevertheless, Day (1999) pointed out that most professional development programmes are designed to address problem focused goals based on a short-term curriculum.

### 2.7.3  Stages of Professional Development

Steadman et al. (1995) stressed that planners of INSET should ensure that teachers who go through the planned professional development progress through a sequence. The progression should go in the order of awareness of new knowledge and skills, learning new strategies, having ownership over them and applying these in their

teaching. They should also bear in mind that the quick desire to evaluate classroom outcomes in a short duration of time would not give an ideal picture of the effectiveness of teachers' professional development.

According to Neil and Morgan (2005), a teacher's journey through professional development may progress according to five stages in his or her career. The progression moves in the following order. The first stage is as a new teacher who receives initial training. The second stage is induction, in the first year of being a qualified teacher. This is followed by the third stage of early professional development, usually covering a period of two years. The fourth stage is a career long CPD which leads the individual towards being a subject leader and the last stage of CPD leads the individual towards the pathway of being a head teacher. The emphasis at each stage should be the on-going development of the teachers' knowledge and professional skills.

### 2.7.4 Cultural Shifts in Professional Development

Rose and Reynolds (2007) highlighted the concept of professional development in education is usually ill-defined because of the confusion of professional development as formal training and on the job learning. In relation to this, Craft (1996) explained that the context of professional development and INSET has been going through cultural shifts and attracted a lot of attention with sources of tension. It was perceived in the 1980s in the UK that there was a need to implement a national curriculum to increase quality in schools. On the other hand, there are the individual needs of teachers in relation to job satisfaction and professional growth.

In recent years, the focus of professional development has shifted towards an emphasis on a teacher's self-evaluation, reflective practice and continuing personal and professional development. Teachers are now encouraged to take responsibilities over their own learning. There are individual needs of teachers in relation to job satisfaction and professional growth. On the other hand, there is a need to implement a national curriculum to increase quality at schools.

## 2.8 Models of Professional Development

Kennedy (2005) lists nine models of professional development and they are the following models; training, cascade, award-bearing, deficit, coaching and mentoring, standards-based, community of practice, action research and transformative.

In this section, I will classify the nine models of CPD according to the classification by Kennedy (2005); the transmission models, the transformational models

and the models which increase capacity for professional autonomy. There are four models which fall under the transmission model and the models are training model, cascade model, deficit model and award-bearing model. The transformational models include three models which are coaching and mentoring, communities of practice model and the standards based model. There are two models under the category of professional autonomy and they are the action research model and the transformative model.

In this chapter, the discussion focuses on three models which are central to this study and directly related to INSET in Malaysia. They are the cascade model, training model or INSET and coaching and mentoring.

### 2.8.1    The Cascade Model

Wedell (2005) stressed that the cascade is aimed to be a cost-effective means to bring educational change to a large population of teachers as funding to provide training is rather limited. The cascade model has a few processes. It begins with teachers being selected as individuals from schools or institutions to attend training sessions. After they have completed the training or course, they have to disseminate and share the information, knowledge and skills they have acquired to other teachers in their schools or districts.

The cascade model is used in contexts where there are limited resources, such as lack of skilled trainers (Kennedy, 2005). According to Craft (1996), dissemination of information is built into the initial learning process, to disseminate a central message or approach which is proposed.

The cascade model actually comes under the training model. According to McDevitt (1998), the cascade model often employs a trainer or a small team of trainers to train a large group of teachers. The first pool or level of teachers will then train another group of teachers. It uses a chain effect and there is no limit to the number of groups trained by those trained in each link. However, the norm of the number of links is three to four groups down the cascade model. In theory, the quality of content which is passed down from the first group to the last group should be similar because the training is often delivered as the same package (McDevitt, 1998).

The principle of the cascade model is to train small groups of teachers to be specialist trainers. They are trained in content comprising knowledge and skills which are needed to bring about changes in the classroom, to improve teaching and learning (Wedell, 2005). The teachers who have been trained at the first level have a big responsibility to train other teachers well as the next level of teachers have to

pass on the essence of the training to their colleagues.

Wedell (2005) also emphasizes that when using the cascade model, a key focus is to consider the context and content of the training. The initial planning stage should identify whether there is a mismatch between programme aims, the subject and realities in the classroom. The audience for the cascade model has to be well defined the teachers' needs targeted carefully in order for the training provided to be effective and relevant to them (Craft, 1996).

### 2.8.2 Strengths and Criticisms of the Cascade Model

One of the greatest strengths of the cascade model is the training role given to the facilitators at each level or link (McDevitt, 1998). Teachers who have gone through the first level of training will have the experience to take on the role of trainers in their districts or schools etc. It indirectly gives them a dual role as a participant first and then a trainer (Wedell, 2005). This fosters professional development and staff development for them, enabling them to become more familiar with the content.

In contrary, it could also be a problem if the transition periods given to the teachers are very short, should they need to become 'active' facilitators right after completing the initial training (McDevitt, 1998). In terms of practicality, they would actually need time to understand the ideas and key concepts and do further exploration of the content area before being able to train others.

Wedell (2005) further explains that the 'dual' role given to the teachers is similar to expert coaches (Showers and Joyce, 1996). This is true especially for teachers who serve as trainers to do smaller scale training programmes in district or state levels. Nevertheless, Showers and Joyce (1996) are of opinion that these trainers or expert coaches will still need some form of active coaching before they will be fully ready to conduct training. It would help to develop their confidence and competence in the content area.

The cascade model's strength is also training as many teachers as possible in a shorter period of time (Wedell, 2005). More teachers will be able to receive hands-on experience of the proposed content, skills and teaching techniques to maximise the impact in the classroom. Thus, it is an economical way of getting the training done with less materials and less master trainers. In most cases, preparation will include one module or package and a small group of skilled trainers to train the first group.

The third strength of the cascade model is it has continuity as compared to many other one-off training programmes which end in themselves. Courses that provide training with this model will go on for a longer period of time, with the

whole cycle for all links and levels to go on for months and even years.

Apart from the strengths demonstrated in this model, there are also many criticisms and weaknesses which come with the design.

The main criticism of the cascade model is that it follows a top-down model, making it difficult to make changes once it is set in motion and has started running (McDevitt, 1998). It promotes a one-way transmission and this makes it hardly possible for a review to take place along the links. Even if the trainer has noticed flaws and wants to make changes after the first training, the first link is already over and the teachers will follow what they had gone through in training the next link. It will be impossible for them to get feedback from the trainer if there are suggested revisions. Furthermore, this strengthens the case that it is difficult to find a system that will ensure what is proposed from a central government or agency will filter down in an effective way.

Another major weakness of the cascade model is the audience is constantly changing from one level to the next (McDevitt, 1998). This makes it difficult to tailor one package of training to fit the needs of the teachers at all levels. The planners would likely face a tension over audience and who to target, educators at the top of the pyramid such as head of departments or beginning teachers. It is important to note that the target audience will change at different levels and links as in most training scenarios, heads of departments are trained first followed by middle level teachers and then beginning teachers.

The issue over the audience can lead to a serious problem for the planners and initial trainers because there is a crucial question of the context of training. The planners would decide what to focus on as the audience will be made up of different levels of teachers. The question arises of whether the target of the course or workshop should be what the teachers need such as particular skills or should the training target the end users, by providing teachers with ideas and handouts for differentiated activities to use in the classroom and train the teachers how to use these materials directly with their pupils.

One of the criticisms of the cascade model is the teachers who attend CPD will share knowledge based or skills based content, and not always on values (Solomon and Tresman, 1999). The training is often tailored around the 'what' and 'how' aspects and hardly on the 'why'. Kennedy (2005) also believes the cascade model supports the technicist view of educating, with the main focus on knowledge and skills.

Day (1999) explained that the cascade model is suitable for teachers to share their own successful learning with colleagues. Nevertheless, a smooth transfer of

knowledge is not always the real situation (McDevitt, 1998). The ideas may get distorted if it is not clearly understood by the first group of teachers being trained. There is also a risk for the first group of teachers to alter the content, adapt it or make changes before delivering it to another group in the next link. They may modify or select specific content they want to use in training another group of teachers and leave out critical areas originally included by the programme developer. On the other hand, empowering teachers in this time and age is needed, and it includes allowing them to change some of the content (McDevitt, 1998).

Wedell (2005) stressed that the cascade model's provision of training is not a guarantee that the training aims will be applied in classrooms. The content may be diluted and trickle down along the different links and levels of teachers. Additionally, Dichaba and Mokhele (2012) claimed that although the cascade model is an accepted method and is popularly used for the training teachers for INSET, it did not succeed to improve the performance of teachers in the context of their research. In addition, Hayes (2000) and González (2007) emphasised that the cascade is more often reduced to a trickle by the time it reaches the teacher in the classroom.

The cascade model has its strengths and is still widely used and preferred in many countries especially in Asia Pacific. It may be useful as a training model but partly fails to disseminate information and ideas or changing behaviour patterns along the different levels and links (McDevitt, 1998). It is also not flexible to respond to challenges from the grassroots level and what pupils need (Prophet, 1995). According to Wedell (2005), few projects using the cascade model cater to the training aims that provide support for the micro and macro level context.

### 2.8.3 The Training Model or In-Service Education and Training

The training model is the dominant form of CPD widely used to train and re-train teachers in recent years universally (Kelly and Mcdiarmid, 2002). This model provides teachers with the opportunity to upgrade their knowledge and skills and become more competent teachers. The training is often planned and conducted by a trainer who is seen as an expert (Kennedy, 2005). The training can take place at the teachers' school or institution as well as at an off-site location, which is centralized.

This model is often labelled as a top-down delivery model of CPD which focuses on direct teaching. Information is passed down from trainers to teachers and they are expected to implement it in their teaching. This method reinforces the idea that teachers are implementers of externally imposed policies (Rose and Reynolds, 2007).

Training and educating teachers can be seen as problematic concepts. There is a fine line between both but it is difficult to separate the two as they are related.

Lieberman (1996) uses the term, an 'expanded view of professional learning' to explain the education of teachers. It covers private, unaided learning from experience where teachers learn how to cope and survive in their professional roles, become competent and develop in their contexts, classrooms and schools. At the same time, they go through informal development opportunities in school and also get the opportunity to attend formal 'accelerated' learning opportunities such as training. The training could be available through internal CPD programmes at school level or externally run INSET programmes and training activities planned by the government.

Lieberman (1996) created a classified list of practices which can motivate teacher development, and move them further than just listening to new frameworks and ideas to understand good practices for teaching. The teachers are encouraged to be involved in the decisions about the substance, process and organisational support for their learning, in school or even in wider partnerships outside the school setting. Such networks can provide opportunities for teachers to share innovative ideas. Lieberman (1996) also classified CPD into three categories; direct teaching, learning in school and out of the school learning. Training would come under direct teaching where teachers attend courses, workshops and have consultations with their trainers.

The classification by Lieberman (1996) is significant because it highlights the education of teachers which occurs through informal learning and which grows from the purpose and direction of a teacher's own work, the sense they make out of their understanding of what works and what does not. In line with this, Lieberman's work also pointed out that formal education and training only contributes a small proportion of teachers' learning.

Lieberman (1996) also stressed that teachers need to be educated in and out of the work place and that both are crucial in their CPD and this strongly suggests a learner-focused perspective as being more crucial than a training-focused perspective in planning and managing CPD for teachers. A learner-focused perspective will look at the role of teachers as individual learners, being part of an organizational culture, learning from their colleagues and developing leadership qualities as they take on various roles and taking initiatives and contributing to their own CPD.

Teacher growth through CPD can be seen along a continuum which slowly moves from direct teaching, the most dominant type of professional development programmes such as training, towards practices which involves teachers' learning

from their practices in school and out of school, such as in communities with other teachers.

Stenhouse (1975) sums up the whole debate very well by stating that curriculum development will not be able to exist without teacher development as part of it. He further explains that curriculum implementation cannot take place without training. Day (1999) sees this view as a narrowly focused view of training which only looks at the technical aspect but does not look at the broader aspect of educational values.

Steadman et al. (1995) explained that research into INSET actually revealed findings that effective INSET constitutes two elements which are complementary, and they are education and training. Educating teachers helps them to decide what they need to do in the classroom and what they need to do when they face challenges. Meanwhile training teachers helps them to do what is necessary in an effective, consistent and efficient manner.

### 2.8.4   Strengths and Criticisms of the Training Model or INSET

The greatest strength of this model is its compatibility with the standards-based aspect of teacher development, which is often based on national set standards. It is usually part of a centralised programme, which focuses on standardization and quality control from government agencies (Kennedy, 2005). At the same time, it has a dual role and is seen as a weakness as well because the standardization of training precedes the need for teachers to look at their individual needs (Kennedy, 2005).

In contrast, Kelly and Mcdiarmid (2002) stated that common features of good professional development in the last 20 years involve teachers being recognised as professionals and incorporated into the development process of their CPD. They stressed that teachers' CPD should be practical and embedded in teachers' work as well as related to their daily teaching. Thus, although a central agency such as a government body plans and carries out centralized training on a large scale, teachers are often left out of the whole process of identifying their CPD needs and customizing a relevant CPD programme.

According to Petras et al. (2012), professional development in Malaysia consists mostly of formal activities organized by educational authorities. They acknowledged that the efficacy of CPD in Malaysia which usually focuses on developing a single teaching skill has been challenged by the failure of many professional development programmes. The main reason for such failure appears to be the disconnection between the goals of the policy and the reality in the classroom. It is a case of conflict between policy and practice in the classroom.Day (1999) also stressed one common

criticism of this model is that it lacks connectivity to the current classroom situation. He believes such training for CPD does not relate to the moral purposes of teachers' professionalism.

Nevertheless, Hoban (2002) claimed that the training model is effective as a means to introducing new knowledge to teachers in a decontextualized setting. Lieberman (1996) on the other hand claimed that this form of training is unattached to classroom life, is often made up of a combination of abstract ideas and pays little attention to ongoing support for CPD and changing practices. This is in contrast to the concept that teachers' professional development should go hand in hand with pupil centred pedagogy which gives more opportunities for teachers' learning.

de Vries et al. (2014) also agreed that teachers' CPD can update their knowledge and skills. There is a big possibility that the planners of a CPD programme have control over the content to be delivered. Despite introducing new concepts and content, this model does not necessarily go on to assist teachers on how to use the new knowledge introduced to them (Kennedy, 2005).

The training model offers CPD courses that can provide stimulating contact with teachers from a range of backgrounds and experiences. It allows the teachers to exchange ideas and see new perspectives (Craft, 1996).

Craft (1996) stressed that the course-led training model has many traditional weaknesses. Some of them are the domination of off-site training, lack of links to the needs of schools or classrooms, the fact that training may not be given to those who need it most. Craft (1996) also believes such training has limited impact on teachers' practice and no follow up after disseminating of information and knowledge. A major weakness of this model is it disrupts the teaching timetable when teachers have to go off-site for training on weekdays during term time. Furthermore, the training caters for teachers at different starting points and is likely to be unable to satisfy all teachers' needs.

Research by the CUREE centre (CUREE, 2012) on characteristics of high professional learning for practitioners as seen in a report on research evidence stated that there are four models of professional development which are likely to contribute highly to improve student learning outcomes. The first model is collaborative learning which promotes teachers to work together, try new approaches and share evidence of their learning (CUREE, 2012). The second model is professional development supported by specialist expertise such as specialist and collaborative coaching. The engaged specialist can be an external source. The third model which will have an impact on students learning is INSET sustained over time. Teachers who have been attending professional development regularly will have more impact from their

teaching over the years to benefit their pupils. The fourth model of professional development highlighted in the report by CUREE (2012) is exploring evidence from new things. Teachers will be able to connect the new knowledge by linking practice to theory. The research report by CUREE (2012) also emphasized there are four professional development approaches which demonstrated characteristics linked to effectiveness. These approaches are collaborative enquiry, coaching and mentoring, networks between schools and using structured dialogues and group work for teachers to try out new approaches.

### 2.8.5  Coaching and Mentoring

Research by Lortie (2002) highlighted that teachers often complained about the lack of time to collaborate and work together with fellow colleagues and other teachers. Boreen (2009) stated that this situation would lead to a lack of personal and professional fulfilment for the teachers and also emphasised that coaching and mentoring does come with its own set of challenges.

According to Connor and Pokora (2012), effective coaching and mentoring involves people meeting, engaging and relating with one another as well as connecting to each other on a professional level. It is crucial for them to have a learning dialogue in a pair or small group where all parties are willing to share their perspectives (Connor and Pokora, 2012).

The coaching and mentoring model focuses on relationships between teachers, usually on a one to one basis to develop professional learning (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2003; Lofthouse et al., 2010). Their relationship is to support professional development through partnerships of colleagues in schools or a more hierarchical relationship, which can be in the form of a mentor and mentee (Hudson, 2013; Gordon and Brobeck, 2010; Aladejana et al., 2006). The goal is to develop a non-threatening relationship to encourage discussion (Connor and Pokora, 2012; Showers and Joyce, 1996). Neenan and Palmer (2001) emphasised that the relationship fostered through coaching and mentoring is one which is a collaborative relationship that focuses on problem solving in a structured manner.

A coaching and mentoring programme serves as a platform to provide the space for professional learning to take place (Burley and Pomphrey, 2011; Parsloe and Leedham, 2009). Connor and Pokora (2012) stated that the type of learning which occurs is at the heart of the process of change and the coach and mentor has the role to facilitate learning and development of the mentees. Rhodes and Beneicke (2003) explained that coaching is more skills related while mentoring also involves a professional friendship and counselling. One partner is often more experienced than

the other, such as a senior teacher and new teacher or even a head of department and subject panel member (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2003). Garvey et al. (2014) and Brunner (1998) explained that there are variations of coaching and mentoring which can be planned and incorporated into teachers' professional development and activities can take place in a wide range of contexts. In addition, it is important for participants to have a full understanding of the activities and strive for a consensus when working with coaches and mentors in pairs or groups (Garvey et al., 2014).

### 2.8.6 Strengths and Criticisms of the Coaching and Mentoring Model

Showers and Joyce (1996) stressed the main concern for coaching and mentoring is to help pupils benefit when their teachers learn, grow and change. They outlined a few principles of peer coaching. The first principle is to work with an entire faculty of teachers whereby all members are in the coaching teams. They should agree collectively to practice or use whatever changes they decide to implement. They should also support one another in the process of change and share the task of developing lesson plans and materials. Finally, the teachers should collect data on the whole process of implementation and monitor the effects on pupils' progress.

Gathercole (2009) reported positive feedback of activities in schools from a teacher to teacher approach. It showed high levels of pupil engagement and teachers were more enthusiastic. It demonstrated teachers can be innovative in creating new lesson plans and promoting independent learning by working collaboratively. Gathercole (2009) stated that peer coaching among teachers supports internationalizing learning through reciprocal observation and giving feedback. It is more informal and different from observations of teachers which cover inspection, monitoring and accountability. Daresh (1995) also stated that it is an advantage for teachers to have peer support from colleagues and other teachers as this contributes towards more effective professional development.

Leat et al. (2012) emphasised that through the coaching and mentoring process, teachers have the opportunities to become learners again and are given the chance to step out of their hectic daily schedules of planning lessons to interact with other teachers and discuss issues related to pedagogy and learn more about other teachers' contexts and practices. Additionally, they would be able to reflect on their own teaching during the coaching and mentoring process and where they are able to break issue down into small episodes and work together to find some solutions to improve their teaching (Leat et al., 2012; Thomas and Smith, 2004).

According to Rhodes et al. (2004), coaching and mentoring can support the

professional practice of teachers especially by enhancing teachers' self-esteem and confidence from support given by their peers, colleagues and mentors. Additionally, the knowledge and skills the teachers gained from the coaching and mentoring activities would be transferred from teacher learning to student learning (Rhodes et al., 2004). Moreover, Thomas and Smith (2004) highlighted some of the other advantages of teachers taking part in coaching and mentoring activities for their professional development include working more effectively, encouraging personal growth in their careers, motivating other peers and teaching and working well in teams. Equally important, the teachers would also develop teaching techniques for constructively challenging pupils and this would influence improved performance of their pupils (Thomas and Smith, 2004). Furthermore, when teachers contribute their time to coaching and mentoring activities, it will open creative thinking pathways for them and enhances job satisfaction in the long term especially when they find solutions to solve their initial problems related to teaching and learning (Allan, 2007; Thomas and Smith, 2004).

On the other hand, Nicholls (1997) explained that although collaboration and partnership are developmental aspects that are closely related in professional development, there is a struggle between the two concepts. They should not be looked at as separate entities as professional development, collaboration and partnership are linked together to benefit educators and researchers (Nicholls, 1997).

Allan (2007) found that there are issues that may arise from the onset of coaching and mentoring related to the selection process of suitable coaches and establishing trusting relationships. In addition, there is a question of how coaches are being selected and based on what criteria have they been paired up or grouped together as mentors and mentees (Carter and Francis, 2001). Findings from the study suggests that the criteria have to be clearly stated and laid out on the qualifications and skills of the coaches selected for a coaching and mentoring programme. Aladejana et al. (2006) highlighted the disadvantage of the mentor mentee relationship that derives from coaching and mentoring which resulted in coaches and mentors becoming over protective over their mentees. This could result in a lack of unity in the pair or groups and cause disunity. The gender factor was also noted as in certain countries which have cultural stereotypes, male teachers would not be comfortable to have a female coach and mentor (Aladejana et al., 2006).

In addition, Allan (2007) stressed that it would take time before teachers see the benefits of activities from coaching and mentoring. It is usually a slow process as it is often planned as a bottom-up initiative with the potential to empower teachers. Allan (2007) also believes that coaching and mentoring should not be planned as a

government initiative as it would have less impact on teachers to take part willingly in the programme.

## 2.9 The importance of INSET

Surveys have shown that teachers are not very confident or competent about certain aspects of their teaching as this might not have been addressed during their initial teacher training (Guskey, 1988; Valazza, 2012). Senior teachers may also question the techniques they have been using for a long time and the validity of teaching using the same methods. INSET can be seen as placed along a continuum of two main approaches, which are when teachers face a problem in their teaching and try to find a solution to solve the problem (Kerry and Wilding, 2004).

Omar (2014) suggests that INSET is a catalyst for the effectiveness of teachers as it leads to better job performance with updated knowledge and skills. In addition, it will help teachers when they face challenges and the need to keep up with changes in education and they will be able to apply it to their teaching and learning in the classroom. Thus, it can lead to teacher professionalism. It will also motivate the teachers to perform better in their teaching.

Dutto (2009) has highlighted that INSET has a dual role; inclusive of a remedial role and a support role for teachers. When there are new reforms to be implemented in an education system, there will be a need for teachers who are able to implement those reforms and make them a success. It will also provide the teachers opportunities for diversification and personalization of personal growth.

In addition, INSET was a priority in the past but now it is a high challenge (Dutto, 2009). Teacher professionalisation will involve reinventing professional development as it is the key to improving the profile of the teaching profession. CPD focuses on fostering each teacher's competence and enhancing one's practice. Additionally, an integrated learning environment for teachers is also important (Dutto, 2009).

According to Joyce et al. (1993), the interests of the teachers and pupils as learners are intertwined. Lazarova and Prokopova (2004) and Joyce et al. (1993) agreed that in the last 20 years, INSET has become more of a provision of services as well as a saturation or concentration of needs for teachers because in their daily teaching activities, teachers are caught in a net of needs based on changing needs and their pupils' needs (Lazarova and Prokopova, 2004). Hustler (2003) emphasized the main aim of INSET is to address teachers' educational needs in a general manner and focus on increasing their knowledge, however teachers also have their individual

needs which vary depending on their pupils needs and contexts. Although teachers have various needs and expectations of INSET, they usually get to attend INSET offered by CPD planners whose services are to plan programmes based on political and economic factors (Lazarova and Prokopova, 2004).

Kerry and Wilding (2004) emphasised one important question to consider in relation to INSET is whether professional development is something done to teachers or something done by them. Research has shown that one of the factors which contribute to effective professional development is when teachers work collaboratively (Cordingley et al., 2003; Duncombe and Armour, 2004; King and Newmann, 2001; Hixson and Tinzmann, 1990).

Harris and Jones (2012) also emphasized that in the classroom, teachers can evaluate their teaching with purposeful collaboration. It can be effective especially when they use their knowledge, skills and understanding as well as data relating to students' achievement, thus linking improvements for the student and teacher. Ulvik and Langørgen (2012) highlighted findings from their study which showed experienced teachers can learn and acquire skills from beginning teachers too, contrary to the popular belief that beginning teachers learn more from senior teachers. They found that beginning teachers contributed in three ways, which are; bringing new ideas and enthusiasm, digital competence and have more common frames of understanding of young people (Ulvik and Langørgen, 2012). Thus, they would contribute during collaborative learning in INSET with other middle level teachers and experienced teachers.

It is important to note that teachers do not enter INSET as empty vessels. Instead they bring a wealth of existing knowledge, skills, practices, perspectives, ideas as well as anxieties about the complexity of teaching and developing as teachers (Dadds, 2001). These are useful resources that can be tapped into during collaborative learning in INSET. Similarly, Borg (2011) stated that in the context of INSET, teachers bring their previous knowledge, substantial classroom experience and their beliefs of teaching and learning to professional development programmes. In addition, Waters and Vilches (2000) reported from their research that INSET programmes which had follow-up school based monitoring processes and further support for teachers after the courses proved to be more successful in the long term. Zepeda (2012) agreed that effective professional development is often job embedded, on-going and career long INSET. In addition, INSET programmes which had continuous follow-up support ensured the teachers had higher self-esteem, worked better in teams and gained problem solving skills (Waters and Vilches, 2000). Walter and Briggs (2012) emphasised the findings from their research suggests that teachers'

professional development bring about major changes in relation to teachers' effectiveness, resourcefulness and enthusiasm.

## 2.10    Complexities of INSET for Teachers

As seen from the discussion above, INSET is indeed a complex and long-term process in many cases (Neil and Morgan, 2005; Zepeda, 2012). It is crucial not to adopt a quick fix approach when planning INSET (Bates et al., 1999). This is in line with the point by Harland (1999) which emphasizes the best learning is slow learning. Some of the central issues linked to the complexities of INSET are discussed below.

Graham (1996) highlighted the issue of frequent political intervention on matters related to curriculum, assessment and the quality and professional development of teachers. Political intervention in education related matters have become some routine that is seen as a norm, resulting in people accepting it and not seeing it as problematic.

According to Pring (2011), curriculum development is an integral part of teacher development. A completely 'hands-off' approach by the government towards education will not last. This is because of concerns related to the content in the curriculum, the type of examination system and the standards of achievement. In addition, Adey (2004) stressed that professional development of teachers lies within school improvement, which also lies within the bigger picture of educational change.

In some governments, funding for INSET comes from a competitive bidding process which will likely cause a significant impact on the quantity and quality of INSET provided for teachers. If there are changes in funding, it would be the mechanism that bring changes in the planning of medium term and long term development for professional development (Bates et al., 1999). Therefore, there needs to be a proper analysis on the role of the central government and other agencies linked to it such as the education ministry as well as the INSET at state and district levels who plan and implement professional development programmes for teachers.

Bates et al. (1999) suggest that best practices are helpful for organisers of INSET. The organizing body should also seek advice on difficulties from other organisers and share about possible necessary compromises they could take as solutions. A teachers' professional development as an individual is important. Thus, organising bodies should provide a strong element of leadership and support. Burgess (1993) also characterized high quality INSET as being long term with teachers having secure access to a variety of recent high quality resources and facilities.

There is also the crucial issue on the question of the right teachers attending

the right courses. It is linked to the balance between three areas of need, the individual, school and national level. However, problems could arise when national needs are identified through national priorities which the government wants to implement in a specific period of time. There are risk and dangers in a top-down national priority driven structure of professional development, as it uses an inflexible training structure. Graham (1996) believes this is related to the concern of a shift from a knowledge and values base of education to the instrumentality of training.

Results from a Mori Survey on the cost, nature and perceived effectiveness of INSET showed that a generic off the shelf course is not as effective as a tailor-made programme for training and professional development (Bates et al., 1999). In line with this, Pring (2011) emphasized that experienced teachers were able to determine the particular type of INSET they need, especially the ones conducted by teachers in collaboration with professional organisations. Thus, they did not prefer the generic INSET imposed on them from a centralised educational system. Nevertheless, Weingarten (2011) explained that this might be challenging because teachers and their schools find it difficult to find partners who want to collaborate with them. Indirectly, this has resulted in the blaming of teachers, and their institutions become the scapegoats (Weingarten, 2011).

Burgess (1993) acknowledged the difficulty of identifying the impact of INSET for teachers' professional development on pupils' classroom learning, whether for short or medium term. The use of a simple input-output model or a sequential linear model does not recognise the complexities of the various issues that may arise along the journey of an individual teacher's career and the different stages of professional development (Burgess, 1993). A linear model gives the image of smooth running images of INSET. There are also assumptions that a certain good practice can be transferred and adopted into another context and be universally appropriate, with the belief any problems can be overcome. It is just an illusion that makes INSET look ideal.

According to Nicholls (1997), teachers have a psychological need to construct knowledge which leads them to participate in professional development. Although a teacher's development can be seen in isolation, they still need the support of the institution for their development. The institutions also have a major role to support the teachers in their development. Thus, professional development can only happen when the teachers support their institutions.

With reference to Curriculum development and educational reform, all new plans and changes to improve teaching and learning in schools does emphasize the need for high quality professional development for teachers (Guskey, 2000). Based

on all the INSET programmes conducted for teachers' professional development to enhance teacher quality, teachers must also be provided with time to integrate the new knowledge and skills in their curriculum. Teachers need time to adapt their practices to meet pupils' needs and use the curriculum given to them. Professional development should be able to support the teachers with subject matter, strategies for pupils' learning and new practices. INSET has been used globally as a form of professional development to fill this gap but it's impact and effectiveness has been questioned (Yan and He, 2015). Research by Yan and He (2015) suggests that teachers had intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to participate in short INSET courses in an EFL context but their intrinsic motivations were more dominant as they found attending INSET personally rewarding towards their teaching to improve their pedagogical skills.

In addition, Hoban (2002) explained about educational change and how it can be represented in the form of a spider web. It is a complex system whereby there are multiple lenses for understanding the nature of the change process. The complexity of change in school and for teachers to make changes in their practice after attending ongoing INSET would depend on a few elements. These elements include school leadership, school culture, teachers' lives and their work, structure in organisations, politics, contexts and teachers' learning (Hoban, 2002). These elements need to act collectively to be able to influence some form of change. Hoban (2002) gave an example of a new curriculum being introduced and stated this could alter relationships of the parties involved and could lead to various different outcomes as it is a non-linear process. It is dependent on the interrelationships among all the elements. Thus, the situation is similar to the education system in Malaysia with the current KSSR curriculum and the provision of on-going INSET for teachers. Hoban (2002) believes that the focus should be on dynamic interactions among the various elements in a complex education system.

## 2.11   INSET in Malaysia

Curriculum and curriculum development on a whole is complex as it has components of curricula policies, goals, areas of study, units and lesson plans. All the components are equally important. Glatthorn et al. (2012) sums it up by stating the curriculum is a plan made for guiding learning in schools. It is represented in documents at a few levels and the actualisation of the plans in the documents by the teacher and it is experienced by pupils in the classroom during teaching and learning.

The role of the teacher is central to the creation of the curriculum and the

development of the curriculum goes hand in hand with teacher development (Pring, 2011). Teachers are indirectly also researchers of what works in the classroom and act as curriculum thinkers based on evidence they see and gather in their practice (Pring, 2011). Teachers are deliverers in the classroom and their professional judgement is important to aid them in their teaching. They have a huge task to think about the development of learning opportunities for a diverse group of pupils. Thus, there is a great emphasis for professional development for teachers as the central role of the teacher has been often overlooked by policy makers who focus on targets of pupils' high achievements (Fullan, 2005).

Sustained professional learning is a vital and important global issue to achieve the effectiveness of education and improve pupils' learning outcomes (Yan and He, 2015; Tomlinson, 2004). Brown (2000) stressed the need to address real life aspirations of INSET for teachers as they face real life frustrations in the role of teaching to implement change in the classroom.

Che Musa et al. (2012) reported the findings from their research on the teaching of English in Malaysian schools and suggested three important issues. Firstly, the teaching of the English language is influenced by the use of Malay language (Bahasa Malaysia) due to the interference of mother tongue, by pupils as well as teachers. Secondly, pupils in Malaysia who study the English language as an ESL or EFL subject often use direct translation from their mother tongue but use dictionaries to understand the meaning of words in the English language. Thirdly, teachers still focus on the teacher centred approach and more emphasis is given to teaching reading and writing skills (Che Musa et al., 2012).

In Malaysia, most INSET programmes are planned and carried out using the cascade model, an apparently cost-effective means to bring educational change to a large population of teachers with limited resources (Ming et al., 2010). Dissemination of a central approach is built into the initial learning process. The Ministry of Education (MoE) in Malaysia has planned and carried out many programmes in support of the various policies and the implementation of the KBSR and KSSR syllabuses for primary education. In the last few decades of INSET for English language teachers (non-option and optionists) in Malaysia, MoE has implemented many INSET programmes and courses to provide teachers with professional development on an on-going basis. Nevertheless, a smooth transfer of knowledge is not always achieved and the cascade model is not a guarantee of the training aims being applied to teach pupils in classrooms (Wedell, 2005; Mathekga, 2004).

According to Abdul Rahman (2015), ESL teachers need to be appropriately trained and qualified and have access to high quality INSET throughout their careers

and made reference to the fourth shift in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MoE, 2013). It stated that ongoing professional development allows teachers to maintain and enhance their skill set, including staying up-to-date with the latest development in pedagogy. In line with the MBMMBI policy and the change in the curriculum with the implementation of the KSSR, timely changes are needed with reference to the type of in-service courses and training provided for in-service teacher training in Malaysia. The curriculum of these courses aimed to provide support and cater to the teachers' needs which are critical to them now, which is to implement the KSSR syllabus effectively.

In view of the research by Hattie (2009) and Rand-Education (2012) that the teacher factor is the most important in the school that matters to pupils' achievement than any other factor in the school, there is an urgent need to pay great importance to INSET and focus more closely on the teachers and learners needs to improve teaching and learning. Graham (1996) shared a concern of professional development that there is a steady drift from a knowledge base of education towards the instrumentality of using training. Following that, the teacher training agency (TTA) in the UK identified areas to focus on to promote more targeted and effective professional development for teachers (Graham, 1996). One of the areas is to gather views and information on national training priorities and of targeting resources to its best effect. In the context of Malaysia, teachers' views have been under researched and there is a need to know what the teachers who are clients of INSET have to express about their needs in relation to INSET.

The analysis from a MORI survey on perceived effectiveness of current professional development was used to plan areas for targeting and further planning (Bates et al., 1999). The MORI report also showed that INSET appears to happen on an ad hoc basis with little linkage to developments in the school, without considering school development planning, teachers' personal development planning and teacher's appraisals (Bates et al., 1999). This is also another area of INSET in Malaysia which needs to be investigated and addressed.

## 2.12  Focus of this Research

This education system in Malaysia is likely to have a significant impact on the quantity and quality of INSET courses provided for teachers in every state. These are risks in a top-down, national priority driven and bureaucratically inflexible training system. I believe the most crucial thing to do at this time is to find out about the teachers needs in terms of INSET as they are the clients of the CPD providers.

The central training agency needs to know if the right teachers are attending the right courses. Furthermore, it is important to find out about issues of the provision and balance of INSET and whether it matches national needs, school needs and the teachers' needs. These three areas are related to the curriculum development and professional development, pupils' achievement, teacher quality and INSET for teachers' professional development.

The first step is to find out teachers' views and their beliefs of INSET as this would shed some light on their current needs and their real needs as compared to perceived needs by the central governing agency who decided on the types of courses need nationally for INSET, who believes in a one size fits all model for INSET. Phillips (2014) stated that teachers know best, as they are eager to improve in their craft of teaching and we need to start listening to teachers in order to assist them in their professional development. In some countries, teacher morale is low and this is also a reason why governments should listen to the voices of teachers (Riley and Louis, 2000).

What really matters now is to have well qualified teachers who are supported with more opportunities to develop their skills and participate in using the curriculum well to tailor their lessons to pupils needs. According to Fullan (2005), educational change will depend on what teachers think and do, it sounds simple and complex at the same time. Improving pupils' learning is interlinked with a model to help teachers to innovate in their judgement and practice, and use a variety of pedagogical skills. Therefore, professional development for teachers should focus on capacity building. Yan and He (2015) reported findings from their research that school support did not rise in recent years in INSET for teachers and this is an important factor for teachers' participation in INSET and should be addressed.

In relation to the Malaysian context of INSET for primary school English language teachers in this study, the focus of research is on narrowing the gap of the INSET needs of primary school English language teachers. This is in order to plan and conduct relevant INSET programmes to support these teachers in their professional development to improve teacher quality. This area was selected because the literature shows that teachers are dealing with many issues such as the complexity of the curriculum, complexities of teaching as well as the complexities of INSET.

There are many underlying issues which influence a teacher's performance in the classroom which is unseen by other parties who focus and insist on the quality of teachers in relation to pupils' achievement. Furthermore, I have observed a few challenges from my teacher training experience of delivering INSET courses to English language teachers in Malaysia. Firstly, the planning and preparations

for INSET in Malaysia usually starts with a bidding process of the representatives from various State Education Department to the central agency for the funding of INSET and selection of programmes. Once this is done, each state is allocated a number of teachers who can be selected for INSET in the second stage. Thirdly, the teachers are selected by the state education officer and they receive letters of appointment to attend INSET courses for their CPD. The planners and providers of CPD in Malaysia are instructed from the top agency on the type of courses to offer, right down to the title and content of the INSET courses. The teachers or clients are never consulted on what are their immediate needs to assist them with their teaching and thus, their views on the previous experiences of INSET and future expectations are timely and this study focuses on this area.

## 2.13 Scope of this study

The scope of this study was developed by identifying the themes from the literature review to determine what was to be investigated and why it is important. This was followed by how I was going to do it. It was clear that an investigation into teachers' views of their INSET experiences could give a clearer picture of their perceived needs for INSET and their future expectation of INSET programmes for English language teachers in Malaysia. It would also shed some light on the type of INSET courses and activities which the SISCs and non-specialist teachers prefer which would be useful to the providers of INSET. The research participants would be able to share their perceptions of past experiences and views on the types of INSET activities they experienced based on their beliefs of what good INSET is. Their views were pertinent as they gave suggestions on how the whole process of INSET could be improved to cater to the teachers' individual needs, pupils' needs, school needs and national needs in Malaysia.

The research questions in this study as seen below helped to define my research project and set boundaries for the research.

RQ 1. **What are the perceptions of a group of primary school English language educators about their previous experiences of INSET?**

    i *What are their perceptions of the Cascade model and training model?*

    ii *Which type of INSET courses do the research participants prefer?*

RQ 2. **How relevant are the INSET courses in helping the educators to improve in their practice?**

 i *What are their perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of INSET courses?*

RQ 3. **What are primary school English language educators' future expectations for INSET courses?**

 i *What are their future expectations in relation to their needs and their pupils' needs?*

## 2.14 Overview of the Literature Review

The curriculum is more complex than it seems as it includes the intended curriculum, enacted curriculum, assessed curriculum and learned or hidden curriculum (Porter, 2004). Curriculum development and professional development are integral (Pring, 2011). When teachers plan lessons, develop teaching materials and engage with other teacher in collaborative projects and CPD activities, they contribute to curriculum development. Thus, teachers' professional development supports curriculum development and lead to curriculum change.

Curriculum development is a complex process (Kelly, 2010). The three models discussed in this chapter are as the following. The Tyler model (four basic principles) is an objectives centred model which is based on a top-down administrative origin (Tyler, 2013). The Taba model (grassroots rationale) includes teachers in the process of curriculum development (Taba, 1962). The process model by Stenhouse is a process-inquiry model which uses logic to plan a curriculum (Stenhouse, 1989).

Hattie (2009) identified that the teacher factor is the most important school factor which influences pupils' achievement in school. Pupils' academic achievement can be improved if the quality of teachers improved and professional development for teachers focuses on enhancing teacher quality. Evidence shows that effective professional development which enhance teacher quality is based on expressed teachers' needs and analysis of pupils' achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Professional development for teachers includes professional learning, professional education and professional support (Bolam, 1993). Three models of professional development discussed in this chapter were relevant to the context of this study which focused on INSET in Malaysia and they are the cascade model, the training model as well as coaching and mentoring.

The cascade model is a cost-effective means to share resources, knowledge and skills teachers require to improve in their practice (Wedell, 2005; Ming et al., 2010). It is favoured in contexts where there are limited resources and dissemination of information is built into the learning process (Craft, 1996; Kennedy, 2005). The cascade model uses a chain effect to train teachers in a few groups down the cascade model, to become specialist trainers (Showers and Joyce, 1996).

Professional development in Malaysia is carried out using centralised training but lacks connectivity to the real classroom and faces the risks of dilution of knowledge to the teachers (Petras et al., 2012; Guskey, 2000; Lieberman, 1996; Elder, 1996). With reference to coaching and mentoring, CUREE (2012) stated that collaborative learning promotes teachers to try new teaching approaches together and share what they learned. Teachers develop nonthreatening relationships, encourage discussion, work on problem-solving together and find solutions to improve their practice (Showers and Joyce, 1996).

INSET helps teachers when they face challenges and encourages them to keep up with the current changes. However, teachers also have their individual needs depending on their contexts and pupils' needs (Yan, 2005; Hustler, 2003). It is also crucial to note that teachers do not attend CPD as empty vessels (Dadds, 2001). Teachers bring their previous knowledge, teaching experience and beliefs of teaching to professional development programmes (Borg, 2011). In addition, effective CPD is usually job embedded and on-going during teachers careers.

# Chapter 3

# Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description and justification for the research methods and processes employed in this study. The chapter includes a discussion on the philosophical and theoretical framework of qualitative research and the qualitative survey approach adopted. This is followed by a description of the research design and methods employed, since the process is important to answer the research questions in the study. The last section is a discussion on ethical considerations.

According to Robson (2011), the conceptual framework of a study comprises concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories which supports and inform ones research, and which are the key to a research design. A conceptual framework is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 18) as something that *"explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, the key factors, concepts or variables and the presumed relationships among them"*.

Maxwell (2013) clarified that a framework refers to the actual ideas and beliefs a researcher holds about the phenomena studied. It is the idea, context or theoretical framework of the study and used throughout the research project (Maxwell, 2013). In addition, the structure of a conceptual framework needs a critical examination of each idea and key source in order to understand the phenomena in question.

Crotty (1998) explained that the structure and procedure of the methodology in a study is based on a conceptual framework which depends on the epistemology, ontology and theoretical perspective. These helped to determine the methodology, research methods and sources of data which are suitable, followed by the methods which are used to analyse the data emerging from the study.

The epistemology and ontology chosen in this study informed the constructivist inquiry perspective employed in my research. The research design and research methods are discussed in the following sections.

## 3.2 Focus of the Research

My research focuses on investigating the INSET needs of Malaysian primary school English language teachers. I selected this area because previous research suggests that teachers have to deal with many issues such as the complexity of the curriculum as well as the complexities of professional development and INSET. There are many underlying issues which influence a teacher's performance in the classroom which are unseen by others who focus and insist on the quality of teachers in relation to pupils achievement.

I began planning this study by looking at themes from the literature review to determine what was to be investigated and why it is important. This was followed by how I was going to do it. It was clear that an investigation into teachers' views of their CPD could give a clearer picture of their perceived needs for INSET. It would also shed some light on the CPD models teachers prefer which would be useful to the providers of INSET. They would be able to give views on the types of INSET activities they experienced, based on their beliefs of what good INSET is. Their views were pertinent, as they gave suggestions on how the whole process of INSET could be improved to cater to the teachers individual needs, pupils' needs, school needs and national needs in Malaysia.

### 3.2.1 Aims of the Research

The goal of the study was to investigate an area related to INSET in Malaysia concerning the professional development needs of Malaysian primary school English language teachers. Teachers' perceptions of their professional development and the factors affecting it has so far been under-researched in a Malaysian context. It is hoped that this research will be beneficial to CPD providers and improve teachers' experiences of INSET, based on their perceived needs and their pupils' needs.

The research thus aimed to identify the perceptions of a group of Malaysian primary school teachers regarding their previous INSET activities, the CPD models they prefer, relevance of INSET to the curriculum and the perceived effects on changes in their practice. In addition, the research also aimed to identify their future expectations about INSET in terms of their professional development needs, their pupils' needs and school needs.

The objectives relate to three research questions below.

### 3.2.2 Research Questions

The value of the research questions in this study are that they helped to define my research project and set boundaries for the research. I also had to be flexible and to ensure that the research questions were not fixed, and could be modified as the study expanded and evolved. In addition, the research questions provided a sense of direction as to how to progress with my fieldwork and complete it successfully. As outlined at the end of Chapter 1,the research questions that were addressed and answered in this study were:

RQ 1. **What are the perceptions of a group of primary school English language educators about their previous experiences of INSET?**

    i *What are their perceptions of the Cascade model and training model?*

    ii *Which type of INSET courses do the research participants prefer?*

RQ 2. **How relevant are the INSET courses in helping the educators to improve in their practice?**

    i *What are their perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of INSET courses?*

RQ 3. **What are primary school English language educators' future expectations for INSET courses?**

    i *What are their future expectations in relation to their needs and their pupils' needs?*

## 3.3 Research Paradigm

Paradigms are conceptual frameworks to guide the organization of beliefs, thoughts, practices and views into a logical way of developing the research design (Basit, 2010). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), a conceptual framework is "a visual or written product that explains the main things to be studied". The main things studied could be ideas, beliefs or a phenomenon. The framework is a model of what exists and is to be studied, what is going on as well as why the phenomenon is being studied.

A Paradigm covers a list of assumptions about the world and suitable techniques for the research inquiry (Punch, 2009). It tells us what reality is like as well

as the relationship between the researcher and that reality. The researcher will then decide how to find out the reality by selecting appropriate methods for the study. The purpose of the paradigm is to enhance knowledge and allow us to know more by acknowledging the multiple realities that exists (King and Horrocks, 2012).

Paradigms have philosophical stances such as positivism, constructivism, realism, pragmatism and post modernism. Each of these philosophical stances have different ideas of reality (ontology) and how people can get a better understanding and knowledge of it (epistemology). According to Robson and McCartan (2016), when researchers establish a philosophical stance, it provides a way of thinking about the type of research questions which are relevant and what makes up the answers to the questions.

### 3.3.1 The Ontology and Epistemology of the Study

In research, there are four building blocks; ontology, epistemology, methodological considerations and instrumentation (Grix, 2002). They are used to frame research within a series of assumptions (Arthur et al., 2013).

Ontology and epistemology look into the extent to which researchers can gather relevant and reliable knowledge related to the scope of the research (King and Horrocks, 2012). The ontological assumptions will influence the epistemological assumptions for a research project.

Ontology focuses on the question of the nature of social reality to be investigated and forms the starting point of the research (Grix, 2002; Lichtman, 2013). There are usually two ontological positions in educational research: objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism looks at the existence and meaning of a social phenomenon that is not related to social factors, where people are not part of the phenomenon. Constructivism looks at the reality and meanings that do not exist independently but in which people have a part to play to construct the meaning.

Epistemology is the theory of how we come to know something, have the knowledge of it and how we make sense of what we know (Arthur et al., 2013). The two positions in epistemology are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism encourages researchers to be objective and neutral as they adopt the methods of natural sciences in carrying out research. The underpinning world view is realism, underpinned by a belief that the answer is 'out there'. In contrast, interpretivism acknowledges that the world is constantly changing and meanings are varied. There is no-objective pre-existing truth waiting to be discovered for interpretivism (Thomas, 2009). The underpinning view believes truth will come to light when meanings are constructed and interpreted from the data.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions are key issues which underpin the framework of a whole research project. Once they are in place, the researcher can decide on the methodological considerations and appropriate instrumentation for data collection (Cohen et al., 2011; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995).

My research project adopted a qualitative research process using the constructivist paradigm which assumes the relativist ontology. The realities are in the form of multiple intangible mental constructions which are shared by the research participants across cultures (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Their constructions are true in nature based on their associated realities which are socially and experientially related to local and specific examples (Guba and Lincoln, 1989).

This study also used the subjectivist epistemology of how we come to have knowledge of things where the knower and respondent co-create understandings (Dezin and Lincoln, 2013). The researcher and the object of investigation are interactively linked and the findings are created as the study progressed (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

The reasons are due to the nature and focus of my study, by which I am researching teachers' perceptions of their CPD through INSET courses they have attended and what are their future expectations of INSET courses in relation to their needs and their pupils' needs. Meanings will be constructed from their responses during focus group interviews, individual interviews and questionnaires. In my research, I am interested in investigating how people differ in relation to a phenomenon as well as what they have in common (King and Horrocks, 2012).

According to Jansen (2010) and Bryman (1988), methods are not completely bound by a particular paradigm and this is the case for qualitative survey research. The qualitative survey could employ a paradigm or theory of positivist or post-positivist whether in terms of ontological realism or epistemological objectivism. It could also be done in context of critical theory or constructivism (Jansen, 2010).

In the constructivist paradigm, we do not discover meaning but it is constructed (Crotty, 1998). Constructivism claims that meanings are constructed by people as they engage with various activities and situations in the world and they are interpreting them. Prior to this process by people, things happenings in the world did not have meaning to them (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, meaning cannot be described as objective or subjective. Crotty (1998) stressed that constructivists do not create meaning but construct meaning; thus they work with the world and objects in the world, such as people.

### 3.3.2 Research Design

This study is informed by the qualitative research paradigm, and will employ the qualitative survey approach to capture the multiple realities of teachers' perceptions and perspectives of INSET that may be connected to each other. The core problem being investigated are the primary school English language teachers' views of their previous INSET experiences and their future expectation of professional development programmes. This research concerns teachers' perceptions of the INSET programmes they have attended, their future expectations of INSET courses for English language teachers in Malaysia, their perceptions of INSET in relation to their pupils' needs, and their views on whether it changes their practice in the classroom.

Qualitative research was chosen for this study, since it is relevant to the study of social relations by approaching social contexts to be studied (Flick, 2014). The study employed an interactive model of research design which has seven components as proposed in Figure 1 below. It was adapted from a model which has five components proposed by Maxwell (2013); goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity. According to Robson and McCartan (2016), two other components crucial to the framework for research design are the sampling procedures and ethical considerations which have been added into the research design of this study. The research questions are at the center of the research design, and they are directly related to all the other components. Thus, the seven components seen below form an integrated and interacting whole because they are closely linked.
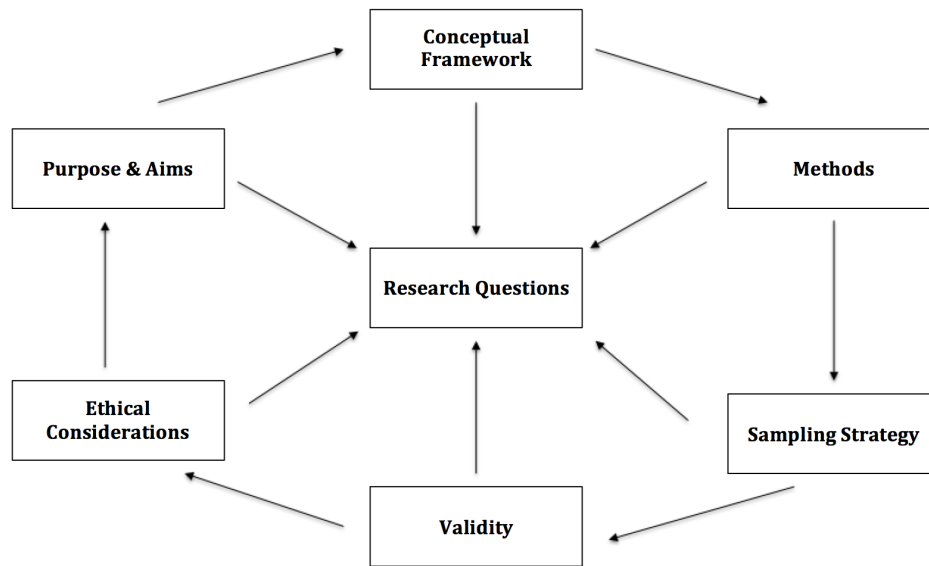
Figure 3.1: Framework of the research design
Source: Adapted from Robson and McCartan (2016) and Maxwell (2013)

### 3.3.3  Qualitative Research

According to Merriam (2009), all qualitative research is interpretive, and it is known and labelled as a basic qualitative study. It focuses on the 'what', 'how' and 'why' questions (Draper, 2004a; Lichtman, 2013) . Qualitative research is based on the notion that meaning is socially constructed by individuals as they interact with people and situations with their world (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research studies how things work by getting into the topic and phenomenon of interest to obtain data with detailed description and capture the research participants stories and perceptions about the realities around them.

Researchers choose qualitative research to understand the quality and nature of human experiences and the meaning research participants construct about their experiences and how they make sense of it (Merriam, 2002; Draper, 2004b). Guest et al. (2012) and Nkwi et al. (2001) also agreed that qualitative research uses data which consists of texts, images and sounds and does not indicate ordinal values. Thus, qualitative research uses data which are non-numeric.

The researcher's aim in research conducted using a qualitative approach is to understand a phenomenon and how much meaning can be constructed to make sense of people and their lives (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research aims to construct

reality in the social world and interactions among people and is underpinned by constructivism. It captures people's stories to understand their perspectives and experiences as to what they do and think, and their reasons often do not make sense to other people (Patton, 2015). It also aims to understand the interpretations of what is happening in a particular social and cultural context at a certain time Draper (2004a). Thus, qualitative research leads the researcher to unforeseen areas of discovery within the lives of the research participants instead of broad populations (Holliday, 2007). How a researcher communicates and makes sense of the data and findings from the research involves the art of storytelling (Hastings and Domegan, 2014). The research participants' experiences are infused with their intentions, motives, beliefs, social rules and practices, values and these must be taken into account in understanding and explaining the findings from the investigation (Draper, 2004a).

In qualitative research, understanding the context is crucial and is related to what is going around the research participants and people, communities and organizations. Thus, attention to context is a priority for the data collection and reporting of findings (Patton, 2015). Robson and McCartan (2016) added that it is crucial for the researcher to explain events and situations from the perspectives of the research participants involved in the study and strive for a depth of understanding. This is because the experiences and perspectives of people are more diverse, complex and interesting; thus, documenting them is intrinsically worthwhile (Hammersley, 2013).

Patton (2015) suggested that contexts are dynamic complex systems, and that the context of a study usually consists of at least five different areas related to context as seen in Figure 3.2 below. The research begins with the purpose context, which focuses on why the study is being conducted. The inquiry- focus context derives from the inquiry traditions, subject area, issues and research questions of the study. The location context is where the study takes place. The broader context refers to the researchers sensitivity towards the social, cultural, historical, political, organisational contexts as well as demographic trends. The relationship context relates to the researcher's relationship to the participants in the study.
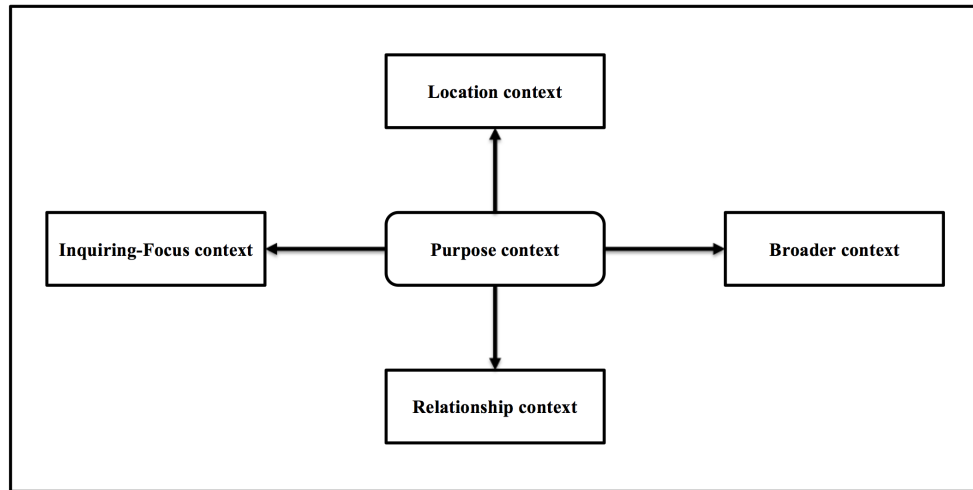
Figure 3.2: Forms of context in the Research Design
Source: Adapted from Patton (2015)

Patton (2015) explained that qualitative research looks into the meaning making process and is often personal as the researcher is the instrument for inquiry. Qualitative research begins with the researcher's interest, background, experience, training, skills, competency in interpersonal relationships, capacity for empathy as well as cross-cultural sensitivity which helps one to engage with the chosen research area to study. In addition, the researcher's credibility would likely influence reflection on the whole process of the research, world view, fieldwork and data analysis of the research project. The researcher's reflection on the findings and connecting it to his or her world view is a part of the qualitative methodology (Patton, 2015).

Maxwell (2009) explained that the research design on quantitative studies usually have fixed, standard arrangements of research methods with their own logic concerning which research design and methods to employ. With reference to qualitative studies, they are often not easily categorized based on limited features and thus it is difficult to clarify the interrelationship of components in the research design (Maxwell, 2009). On the other hand, there are models which present a logical design with progression of stages beginning from formulating a research problem to generating theories and conclusions (Creswell, 2013b). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) explained that such models do not adequately represent the process of qualitative research. Instead, qualitative research should be a reflexive process which operates at every stage in any study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

Robson and McCartan (2016) explained that the design of qualitative re-

search emerges in stages as the research is conducted and it is also flexible during the whole process of the research. The various stages in a qualitative study such as collecting data, analyzing data, developing theory, elaborating and verifying findings with the research questions again as well as validating findings influences each other and all of the stages (Maxwell, 2009). Yin (2014) stated that each type of empirical research has an implicit or explicit research design. The research design is a logical sequence which connects the research questions to the empirical data, findings and conclusions (Yin, 2014).

Maxwell (2009)presented an interactive model of qualitative research which consists of five components which may affect and is affected by other components. This model does not necessarily have a fixed order for the components which influences the study. Qualitative research thus resembles a more general research design with components that work harmoniously together to promote efficient and successful functions (Maxwell, 2009).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2013), here is no single methodological practice which is preferred over any other in qualitative research. In addition, there are multiple theoretical paradigms which use qualitative research methods and strategies.

Researchers use qualitative research because they are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, make sense of them and attribute meaning to these experiences (Merriam, 2009).This type of research uses a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is also known as qualitative inquiry and became popular with anthropologists, sociologists and researchers who were interested to understand a social phenomenon in specific cases (Merriam, 2009). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), there are many paradigms, strategies of inquiry and methods of analysis for researchers to choose from, to suit various research projects.

Qualitative research has a few characteristics such as having a focus on meaning and understanding, the primary instrument being the researcher, using an inductive process to gather data and build concepts and being richly descriptive (Merriam, 2009). Hammersley (2013) added that features of qualitative research include being flexible, inductive or data driven. It also has features of natural settings and study lives of ordinary people related to their work or daily activities.

In addition, qualitative research is often flexible as it can adapt to the changes in conditions of any study in progress. The researcher will often be conducting the research by doing field work and have contact with research participants. Lapan et al. (2012) stressed that qualitative research places more emphasis on the study

of phenomena from the perspective of insiders and views that reality is complicated and socially constructed. In addition, qualitative research gives a voice to those who live experiences which other people would not know. Thus, researchers often ask questions which encourage reflection and insights (Lapan et al., 2012).

### 3.3.4   Strengths of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research involves the researcher collecting data from fieldwork in a specific setting and time during the period of the research study. The researcher gets to make first hand observations of interactions and activities (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research stems from the basis of the researcher's passion and interest in the topic being investigated and the intent (intention) to understand it at a deeper level. The research develops from a personal inquiry to a fully qualitative inquiry. Therefore, the researcher has an important role involving his or her personal commitment and self-awareness which is also known as reflexivity (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

According to Patton (2015), there are seven contributions which could result from qualitative research. Firstly, qualitative research interprets how people construct and attach meaning to their life experiences. Thus, the focus of qualitative research is on meaning and it contributes in illuminating meaning (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

Secondly, qualitative research allows researchers to study how things work by illuminating how any human phenomenon unfolds. Thirdly, qualitative research captures stories to understand people's perspectives and experiences by unfolding events and reaching some point of closure when explaining case studies of individuals. The fourth strength of qualitative research is explaining how different systems function and their consequences for people's lives. This could be on family systems, school systems, educational systems, community systems and many others which gather participants' perspectives on different layers in the systems and the implications faced by different parties. Findings will be reported in the form of stories and insights. Robson and McCartan (2016) emphasized that the social world is a result of creation by people and their stories.

The fifth strength of qualitative research is it enables researchers to understand the context, especially how and why it matters within groups of people, communities, organizations and others. The researcher also needs to pay attention to contextual sensitivity about how people's lives unfold within larger enveloping countries. The context is seen as vital as it is key to understand a phenomenon in a particular setting where the research is conducted (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

The sixth contribution of qualitative research is identifying unanticipated

consequences as many stakeholders work hard on striving their intended goals. The seventh contribution of qualitative inquiry is the ability to make comparisons to discover important patterns and themes across the diversity of individuals or groups of people (Patton, 2015).

The use of qualitative methods is an alternative way used for investigating a research topic as it can change one's world view (Patton, 2015). The power of qualitative data lies in a few factors. Firstly, it has face validity and credibility. In a research on implementing a new accountability system, Patton (2015) explained that using a questionnaire with two open-ended questions managed to obtain responses from over 70% of respondents. The teachers gave meaningful responses and the qualitative responses revealed the full scope of the teachers' feelings in relation to working in schools which implemented the accountability system.

An additional strength of qualitative research is the ability to use data with open ended responses from the research participants as evidence. The purpose of these responses is to reveal the research participants' depth of feelings, emotions, thoughts, perceptions and experiences. This would develop from the use of an inductive logic from the stage of data collection, leading to theoretical ideas and emerging concepts (Robson and McCartan, 2016).

### 3.3.5   Qualitative Survey Approach

Jansen (2010) stated that basic qualitative research has been criticized by several authors as having a weak methodological justification, and not having been explained clearly. According to Merriam (2002), researchers who employ a basic qualitative study are keen to understand how research participants make meaning of a phenomenon. This strategy is often inductive and uses a descriptive outcome. Data is collected by instruments such as interviews, observations and document analysis.

Jansen (2010) emphasized the fact that the survey is a systematic method to obtain information to construct the quantitative descriptors of a large population. However, it only observes individual characteristics of members and does not observe social interactions between people in a particular population. In contrast, the qualitative survey is an approach to defining and investigating variations in population.

The qualitative survey approach does not use frequencies, means or statistical analysis to determine diversity in a given population on a particular topic. Instead, this approach establishes variation in terms of values and dimensions that are meaningful within that population (Jansen, 2010). Thus, this approach is a study of diversity in a population, as compared to distribution in a quantitative

survey approach. In addition, Fink (2003) stated that qualitative surveys are used to obtain information on meanings people attach to their life experiences and how they share and express them. In addition, a survey is a system used to collect information about a group of people to describe, compare their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (Fink, 2003).

### 3.3.6 Strengths of Qualitative Survey

The use of qualitative survey has a few strengths which makes it suitable for a qualitative research study. As seen in Table 3.1, qualitative survey approach is different from quantitative survey and is suitable for an investigation in research to identify variation in the research participants. It is useful for getting their diverse views and responses on the topic being investigated, and is likely to increase the richness of the data. Another strength of using a qualitative survey is the opportunity to obtain meaningful variation in the participants responses and analyse the data to show the diversity in the groups of teachers and educators in this study.

Table 3.1: Qualitative Survey and Quantitative Survey

| Qualitative Survey | Quantitative Survey |
| --- | --- |
| Investigates variation in populations | Studies populations |
| Determines the diversity of topic of interest within a population | Measures population characteristics |
| Establishes meaningful variation (dimension/values) | Observes characteristics of the members involved |
| Analyses diversity | Describes numerical distributions of variables |
| | Analyses distribution |

## 3.4 Context

The context of this study was at an in-service training centre, the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) in Malaysia, a country in South East Asia which is a former British colony. According to Thirusanku and Yunus (2014),the role of the English language in Malaysia is accepted and recognized in the education policy as an important second language. In 2012, the Ministry of education (MoE), Malaysia introduced the 'To Uphold Malay language (Bahasa Malaysia) and to Strengthen the English language' (MBMMBI) policy. Steps have been taken to enhance the proficiency in English among pupils and students to allow them to compete on a national and international level. English language is a compulsory subject in

Malaysian schools at primary and secondary level. Nevertheless, Ali (2003) reported that pupils' performance in the English language in primary schools has not improved much, and there is a great need to work towards the government's aspirations to improve the literacy of pupils in the English language.

ELTC has been entrusted with the role of re-training English language teachers in Malaysia by delivering INSET to in-service English language teachers who are teaching in government schools. They comprise national type schools and vernacular (Chinese and Tamil) schools. The centre was set up in 2002 under the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ministry of Education (MoE), Malaysia. The research participants who attended in-service training (INSET) courses for their continuing professional development (CPD) in this study travelled from all over Malaysia and attended INSET courses in one central location.

## 3.5   Approval to Conduct Research

The first step I took to plan out this research was to prepare and submit an upgrade report and ethical approval report to the Centre for Education Studies (CES) department at the University of Warwick in March 2015. It was only after I passed the ethical approval application that I moved to the next stage. Full details of the ethical issues pertaining to this study, and how I was able to manage these, are discussed in a later section of this chapter.

Before I could plan to carry out the field work for my research and undertake data collection in Malaysia, I also had to apply for permission to conduct research in Malaysia. I submitted an application to the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in the Prime Minister's Department in Malaysia. I sent documents which included my research proposal, ethical approval form from the University of Warwick, copies of my student status letter and prove of identification in hard copies via post and scanned copies submitted online. The processing time took over 6 weeks, and I managed to obtain approval and permission to return to Malaysia and carry out the data collection at ELTC Malaysia, which is a government agency under the Teacher Education Division (TED), Ministry of Education (MoE), Malaysia. The duration of the field work in Malaysia was granted for a period of not more than 90 days, from early May to the end of July 2015.

## 3.6   Sampling of Research Participants

According to Jupp (2006), sampling is defined as a technique to select research participants from a wider population. In addition, how the researcher selects the research participants is related to the theoretical context of the study, its aims and objectives. The selection of sampling is based on the notion that the sample chosen will allow the researcher to make inferences and conclusions from the sample in a given population (Jupp, 2006).

There are many approaches to sampling which begins on a spectrum of probability samples to non-probability samples (Matthews and Ross, 2010). A probability sample helps a researcher to use probability or statistical theory to select a sample which represents a certain population for the research and is more suitable to a quantitative study. Each member of the population has an equal chance to be selected and included in the sample of the research.

Smaller scale research, of necessity, involve non-probability sampling which does not include selecting participants randomly nor is representative of the population. It is also suitable for a research project which has limited resources and time frame (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

The sample of research participants for this study were from East and West Malaysia. They are English language teachers who consist of optionist and non-option teachers. Optionists English language teachers are teachers who have specialized in the English language known as their 'option' during pre-service training. They have been trained to teach the English language while undertaking a diploma or bachelor's degree in TESL/TESOL. Thus, they are specialists in their subject area and are qualified to teach the English language. Non-option teachers are those who do not have any prior pedagogical training on how to teach the English language and have specialized in other subjects such as Science or Moral Education. Thus, they are non-specialists in teaching English language. However, they are required to teach the English language as there are not enough optionists or trained English language teachers to cater for the needs in primary schools in Malaysia.

My aim is to present the experience and views of the research participants, which comprised the two groups of educators, optionists and non-optionist. These will be reported in a detailed manner to be sufficient for the reader to connect to their experiences and have a deeper understanding of the issues (Alvesson, 2011).

A year prior to the field work period for three months in Malaysia from May to July 2015, I had contacted the head of department (HOD) in charge of the training calendar and received a copy of the training calendar in May 2014 for the following

academic year. I also received updated versions in December 2015 and three more versions up to April 2015. Some of the INSET courses were rescheduled due to the bids received from English Language officers (ELOs) which selected certain INSET courses for teachers from their states.

I was only able to select the specific courses once I returned to Malaysia for the data collection period, as the training calendar at ELTC had been updated again in May and June 2015. In addition, I only had direct access to the trainers conducting the courses when I returned to Malaysia and this was important as I had to get their co-operation to participate in this research. Thus, I only had the choice of selecting INSET courses aimed at primary school educators within the duration of May until July 2015. I was able to consult the Heads of department and lecturers who were the trainers for each INSET course and they gave me consent to conduct my research with their course participants. The three INSET courses which were selected were as follows.

i Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students

ii Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary)

iii Fun Learning Through Language Arts: Toolkit for Trainers

### 3.6.1 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is also referred to as accidental sampling or haphazard sampling. It is a non-probability and non-random sampling method which involves participants which meet certain criteria (Etikan et al., 2016). Such criteria could include any of the following: availability at the time of data collection, geographical location near to the venue and place for the field work and their voluntary nature to take part in a study (Dornyei, 2007). In addition, the researcher has easy access to these participants (Saumure and Given, 2008). According to Etikan et al. (2016), convenience sampling also happens due to situated and administrative factors which could result in the participants being near the research site, as well as proximity to the researcher. In addition, Robson and McCartan (2016) explained that participants selected through convenience sampling are often the most available people to act as participants in the research.

Explorable (2017) emphasized that although convenience sampling is easy and readily available, it is important for the researcher to explain if there are participants who are over represented or excluded during the process of selection. Palinkas

et al. (2015) explained that convenience sampling is neither purposeful nor strategic, even though it is commonly used and is often chosen by researchers as a sampling method. One of the weaknesses of convenience sampling is that it could be biased, and therefore it is vital to remember that the sample should not be taken as representing the whole population (Mackey and Gass, 2005; Etikan et al., 2016).

Convenience sampling deemed to be the most appropriate sampling method for the first level of sampling, because the course participants for each INSET course were pre-selected in their own states by the English language officer (ELO) with representatives from different districts, and their personal details were sent to the CPD provider. The teacher trainers as course facilitators did not have any control to identify if the course participants matched the criteria specified as pre-requisite to attend the course. One common criterion they would definitely have had is either being an optionist or non-option English language teacher or recently appointed SISC. Thus, as I did not have the choice in selecting course participants, and they were readily available with ease of access, convenience sampling was the most appropriate approach for sampling at the initial stage of the data collection.

I followed the progress of three groups of educators, comprising experienced primary school English language teachers who had recently been appointed as School Improvement Specialist Coaches (SISCs) in the last one year and non-specialist English language teachers. Since their appointment to their new role in 2014, the SISCs have been attending INSET courses as part of their CPD journey. Based on the training calendar provided by the head of department of Quality Assurance, the three INSET courses were all relevant to primary school English language teachers and educators as they were INSET course participants at various stages in their careers.

The SISCs and non-specialist teachers attended INSET at the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) in Malaysia. For the first level, I used convenience sampling, as it was estimated there would be about 30 teachers in each group based on the name lists of course participants for each INSET course from State Education departments. They were pre-selected in their respective states based on the criteria set by the provider of INSET. The number of expected course participants and actual research participants are seen in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Convenience Sampling

| No | INSET Courses | Expected sample | Population sample | Consented to participate | Did not consent to participate | Actual sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students | 30 | 22 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| 2 | Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary) | 30 | 21 | 18 | 3 | 18 |
| 3 | Fun Learning Through : Language Arts Toolkit for Trainers | 30 | 13 | 9 | 4 | 9 |
| | **Total** | 90 | 56 | 38 | 18 | 38 |

During my first meeting with each group of course participants for the three INSET courses, they were given the consent forms for this study. This was administered to all 56 English language educators as seen in Table 3.2 and 38 of them agreed to take part in this study. The other 18 did not agree to take part in my research project and were not involved after this stage.

### 3.6.2  Purposive Sampling

After I obtained replies in the consent forms where some of the course participants consented to take part in this study, they were given a profile questionnaire to fill in. This enabled me to use the information gathered to select research participants for the focus group interviews. I decided to use purposive sampling which is also a form of non-probability sampling for the selection process as it is related to selecting participants for specific purposes.

According to Patton (2015), purposive sampling is also known as purposeful sampling, as the two terms are similar in meaning. Etikan et al. (2016) stated that purposive sampling is also named as judgement sampling as the researcher makes a deliberate choice of selecting participants based on certain qualities that they have. Similarly, Robson and McCartan (2016) emphasize that research participants are chosen based on the researchers judgement of their typicality, exhibiting most of the qualities, traits and characteristics suited to the interest of the study being conducted.

Merriam (2009) explained that this type of sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher has carefully selected the sample to discover as much as possible about the topic being investigated. In addition, Patton (2015) uses the term 'information-rich' to describe the participants that are likely to be selected for an in-depth study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) agreed that the participants selected are individuals who are well-informed of the phenomenon being investigated.

Purposive sampling is suitable for small scale, in-depth studies which uses qualitative research methods. It is also appropriate for studies that explore and interpret the research participants' opinions, perceptions and experiences. In addition, purposive sampling is the most suitable for interviews (Seidman, 2006). The research participants are selected with the specific purpose of allowing the researcher to explore the research questions and the criteria for selection is usually derived from the research questions.

Some of the advantages of using purposive sampling include allowing researchers to select research participants on the basis of the research questions in the study. It also enables one to gather in-depth qualitative data from a smaller

number of research participants, and helps the researcher to make good use of time and resources. According to Maxwell (2013), there are five main reasons for using purposeful sampling. Firstly, purposeful sampling is used to achieve representativeness of the research participants or activities selected; in this case being English language educators attending INSET programmes. Secondly, a purposeful selection of research participants is (likely to be) adequate to capture the heterogeneity in the population. Thirdly, the selection of research participants are critical for the research study at the beginning and is still critically important as it develops. The fourth reason is purposeful sampling is useful to make particular comparisons to highlight the reasons for similarities or differences between individuals, groups or settings. The fifth reason is to select research participants who can establish productive relationships with the researcher in order to answer the research questions.

I used purposive sampling in the second level of sampling in this study to select the research participants. I selected stratified purposive sampling, as it allowed me to select research participants from within groups attending different INSET courses as well as where there is variation between the groups, such as attending a course on literacy, pedagogy and content of language arts for INSET. This gave me the opportunity to make comparisons.

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), stratified purposive sampling is one of the most common ways of selecting a sample. One of the features of a stratified sample is that participants are chosen to ensure certain categories of people are included with a proportionate presence as far as possible in the selected group. I identified participants who fulfilled as many criteria as possible from the list below, as this was important to answer my research questions.

- Gender

- Age range

- Urban or rural school

- Teaching experience

- Type of INSET activities attended

- Option (specialist) and non-option (non-specialist) English language educators

Based on the number of research participants who gave their consent to take part in this study, I selected between 6 to 8 educators from each INSET programme to take part in the focus group interviews. Initially, I decided to select eight educators from each course, but was not able to select eight educators from two of the

INSET courses to match the criteria set for the purposive sampling. The information of the number of research participants selected is seen below in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Purposive Sampling

| No | INSET Courses | Population sample | Consented to participate | Purposive sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students | 22 | 11 | 7 |
| 2 | Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary) | 21 | 18 | 8 |
| 3 | Fun Learning Through Language Arts:Toolkit for Trainers | 13 | 9 | 6 |
| | **Total** | 56 | 38 | 21 |

Based on using purposive sample, I selected 21 research participants to take part in the focus group interviews. My selection was based on the information obtained from a profile questionnaire which I had used to collect details about the teachers' educational background, number of years in teaching and how long they have taught the English language and information on their experiences of attending CPD and types of INSET activities they had attended in the last two years and the criteria needed to fulfill to be in the focus groups. The number of research participants selected from each INSET course was then divided into two smaller groups for the focus group interviews, ideally with three or four in a group.

### 3.6.3   Volunteer Sampling

In the third level of sampling, I selected a few teachers from each of the three groups of educators attending the INSET courses for individual interviews. I decided that the most appropriate approach was to use volunteer sampling which is also a non-probability sampling method. Jupp (2006) defines volunteer sampling as a type of case selection which is also purposive, and involves research participants who are willing to take part in the study. Sometimes, it can also take the form of a person in authority who volunteers their organization or institution to take part in the research.

Volunteer sampling was chosen due to the reason that the phenomenon being investigated focused on the educators' views on their professional development and

it is related to their needs, their practice, pupils' needs as well as the curriculum and CPD providers. Thus, their opinions are personal, and could be sensitive especially when they share critical views about the INSET activities and CPD provider. One advantage of using volunteer sampling in this study is that the research participants who volunteered are typical of the whole group of research participants as they are the same participants from the first level of sampling, in convenience sampling.

In this study, the participants were asked if they wanted to volunteer to participate in individual interviews and they self-selected to take part. This method is also considered convenient and quick. The volunteers were from the initial research participants who consented to take part in this study and have been involved since the first level of sampling using convenience sampling. The number of volunteers are seen in the table below.

Table 3.4: Volunteer Sampling

| No | INSET Courses | Population sample | Consented to participate | Volunteer sample |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students | 22 | 11 | 4 |
| 2 | Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary) | 21 | 18 | 10 |
| 3 | Fun Learning Through Language Arts:Toolkit for Trainers | 13 | 9 | 2 (3) |
| | **Total** | 56 | 38 | 16 (17) |

As seen in Table 3.4, 17 educators comprising SISCs and non-specialist teachers came forward and volunteered to be involved in the individual interviews. For the first and second INSET courses, all the volunteers were interviewed twice, in the first interview and a follow-up interview. For the third INSET course, only two of the volunteers took part in two interviews each and the third volunteer was not interviewed as the researcher was not given more time by the course trainers to interact with the course participants. Thus, only 16 research participants were interviewed in two sequential interviews. The data collected from the three groups of teachers was used for comparison and cross-referencing.

## 3.7  Research Participants

### 3.7.1  Group 1

The first INSET course selected was the 'Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students'. This is aimed at senior English language educators of which some had dual roles to act as teachers and coaches in their local districts.

The Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development was a two-week course which proposed to develop course participants' knowledge and expertise in literacy development. It also exposed the participants to methodologies and best practices in early literacy among young children. The aim of the course was to develop the skills of participants in mentoring teachers towards developing effective literacy instructions in the ELT classroom.

The course was implemented by ELTC and the target group was ELT practitioners. The content of the course includes 70 per cent practical hands on tasks focusing on application of principles and theory in early literacy and 30 per cent theory. There are three major units in the module for this course, which include introduction to early literacy, listening and speaking, reading, writing and multi-literacy. These units covered a total of 56 hours. Formative assessment in the form of an article review and presentation, as well as a portfolio, was conducted throughout the course. This course aims to enhance the knowledge and expertise of second language teacher educators on literacy development.

The expected number of course participants for this course was 30 people, but only 22 attended and completed the course. All the 22 course participants were given consent forms and a profile questionnaire to fill in initially and only 11 of them gave consent to take part in the study. After going through their profile questionnaires, seven educators were selected for the focus group interviews and they were divided into two focus groups, comprising three and four participants in each focus group. The other course participants were asked if they wanted to volunteer to be interviewed, and all four agreed. The demographic details of all the 11 research participants are as seen below in Table 3.5. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

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Table 3.5: Demographic of Research Participants: INSET Course 1

| Participant | Gender | Teaching Experience | Option/ Non-optionist | Education Level | School/ District |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tara (B1) | F | 26–30 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Rural |
| Alya (B2) | F | 11–15 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |
| Hana (B3) | F | 26–30 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Education | Rural |
| Rose (B4) | F | 26–30 years | Optionist | Master of Education | Urban |
| Noor (B5) | F | 6–10 years | Optionist | Master of Education | Urban |
| Nita (B6) | F | 16–20 years | Optionist | Master of Education | Rural |
| Puteri (B7) | F | 21–25 years | Optionist | Master of Education | Urban |
| Kumar (B8) | M | 26–30 years | Optionist | Master of Education | Urban |
| Rita (B9) | F | 26–30 years | Optionist | Master of Education | Urban |
| Siti (B10) | F | 11–15 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |
| Lily (B11) | F | More than 30 years | Optionist | Master of Education | Urban |

## 3.7.2 Group 2

The second INSET course selected was the Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary) for non-option primary school English language teachers. It is aimed at teachers who are currently teaching upper primary level, Year 4 to Year 6 pupils. The course is a 12 week INSET course which is divided into three phases. The first phase consists of four weeks of face-to-face training, followed by Phase 2 which is completed online and the third phase is another four-week component of face-to-face training. This was the 3rd phase of the 12 week course, and the participants were attending the 3rd week of the course.

The ICELT-PITO course is an incentive programme for non-option English language teachers to acquire recognition and qualifications to teach English language. The programme covers three areas such as methodology, proficiency and school-based assessment (SBA) and includes six components, as follows: awareness raising, developing language skills in ESL contexts, classroom talk, adaptation and materials design, planning for teaching and learning and assessment (SBA). The course aims to equip the course participants with knowledge of pedagogical skills and best practices. They are also required to complete three assessment components during the three phases, these being an upper primary portfolio, lower primary portfolio and an examination at the end of the course.

The expected number of course participants for this INSET programme was about 30 teachers and only 21 non-option English language teachers attended and completed the course successfully. All the course participants were given consent forms and a profile questionnaire to fill in on the first day of the course and 18 of them had given consent to take part in this study. After going through the information given in their profile questionnaires on the types of CPD activities and INSET they have attended, 8 of them were selected for the focus groups interviews. The others participants were asked if they would like to volunteer for the individual interviews, and all ten agreed to take part. The demographic details of all 18 course participants are below in Table 3.6. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

Table 3.6: Demographic of Research Participants: INSET Course 2

| Participant | Gender | Teaching Experience | Option/ Non-optionist | Education Level | School/ District |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jim (C1) | M | Less than 5 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban (Vernacular) |
| Amelia (C2) | F | Less than 5 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban (Vernacular) |
| Jaya (C3) | F | 6–10 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban |
| Sara (C4) | F | 6–10 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Rural |
| Ivan (C5) | M | Less than 5 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Rural (Vernacular) |
| Hannah (C6) | F | 6–10 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban (Vernacular) |
| Rania (C7) | F | 11–15 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |
| Ahmad (C8) | M | 6–10 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban (Special Needs) |
| Nurin (C9) | F | 16–20 years | Non-optionist | Master of Education | Rural |
| Joyce(C10) | F | Less than 5 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Education | Rural |
| Wendy (C11) | F | Less than 5 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban |
| Usha (C12) | F | 6–10 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban (Vernacular) |
| Ray (C13) | M | 11–15 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban |
| Ben (C14) | M | 11–15 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban (Vernacular) |
| Adam (C15) | M | 6–10 years | Non-optionist | Master of Education | Urban |
| Nicole (C16) | F | 11–15 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |

| Participant | Gender | Teaching Experience | Option/ Non-optionist | Education Level | School/ District |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alicia (C17) | F | Less than 5 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban |
| Tina (C18) | F | Less than 5 years | Non-optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban |

### 3.7.3 Group 3

The third INSET course was entitled 'Fun Learning Through Language Arts: Toolkit for Trainers' course for English language educators who were teaching lower primary level, Year 1-3 and who have been in their new role as School Improvement Specialist Coaches (SISCs) in the last one year.

This course aimed to provide course participants with essential knowledge about the teaching of Language Arts. Course participants were able to explore a repertoire of activities that enabled them to support their students' learning of language arts. Using nursery rhymes, songs, jazz chants and stories, course participants produced resources to be used in the classroom. The course tasks also enabled participants to discuss, reflect and review strategies on the teaching of Language Arts.

The course content also incorporated the assessment of Language Arts. Participants were provided with useful strategies on how to monitor the progress of students through the School Based Assessment (SBA). Participants also learned to develop skills in mentoring towards teaching of Language Arts in the ELT classroom. In addition, the course aimed to enable participants to enhance and extend existing knowledge and skills, build confidence in the teaching of Language Arts, promote awareness in the teaching of Language Arts, examine and employ different skills and strategies to teach Language Arts as well as increase knowledge in assessing (AfL) through Language Arts.

The expected number of course participants for this INSET course was about 30 people, but only 13 course participants attended and completed the course. A total of nine educators gave consent to take part in this research, and their details are seen below in Table 3.7. Pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

Table 3.7: Demographic of Research Participants: INSET Course 3

| Participant | Gender | Teaching Experience | Option/ Non-optionist | Education Level | School/ District |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fatin (D1) | F | 11–15 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |
| Iman (D2) | F | 11–15 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |
| Nurul (D3) | F | 21–25 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban |
| Stella (D4) | F | 21–25 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |
| Mala (D5) | F | 11–15 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban |
| Wani (D6) | F | 21–25 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Education | Urban |
| Syah (D7) | M | 21–25 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |
| Nadya (D8) | F | 16–20 years | Optionist | Bachelor of Arts/Science | Urban |
| Priya (D9) | F | 21–25 years | Optionist | Master of Instructional Multimedia | Urban |

## 3.8  Language used in this Study

Language is central to the process of gathering qualitative data and the subjective experiences of the research participants, and language differences are usually present when research participants in an ESL or EFL context come from different backgrounds. In this study, the research participants were of different ethnic origins in Malaysia, including Chinese, Indian, Malay, Iban and other native tribes from East Malaysia. The research participants were all attending three different INSET programmes at ELTC Malaysia which were all conducted in English.

As the research participants and I have different mother tongues, I decided to use English language as a medium of instruction to use in consent forms, profile questionnaires and questions for the focus group and individual interviews. In addition, all the focus groups discussions and individual interviews were conducted in

English.

One of the reasons for using the English language was to encourage and motivate them to speak in English while they took part in this research. Secondly, ELTC had a policy in place that all course participants had to speak in English at the training venue. Nevertheless, I was aware that some of the participants faced situations where they experienced difficulties in giving words to experiences as they were involved in two processes, telling me about their experiences and finding the words and language to express it (Van Nes et al., 2010). Thus, some of them did use words in their mother tongue when they could not come up with an English word to convey the meaning and these responses were transcribed into their mother tongue such as Malay language (Bahasa Malaysia).

This study was conducted within a cross-border fieldwork setting, with the participants crossing boundaries to be interviewed in English. Thus, I was aware of the challenge as the interviewer to word questions appropriately to reduce potential misunderstandings and ensure accurate information was obtained from the research participants (Welch and Piekkari, 2006).

## 3.9    Consent Forms

I knew that as part of the research process, I had to obtain prior informed consent from the participants before starting my research. This is due to the reason that one of the questionable practices in social research is to involve participants without their knowledge or consent (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Boynton (2017) explained that it is also crucial to explain to participants what the study involves, give them some time to think about it and then check and double check again if they fully understand the research process and their role in contributing to the research project.

I prepared a participants' consent form to be distributed to the participants on the first day of the intervention INSET course when I met with them. The form as seen in Appendix A consisted of two pages and a short description of my research is stated on the first page of the consent form as well as a researchers profile.

In my first meeting with each group of research participants and with the trainers of their INSET course, I explained my role to them, namely that I was a former member of staff and (had?) worked as a teacher trainer at ELTC in Malaysia, and that my current role was as a researcher. I gave a brief outline of my research with as much information as possible about the research so that they could make informed decisions on their possible involvement. The objective was to conduct research openly, without deception. The research participants were given

the opportunity to ask any questions to clarify any aspects of the research project and to decide on their willingness to participate in this study. They had the choice of voluntary participation and were given consent forms to fill in. Their consent was not limited to the signing of the forms at the start of the study. It was continually open to revision and questioning if they changed their minds at any stage of the study. I explained to them that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any point for whatever reason. Their consent had to be freely given, in order to be valid. Thus, the participants were not coerced into participating in this study.

I also ensured that I avoided any sensitive issues in Malaysia relating to politics, race and religion. The participants were also not forced to answer any questions they were not comfortable with for any specific reason. Moreover, the profile questionnaires which I distributed to the research participants also did not contain items which identified their race, religion or mother tongue. The form only had five items for the research participants to tick if they agreed, followed by the date and their signatures, as seen in Appendix A.

## 3.10 Profile Questionnaires

The profile questionnaires were short questionnaires for the participants to give information about their educational background, teaching experience and INSET attended. The participants were required to tick boxes and fill blanks with one word or short phrases only. It may be less personal, but the information assisted me in the process of selecting teachers for the focus group interviews. Furthermore, I was only given a short period to meet the participants and gave them the questionnaires to fill in before they started their INSET programme, as their trainers for the course wanted to continue with the course without much time taken up for my research. I was given about 10-15 minutes to meet each group of course participants to provide a brief summary of my research and to administer the consent form and profile questionnaires.

### 3.10.1 Why Profile Questionnaires?

A profile questionnaire was used as a profiling survey to obtain key demographic information about all the research participants in this study. It was used to collect details such as gender, age, education level, their teaching experience as well as the type of CPD activities the research participants have previously attended in the last two years as seen in Appendix B.

The profile questionnaire was given out at the same time as the consent form

when I met the educators for the first time during the intervention course, and the main reason I used these questionnaires was to gather details of the whole group. I then sorted them out into three groups. The first group consisted of those who did not give consent to take part in the research. The second group consisted of those who had consented to take part in the research and had the matching criteria to take part in the focus group interviews. The third group included others who had given consent to take part in the study and who were later asked if they wanted to volunteer for the individual interviews.

I decided that the best time to give all the educators the profile questionnaires was when they filled in the consent form, as the trainers for the INSET course had given me a limited time to meet the educators. I was allowed to speak to them before their first session in the morning, before the course began and during break times for tea break and lunch time. In addition, some of the INSET courses were short courses comprising 3 to 4 days and I had to gather this information on the first day of meeting them and planned the data collection from the second day onwards.

### 3.10.2   Design and Pilot Study

The profile questionnaire used was a short two-page questionnaire which participants were able to complete within a few minutes. It was divided into three sections and aimed to obtain details of the research participants in terms of their personal details, teaching experience and types of CPD including INSET which they had attended in the last two years.

The first part of the profile questionnaire (Section A) had three questions on personal details. Question 1 required participants to complete their details of gender, age and academic qualifications. For the participants' age, I included four different age ranges which covered newly qualified teachers, mid-career teachers as well as senior teachers near to their retirement age. The categories included were 'under 29 years', the range between '30 to 39', '40 to 49' and '50 to 59' years. I decided to use these age ranges because I could classify the research participants to a few groups of in-service English language teachers such as newly qualified teachers, mid-career teachers, senior teachers and experienced teachers. The third question in section A covered the research participants' academic qualification and had five options which included a Diploma in education, Bachelor degree (Arts or Science), Bachelor of education, Master degree (Arts or Science) and a Master degree in education. I wanted to make a distinction between teachers who had specific training in a Degree level programme and Master in education as well as those who are from other disciplines such as Arts or Science.

The second part of the questionnaire included three questions which focused on the teachers' teaching experience. The first question required the teachers to identify whether they were option (specialist) or non-optionist (non-specialist) English language teachers. In Malaysia, non-option teachers are educators who are untrained and appointed to teaching posts in schools to teach the English language. This is to overcome the shortage of English language teachers on a national level. There are also trained teachers who specialize in other subjects such as Science or History who had to teach the English language although it is not their specialization because there are no English language teachers in the schools they were sent to. These two groups form the non-optionist who are currently teaching the English language in Primary schools. The optionists are teachers who are trained primary school English language teachers.

The second question in this section required the research participants to tick a box for the number of years they have been teaching. They had seven ranges to choose from and these are as stated; under 5 years, and ranges of 6 10 years, 11 15 years, 16 20 years, 21 25 years, 26 30 years and more than 30 years. I decided to categorise the number of years the teachers had been teaching into these categories as this helped to identify whether the teachers are newly qualified teachers, those in mid-careers, senior teachers as well as experienced educators. The third question is on the number of years the teachers have been teaching the English language in primary schools. I used a similar format as question two and included seven categories of ranges for years of experience in teaching the subject. It was important for the range of number of years of experience to be parallel for question 2 and 3 as it was predicted there would be teachers who have taught English throughout their teaching career and others who have been upgraded from non-specialists to specialists by gaining academic qualifications after they started teaching.

The third part of the questionnaire had four items, and required the research participants to provide information related to INSET they had attended in the last two years. The first question had eight items listed as different types of CPD and the participants had to tick a box next to each one of these items, selecting 'yes' or 'no' to indicate if they had attended any of these forms of CPD. The items were courses, workshops or online courses, education conferences or seminars, qualification programmes (Degree or Master), observation visits to other schools, participation in teachers' network for CPD, individual research (eg: action research), collaborative research, mentoring or peer observation. The information from this question was used to highlight which type of CPD activities the teachers took part in for their professional development as well as noted if they had attended courses, workshops

and online courses for INSET as English language teachers. The next two questions required more specific information as participants had to fill in blanks with the number of days. The second question in this section was to obtain the number of days the teachers attended INSET in the last one year and the second question required information on how many days were compulsory for the teachers to attend those activities as part of their job as English language teachers. The last question obtained information on whether the teachers had to pay for INSET or any CPD activities they attended.

The pilot study for the profile questionnaires was conducted at the same time as the consent form was completed, on 22 April 2015. Copies of the profile questionnaires and consent forms were given to three educators who were studying at the Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick for qualifications in a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Master of Education. After the pilot study, the profile questionnaire was edited and corrected mainly for vocabulary items.

## 3.11 Research Methods and Instruments

The most prominent data collection instrument in qualitative research are interviews, as these are seen as very useful in accessing data on research participants' perceptions, attitudes and opinions of situations related to their practice (Punch, 2009). Seidman (2006) stressed that the purpose of interviews for qualitative research is to understand the living experiences of people and how they make sense of it.

This study used two instruments for data collection to collect multiple sources of data (Patton, 2002). They were focus groups interviews and individual interviews. I used these two methods for triangulation, mapping one set of data against the other (Silverman, 2011). It is also known as data triangulation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). According to Robson and McCartan (2016), triangulation is a strategy which involves more than one source of data to enhance the rigour of the research process. In addition, the focus group discussions facilitated the mutual experiences of the research participants, but the interviews considered voices which were silenced or compromised by speaking in public in groups (Michell, 1999).

The first instrument I used was a list of interview questions for the focus group interviews, as seen in Appendix C. I also prepared a topic guide which included additional prompts to be used during the focus group interviews. This is seen in Appendix D. The second instrument used were two sets of interview questions as seen in Appendix E and F, for the first and second round of interviews

with research participants.

The focus group interviews and individual interviews were conducted sequentially during data collection with the research participants from each INSET course. The research participants were selected based on the information they provided in the profile questionnaires for the focus group interviews. Then, they were invited on a voluntary basis to be interviewed. Thus, after completing the data collection for focus groups for the first INSET course, I listened to the audio recordings to get a sense of the preliminary findings and then conducted the individual interviews within the same week. In the following weeks, I proceeded to collect the data for the second and third INSET course, with the focus groups first, listened to the audio recordings from the focus groups, and then conducted the individual interviews.

The focus group interviews and individual interviews were carried out simultaneously within the same period as the research participants who took part in each INSET course. This was due to a few reasons. Firstly, it was because of the limited period of 90 days for field work as approved by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), Prime Minister's Office in Malaysia. Additionally, I was only given access to collect the data while the SISCs and teachers were attending the INSET courses and this was for five days each for the first and third INSET course. Thus, the focus group discussions had to be followed up with interviews within the same week.

Secondly, conducting the focus group discussions first for each INSET course allowed me to recruit a larger number of participants, as those who were not selected for the focus groups were keen to contribute and volunteered to be interviewed. In addition, during the process of data analysis, I could add the themes from both data collection tools as I did the analysis.

Thirdly, the research participants for each INSET course came from various states around Malaysia, as seen in the Table 3.8. Thus, using focus groups was essential to include participants from widely dispersed geographically areas within the same focus group to share their views on the phenomenon being investigated. This enabled me to ascertain the views of participants who came from all around Malaysia before proceeding with the individual interviews.

Table 3.8: States represented by Research Participants in the Focus Groups Interviews

| No. | INSET Courses | State participants represented | No. of states |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students | Perlis, Perak, Pulau Pinang, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang | 6 |
| 2 | Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary) | Perak, Pahang, Pulau Pinang, Selangor, Melaka, Johor, Sabah, Sarawak | 8 |
| 3 | Fun Learning Through Language Arts: Toolkit for Trainers | Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor | 3 |

## 3.12 Focus Group Interviews

The use of focus group interviews has some strengths and features which led me to decide on using this method for data collection. Firstly, focus groups involved groups of people and this is relevant to my research topic of investigating teachers' perceptions of INSET and talking to them and listening to their stories. Secondly, the research participants in this research are similar to one another in terms of being primary school educators, having homogeneity as determined by the purpose of my research. One common factor the participants had was the fact that the subject they had taught and were currently teaching was the English language. In addition, the curriculum they were using in their role as educators was the same. In addition, they would have attended many INSET courses which were similar in relation to their roles. Thirdly, using focus groups allows me to provide a slightly more natural environment to obtain a range of views from educators across the six focus groups from the SISCs and non-specialist teachers attending three different INSET programmes.

I selected focus group interviews, as they allowed me to narrow down the participants from a whole group to a target group which I could interview at one time in an interactive manner. I conducted focus groups with participants from each INSET course by selecting participants based on the profile questionnaires and divided them into two smaller focus groups. The criteria used to select the research participants included gender, age, teaching experience and the number and type of INSET and CPD programmes they have participated in for the last two years. The

focus groups provided an opportunity for the teachers to talk freely and discuss their ideas and opinions about questions relating to their previous INSET activities and future expectations of INSET.

### 3.12.1  Why Focus Group Interviews?

A focus group is defined as 'a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain views, opinions and perceptions on a specific topic of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment' (Krueger and Casey, 2009). Focus groups are small structured groups of 3 to 8 research participants who have been selected on the basis of similar demographics and led by the researcher as a moderator.

The aim of using focus groups is to explore specific research topics of interest, delve into attitudes, feelings and people's views, perceptions and experiences using small group interactions (Greenbaum, 2000). In addition, Krueger and Casey (2009) emphasized that one of the aims of using focus groups is to encourage self-disclosure among research participants and is achieved when people feel comfortable and the environment is non-judgemental and they perceive that they have something in common with the other participants in the focus group.

Forming focus groups depends on factors such as the purpose, size of group, composition and the procedures. It is crucial that research participants in focus groups feel safe, comfortable and enjoy taking part in the process. In addition, they can make decisions during the discussion and also reach some kind of consensus in the group while expressing their opinions.

There are several advantages of using focus groups. Firstly, Stewart et al. (2009) explained that focus groups are useful for collecting data more quickly at less cost and allows the researcher to interact directly with the participants at the same time in a group. Secondly, using a focus group provides an environment which is similar to the natural environment of real life conversations. The format of focus groups also provides researchers with a lot of rich data in the participants own words (Stewart et al., 2009).

Thirdly, focus groups are interactive and group dynamics are very important, as the members in the group would contribute their views within the group. Focus groups centralizes on the research participants' attitudes and beliefs and are seen as a middle group in between individual interviews and observations (Litosseliti, 2005). According to Stewart et al. (2009), the use of focus groups encourages the participants to react to the points mentioned by other participants in the group and build on the responses by adding more points and details. The research participants are in a situation where they are influencing and being influenced by each other's

responses (Krueger and Casey, 2009). This process creates a 'synergistic effect' in the group setting which allows them to contribute to and further develop the responses of the other members in the group (Bickman and Rog, 2009). This results in the production of ideas and rich amounts of data which might not be discovered in other forms of data collection such as interviews.

Litosseliti (2005) also stressed that the synergistic approach produces a whole range of views, opinions, ideas, perceptions and experiences that may provide insightful information. Thus, focus groups are socially oriented events which generate invaluable content for research project and makes it a strong methodological tool. Blaikie (2010) stressed that the purpose of using focus groups is very different from individual interviews, and its strength lies in providing a group interaction whereby research participants provide greater insights about why they hold certain opinions.

In social science research, focus groups can be used as part of an intervention in the research study and may require more formal and structured groups (Litosseliti, 2005; Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015). On the other hand, it can also have an emphasis on observation which results in exploratory, qualitative, naturalistic and interpretive groups. By using focus groups in this study, the teachers and educators may answer the questions and build on each other's answers, thus building the richness of the data. They also become more aware of ideas given by others and reflect on discussions as they face contrary views.

The fourth advantage of using focus groups is that they are flexible, and can be used to explore a wide range of topics with a variety of research participants, ranging from children, teenagers to adults; whether they are literate or not very literate (Stewart et al., 2009). The fifth advantage is the results from focus groups are usually are quite easy to understand as compared to more sophisticated research using surveys or statistics. A further advantage of using focus groups is related to their ability to create a common understanding of an issue, problem or phenomenon in the group which could be useful, especially for decision makers.

One disadvantage of using focus groups is that the researcher has less control over the discussion as compared to individual interviews. Nevertheless, researchers have found it worthwhile to use focus groups to obtain multiple views, perceptions and attitudes of research participants although it requires clear negotiations before hand and during the on-going process of interactions among the researcher as moderator and the research participants (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999).

The second disadvantage of using focus groups is that they have a small number of participants, and this limits the generalization of findings to the bigger population. Thirdly, the interaction from the participants in the focus groups may

not be independent of one another at certain times and could even be biased if there is a very dominant participant in the group (Stewart et al., 2009).

According to Litosseliti (2005), focus groups can have participants ranging from 6 to 10 and as few as four people. Similarly, Krueger and Casey (2009) explained that focus groups can compose of 5 to 10 people or as few as 4 and a maximum of 12 people. Goss and Leinbach (1996) agreed that there can be up to 12 research participants in a focus group depending on the purpose of the research project.

A bigger focus group is more difficult to manage and smaller groups are more appropriate to explore topics which are more complex and require in-depth reflection and discussion. A smaller group will provide more opportunities for the research participants to talk and have more opportunities to respond as turn taking will be among fewer members in the group. It will be easier for the researcher to set up smaller groups for the focus group interviews to ensure a flowing discussion. Krueger and Casey (2009) emphasized that all participants should have the opportunity to share insights and if the group is too large, not everyone will be able to talk. Thus, it is possible to have mini focus groups which consist of 4 or 5 research participants.

### 3.12.2 Design and Pilot Study of Focus Group Interviews

The questions for the focus group interviews were carefully thought out and sequenced in a logical order after reflecting on the questions based on input from the literature review. I constructed 10 questions for the focus group interviews as seen in Appendix C. I started developing the questions for the focus groups by using the topic guide based on topics covered in the literature review and the questioning route and sequence which would help me to answer the research question in this study (Appendix D).

The topic guide is based on the key areas in the research project, its aims, research questions and sub-questions. The key words and phrases helped me to focus on the key topic while the focus groups were being conducted (Litosseliti, 2005). This helped me to plan the questioning route and sequence the questions in an appropriate sequence which also had a logical flow of topics. The questions were made up of questions in complete sentences. I included prompts for each question in the topic guide.

As seen in Appendix C, a total of 10 questions were developed in order to obtain the research participants perceptions of INSET courses they have previously attended, the intervention course they are attending and their future expectations of INSET courses. Some other aspects covered in the questions include the duration

of INSET courses, attending INSET during term time and school holidays as well as how much has INSET fulfilled their needs, pupils' needs and school needs. The questions look short and simple, but they are purposefully constructed using open-ended questions. The questions were developed and phrased to be able to generate focused and in-depth content which is lead on by the flow of the discussion in the focus group. The pilot study was conducted in April 2015 at the University of Warwick with two postgraduate students who were former educators in the United Kingdom and Kazakhstan.

### 3.12.3 Conducting the Focus Group Interviews

After the educators from the three INSET courses had completed the consent forms and the profile questionnaires, I sorted the documents based on those who had given their consent to take part in this study and those who did not want to be involved. The next step I took was to go through the information on the profile questionnaires and identify individuals who fit the criteria for the participants to be included in the focus group. The criteria I used were educators of both genders, male and female and a selection of age range to include educators who were early in their careers, mid-career or very experienced. I also wanted to include research participants who are currently teaching in schools in towns and in rural areas. It was also important for me to include educators who are specialists and non-specialists in teaching the English language and have different levels of teaching experience from being newly appointed educators early in their careers to senior educators nearing retirement. The final criteria I considered was the different types of CPD activities they have attended in the last two years. I selected research participants who had attended at least two types of CPD activities including INSET. It is crucial for participants in focus group discussions to be selected based on certain criteria, and the process of selection is related to the concept of 'applicability', whereby the participants are selected due to their knowledge of the research area (Rabiee, 2004; Burrows and Kendall, 1997).

Initially, I planned to select eight participants from each INSET course and then divide them into two smaller focus groups consisting of four participants. This would enable me to have two focus groups for each INSET course and would make up six focus groups from the three INSET courses. However, I was not able to identify eight research participants from all three INSET courses who matched the criteria I had prescribed for the selection process. The number of research participants who were selected and had taken part in the focus group interviews are seen in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Research Participants in Focus Group Interviews

| No. | INSET Courses | Focus Group 1 | Focus Group 2 | Total |
|-----|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| 1 | Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| 2 | Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary) | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| 3 | Fun Learning Through Language Arts: Toolkit for Trainers | 3 | 3 | 6 |

## 3.13 Individual Interviews

According to Punch (2014) and Aurini et al. (2016), the most prominent data collection instrument in qualitative research is an interview. It is very useful to access data on research participants' perceptions, attitudes and opinions of situations related to their practice (Punch, 2014). Seidman (2006) stressed that the purpose of interviews for qualitative research is not to get answers to questions or hypothesis. Instead, it is meant to understand the living experiences of other people and how they make sense of it. In addition, the format of an interview which consists of spontaneous conversations has a structure and a purpose (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

The key basic assumption in interviewing is that one is interested in others, as their stories are worth listening to and are very important. The interviewer's ego has to be kept in check throughout the process too (Seidman, 2006). Furthermore, interviewing provides access to the context of people's behaviour for researchers to understand the reasons for their behaviours. The role of the researcher who conducts the interviews is to make the process as transparent as possible, for it to be rigorous and systematic as well as take all other factors in to account (Edwards and Holland, 2013).

An important assumption in interviewing comes from the way people do things and how they make meaning of that experience (Kvale, 2007). They are both related to meaning having an effect on how experiences are carried out. Thus, interviewing is necessary for me to understand the meaning teachers and SISCs make of their experiences in INSET.

Qualitative inquiry questions are aimed at gathering in-depth, individualized and contextually sensitive understanding of each person being interviewed. The research participants who volunteered to be interviewed took part in sequential and linked interviews. I used semi-structured interview questions for two separate interviews for each participant as it gave me the opportunity to focus on in-depth interviewing in a series covering topics on two areas. The first interview focused on interview questions related to their previous CPD and INSET experiences and the second interview covered the scope of the intervention INSET course they were attending at ELTC Malaysia and their future expectation of INSET based on their needs, their pupils needs, school needs and national needs of Malaysia.

### 3.13.1 Why Individual Interviews?

Qualitative interviewing was vital in this research project, as its usage is justified by the focus of this research study and the following reasons. Firstly, interviewing facilitates direct communication between people, through a few mediums such as face-to-face interviews, via the internet or telephone (Matthews and Ross, 2010). It produces interactional exchange of dialogue between the researcher and interviewees (Edwards and Holland, 2013).

Secondly, the goal of using interviews is to elicit the interviewees' perspectives of the topic and research questions and understand how and the reasons they have come to their viewpoints (King, 2005). Thus, the use of individual interviews gives the researcher the opportunity to elicit information and gain insights from specific details, opinions and feelings of the research participants (Edwards and Holland, 2013). Interviews attempts to understand the research participants' meaning of their lived world experiences (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

Flick (2014) stressed that using semi-structured interviews would encourage participants to express their views more openly. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) explained that the use of semi-structured interview questions gives the interviewer the freedom to change the sequence and form of the questions in order to follow-up certain responses of the participants. Aurini et al. (2016) and Punch (2014) agreed that using individual interviews gives the researcher the flexibility to craft and rework the interview question as needed.

The third key feature of individual interviews is the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the research participants. The interviewee plays an active role in shaping the course of the interview during the interview session and is similar to a research subject in other research which get participants to complete surveys (King, 2005).

Fourthly, different types of qualitative interviews may be used to obtain data for different types of research questions. Thus, this makes interviews one of the most flexible method to address questions focused on aspects of life, specific processes and decisions. King (2005) emphasized that qualitative research interviews are suitable for research topics which seek to explore different levels of meaning.

The fifth advantage of using qualitative interviews relates to the fact that interviews are more readily accepted by research participants because most people are familiar with interviews and like to share about their work experiences (King, 2005). It is seen as a new social practice in the current 'interview society' (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

The use of individual interviews in qualitative research also has its share of disadvantages. One of the drawbacks are that interviews are time consuming for the interviewee and the interviewer. Additionally, the researcher is involved in the process of planning the interview, carrying out the interviews, preparing the interview transcripts and analyzing the transcripts (King, 2005).

The second disadvantage of using interviews is the data overload faced by the researcher. King (2005) suggests that researchers could refer to the original aims of the study and change the direction of the analysis if necessary.

### 3.13.2   Pilot Study of Individual Interviews

While planning for the individual interviews, I decided to use the seven stages of interview inquiry, as suggested by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) to design the instrument for the individual interviews. This is seen in Table 3.10 below.

Table 3.10: Stages of Interview Inquiry

| No. | Stages | Purpose | Processes for trial run |
|-----|--------|---------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Thematizing | To formulate the purpose of investigation.<br><br>To come up with the concept of theme | Determine the purpose of the interview in relation to the research project |
| 2 | Designing | To plan the design of the study | Designing the stages and steps of the interview and construct the questions |
| 3 | Interviewing | To conduct the interviews | Conducted individual interviews; face to face |
| 4 | Transcribing | To transcribe from oral to written.<br>To prepare for analysis | Transcribe the audio recordings of the interviews |
| 5 | Analysing | To decide which modes of analysis are suitable | Identify deductive themes from interview questions and emerging inductive themes through coding |
| 6 | Verifying | To check the validity, reliability and generalizability of interview findings | Compare the findings from the interviews, looked for similarities and differences |
| 7 | Reporting | To communicate the findings of the study and the methods applied | Report the process of the pilot study, limitations and recommendations for data collection |

In August 2014, I conducted a skype interview with a Malaysian primary school teacher who is currently pursuing her PhD at University College London. I also interviewed a PhD student at the University of Warwick who was an educator to pilot the interview questions I prepared for my Advanced Research Methods Assignment which expanded into this research study. The first set of interview questions had 17 questions and were divided into two sections. The first section consisted of five general questions on Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The second section consisted of 12 questions on teachers' own CPD. The two sets of questions were used to conduct one interview. The experience of piloting the first set of interview questions gave me initial insights into how I could improve the questions by making them more specific to INSET instead of focusing more generally on their CPD. The trial run also helped me to review the interview questions as I realised I

asked additional probing questions during the interview and this showed me there were gaps in between the questions that needed to be filled with new questions.

The next step I took was to revise the interview questions and break them down into questions for two separate interviews, as sequential interviews during the field work. The first interview focused on questions about the research participants' previous INSET experiences. I constructed 11 questions, as can be seen in Appendix F. The second interview focused on questions about the research participants' perceptions of the intervention INSET course they attended, as well as their future expectations of INSET in relation to their needs and their pupils' needs. I constructed nine questions for the second interview, as seen in Appendix F.

As a follow-up, I conducted a second pilot study in the United Kingdom in April 2015 to test out the revised interview questions. I interviewed a postgraduate student from the University of Warwick who was a former educator in China. It allowed me to transcribe the participant's responses and make changes by editing the questions before the data collection period started. I also managed to add one more question which was relevant to the research.

### 3.13.3 Conducting the Individual Interviews

In the initial plan for this study, I had hoped to be able to have about five volunteers from each group of research participants attending the INSET courses to take part in the interviews. Thus, there were supposed to be fifteen teachers. However, during the field work, I had 17 volunteers who wanted to be interviewed but the time given for me to conduct the individual interviews during their break times while attending the INSET courses only allowed me to interview 16 research participants who took part in the series of two interviews each. The information is seen in the Table 3.11 below.

Table 3.11: Research Participants in Individual Interviews

| No. | INSET Courses | Volunteer Sample | Participants Interviewed |
|-----|---------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students | 4 | 4 |
| 2 | Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary) | 10 | 10 |
| 3 | Fun Learning Through Language Arts: Toolkit for Trainers | 3 | 2 |
| | **Total** | **17** | **16** |

I conducted semi-structured interviews using a set of topics to develop questions for each interview. The questions were introduced in different orders in each interview as it was appropriate of the flow in the interview depending on the research participants' responses. This allowed the participants to answer the questions in their own way using their own words. I also asked for further clarification for some of their responses. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate to collect qualitative social research data when researchers are interested in understanding how the research participants experience and understand the phenomenon being investigated and the world as they see it (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

The first interview focused on the interviewee's previous CPD and INSET experiences. This included questions on INSET provided in the school context, courses attended outstation and their own CPD initiatives. The questions also seek to obtain information of their preferences of INSET in school and those conducted off-site and whether it helped them in changes in their practice. In the second interview, I tried to uncover concrete details of the interviewees' present experience of attending INSET; i.e. the intervention INSET course they were attending at ELTC Malaysia. The details of their experiences were important for them to build their opinions on in the interview about their future expectations of INSET. I also asked them specific questions with reference to pertinent points, some of them made during the first interview which was linked to the questions of their future expectations of INSET and their needs as English language educators.

The participants' comments were analysed through a preliminary data analysis task. Their comments were then analysed a second time and reported as conceptions or findings. I ensured the findings remain true to the voice of the participants to understand the relationship between the individual participants and the phenomenon. As the researcher, I remained neutral and recorded their experiences as they were encountered and explained by the participants.

## 3.14   Data Collection

The data collection period was planned for a period of not more than 3 months. This is because the permission given by the Prime Ministers Department of the Malaysian government for researchers to do field work in Malaysia is a maximum of 90 days. I applied for permission via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Prime Ministers Department in Malaysia to conduct the field work and obtained permission to do my research from May to July 2015.

Table 3.12 shows the processes taken for preparation before field work, conducting the pilot study and the data collection period.

Table 3.12: Planning the Research Proces

| Phase | Duration | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | August 2014 | Pilot Study  Trial of interview questions |
| 2 | September - December 2014 | Pilot Study - Transcribed interviews and analysed data |
| 3 | January 2014 | Revised Interview questions<br>Constructed questions for Focus Group Interviews |
| 4 | February 2015 | Prepared Ethical Approval Report |
| 5 | March 2015 | Applied for Ethical approval<br>Applied permission to conduct field work in Malaysia |
| 6 | April 2015 | Pilot Study  2nd Trial of instruments |
| 7 | April 2015 | Received Ethical Approval from CES Warwick<br>Obtained permission to conduct research in Malaysia |
| 8 | May  July 2015 | Data Collection in Malaysia<br>Conducted Focus group interviews and individual interviews with research participants |
| 9 | August 2015 onwards | Transcribed audio recordings of interviews and focus groups and prepared transcipts for data analysis |

The number of research participants who contributed to the data collection during the field work in Malaysia and the amount of data that was obtained is seen in the Table 3.13 below.

Table 3.13: Research Participants and Data Collected

| No. | INSET Courses | Focus Groups | Interviews |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Specialist Certificate in Literacy Development for Lower Primary Students | 2 | 4 x 2 = 8 |
| 2 | Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary) | 2 | 10 x 2 = 20 |
| 3 | Fun Learning Through Language Arts: Toolkit for Trainers | 2 | 2 x 2 = 4 |
| | **Total** | **6** | **32** |

## 3.15   Ethical Considerations

Merriam (2002) stated that the validity and reliability of a research project depends on the ethics of the researcher and how ethical dilemmas are dealt with. According to Maxwell (2013), Christians (2011) as well as Cannella and Lincoln (2011), it is important for researchers to pay close attention to ethical issues in qualitative research because it is an essential and integral part of the research process itself.

Maxwell (2013) explained that ethical considerations are vital not only for the methods in any research study, but to other aspects of the research design such as the goals of the study, research questions, issues of validity and the conceptual framework. Therefore, ethical considerations are related to every aspect of the research design in a qualitative study. Robson and McCartan (2016) agreed and emphasized that ethical considerations are vital in the planning stage of the research as well as the process of carrying out the research itself.

There are many ethical issues which arise during data collection while conducting research. According to Creswell (2013a), it is important not to put the research participants at risk in any way and it is necessary to respect differences of participants in various contexts. In addition, Mertens (2012) explained that qualitative researchers may face complex ethical issues as such in studies which involve interactions with many individuals or even communities of people. The concept of researcher as instrument brings ethical issues related to human relationships. This would be more challenging if the study is conducted in a context with issues of diversity.

The ethical considerations in this study are based on ethical principles within an ethic of respect for the research participants, other parties involved in the research

process, gaining new knowledge, democratic values, strengthening the quality of educational research and academic freedom (BERA, 2011).

### 3.15.1 Ethical Principles

The ethical considerations and ethical guidelines undertaken while conducting this study are related to the ethical principle of respect which is defined as treating research participants with respect and courtesy (Mertens, 2012). It was vital to allow the participants to freely choose to participate or to refuse and withdraw at a later date. It was also important not to make promises to the participants about things which could not be fulfilled Kitchener and Kitchener (2009).

Additionally, there are many ethical questions about the meaning of respect and strategies for establishing trust in different cultural groups (Lapan and Quartaroli, 2009). Researchers need to adhere to the cultural norms in a community and identify who are the participants, where they are from, explain the purpose of the research, who will own the data, who will benefit from the research findings and how the information will be shared and disseminated (Lapan and Quartaroli, 2009).

Apart from respect for the research participants and their time taken to contribute to the research, the ethical principal of justice is equally important in this research. Justice is defined as the process of ensuring that the participants who take part in the study benefit from the research (Mertens, 2012). This could be achieved by using procedures and processes which are not exploitative, reasonable, considered carefully and carried out in a fair manner. This principle also means that certain groups of people would not be overburdened to take part or excluded due to any factors such as gender, disabilities and ethnicity.

In addition to the ethical principles above, there are also norms to guide the process of the research. These norms include the following; using a valid research design, evidence of the researcher's competency, keeping participant's identities confidential, maximizing benefits and minimizing risks, using an appropriate sample, getting voluntary informed consent and informing participants of any potential harm (Lapan and Quartaroli, 2009).

Guba and Lincoln (1989) proposed several principles to guide researchers to link their research to ethical practice. One of the principles is credibility which is parallel to internal validity and it can be achieved by having sustained involvement in the research setting. The researcher could also use a journal or take notes to monitor his or her own beliefs, biases, perceptions and changes in thinking.

## 3.16 Ethical Guidelines in this Study

Punch (2014) and Sikes and Potts (2008) stressed that a researcher decides what and how the research is done. Thus, I was mindful of the data collection period when I had to internalize the ethical issues involved in this research project as Punch (2009) highlighted that ethical issues do arise sometimes early on in the research, during the development of the project and later on after the research project is completed. Mann (2016) agreed that researchers should think about ethics throughout the research project.

I fulfilled the requirement and submitted an Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees to the Centre for Education Studies and received the approval to conduct this study on 15 April 2015 (Appendix G). I also applied for permission to conduct the research in Malaysia and was granted approval from the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in the Prime Minister's Department (Appendix H), with a research pass which was used during field work for data collection (Appendix I).

In planning this study, I adopted the ethical guidelines for educational research by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). These guidelines cover the following three areas of responsibilities as discussed in the sections below.

### 3.16.1 Responsibilities to Participants

The research participants in this study were primary school educators who engaged as active participants. They shared their views of their professional practice of attending INSET courses in Malaysia. There were six areas which were taken into consideration while planning this research. They are discussed below and include areas on voluntary informed consent, openness and disclosure, the right to withdraw, incentives, privacy and disclosure.

It was important for all the research participants who took part in this study from the initial stage to understand the research study's aims and objectives and how they would be engaged when they agreed to consent and take part. It was important for me to be mindful of opposing deception when obtaining informed consent as misrepresentation done deliberately was forbidden. The decision of the research participants to take part in the research should be free and warranted of any pressures upon how they come to decide to take part (Christians, 2005; Gregory, 2003).

During my first meeting with the research participants of all three INSET programmes, I informed and explained the nature of the research and consequences

of the data collected to them. I informed them that their decision to participate in the research was voluntary as Gregory (2003) emphasized that research participants should not be pressured into arriving at their decisions.

It was important for me to explain to the research participants that confidentiality would be guaranteed on the basis of anonymizing the data. After my explanation, their consent was more forthcoming and I managed to obtain informed consent with the form in Appendix A. According to Gregory (2003), confidentiality is linked to the right to privacy in human affairs and is an integral element of our beliefs that each individual does matter.

After I obtained the research participants informed consent, I explained to them that I would maintain privacy to protect their identities. I disclosed to them that their views would be analysed and reported with accuracy. I also ensured the data was as accurate as possible, whereby the transcription of interviews were checked by another researcher for inter-rater reliability.

I informed the participants that they could withdraw at any time. This also resulted in a few teachers who noted in the consent forms that they did not want to take part in the study and thus did not proceed to the next stage of the research. In addition, the professional code of ethics by Willig (2001) emphasised great importance for the participants to have the right to withdraw. They should not feel penalised if they decided not to take part in the research project at some point (King and Horrocks, 2012).

I decided not to give the research participants any incentives in any form, including food, money or gifts. This is because it could create bias while conducting sampling or influence them in their responses. I also informed the research participants that the data obtained from their participation in the research would remain confidential and anonymous. It was important to recognize that the research participants had the right to have their privacy protected. If they needed to be identified in any publications, their real names and details were replaced with pseudonyms or numbers assigned to them. The data would be stored safely for a period of 10 years and the use of personal data is set down by the Data Protection Act 1998. Thus, the research participants had a right to know how their data will be stored and is only available for me to work on the data analysis.

In the case of agreements made with any of the research participants as signed on the consent forms had to change for any reason, I would deliberate carefully before disclosing it to appropriate parties. It is also considered a good practice for researchers to debrief the research participants about the findings and conclusion from the research and I would disseminate any articles published based on my

research findings.

### 3.16.2 Responsibilities to Sponsor of Research

An organization or a person who funds or contributes to the funding of the research is a sponsor for the research project. Researchers need to fulfill their responsibilities to the sponsor by ensuring the research is conducted to a high standard. In this study, I was required to submit an outline of my research plan to my sponsor in the first year of my PhD studies and also submitted a follow-up detailed research plan to my sponsor for approval before I planned for my field work in Malaysia. I considered two areas which were important with reference to my responsibility to the sponsor of my research and it was linked to the methods used in the process of the research and any publications. These are discussed further below.

The methods employed in this study had to be suitable to the topic and research questions and manageable within the time frame to complete the data collection and working on the data analysis. In addition, my sponsor had already approved my research plan and reviewed the proposed methods for data collection.

The findings from this research will be published in the form of my thesis and research papers which will report the findings. The findings will be placed in the public domain via University of Warwick's WRAP system as well as open access journals. This is to enable the findings to be available to other educational practitioners and researchers.

### 3.16.3 Responsibilities to the Community of Educational Research

While planning this research project, it was also important for me to give consideration to my responsibilities to the other researchers, academics, educators and students as well as government agencies, policy makers, public and private institutions.

The main factor related to misconduct was for the researcher to protect the integrity of the whole research project, the researcher herself as well as the research process. Therefore, I had to refrain from deliberately tempering with the data or falsifying the evidence from the findings.

One of the other main areas was also to adhere and later give others such as policy makers, researchers and the research participants access to the results from the study in the form of research articles published. In addition, the information has been reported clearly by the researcher, in a straightforward manner in clear language.

# Chapter 4

# Data Analysis and Findings

## 4.1 Introduction

Qualitative research attempts to capture the research participants' stories in order to understand their perspectives and experiences of a certain phenomenon or topic (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research generates rich data with thick descriptions (Braun and Clarke, 2013). How the researcher makes sense of and communicates research involves sharing informal accounts of lived experience (Drumm, 2013). The main aim is to capture and understand diverse perspectives, observing and analyzing behaviours in a particular context and looking for patterns in what people say and do. The research participants' accounts of their lived narratives are then structured by researchers into narratives which interpret their stories (Drumm, 2013). The first section in this chapter describes the process taken during the stages and steps of data analysis I have undertaken to analyse the data from the focus group interviews and the individual interviews. This is followed by the second section, which reports the findings from the data analysis process for focus group interviews. The third section reports on the findings from the data analysis for the individual interviews.

## 4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

According to Maxwell (2013), the analysis section in most research is separated from the design because the design takes place before the data collection process. However, the planning of the data analysis can be seen as part of the design, as it must also be carefully designed and planned. In qualitative studies, careful decisions need to be taken to inform how the data analysis will be done. It would also be decided based on the whole research design of the study and systematically planned

(Maxwell, 2013).

According to Saldaña (2011), there are more than 20 different genres of qualitative research, each approach employing certain forms of data analysis with the data obtained. Miles et al. (2014) explained some of the common features of qualitative enquiry: firstly, qualitative research often takes place in a naturalistic setting to investigate the daily activities of the research participants; secondly, researchers are keen to gain a holistic view of the context of the study; thirdly, the researcher may wish to obtain data to reveal the research participant's perceptions through the process of gaining an insider's perspective through deep attentiveness in observations or interviews. Robson and McCartan (2016) agreed with Saldaña (2011) that qualitative data is usually made up of words instead of numbers and is rich, real and full of description and details.

Maxwell (2013) emphasized that there is no one correct way to perform qualitative analysis. The strategies a researcher adopts will depend on proper planning and modification throughout the process of conducting the data analysis. The planning will need to take a few areas into consideration, including the amount and type of data that has been collected, answering the research questions as well as addressing issues of validity and conclusions. In addition, Rabiee (2004) stated that data analysis does not occur in a linear form as each part of the process would overlap another.

Some approaches to qualitative data analysis include the following. Quasi-statistical approaches use word and phrase frequencies to determine the importance of concepts by content analysis (Robson and McCartan, 2016). A thematic coding approach is a generic approach which is not always linked to a theoretical perspective. A grounded theory approach also uses thematic coding; however, the codes emerge from the data based on the researcher's interpretation of the meanings of the texts Robson and McCartan (2016).

According to Miles et al. (2014), the data that researchers collect from any documents, observations and interviews in qualitative research are not ready for analysis and need to go through a stage of processing. Some examples of processing include typing and expanding field notes, transcribing audio interviews and editing them and documenting any other documents collected such as reports, timetables etc. The researcher's role also involves using words to document observations during field work and interpreting what was experienced. Thus, the process of analyzing qualitative data deals with complexity, and the researcher needs to have self-awareness to reduce personal influence such as values, attitudes and beliefs on the data (Miles et al., 2014).

Qualitative data has a few strengths, such as focusing on what real life is like and having a close proximity to the issue or phenomenon being investigated. The influence of the context is vital and will help to understand any underlying meanings clearly. Rich data has a huge potential to reveal complex issues, as the data provides detailed descriptions. This would then lead to uncovering truth, reporting it and having a strong impact on the readers. Miles et al. (2014) added that qualitative data is usually collected over a period of time, making it powerful and potentially explaining more than the what, why and how questions. The data is heavily embedded within the context, and helps the researcher to locate the meaning that research participants have on their life events, the daily processes they go through and relating these meanings to their world (Miles et al., 2014).

## 4.3   Stages in Qualitative Data Analysis

Miles et al. (2014) explained their view of qualitative data analysis as encompassing three activities happening at the same time: data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions and verification.

According to Miles et al. (2014), the amount of data collected during field work is usually over-whelming, and can be reduced by producing notes, abstracts and summaries through a data analysis process which is called data condensation. Robson and McCartan (2016) added that researchers could also use other methods of keeping track of data, such as document sheets, session summary sheets for interviews and memoing to capture ideas, views and intuitions during the whole process of data analysis. The process of data condensation makes the data stronger, and this happens progressively from the beginning of the qualitative research project (Robson and McCartan, 2016). The researcher would already have undertaken anticipatory data condensation while planning the conceptual framework and data collection methods, and this process will continue until the whole research is completed with a report.

Robson and McCartan (2016) explained that the decision by the researcher as to what to summarise and how to organize it are done based on analytic choices. The researcher has to decide which words, phrases or chunks to code and how to label or categorise them. In addition, the researcher needs to decide how to use the codes and labels to tell an evolving story of the phenomenon being investigated.

After data condensation, the next activity is to prepare data display, which showcases the information in a concise, compressed and organized manner (Miles et al., 2014). This allows the researcher to develop an understanding of what is

coming through from the data and draw conclusions. The first activity of data condensation will lead the researcher to new ideas and what to include in data displays. The process of creating the data display is part of the data analysis process, and can be presented in the form of tables, graph, charts and quotations and further steps of condensation also takes place.

The third activity focuses on drawing conclusions and verifying those conclusions. The earlier processes completed by the researcher from the data collection period would have given the researcher a sense of openness which slowly developed to draw general conclusions. As the researcher goes through the steps to analyse field notes, coding and storing the information, the conclusions may seem vague initially, and then develops to be more explicit and grounded (Miles et al., 2014). The three main activities explained above about qualitative data analysis work in a logical sequence in the analysis process. Additionally, they also work in an interactive way, as seen in the diagram below in Figure 4.1.
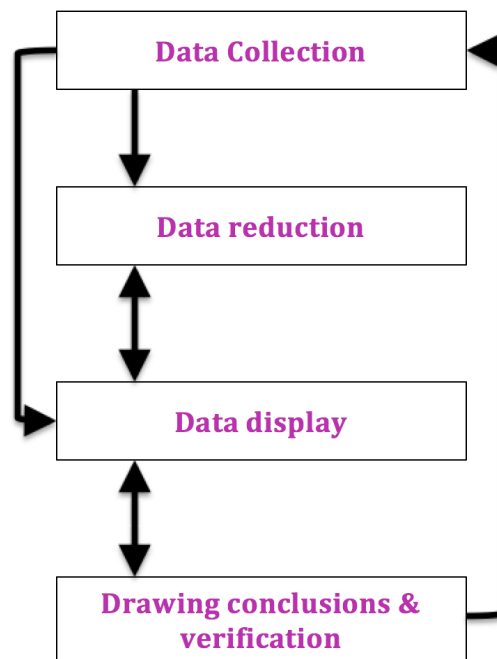


Figure 4.1: Components in Data Analysis
Source: Adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994)

## 4.4 Data Analysis in this Study

Date analysis is part of the research design in qualitative research and is informed by the rest of the design in a research project. Maxwell (2013) emphasized that the data analysis itself has to be designed, as decisions have to be made on how the analysis will be done.

The steps taken to approach the data analysis in this study are based on a flexible foundational method, which is the six-phase thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2012), as this suited the research topic and the research questions which was exploratory. Thematic analysis is defined as an approach to organise data, identify, analyse and report themes and patterns from the data in a study (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Guest et al. (2012) explained that thematic analysis focuses on identifying and describing the implicit and explicit ideas found within the data and this leads to the themes. Thematic analysis also helps a researcher to interpret the data and make sense of unrelated material in relation to various aspects of the phenomenon and topic being investigated (Boyatzis, 1998).

The data collected in this study are focus group interviews and individual interviews. The focus group interview and individual interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. An experiential form of thematic analysis within a contextual framework was adopted using a combination of deductive and inductive thematic analysis. In the deductive approach, the themes were developed from the literature review and the research questions. In the inductive approach, the themes developed from the stories and narratives of the research participants. The approach to thematic analysis followed the phases suggested by Braun and Clarke (2012).

In this study, data analysis was conducted through the following phases. The first phase consisted of transcribing the audio recordings of focus groups and individual interviews as well as managing the qualitative data. The second phase involved the procedure of coding the data in Nvivo, and organizing and sorting the data. The process of coding is considered to be part of the initial process of analysis. This was followed by the process of coming up with the criteria regarding how to develop the main themes from the data which has been coded. The next step taken was to identify the main themes and sub-themes from the parent nodes and child nodes. The steps in each of these phases will be discussed below in greater detail.

### 4.4.1 Phase 1: Familiarisation with the Data

Miles et al. (2014) named this phase 'data processing and preparation', and explained that the focus is on words as the basic form of data. Any raw data collected

during field work such as field notes and handwritten notes have to be expanded into write-ups. Similarly, audio recordings of interviews have to be transcribed into texts which are clear, and this is dependent on the skills of the researcher transcribing it (Miles et al., 2014).

I reviewed the multiple types of data such as the audio recordings, actual transcribed texts, notes and summary comments (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). In this phase, I started listening to the audio recordings of the focus group interviews and individual interviews during the field work period to double check all the recording, and made back-up copies. Following this, I transcribed all the recordings and prepared the first draft of the transcripts. I listened to the recordings again and checked the accuracy of the transcription and for some words which were not clear. I also ensured that I followed up with the process of deidentifying data, which was to provide a non-identifying variable such as a number to each participant, and to use that in the transcripts. For example: Participant B5 or a pseudonym. The main point of deidentifying the data was to ensure the research participants' real names were not used in all documents and numbers, and that pseudonyms were assigned and used in transcripts and other documents (Stuckey et al., 2014). However, I prepared a master list of the participants' names and the numbers and pseudonyms assigned to them in a separate location from all the data.

Following on from completing the transcriptions, I made some brief notes on certain parts of the data which were words in Malay language and translated them into English for reference later on. Simple notes were also made on printed copies of the transcriptions. It was important to read the transcripts again in an active and analytical manner, as there were six focus group interviews and 32 individual interviews and I could not remember all the information collected, thus this practice helped me to unconsciously process and recall some of the information and familiarize myself with the data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). I also used the traditional method of reading through the data line by line by marking them with different coloured highlighters on the hardcopies of the transcripts. I underlined key words and important phrases and sections of the texts. According to Bernard (2000), this method is also known as eyeballing, when a researcher scans the data and tries to sort out and identify initial patterns.

Reliability and validity are fundamental concerns of quantitative research and one concept of achieving it is triangulation (Armstrong et al., 1997). It was crucial to ensure there was consistency across all my transcripts and I decided inter-rater reliability was important as suggested by Armstong et al (1997). I had given my audio recordings of two interviews for participant D7 to a fellow researcher who

helped me to transcribe and code them based on a coding scheme used. After making comparisons with a simple percentage agreement, we had about 95% similarities and is considered as excellent reliability.

### 4.4.2 Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

Braun and Clarke (2012) explained that coding data will produce codes that form the building blocks of analysis. Saldaña (2013) stated that codes are words or short phrases which capture symbolic meaning, contain important descriptions which capture the essence of the meaning in the data, and assign significant attributes to the visual text that is being coded. Miles et al. (2014) defined codes as chunks of data in different sizes that are labelled and assigned a symbolic meaning. The code can be coded with a straightforward descriptive label or a complex one used for inferential content.

The process of generating codes is technical and forms part of the data analysis, and is used to categorize and later to retrieve similar chunks of data for clustering and further analysis. Miles et al. (2014) explained that there are more than 25 types of approach for the first cycle of coding, and it is possible to use more than one approach as needed.

Saldaña (2009) explains that first cycle coding processes involve coding from words, phrases, longer sentences to paragraphs. This is followed by second cycle coding processes, in which the same texts may be coded and developed further by reconfiguring the codes. Likewise, Lapan et al. (2012) and Charmaz (2000) emphasized that coding consists of a minimum of two phases, initial coding and focused coding. Initial coding is also known as open coding, when the researcher analyses the data by being by being open and exploring what is happening in the data.

Miles et al. (2014) stressed that codes are prompts and triggers to help the researcher to understand deeper meanings in the data through reflection and like Robson and McCartan (2016), see coding as a process of data condensation. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), it is crucial for the coding to be inclusive, thorough and systematic and re-reading the transcripts after the first level of coding is helpful to identify if a new code is needed to capture a particular section or selection of the data.

After identifying the first cycle codes to summarise chunks of data, a second cycle coding named pattern coding is needed (Miles et al., 2014). This is similar to focused coding, as mentioned by Lapan et al. (2012) and Charmaz (2000). The purpose is to group the initial summaries into a smaller number of categories and

themes, pulling together the information from the first cycle of coding, thus producing more meaningful units of analysis. Pattern codes are also inferential codes, which identify emergent themes and assist in a clearer explanation. The purpose of using pattern coding is to condense large chunks of data into smaller analytic units, help the researcher to conduct analysis, help the researcher to develop a cognitive map and lay the groundwork for identifying common themes for cross-case analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

In this study, my coding process involved two types of coding, deductive coding and inductive coding. In the initial phase of the data analysis, I began by coding on the printed hardcopies of the transcripts themselves, since it was easy to read them and code with different colours. I then decided to use the Nvivo software programme to help me to code the data in a more systematic manner, and to develop it in to electronic form. Nvivo does not code the data for a researcher, but works as a data management system and is helpful for projects with a large amount of qualitative data (Stuckey, 2015).

I used Nvivo Version 11 for windows to help me to code the data. All the transcripts for the focus group interview and individual interviews were imported and saved into two separate folders, under 'sources'. One folder contained the transcripts for the six focus groups, and the other folder contained the transcripts for the 32 individual interviews. In the Nvivo software programme, the term used for a code is 'node'. Nodes can represent either a code, a theme or an idea about the data in a whole transcript document, which is saved as a source.

During the phase of generating initial codes, I began to come up with a system to code the data. The first step I took while working on the deductive coding, also known as predetermined coding, was to create codes using the provisional coding approach. It consisted of a starting list of possible codes, which was prepared based on the literature review, research questions and key variables. Thus, I prepared a starter list of possible deductive themes from the literature review, research questions and key terminology.

Then, I started to code words and phrases in the transcripts. The words and phrases I coded provided a label for that data, which was relevant and related to the research questions in the study. Some codes provided a close description of the data and some were from the research participants' perspective, meaning of their understanding and language they used. Some other codes were based on my understanding of what was explained by the research participants.

The initial codes were short and concise, comprising descriptions in small chunks, and some were sentences and larger chunks of texts. Some parts of the

transcriptions had overlapped codes, as the coded text was relevant under more than one label; thus simultaneous coding was used. In addition, sub-coding was also applied where a second order tag was assigned after a primary code or initial code to add detail to the entry (Miles et al., 2014).

As the process of coding developed, some of the codes went through the process of being revised and changed or relabelled from the starter list I had for deductive coding. Some codes had to be changed completely, while others were divided further into sub-codes, leading to the creation of parent nodes and child nodes using Nvivo. This process of coding was conducted for all the transcripts from the focus group interviews and individual interviews.

Based on all the data collected during field work, other new codes emerged in the transcripts and these were coded through inductive coding. These inductive codes were crucial to the study, as they uncovered relevant points linked to the context and local factors arising from the phenomenon being investigated in Malaysia. For this stage of coding, I reviewed the coded data, and sought to tie together some coded chunks of data, since these suggested some variables to be examined further. Pattern coding helped to process the information and do cross-checking when some data did not seem to fit in with a label or node given. The search for common threads in pattern codes also summarised categories of themes, explanations, theoretical constructs and relationships among the research participants and other people linked to the phenomenon investigated (Miles et al., 2014).

The codes prepared in Phase 2 of the data analysis formed part of early and continuing analysis, which led to a reshaping of the perspectives of how to interpret the data. The coding phase went through the cycles of deduction and induction as analytic notes were jotted down and the analysis progressed. The notes strengthened coding by highlighting underlying issues which needed more in depth analysis. The codes and nodes were used to retrieve and categorize the data that were similar in meaning, so I could quickly find and cluster the segments that related to one another.

### 4.4.3 Phase 3: Searching for Themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) define themes as being able to capture an important element linked to the research question and providing responses which form a pattern in the data. By this phase, the possible codes that were prepared initially before coding for the deductive thematic analysis have generated a pattern in the data for sub-themes. Many of these codes coded in the data in Nvivo represented the parent nodes and child nodes. As for the inductive thematic analysis, the codes have been

used to generate and construct themes. The codes formed many different variations while analyzing the data, and it was important for certain decisions to be made as the codes were reviewed again to check for overlap between the codes and any similarities.

Braun and Clarke (2012) suggested that the process of collapsing and clustering codes is important too, as it helps to develop themes and sub-themes and describes the content in a meaningful way. The next step taken was to try to form a relationship between all of the themes, and to use the data to develop a narrative story. Although some of the codes and sub-themes do not seem to fit at this stage, they were retained and included in a hand-drawn thematic map and notes. The thematic map was revised again when checking the codes, themes and sub-themes.

While coding in Nvivo, the data which I had coded were further divided into hierarchies to form two groups, namely parent nodes and child nodes. The parent nodes were formed by, and represented more general codes and are classified as the main themes found in the data. On the other hand, the child nodes were in the form of more specific codes and sub topics, and represented the sub-themes in data from the focus groups and individual interviews. At this stage, I also used the function of text search query and conducted over 30 queries of key words and phrases to help me to check the frequency of the words and phrases mentioned by the research participant.

The initial thematic map was used for a few reasons, including (the need) to draw first conclusions by noting patterns and themes. In addition, it assisted me to make contrasts, comparisons and clustering (Miles et al., 2014). It was crucial to make inferences to understand the display of the parent nodes and child nodes and thematic map as it made the conclusions more explicit and clear, and helped me to generate more ideas for the ongoing analysis. The first conclusion from the thematic map and display of parent and child nodes were examined again, based on notes made during formulation and reformulation. This step was done for checking, confirmation, verifying the information and ensuring the descriptive notes accompanying my thematic map were clear.

The next step I took was to come up with some specific criteria for developing themes. For the coded data from the focus group interviews, I decided that when an issue was discussed in at least three of the six focus groups, it was considered to be a more important issue, as it was represented in at least half of the focus groups and the research participants shared their views on the issue. On the other hand, it is also important to note that out of the six focus groups, two were conducted with non-specialist English language teachers and four focus groups were conducted

with the SISCs. Thus, when an issue was discussed in at least three focus groups, the views were sometimes shared by a combination of non-specialist teachers and SISCs.

### 4.4.4    Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes

In the fourth stage, all the themes and sub-themes were reviewed based on all the parent nodes and child nodes in the coded extracts of the data, for the focus group interviews and individual interviews. The coded chunks of data were checked against the themes and sub-themes to ensure they matched and represented the data meaningfully. The themes and sub-themes which developed captured the richness of the data and highlighted relevant aspects according to the tone of the responses of the research participants, with reference to the research questions. In addition, the themes which were developed were based on the frequency of being discussed in at least three focus groups for the focus group interviews.

Apart from going through my notes, the display of parent and child nodes and the sketch of a thematic map, I also relied on other methods to help me to review the data and come up with some initial themes. I looked at frequent word repetitions in the data and connected them to the research questions. Some of these words included items such as 'needs', 'INSET', 'experience' etc. These words are also connected to the key words in the context of this study.

### 4.4.5    Phase 5: Defining and Coming up with Themes

In analyzing the data from the focus group interviews and individual interviews at the thematic analysis stage, I reached a stage of deep analytic analysis which shaped the results from the previous phases of the analysis into more detailed descriptions. It consisted of selecting extracts which provided clear examples to substantiate the narrative story found in the data. A detailed interpretation was presented, which was connected to the research questions in this study. It was also connected to other features in the broader content such as key words and contextual information.

The connection between various themes and sub-themes was applied to the whole analysis. A review of the labels for the themes was needed, as the themes had to be concise, yet informative and interesting. In addition, I used a few scrutiny-based techniques such as conducting more queries regarding words and phrases, comparing and contrasting information from different transcripts, while looking for missing information in some of the transcripts was helpful in the process of formulating themes and sub-themes.

### 4.4.6    Phase 6: Writing the Chapter or Report

After the previous five phases, the writing of the chapter from the beginning of the data analysis was reviewed and revised after the first draft. The reason was that the story of the data and analysis has to be logically connected, complicated and convincing. The chapter attempts to provide a coherent and compelling account of the essence of the argument based on the research questions. It was crucial to go through tabulating and recombining the evidence to address the initial aims of the study. The findings from the data analysis are reported in the following section of this chapter.

## 4.5    Findings from Focus Group Interviews

The second section in this chapter highlights the findings from the six focus group interviews. Below are the screen shots of the parent nodes and child nodes from the coded data in Nvivo. The discussion of the findings will be discussed based on themes which were developed and derived from these nodes. Based on the parent nodes and child nodes, I have selected nodes with data discussed from at least three to six focus group (sources in Nvivo) which were developed into five main themes. The findings will be discussed according to these themes in the following sub-sections.

**Nodes**

| Name | | Sources | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| Assessment | | 2 | 10 |
|   Assessment in INSET | | 2 | 10 |
| Categories of INSET | | 6 | 60 |
|   Generic CPD | | 3 | 6 |
|   INSET during term or holidays | | 5 | 34 |
|   Other INSET - non govt funded | | 1 | 1 |
|   Subj related CPD | | 3 | 9 |
|   Type of INSET | | 2 | 10 |
| Challenges | | 0 | 0 |
|   Challenges as Coaches | | 2 | 6 |
|   Challenges in INSET | | 5 | 26 |
| Choice of INSET courses | | 6 | 67 |
|   Applying for INSET | | 1 | 2 |
|   Choice of INSET | | 6 | 64 |
|   Selection of teachers for INSET | | 1 | 1 |
| Coaching | | 0 | 0 |
|   Advantages of coaching | | 2 | 2 |
| CPD Model | | 3 | 3 |
|   Cascade model | | 3 | 3 |
| CPD Provider | | 0 | 0 |
|   ELTC's role in INSET | | 2 | 2 |
|   Providers of CPD | | 1 | 1 |
| Duration of INSET courses | | 6 | 51 |
|   Duration of INSET | | 6 | 34 |
|   Frequency attending INSET | | 4 | 17 |
| Effectiveness | | 0 | 0 |
|   Effectiveness of INSET | | 5 | 22 |
| Future Expectations | | 6 | 58 |
|   Future expectations for INSET | | 5 | 52 |
|   INSET 4 special needs | | 1 | 4 |
|   Proposed changes for INSET | | 1 | 2 |
| ICT | | 4 | 14 |
|   21st Century skills & INSET | | 4 | 10 |
|   ICT & INSET | | 3 | 4 |
| Importance | | 3 | 7 |
|   Importance of INSET | | 3 | 7 |
| Ineffectiveness | | 4 | 16 |
|   Ineffectiveness of INSET | | 2 | 13 |
|   Ineffectiveness of teachers | | 3 | 3 |
| Learning | | 6 | 85 |
|   Adapting from Content learned | | 5 | 13 |
|   Change & INSET | | 3 | 15 |
|   Collaborative Learning | | 3 | 15 |
|   Learning from INSET | | 6 | 28 |
|   PLC | | 4 | 14 |
| New Trends | | 1 | 2 |
|   Specialization in INSET | | 1 | 2 |
| Opportunity | | 4 | 21 |
|   Opportunity to improve skills | | 3 | 12 |
|   Opportunity to attend INSET | | 3 | 9 |
| Other Issues | | 3 | 5 |
|   Cost of INSET | | 2 | 3 |

Figure 4.2: Nodes for Focus Groups in Nvivo (Part 1)

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lesson Study | | 1 | 1 |
| Standardization | | 1 | 1 |
| Overall Needs | | 2 | 6 |
| Evaluation & INSET | | 1 | 1 |
| Needs Analysis -CPD | | 2 | 5 |
| Planning | | 5 | 27 |
| Planning INSET | | 5 | 27 |
| Previous INSET | | 6 | 59 |
| INSET attended | | 6 | 53 |
| Native speaker programme | | 2 | 6 |
| Relevance | | 5 | 23 |
| Factors affecting relevance of INSET | | 3 | 6 |
| Relevance of INSET | | 4 | 17 |
| Responsibilities | | 4 | 18 |
| Responsibilities after INSET | | 3 | 6 |
| Responsibilities- SISCs | | 2 | 12 |
| Selection for INSET | | 4 | 14 |
| Headmaster's role in INSET of teachers | | 3 | 9 |
| Notice for INSET | | 3 | 5 |
| SISCs | | 5 | 30 |
| INSET for SISCs | | 3 | 26 |
| Needs (INSET) 4 New Coaches | | 2 | 2 |
| Perks as SISCs | | 2 | 2 |
| SISCs and INSET | | 2 | 9 |
| SISCs & planning | | 2 | 3 |
| SISCs role in INSET | | 2 | 6 |
| Students' Needs | | 5 | 22 |
| Students needs | | 5 | 22 |
| Teachers | | 0 | 0 |
| INSET for KSSR | | 3 | 5 |
| Non-option teachers | | 3 | 6 |
| Readiness for INSET | | 2 | 3 |
| Teachers' Needs | | 6 | 111 |
| Preference of type (INSET) | | 6 | 38 |
| Sek Kurang Murid | | 1 | 2 |
| Teachers needs | | 5 | 68 |
| teaching materials | | 1 | 3 |
| Trainer's | | 3 | 13 |
| Quality of trainers & facilitators | | 3 | 9 |
| Trainer's expectations | | 2 | 4 |
| Trends | | 1 | 1 |
| Current info & INSET | | 1 | 1 |

Figure 4.3: Nodes for Focus Groups in Nvivo (Part 2)

The findings from the focus groups in this section are those from two groups of educators; school improvement specialist coaches (SISCs) and non-option (non-specialist) English language teachers in Primary schools in Malaysia. The data

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was obtained from two focus group interviews with non-specialist English language teachers and four with groups of SISCs.

### 4.5.1    Previous INSET Experiences

The first theme of the previous INSET experiences was developed from the data derived from the following nodes in six focus groups and sources in Nvivo, as they fulfilled the criteria of being discussed in more than three focus groups. I selected data from the following nodes as seen in Table 14 below to discuss the findings based on several sub-themes.

Table 4.1: Focus Groups: Nodes selected for Theme 1

| Nodes | Sources No. of Focus Groups | References |
|---|---|---|
| Selection for INSET | 4 | 14 |
| INSET attended | 6 | 53 |
| CPD model (Cascade model) | 3 | 3 |
| Choice of INSET | 6 | 64 |
| Duration of INSET | 6 | 34 |
| Frequency of attending INSET | 4 | 17 |
| Generic CPD | 3 | 6 |
| Subject related CPD | 3 | 9 |
| INSET during term or holidays | 5 | 34 |

**Selection of INSET and INSET attended**

In Malaysia, professional development programmes are planned and conducted through a centralized system, dominated by the cascade model. The majority of the research participants claimed that their English language officers (ELOs) in their State Education District Offices had the authority to appoint them officially to attend INSET. The focus group participants, comprising SISCs and non-specialist teachers, also shared that they did not have a choice regarding the type of INSET they had to attend when they were teachers. Thus, they were not able to choose INSET programmes based on their pupils' needs or their needs. They also did not have the choice to choose INSET based on content or skills, or decide whether it was generic INSET courses or INSET programmes specific to certain content such as Phonics or Language Arts. Below are some views from both groups of educators.

A few SISCs and non-specialist teachers shared their experiences of having the opportunity to attend compulsory INSET pgrogrammes and not having a

choice in almost all INSET courses they attended under the State Education Department and INSET at the national level, implemented by the Malaysian MoE. The SISCs and teachers explained that overall, the provisions to attend INSET for ELT depended a lot on the school administration. For example, if there were a large number of English language teachers in a school, they would take turns to attend INSET courses on a rotation basis. The call for attendance at INSET courses would be endorsed by the head teacher or principal, stating a specific name of one of the English language teachers to attend the course. But if there were more non-specialist teachers compared to specialist teachers teaching English in a school, priority will be given to the non-specialist teachers. In comparison, if there were only one or two English language teachers, attendance would be on a rotation basis, or they would come up with a schedule which works for them, as mentioned below:

*" … in my last school, there were only 2 English teachers, so it was between the 2 of us. We just take turns … when my friend was busy with her small kids, I usually went for most of the courses. But now she has to go because I'm no more there".* (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

The research participants explained that out of 10 INSET programmes being conducted for primary school English language teachers, about eight to nine courses were compulsory. They had to attend all the INSET courses allocated to them, and if they did not meet the minimum requirement to attend at least seven INSET days in an academic year, they would have to apply or request that teachers attend more INSET courses related to the English language. However, they noted that the SISCs would not fall into this category of requesting for more professional development courses, as they had attended at least four courses in the last academic year which finally added up to more than 15 to 20 days for that year.

The SISCs and teachers also highlighted that most INSET courses for English language teachers at primary level are planned and delivered on a national level from the MoE, Malaysia. They agreed in their focus groups that the opportunity to attend INSET very often came in the form of a directive for teachers in primary schools. Most educators claimed not to have a choice when it came to having a say or choice in selecting which INSET course to attend.

In relation to INSET planned at the state level, the teachers were selected as course participants by a higher authority such as the ELOs and given a directive to attend INSET. Thus, it was compulsory for them to attend these INSET programmes. They received calling letters addressed personally to them with their names on the calling letters. They explained that once they had attended the first INSET programme at national level, their details were kept in a database and they

were called more often after that to attend INSET related to their subject areas and the classes they taught, lower primary or upper primary. In addition, they shared the fact that there had been times when they were given very short notice to attend an INSET programme and they received a letter two or three days prior to the course or just a phone call from the ELO in the State Education Department. Thus, they had limited time to make arrangements at school and home before they travelled to attend the INSET programme. One view shared is seen below:

*"Sometimes there is a last minute call for us. So, if there is a week before, or 2 to 3 days before, they receive the letter, then they will just call us and tell us"* (Participant C2, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

On the other hand, it was also discussed during the focus groups that some educators tried to contact the ELOs and requested specific the INSET programmes that they needed. They tried to volunteer to attend certain INSET programmes when their colleagues at school who were appointed could not attend, and they tried to tell the officers about their current INSET needs. However, this was not taken into account, as seen from the following response.

*"Sometimes, you can volunteer ... you can say you want to go for this course because I'm interested ... but they won't put you either ..."* (Participant C2, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

In addition, when the research participants faced any problems or emergency situations and could not attend an INSET programme, they informed the ELO and another person replaced them for that particular INSET course. This was reported in the response below:

*" ... But sometimes if the other teacher does not want to go, we can take over and go".* (Participant C4, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

The SISCs and non-specialist teachers shared their predicament and even mentioned that this practice of selecting teachers for INSET still continues even though they were given the opportunity to share some details occasionally regarding their INSET needs. However, no needs analysis was conducted on a regular basis, and neither was it consistent. Only a fraction of SISCs and non-specialist teachers were aware that there were avenues for them to indicate their INSET needs. Additionally, no other information was provided and they were not aware whether this practice was voluntary or was compulsory to aid in the planning of INSET in a centralized system. This is indicated in the extract below:

*"I think KPM did ask us to do online ... a questionnaire ... to ask us what type of courses we wanted to attend ... or what other courses we had attended. But I did not know the purpose of this because I did not think it was disseminated to those*

*institutions that are giving the courses. They just call people at random. You see if you had picked your people, the letter would have the name of that person. But this one is just one letter sent to teachers ... there is no name so we know that is is not targeting anybody".* (Participant B4, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

Some of the research participants also explained that they had been given forms to fill in while attending INSET courses to complete about their current IN-SET needs and they believed the information would have been sent to the State Education Department. Nevertheless, they explained that they did not receive further information after completing these forms and handing them in to the trainers in the last INSET courses they attended. They also added that recently this year, many of them browsed through ELTC's website to see the selection of INSET courses offered for this academic year, and thus were more aware of what kind of INSET courses were conducted for primary school teachers.

All the SISCs and teachers also stressed that they had always indicated their INSET needs in their annual assessment forms (SKT forms). It was compulsory for them to reflect and list down the type of INSET they required at the end of each academic year. However, they mentioned that they were not sure if this information was recorded somewhere or used to identify teachers' needs, and whether state and national level INSET was planned according to the data collected every year, as seen below:

*"Ya, in our SKT. Every year also we list down ... "* (Participant C2, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

The response above showed that the research participants needed specific INSET programmes and had highlighted their specific INSET needs on an annual basis in their SKT annual assessment forms at the end of the academic year. Some of them stated specific INSET needs, as in the response below:

*"Ya, me too. Because we have much less exposure to IT, especially teachers in schools".* (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Nevertheless, they explained that they realized the information on the type of INSET courses they requested to attend in the following academic year had not been taken into account when they were appointed and allocated to attend a specific INSET course.

### CPD Model and Planning of INSET

Most of the SISCs and non-specialist teachers agreed that the planning of INSET at a central level reduces flexibility, but they also saw the value of their roles

as trainees or course participants and later on becoming trainers in their districts. They commented about INSET via the cascade model and shared mixed views.

On a positive note, majority of the research participants disclosed their beliefs about the cascade model of INSET and agreed it as being a *"good programme"*. They gave the reason of having state trainers, known as the 'JUs' who were well trained and they were then sent to conduct INSET courses for the teachers. In addition, it was mentioned that the research participants were then given the opportunities to train other teachers as seen below.

*" ... I was also chosen by the trainers for a short time to go to other schools and to Tioman where we did a workshop there ... we shared with teachers from schools we have never been to and we shared from our experience with them ... it was different because usually we are the trainees and now I become the trainer ... "* (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Consequently, another strength of conducting training for teachers using the Cascade model was when the teachers returned to their schools and carried out in-house training at school level with the other English language teachers in their respective schools. Thus, the knowledge and information gained was shared with their colleagues to aid them in their practice and improve pupils' learning outcomes. One example shared is as below.

*" ... in my school, when the teacher go out for courses, when they come back ... they share the materials and the strategies"*. (Participant C1, Focus Group 3; Teachers)

On the other hand, the research participants explained that the cascade model of INSET has its weaknesses. They stressed that they have accepted the Cascade model as the current INSET model in placed and had experienced being course participants and later became trainers to conduct workshops for teachers. One of its flaws which they agreed upon was the fact that the content was watered down via training using the cascade model. The SISCs explained that in relation to how INSET courses are planned, they are the first ones who always received the updated information first hand from trainers before other teachers attended a similar INSET course. They shared their frustrations of how the content is watered down by the time it reaches the teachers as seen in the view expressed.

*"When you want to train these teachers, you call so many... it's like from 8 to 1, or 8 to 4 for the 3 days. So, that 3 days course is also shorten la to a one day course or half a day. So, it's something like we don't get the full taste. It's watered down"*. (Participant B4, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

Additionally, the SISCs felt that they were getting sufficient information

on the content knowledge and pedagogical skills but lack skills in coaching and mentoring to help them in their role to coach other English language teachers. They highlighted that what they actually needed at this point to help other English language teachers was related to skills on how to mentor and coach teachers, as explained in the view below:

"… they train us more on the subjects but they don't train us on the coaching and mentoring". (Participant D2, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

Moreover, non-specialist teachers expressed that they did not get to choose when is the best time for them to attend INSET, whether it is during term time or during the school holidays. The criteria of attending INSET depending on the time of the school examinations or peak periods during the school term had never been taken into consideration by the planners of INSET. Thus, when they attended INSET during term time, they had to leave their students and schools. This caused them to be burdened with extra work after attending INSET courses when they returned to their schools. They agreed in their groups and expressed their preferences for attending short INSET courses which are school based during term time and long INSET courses during term time going into the term break period, as seen below:

"If short courses means in school la … during school time. And for long courses, some are mixed with the school holidays … and after school holidays, we have to catch up with all the syllabus, all the lessons… If I prepare some activities for them, who want to check? I have to go and do it". (Participant C8, Focus Group 4-Teachers)

In addition, the non-specialist teachers explained that they preferred to attend INSET during term time if they had a choice. They agreed in their groups that they did not prefer to attend INSET during the school holidays as they had planned vacations and family events with their family members. However, they did not have a choice, as their names were stated in the calling letters for the INSET courses, as explained below:

"Normally, we don't like to attend during school holidays because we have some plans on with our families … but if you are directed and your name is already there …" (Participant C3, Focus Group 3- Teachers)

The SISCs also agreed with the points made by the teachers, and stated that teachers are very particular about having their term break holidays, and may not get the most out of INSET courses when they were forced to attend them during the term break, as seen below:

"Teachers are normally very particular about the school holidays because that

*is when they would normally want their time. It's their family time ... If ELTC were to have a course during the school holidays, I don't think the school teachers would enjoy it".* (Participant D2, Focus Group 5-SISCs).

### Frequency and Duration of INSET

With reference to the research participants' previous INSET experiences and the current intervention INSET course, the SISCs and non-specialist teachers explained that they had hectic schedules and tried to cope with the demands of their roles. In addition, they attended INSET whenever they were appointed to attend a specific course, as well as when they were involved in their own INSET initiatives within the English panel in the school or when they paid to attend lessons to improve their English language proficiency.

The SISCs explained that CPD planners need plan INSET carefully to ensure it is effective for teachers, as they should not be sent to attend too many INSET courses continuously without having time to put into practice what they have learnt during the courses. One view which demonstrates this is the following.

*"We have to give a serious thought er ... for it to have effect on us la, it must ... it must be spaced out with much thought ... "* (Participant B1, Focus Group 1: SISCs)

Some of the SISCs explained that they were attending INSET for the fourth time that year, and they had been directed to attend the courses continuously one after another and found it took too much time from their core work duties as expressed below:

*" ... in the recent one that we had, we actually attended two specialist courses, and they were back to back. It's like 1st phase for ELT .... And then after that, we came for the 1st phase for Specialist Literacy, then we went for the phase ELT, then we went back to the 2nd phase literacy ... so it's like back to back".* (Participant B1, Focus Group 1: SISCs).

The research participants also acknowledged the challenges they faced related to the need for them to attend INSET programmes which were conducted in the capital city and other major towns. They had spent a lot of time travelling to and fro to the training venue and felt that a lot of time was wasted on the day of travelling and the last day of INSET courses held outstation or off-site in other towns or the capital city in Kuala Lumpur for teachers as seen below:

*" ... I'm from Penang, going to Langkawi, is sort of a waste ... like the first thing, we take the whole day traveling. We reach there around 4 or sometimes*

*maybe 2 ... they start off the night slot just for one two hours and then the next day they start, and they give us time for shopping. And the next day just finishes quite early and we go ... it's like a waste of two days ...".* (Participant B2, Focus Group1: SISCs)

In addition, three States in Peninsular Malaysia, namely Kedah (Northern region), Kelantan and Terengganu (East Coast States) operate on a five-day week from Sundays to Thursdays and have the weekends on Fridays and Saturdays. Thus, teachers from these states who attended INSET in cities in other states have to attend INSET on a five-day week from Mondays to Fridays, and this caused most of them who attended INSET to lose their weekends, as explained below:

*" ... Its taking away our weekends ... I go to work on Sunday. Ya, because in Kelantan we work on Sunday... I go and work on Sunday ... and ... leave the office at 5 o'clock. And go back home and pack ... hurry hurry. The next morning ... Monday morning ... and Monday afternoon the course, the 1st session begins. And tomorrow is a Friday, it's our Friday, it's our weekend".* (Participant B3, Focus Group 1: SISCs)

The research participant above shared how she had spent Sunday at work, and also prepared to travel for the INSET programme which began on Monday. The course was completed on Friday, which fell into the weekend in her state and she had to travel back home to begin work the following Sunday.

Additionally, all the participants in Focus Group 1 agreed that they preferred short INSET courses with a duration of about three days in a venue which was within their state or region: for example, still within the states in the Southern region. The participants also shared their views about the duration of INSET courses. They were varied views, but some of them preferred short courses course, as seen below:

*"It's very subjective actually. If you say 3 to 5 days ... that's ample ... time for the knowledge that you can gain, maybe not. But to avoid boredom ... yes ..."* (Participant D4, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

On the other hand, some of them experienced attending long INSET programmes which were held from over five days to a few months in another state or country, as seen from the view below:

*" ... I take the native speaker programme. So the duration is 70 weeks. I think this is the longest".* (Participant C5, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

Their personal preferences showed that some of them found the quality of INSET did influence how they felt about the duration or the course, explained below:

*"If it's going to be fun and interesting... although for 5 days, we won't feel it ... ".* (Participant D6, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

Despite the various views, some of the research participants stressed that the duration of the INSET programme did not really matter, as long as they received the necessary content they needed during the course as mentioned by the following participant.

*"For me this doesn't matter, the important thing is to include all the important information in the course first".* (Participant C1, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

In relation to the frequency of attending INSET, it was mentioned that there were a few reasons which determined how often the teachers attended INSET. One of these included taking turns among colleagues, as seen below:

*"Ya, take turns. If the other teachers have gone for it before, then they won't select the same teachers. They select other teachers".* (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Moreover, the needs of less experienced teachers was also one factor for giving teachers priority to attend INSET as seen in this view shared.

*"Especially for people who don't have the exposure yet. But sometimes if the other teacher does not want to go, we can take over and go".* (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Furthermore, the research participants agreed that the opportunity to attend INSET also depended on the type of schools and how many English language teachers there were in the English language panel. When there were many teachers attending INSET on a rotation basis, they attended INSET once or twice a year, and when there were only one or two teachers in the school, all the INSET for English language teachers were shared among these teachers, as explained below:

*"Actually depends on the school. If it is a small school with 1 or 2 English teachers ... small school right... so the English teacher will go out often".* (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

The research participants explained that they were required to attend up to seven days of INSET annually, but each of them have already attended INSET for more than 20 days in the last academic year. Thus, they felt that they have been attending too many INSET programmes in the the last academic year, as seen from these views.

*"What we need is only 7 days ... ah compulsory, for everybody. But last year, we had 21 days. I myself personally had 25 days ..."* (Participant B1, Focus Group 1: SISCs)

Some of the research participants even attended INSET for over 30 days annually, as explained below. This is linked to the overall planning of INSET and the selection of teachers mentioned by the research participants in the previous

section.

"It could have been about up to 30 days per year. Ya, before this, also ... ". (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

### Type of INSET Courses

The research participants shed some light on the types of INSET they have attended for generic INSET courses, as well as INSET courses which were more subject specific, based on the content of English Language Teaching (ELT).

In relation to INSET courses, which they categorized as generic INSET courses for teachers, the research participants shared that they have attended some which focused on generic skills which would help them in their roles as educators on a day to day basis. One example is seen below:

" ... recently, we attended the integrity one ... it is about integrity, it is about when you do your work, you have to be honest ... stuff like that ...". (Participant D3, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

They considered that it was important for them to attend INSET which also focused on generic skills and general topics, as these were related to their profession as educators, and they would benefit by acquiring new knowledge and additional skills, as seen from the following view.

" ... it's not we know everything... but once in a while, its ok to know new things". (Participant D2, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

On the other hand, the majority of the other research participants preferred more content specific INSET, and shared their reasons for their choice. One of the factors why they preferred INSET focusing on ELT was that they felt that their core job specifications were related to teaching pupils English, and felt the need to focus more on those aspects of their role as educators and required more INSET on ELT, as explained below:

"First of all, I think we should be focusing on our subject ... It's always got to do with the subject ..." (Participant D2, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

Additionally, some of the research participants highlighted that they had very specific current needs related to ELT and shared that they needed INSET to help them with reading skills and pedagogy, as seen from the quote below:

"Mine is on ELT, more on subject related ... I'm very much concerned about reading actually ... and a course... if there is a professional course for reading actually ... helping teachers ... to read and how to respond and think ... reading and thinking ... it can change our mindset actually ...". (Participant D4, Focus Group

6: SISCs)

Since the KSSR syllabus was revised in 2010, many teachers noted that they needed more assistance on pedagogical skills for the four language skills. This is because teachers are now required to teach the language skills and language arts using a modular approach, and have thus requested that INSET focuses on the teaching methods for the four language skills, as seen below:

*"Mine is on methods ..."*. (Participant D5, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

Nevertheless, as the research participants in the focus groups reflected on their INSET experiences about attending generic and content specific INSET courses as well as attending a combination of both type of INSET courses, some of them stated that they preferred a combination of both types of INSET courses because both are needed to help them to teach more effectively as well as manage their jobs specifications well. One such view is seen below:

*"I will go for a combination. It actually helps me to be a balanced person where we know more about the job scope and can integrate with other info ... and related factors to our job"*. (Participant D6, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

It was interesting to note that the research participants agreed in their focus groups that for a combination of INSET on generic skills, general topics and specific language skills for ELT, they preferred a ratio of 60 percent for INSET, focusing on specific content and skills related to ELT and 40 percent on generic skills, as seen in the view expressed below:

*"I need both, a combination... 60–40. 60 more on the subject and 40 on more general things. Sometimes we need to know the filing system"*. (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

### 4.5.2    Relevance of INSET courses

The second theme is on the relevance of INSET. This was developed from the data derived from the following nodes in 5 focus groups and sources in Nvivo, as they fulfilled the criteria of being discussed in more than three focus groups. I have selected data from the following nodes, as seen in Table 4.2 below for the discussion of the findings based on several sub-themes.

Table 4.2: Focus Groups: Nodes selected for Theme 2

| Nodes | Sources No. of Focus Groups | References |
|---|---|---|
| Relevance of INSET | 4 | 17 |
| Factors affecting relevance of INSET | 3 | 6 |
| Importance of INSET | 3 | 7 |
| Opportunity to attend INSET | 3 | 9 |
| Opportunity to improve skills | 3 | 12 |
| Effectiveness of INSET | 5 | 22 |

**Relevance of INSET**

The research participants were asked about the INSET courses they had attended and whether they were relevant to ELT and their current roles. There were mixed views from both groups of research participants.

The SISCs and teachers agreed that the INSET courses they attended were planned with relevant content but were not suitable for most of their pupils who were considered as weak learners. They explained the theories proposed in many of the ELT strategies, and the activities which were selected by the INSET trainers were accurate in terms of the theory suggested by linguists and practitioners in other countries, but they were not suitable for learners in their their contexts, as mentioned in the quote below:

*"Theory wise, it's good but in practice ... it's very far distance .... In theory, perfect".* (Participant C5, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

*"The ideas are good but when it comes to application in the class with the students, the levels, their very low levels of English language proficiency ... as we have the weak students ... the expectations are there. We must produce so and so, and so and so ... so it improves in one way, but to show it on paper ... it's not easy".* (Participant C7, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

Thus, the research participants acknowledged that they had to meet expectations set by the school authorities and had to also address national needs, but faced constraints in applying the ideas they learnt during INSET in their practice.

In contrast, some of the other participants disagreed with the views above, and shared that the INSET they attended were of great assistance, but they needed to adapt the content to suit their pupils' levels and improvised from what they gained from the INSET course, as explained below:

*"The course is good, the content is good, we just modified the content".* (Par-

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ticipant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

The SISCs and teachers also stressed that what they learnt from INSET would also help the teachers to improve in their practice and acquire new skills over time. In addition, it would improve pupils' learning outcomes too as explained below:

*"Of course, what we learn in the course will benefit the teachers and in the long run, it will also benefit the students"*. (Participant D3, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

The participants also explained that some INSET courses were not very helpful, because the specialist teachers and non-specialist teachers attended the same INSET course together and this did not suit the level of some non-specialists teachers. The example given below highlights that when both groups of teachers attended INSET together, the specialist teachers coped with the content and pace of the INSET course, but the non-specialists teachers found the level too high for them.

*"Actually ... together ... they attend the course together, so the non-optionist will be struggling..."*. (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

Thus, they felt that INSET should be conducted separately for specialist and non-specialist English language teachers, to cater for their specific INSET needs.

### Opportunity to attend INSET and Improve Skills

The majority of the research participants acknowledged that they have been given more opportunities in the recent academic year to attend INSET. Some of them provided feedback to the school management and highlighted they wanted to attend certain INSET programmes based on their needs and the non-specialists teachers were given more opportunities by the school administration to attend INSET, as explained below:

*"My school and management will ask who wants to go? Because there are still a lot of non-optionist teachers... in English and BM, they will encourage us to go ..."* (Participant C1, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Moreover, word of mouth from teachers who had attended certain INSET courses which they found helpful encouraged other teachers to put in requests and apply for a similar INSET programme, as seen in the response below from a participant from the INSET course focusing pedagogy:

*"Like us who have been teaching English for more than 2 or 3 years, and are interested in attending this course... actually I don't know ... So, I said I can try and I just put my name. First, my colleague was chosen, so I have an idea about*

*this course ... so I have to come here to attend the course".* (Participant C4: Focus Group 3: Teachers)

However, some teachers also wanted to experience other forms of INSET from the usual short courses consisting of workshops. One such view is seen below:

*"I would also like to attend conferences".* (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Some participants also shared that they valued the INSET they attended with other teachers at district level, which allowed them to learn and grow as educators, with content delivered by trainers who were native speakers and experts in their fields, as expressed below:

*" ... those schools that have the native speaker programmes right, so they will come down and then they will gather the teachers from each school in the district and then they will expose to us what are the type of teaching that was taught by the native speaker to them. And then the materials and what we were taught will be reviewed, the native speaker will be there together with the officers also ....".* (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Some of the research participants shared that the INSET courses which were on ELT focused specifically on the content, and updated them on new information and served as a refresher course for other experienced teachers. They found that their teaching experience came in handy during the activities during INSET, as explained below:

*"Like content courses yes... like a lot of subject matter, like new things. Not to say new things... some are like a refresher... so we can go back and convey the message to the teachers. Otherwise, improving our skills in other matters. Most of the time, we are using our experience".* (Participant B1, Focus Group 1: SISCs)

They also agreed there are INSET opportunities for less experienced teachers, but this depended on whether teacher was willing to attend INSET.

*"Especially for people who don't have the exposure yet. But sometimes if the other teacher does not want to go, we can take their place and go".* (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

**Importance and Effectiveness of INSET**

The SISCs and non-specialist teachers explained that they preferred INSET which gave them all the information needed, and enabled them to work in groups and to learn new skills, as seen below:

*" ... the important thing is to include all the important information in the*

*course first*". (Participant C1, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Additionally, attending compulsory INSET indirectly boosted their confidence as they learnt new knowledge and skills, as stated below:

*"Like last time I went to the HOTS courses, I was always lacking in confidence when doing something new ... but I tried because I had to go and I was there, it was quite ok for me and I learnt something new"*. (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Some of the research participants shared that the effectiveness of INSET can be enhanced when they shared their knowledge with other teachers, as well as searching for more information on the topic discussed during workshops, as seen below:

*" ... it's ... what we talked about when X said that she wouldn't be here if it wasn't not for the courses she has attended ... and same like all of us here, so the courses that you attended and the information that you get, you have to apply ... meaning that we share it with the teachers ... around you and then you apply it to your students, then only the school will benefit ... so, there is a link there ... it started with the person himself or herself. You got the knowledge, you have to use it. You impart the knowledge to others and you yourself excel, your students excel and the school also excel"*. (Participant B5, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

Most of the research participants emphasized that they tried to implement the new knowledge and skills they had learnt from INSET in their practice and the knowledge was instilled when they shared it with fellow teachers during INSET and their colleagues in schools. In addition, they explained that they explored further by searching for more information on their own after attending INSET in order to make full use of their new skills and potential. One example is quoted below:

*" ... during the courses, we did gain a lot of information but we need to have our own part also ... we have to impart the knowledge ... then we have to gather some more information, which is maybe are lacking during the courses. That is our part, to find another information about the topic. By that only, you can apply the knowledge and content"*. (Participant B5, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The example above shows that the research participants had their own initiatives and were resourceful in terms of 'going the extra mile' after attending INSET to acquire more information on activities or strategies that were introduced to them. In addition, the SISCs and teachers agreed that other teachers would need to be ready to adapt the content learnt from INSET to suit their learners in various contexts. However, some teachers still commented that the content from certain INSET courses was pitched at a level which was too high for the teachers, and they faced

difficulties in 'thinking outside of the box' and adapting the content, as explained below:

"... the teachers come with a mindset... what you give them in the course may not necessary work with the teacher. It's not one size fits all... I come and learn all the new strategies but I need to adapt the strategies and content too when I go back to my school ... we need to let the teachers understand that this is not the approach ... the answer to everything. They need to understand the learning principles behind it ... then, after that, to think of their own situations and then to apply" . (Participant B4, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

Furthermore, the SISCs and teachers insisted that INSET was not a 'one size fits all' approach to teachers' problems related to ELT and English language teachers in primary schools in Malaysia. Teachers definitely learn something from INSET, but still need the skills and initiatives to think out of the box and modify their teaching strategies and materials to suit their pupils' levels in order to teach effectively, as explained in the view below:

"... I believe there is not one course where you cannot learn anything. Every course has something for you. But it's whether you are able to make use of the knowledge and help the students. I just don't think you can take it wholesale ... they have to learn how to make use of it, how to make changes and adapt to fit the needs of their schools in their districts and their pupils". (Participant B4, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

### 4.5.3    Professional Learning and Change

The third theme selected for discussion is that of professional learning and change. This was developed from the following nodes in the six focus groups and sources in Nvivo, as they fulfilled the criteria of being discussed in more than three focus groups. Data selected from the nodes, as seen in Table 4.3,are discussed below, based on a few sub-themes.

Table 4.3: Focus Groups: Nodes selected for Theme 3

| Nodes | Sources No. of Focus Groups | References |
|---|---|---|
| Adapting from content learned | 5 | 13 |
| Change and INSET | 3 | 15 |
| Collaborative learning | 3 | 15 |
| Learning from INSET | 6 | 28 |
| PLC | 4 | 14 |
| Responsibilities after INSET | 3 | 6 |

**Collaborative learning**

The research participants shared their views about collaborative learning during hands-on sessions in INSET workshops and how they learned in groups with other teachers, as seen below:

" ... we can go into practicalities there... and we create something based on the knowledge they give us ... and you can ask questions and clarify in groups". (Participant C1, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

They managed to share ideas from their own practice which worked and could benefit other teachers, as well as learn from the ideas and suggestions from other group members, as explained below:

"I can share things, share ideas ... from people from different PPDs, the districts and all". (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

In addition, the SISCs and teachers explained that they found micro-teaching sessions to be effective, as they had the opportunity to plan lessons, present the lessons and obtained feedback from other teachers. They found that the dynamics of working in groups with fellow teachers allowed them to be fully engaged during INSET with fruitful outcomes, which generated many ideas during discussions. However, some of them were disappointed that most of the ideas came from the teachers and the trainers only provided feedback, as expressed in the view below:

"Yes, we did present our lessons and make sure the other course participants do it as well. Like in micro-teaching. Mostly it will be like our own ideas ... we discuss among the group ... or friends in any course that we go ... and then we come up with the ideas ... I mean the trainers, they will just contribute by giving ... us their comments but the ideas all come from the teachers, so in one way, we can share our ideas ... "(Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Some of the research participants stressed that they had tried to incorporate

collaborative learning with other English language teachers in their schools and shared what they learnt from the INSET they attended. This encouraged some of their colleagues to apply for the same INSET course, as seen in the following.

*"Even after, teachers in the school asked, where did you learn this? And so I told them from this course, and so this year also, another teacher applied for this course".* (Participant C1, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

On the other hand, some teachers faced some barriers from fellow colleagues in their respective school when they tried to introduce collaborative learning through INSET at school level, as explained below:

*"Because my school is a small school and the teachers are so narrow minded. Since I have been in that school, I wanted to try more things and tell others about new things ... but they are like 'no need la' ... and I don't want them to look down on me, throwing bad words at me ... I don't want to be in that environment ... I want to do more ... but there are barriers ..."* (Participant C7, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

Nevertheless, the research participants agreed that they needed to share the knowledge and learn together as they contributed to each other and helped fellow teachers to improve in their practice as expressed below:

*"It's true, what we gain, we have to apply. It's not keeping it. So as SISC+, what we gain, we go back and share with the teachers. The more we gain, the more actually we find we do not know, and the more we can share. As an SISC, I will not underestimate teachers in school because they might have more knowledge".* (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

They truly believed that they would also get better in their own practice when they disseminated their new knowledge and assisted other teachers through collaborative teaching, as seen below:

*"Ok, it falls back on you as to whether you take it and let it absorb you or let it just disperse just like that ... then it's not going to do any good for you. But if you take it ... and you really practice it ... and you do some in-house training and you do some collaborative teaching and all that ... of course it's going to help you".* (Participant D4, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

The research participants also explained that the individual roles of teachers played a big part in collaborative learning because their motivation to share and learn from each other came from their own initiatives. On the other hand, not all teachers were motivated to attend INSET and share their knowledge, as seen from the view below:

*" ... but some teachers are reluctant to go and once they go back to school,*

*the information dies with them".* (Participant B5: Focus Group 2: SISCs)

**Professional Learning Communities (PLC)**

With reference to the topic on PLS's, the SISCs and non-specialist teachers shared that 'PLC' seemed to be the new 'buzz word' related to INSET in Malaysia within their districts and a few educators were appointed as experts to disseminate the information on PLCs, as explained below:

*" ... now is like hot cakes, it's about PLC- professional learning communities ... the officer in PPD, they have like elected some of the officers to handle PLC ... I guess these things are new things, so they should call all of us to get this firsthand information so that we can deliver ... we can learn through readings ... discuss with our friends ... have our peer discussion and everything."* (Participant B5, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

However, it was also discussed that PLC had been carried out in recent years in certain schools and is not as new as some perceived it to be, as explained by an SISC.

*"PLC is not a new thing for me ... I have done it in 2012 ... so my school is one of the pilots and we have the pilot project Mandat ... so I was so surprised when people said, 'Oh, it's a new thing' ... but we were doing it already and the focus is more ... on the lesson study, but the talk was given to the senior teachers by JPN ... and that is not the way I think ... that you deliver PLC. Because PLC is a group work, it shouldn't be lecture based".* (Participant B5, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The SISCs and teachers shared that in PLCs, they did group activities which helped them to improve their teaching and acknowledged that sharing their knowledge and views were vital in improving their teaching, as seen below:

*"We will share and we will also do the activity together and use these activities with our pupils. So it gives me knowledge which I know can implement in my classroom".* (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

In addition, the participants shared that PLC was done after school hours, and teachers had very limited time for activities through PLCs, as expressed below:

*"I think that will be ok because at the moment ... the teachers only have the most about 1½ hours in the afternoon".* (Participant D3, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

*"The maximum is 2½ hours".* (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

The participants also noted that getting teachers involved in PLCs required them to be ready for changes in the type of INSET. They shifted from just attending INSET courses to working with groups of teachers within their schools and districts.

Nevertheless, PLC also provided an avenue for the teachers to come together, and they shared innovative ideas to address their immediate needs, as emphasized below:

" ... now the world is not flat, people collaborate ... that is what PLC is all about ... it is collaborate, it is a collaborative kind of thing ... you know, our teachers are not ready for that". (Participant B5, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The PLCs at school level also empowered their colleagues and motivated them to become involved in the process of thinking, planning, working with other teachers in small groups and sharing new ideas and providing feedback to each other, as explained below:

" ... We can do PLC with our teachers ... check with our teachers what they need and let them come up with things in small groups ... and then we do PLC". (Participant D5, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

### Learning from INSET

The research participants shared they had gained more knowledge in the intervention INSET course, as it was indeed helpful for educators teaching lower primary classes, as seen below:

"Because I'm teaching Year 1 ... so we found this learning from the course useful". (Participant C1, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

They highlighted that during this particular INSET course, one of the important things they learnt was about starting a lesson with a set induction and progressing up to the last stage of the lesson, as explained below:

"It's like when I come to this course PITO ... then I learn how to start from a set induction until the closure of the lesson". (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

Some of the teachers had not realized about the different stages in their lessons which they planned and conducted in class, and they found this information practical and beneficial to improve their practice.

In contrast, it was brought to attention that INSET programmes on the KSSR syllabus always focused on theoretical aspects of pedagogy which teachers found they could not apply immediately in their lessons. Thus, they preferred the format and content of the INSET course on pedagogy, which introduced various types of classroom activities for the 4 language skills, as explained below:

"Basically the KSSR courses that we went on ... that was more towards theoretical ... that was more about how do we teach, what actually do we do ... but it's not about the type of activities that we have ... fun based things that we can

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*apply ... so ah ... if I followed from what I had learnt from those courses ... so it doesn't improve much or anything in school so ... but in this course ah, there are a lot of things ... the fun based things"* (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

The SISCs and teachers explained that they also learned to develop lesson plans and activities for pupils who were at average or lower intermediate levels. The SISCs agreed teachers needed the skills of how to apply what they learnt from INSET into their lessons, as seen below:

*"Linus is more like towards how to make the pupils have a better grade... they teach us about pedagogy... what type of activities we can conduct in the classroom ... it will have like teachers who have been selected from a few schools in the same district, ... they will put us in a few groups ok, where we have to come up with the lesson plan and they will separate us la, for the reading and writing and... listening and speaking skills. And then we have to come up with the type of activities that are to be implemented with the new syllabus ... for weak students, so how to carry out the activities".* (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

The LINUS programme for early learning focuses on literary and numeracy and lays the foundation for learning in primary schools in Malaysia. The SISCs and teachers further shared that their learning experience have enabled them to become more confident in their roles as educators, as expressed below:

*"Actually, I gained in confidence ... in teaching English because when I attended this course, I become more confident because I had already experienced something like this before. So, it really helped me".* (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

The research participants agreed that they needed to invest extra effort and learn to adapt new teaching strategies, materials and relate it to theories before using it in the classroom, as expressed below:

*"The teaching strategies can be applied, but needs extra work ... ".* (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

*"The course is good, the content is good, we just modified the content, the materials ...".* (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

The research participants stressed that as current practicing teachers, what was crucial to them was how to apply knowledge they learnt from education theories in the classroom, as seen below:

*"Because at their stage, it is application. We learn the theories here".* (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The SISCs shared that what teachers wanted from INSET was also to see the connection between the educational theories, pedagogical strategies, learning

activities and implementation in the classroom, as seen below:

*"What they want is ... how to apply with the students ... what to do. And if they do not succeed in that one, we also have to help them to come up with the adaptation. They don't like theories and strategies and they say, 'oh, it's a big thing'... and then they said it's very hard to apply in the classroom. Every activity ... every course you do ... you must bring it down to activities in the end. They have to see all the strategies, whatever skills, whatever theory ... you have to have what activities you can relate to the pupils. What happens in the classroom, go to the topic, ok this topic how can I teach using the strategies I know and learn and share ... so they wanted those kind of things"*. (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

In addition, the research participants also learnt new skills to deconstruct the process of planning an activity and adapting it to suit pupils' level in the intervention course. This was hardly covered in previous INSET, but was an important skill to be acquired.

*"About the recent phonics course that we went on, Madam X... asked us to deconstruct. She would carry out an activity with us and then she would say, 'ok now, deconstruct what we have done just now. How are you going to carry this out in your school? If you cannot carry this out... what can we do to change it so that it's applicable and it can be used in your school. So, the deconstruction part is what is missing"*. (Participant B4, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The research participants highlighted the fact that teachers learn many new skills from INSET and may add these new skills to their repertoire of skills and implement them in practice. However, one of the challenges is still the time factor as mentioned below:

*" ... if we are given the time, we can apply all that we learnt ... I think it can improve our skills but even with real life in school ... we also have to do a lot of other things not related to this"*. (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

### Change and INSET

With reference to change and INSET, the SISC and teachers provided some suggestions as to how the provision of INSET could be improved. Firstly, they suggested that the CPD provider should obtain the assistance of excellent senior teachers to assist them with effective teaching strategies during INSET courses, as explained below:

*"I think they should bring in more er ... some veteran teachers who really*

*know the techniques and they are really good at … pedagogy and how to teach the pupils …".* (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Additionally, they hoped the syllabus, standard documents and English language textbooks for primary schools in Malaysia could be standardized, as there are currently two different textbooks for pupils in national types schools and vernacular schools, as stated in the following views.

*"If I'm planning, I would like to standardize the book used in SK and SJK".* (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

*"Ya different … the standard documents are different".* (Participant C7, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

The teachers shared that during group activities in most INSET courses, the members in the group comprised of teachers from national type schools (SK) and vernacular schools (SJK). They often worked together to produce resources that were suitable for one group of teachers and pupils only and this resulted in some of them not having resources suitable for their learners after the course, and required those teachers to adapt the resources in their own time. One view shared is seen below:

*" … we … come up with the resource that suits one group only … but they are talking about sharing and we cannot share everything … done during the courses".* (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

Thus, if the documents were standardized, it would help the teachers when they planned lessons and activities to be used with their pupils while attending the same INSET courses together. In addition, they explained that some INSET courses are conducted on Saturdays by trainers as a sharing session. They viewed this format of INSET as 'sharing sessions' that lacked new information being provided by the trainers, and they felt reluctant to attend such INSET courses, as seen below:

*" … depends on the trainers… they say want to talk about English, let's say… they say, "this is a sharing session, you share and you share and we share, then you apply when you go to school". So, what for I go there for the course, Saturday some more …".* (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

At the same time, they agreed that change was not easy, and had to come from the teachers themselves in order for them to use the knowledge they gained during INSET to improve their practice. However, change also depended on their initiatives to implement some changes in their teaching. One example is the quote below:

*" … sometimes we go for courses… and then nothing happens … no changes in the school …  this is because of the teachers…  because they do not know …*

*especially when it comes to literature...they don't know the authors ... some very famous authors also they don't know. You cannot call yourself an English teacher if you don't know ... proficiency of course...sometimes I do compare ... English teachers to Maths teachers ... if you don't know timetables ... how are you going to teach maths ... so if you don't know your grammar ... how are you going to teach English ... although they are not proficient in that sense and they don't read ... when people read, you can see it actually".* (Participant D4, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

The research participants also explained that the content delivered during INSET was not suitable for all English language teachers in urban, semi-urban and rural schools in Malaysia and they had to continuously select what could be used and make changes to suit their context and pupils, as explained below:

*" ... based on the students ... so I say I take these kind of students, I create one module and then I use this to teach these kind of students ... don't use the module to teach another group, because it is not suitable... maybe the content is same, but we can change some things that are unsuitable for them ... I still have to attend for the LD and then to apply the LD to the deaf. Change some terms and change some activities to make them acquire ... if success, that means it's ok, if no success, that means we have to leave it ... level of the activities ... maybe the marking scheme may be the same ... that one we cannot change, but we can change how to assess them".* (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

They agreed that the course participants who attended INSET had considerable responsibility to make decisions regarding how to use knowledge and skills they gained from INSET programmes, sharing with their colleagues in schools and implementing these in their teaching, as expressed below:

*"You have to be aware and help yourself in your situation, because the trainers don't know your situation. They are not in your shoes. But you have to see all the knowledge that you get from the CPD, and then you have to know that these things can be done with my students, these are the things I can share with teachers and my admin and so on and the others. That's one thing, you have to be the person to do it and that's the thing that is lacking in our teachers".* (Participant B7, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

### 4.5.4 Students' Needs and Teachers' Needs

The fourth theme selected for discussion is that of students" needs and teachers' needs. This was developed from the following nodes in 3 to 6 focus groups and sources in Nvivo, as they fulfilled the criteria of being discussed in more than three focus groups. The discussion below is based on data selected from the following

nodes, as seen in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Focus Groups: Nodes selected for Theme 4

| Nodes | Sources No. of Focus Groups | References |
|---|---|---|
| Students' needs | 5 | 22 |
| Teachers' needs | 5 | 68 |
| INSET for KSSR | 3 | 5 |
| Non-option teachers | 3 | 6 |
| Preference of type (INSET) | 6 | 38 |

**Students' Needs**

The research participants explained their pupils' current needs with reference to the modular approach of the KSSR curriculum. Additionally, they expressed the fact that they tried and were able to implement and use skills and strategies from INSET courses to address pupils' needs, as expressed below:

*"I think pupils need a lot because before we start KSSR, there is no listening and speaking skills to teach ... and actually ... we don't know that we have to divide but now we know, and we try to apply it to them. It works if we, the teacher really works hard ... even if from the beginning they don't really follow, you will like every week do the same thing and then ... you know how to catch their attention, I think ... it will work, but it's a lot of work la for the teacher ... to try to apply them and then they will get the idea and then they will understand immediately if you want to do the activities ... like listening and speaking, or reading and writing ..."* (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Notably, a minority of research participants who taught high achieving pupils in urban schools commented that the new KSSR syllabus was relevant to their pupils' needs, and that they were able to implement ideas shared from the INSET on KSSR, as seen below:

*"Relevant to the pupils ... of course it was relevant because I was teaching in a big school ... and the students were selected so I ... no matter what it is ... thinking of the ideal situation and all... it can actually ... I can actually implement it in my school ..."*. (Participant D4, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

In contrast, teachers from vernacular schools shared their experiences of using other approaches such as language drills in their teaching and how it made some pupils dislike learning English. After the teachers adopted the strategies and ac-

tivities they were exposed to during INSET, they found that pupils showed more interest in English and began to learn through the element of fun, as explained below:

*"In my school ... Chinese school, we use drills, it's drill and practice. So, how my school children learn English, it's like the English optionist teacher ... they will give sentences and ask them to copy again, dictation ... and everyday it's about writing sentences because in UPSR, they can apply the sentences ... but after it come out, they can write but another topic which is a little bit different, they cannot write. It's like the drilling is not working ... so with all the activities we learnt here, it's also helping them because they gained ... they are more interested in learning English ... not like in the previous day when it was just drilling and they really hate English lessons ... oh ... with all the grammar and writing sentences... now they really find it interesting actually, its fun... Year 4 and Year 5 ... When they are interested in the language then they will learn"* (Participant C2, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Some of the teachers stressed that they gained many new ideas from INSET, which helped them in their teaching, but the majority of their pupils were still weak in English. They tried to help their pupils, but their efforts were not reflected immediately, as is seen in the quote below:

*"We still get a lot of ideas ... the ideas are good but when it comes to application in the class with the students, the levels, as we have the weak students ... the expectations are there. We must produce so and so... so it improves in one way, but to show it on paper ... it's not easy".* (Participant C7, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

The research participants had similar views that their pupils' needs were varied and they could not use a particular module developed for one group of pupils in another context, and shared the following.

*"So the validity isn't there"* (Participant C7, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

They stressed that they made changes to the content in the teaching modules before they used it for other groups of pupils, according to their level.

*" ... based on the students... so I say I take these kind of students, I create one module and then I use this to teach these kinds of students ... don't use the module to teach another group, because not suitable... maybe the content is the same, but I can change some things that are unsuitable for them".* (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

**Teachers' Needs**

The SISCs and teachers shared their views on teachers needs for INSET in a few areas, including the centralized system of INSET in Malaysia and the needs of specialist teachers and non-specialist teachers.

In general, they considered that the centralized national priority driven planning of INSET should be reviewed to address the present needs of teachers, by incorporating a form of continuing assessment in the centralized system. It was suggested that teachers' skills need to be updated and assessed continuously to improve the quality of teaching. This is seen in the quote below:

*" ... teachers are in their comfort zone because once you get your cert to be a teacher ... that's it ... if you did not go to school ... and you did not teach, nobody can do anything to you ... let's say I am the education minister, I will do something like in the west ... some sort of revision, right ... they have the certificate for things, and then after that you have to sit for courses or exams so that and you can really remember and apply it ... because you have to renew, so you have to revise all and you feel that ... that is the need that we need ... to do the teaching better if not ... you cannot renew the license".* (Participant B5, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

Some participants also believed that school administrators should be involved in the process of needs assessment for teachers' INSET, as expressed below:

*"Sometimes you cannot blame the teachers. The admin should take the responsibility to ask what you need ... maybe when you go for courses, you can learn something that may help you. Always think positive, because whether you like it or not, if you move to other schools, also people will check ... oh, you have these skills and English ...".* (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

Likewise, some of them insisted that school administrators must be involved in the process of planning INSET for teachers, as expressed below:

*" ... should ask the teachers what they want ... then from their responses ... think about the plans and plan something"* (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs) This would help the teachers to be able to attend INSET that they currently need, and their needs should be matched against INSET programmes being offered, as seen from the view below:

*" ... the selection of the candidates and the participants is very important, if not ... all the effort that has gone into the course ... will go down, so it's a waste ... so they seriously have to think of calling course participants who are interested and matches their profile ...'.* (Participant B4, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The research participants highlighted their needs in relation to accommoda-

tion when they attended INSET courses outstation in another town or state and shared the lack of proper facilities affected them and their performance in the course, as seen below:

*"Yes, and only the ground floor has internet access"*. (Participant C1, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

*"Yes, and that is the trouble, because sometimes we want to send our reflections or other work also. And we have to wait because there is no internet there"*. (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Moreover, they were forced to live in the same block of accommodation for male and female course participants and this was not a norm in Malaysia. They expressed their disapproval as below:

*"Because we have to share it. Technically ... male and female are staying in the same block ... So, it's not suitable for us ... so ... I always prefer ladies separated from the boys"*. (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

The SISCs and teachers also shared their needs with reference to ICT and 21st century skills. They explained about the lack of ICT facilities in schools and hoped it would be addressed, as expressed below:

*" ... because of the limitations in ICT too ... it's for the teachers' needs ... if they have problems content wise ... delivery, so based on that, we cater accordingly. I think that will be better ... "*. (Participant D6, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

They also felt that gaining ICT skills would help them to use technology in their lessons to ensure that learning was more enjoyable for pupils, as seen below:

*"Yes, I really need ICT skills ... ya, to use ICT in my lessons so it will become more interesting"*. (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

In addition, the research participants shared what 21st century learning meant to them, and how INSET should include activities of looking at models, learning in a real life classroom environment and taking part in discussions instead of just attending lectures for INSET. One view given by a participant who went overseas for her teacher training is seen below:

*"when I go to UK ... they have specific classroom formats for the primary class ... they have this one set of buildings like how the classroom would look like ... ok, like at the table ... you sit in groups and they will explain that this is how the classroom will look ... this is mature learning ... we need this because for the 21st century ... because they said you can ask us to do this, but we can't see. And when you ask us to go for courses and tell, ok ... this is a discussion and this is...some of the CPD are just lectures ... 21st century is just a discussion now and the teachers need that during the course, during the CPD. And so we need to prepare these kind of*

*materials and activities for the teachers*". (Participant B5, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The research participants also stressed that they needed to improve their English proficiency as it would help them to master content delivered via the Cascade model of INSET as they were aware of its watered down effect. Thus, their proficiency played an important role in facilitating understanding during INSET courses, as shared below:

*"I think I need to strengthen my English first... I realize I still need to improve because when I attend the KSSR courses, sometimes the trainer... when you ask them, they also don't know. They ... maybe they don't get 100% from their courses and then when it comes to us, it's like only 80% and then when it comes to us and we go to school and share ... it's like 60%. So, I need to be aware of what I need to do to improve"*. (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Equally importantly, they wanted to improve their English so that they could pronounce words accurately when they taught pupils to read in English, as seen below:

*"I also need to improve my English in terms of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary ... I'll try to find out if there is any new way ... anything like more fun based learning activities. Because I think the basic is the most important for children from primary school ... knowledge ... they might find it hard to read ... because now they have the Linus ... there are many pupils who find it hard to read properly ... or write properly ... even a simple word, they cannot spell. So, I think we need to work towards the basics ... "* (Participant C1, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

The non-specialist teachers stressed that they really needed more INSET courses on pedagogy and less on the KSSR syllabus, as they were quite familiar with this topic. They also wanted the timing and frequency of the courses to be during the academic year to be planned, as seen from their views below:

*"Hope they can meet our needs based on our subjects ... our target students ... also the time, have to consider the time and the frequency of the courses ... to carry out, think about that"*. (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

*"Teachers want more on pedagogy, how to approach, strategize ... their approach, because we teach the whole year, with the textbook, we see and know ... I know about the textbook, Unit 1, Unit 2... teach me how to approach ..."* (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

In addition, it was discussed that teachers who are teaching pupils with special needs require specific INSET courses to address their needs, which are different from pupils in mainstream classes, as explained below:

*" ... not because I'm not good at pedagogies ... special needs ... more focus*

*on special needs. If can, more related to my special needs la ... last year, I checked the yearly plan of KPM and I saw no course for deaf and dumb pupils. For teachers ... no courses. Even basic sign language course, also none".* (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

### 4.5.5    Future Expectations of INSET

The fifth theme selected for discussion concerns the SISCs and non-specialist teachers' future expectations of INSET. This was developed from the following nodes with data from 3 to 5 focus groups and sources in Nvivo as they fulfilled the criteria of being discussed in more than three focus groups. The discussion below is based on data selected from the following nodes, as seen in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Focus Groups: Nodes selected for Theme 5

| Nodes | Sources No. of Focus Groups | References |
|---|---|---|
| Future expectations for INSET | 5 | 52 |
| Ineffectiveness of teachers | 3 | 3 |
| Planning INSET | 5 | 27 |
| INSET for SISCs | 3 | 26 |
| Quality of trainers and facilitators | 3 | 9 |

**Planning for INSET**

In relation to the planning of INSET courses and programmes, the research participants explained that the current practice of selecting the same course participants for INSET courses back to back continuously or for a few weeks or phases consecutively should be avoided. This is because it forces them to leave their families and students for a long period. They suggested planning courses for different cohorts of teachers from different regions in Malaysia alternately, so that they have a certain period of time after one INSET course before they attend the next one. Below is an example of one suggestion.

*" ... We have SISC in the west coast, for example. So if you have the cohort for the back to back course, maybe for ELT, ... it is for the East Coast. And for the next cohort, you ask the West Coast to come. So, the course is also running, but with different participants. It will lessen our burden ... "* (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The research participants considered that the planning of INSET has not

been well executed. As INSET in Malaysia is planned and carried out through a centralized system, they felt that records should be in place to note the number of INSET courses that each teacher attends and the planners of CPD and ELOs in their State Education Departments should refer to these when deciding on which participants should be attending different INSET programmes. One of their views is seen below:

*" … The planning is not well done …there is no coordination between the person who is in charge of one course and the other course. And overall, we do not know who is in charge. They should have an overall picture of their courses".* (Participant B4, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The SISCs shared that when they planned CPD activities for the teachers in their districts and zones, they already knew the teachers in the schools they were responsible for, and thus could tailor the sessions to their current needs. They agreed that it was important to ensure that they targeted the teachers' needs, as seen below:

*"Let's say this teacher needs err … input…extra training in writing, I will call specifically those teachers who are weak in that and who need some guidance. I really … want to focus on… we target them according to their needs".* (Participant B4, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The research participants explained that when planning INSET, the planners of CPD would have the data of the course participants, as they were in charge of the coordination of INSET courses. The list is based on the selection criteria set by the INSET organizer. However, it was discussed sometimes that the teachers who requested a specific area of training in their annual SKT forms were not the people who were matched and selected to attend the INSET that they needed. One suggestion on what could be done is seen below:

*" … we should use that data and in programming that CPD. And then if we call these teachers first, and then if there is vacancy, then call other teachers to come. But first target people who ask for it first".* (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

It was also shared during the focus groups that the participants felt that they did not gain as much content as they had hoped for from some of the previous INSET courses they attended. They also felt discouraged from attending INSET on Saturdays or during the school holidays, especially if it was a session for them to share about their practices in teaching the English language. One such view is seen below:

*" … difficult for all the teachers… calling all the teachers during school*

*holidays ... Saturday some more... just a waste of time"*. (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

### Quality of Trainers

The focus group discussions brought up the issue about course facilitators and trainers for the INSET programmes. The research participants explained that some of the trainers who handled the INSET for the KSSR syllabus were not able to manage the workshop sessions well. They also mentioned that they brought this matter up to the directors of their State Education Departments about the consistency of INSET. In addition, they shared that some states had the same trainers for annual INSET programmes, while other states had frequently appointed new trainers, and this affected the quality of the training during INSET. One view expressed is seen below:

*" ... they cannot deliver much ... and the JUs were struggling how to deliver to the course participant at the state level"*. (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The research participants also expressed their frustrations and explained that they needed to clarify certain information and needed competent trainers for INSET courses, as seen in the following quote.

*"Sometimes we need to clarify things because the trainer might know new things ... we might know certain things like from 2 years ago ... so we need clarification about certain things ... whether it is still in use now ... "*. (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

Moreover, some of them encountered trainers and facilitators who were not competent and could not answer their queries, as seen below:

*"We would like to improve our skills but who will help us during the course? The course conductor themselves can't answer ... they don't know"*. (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

Thus, this indirectly affected the quality of INSET programmes, and the teachers preferred trainers who were subject matter experts in their fields.

The research participants also explained some of their frustration of travelling and attending INSET during the weekends, only to be divided into groups to share their opinions and try out new ideas discussed in the groups through peer sharing. They stressed that they actually wanted input from trainers and were unhappy about how the INSET day was conducted, as seen from the following view:

*" ... depends on the trainers...they came and we all go and they say ... this is a sharing session ... we share, then you apply when you go to school"*. (Participant

C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

In addition, the research participants from vernacular schools shared that they had attended INSET courses where the trainers only focused and referred to the syllabus document for national type schools (SK) and they felt the sessions which they attended were not relevant to their contexts, and were not helpful in improving their practice, and mentioned that the trainer was aware that the content shared was more relevant to some of the teachers and not all of them, as seen below:

" … she said, "I mainly talk about the SK model" … then we are just sitting there for 4 days doing nothing … because she said not related to us but we had to go …". (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

**Future Expectations for INSET**

With reference to future expectations for INSET, the research participants shared that they often attended INSET on KSSR for teachers from Year 1 to Year 6. However, they explained that the courses for lower primary (Year 1 to 3) had facilitators from teacher training institutes, and the content was delivered in a clear manner. However, the INSET on KSSR for teachers from Year 4 to 6 were conducted by state trainers (JUs) from various states. The research participants considered that these JUs had not been in school for a long period of time and were probably out of touch with the real situation in school nowadays. In addition, they explained that new JUs are elected every year in states like Kelantan could not run the course properly because the content was not well delivered.

Nevertheless, the research participants mentioned that it was all related to planning as states such as Pahang always had the same JUs in charge of the KSSR course and they are well versed with the content. The participants suggested that in order to avoid inconsistencies in the content given to teachers during INSET, they would prefer it if lecturers from the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) were in charge of INSET related to ELT, as seen below:

" … courses like this which are very important, because we are delivering the content to the teachers … so I suggested that ELTC take over courses like this because in terms of delivering the skills in teaching English, I think better for ELTC to give the courses to us compared to BPK officers". (Participant B6, Focus Group 2: SISCs)

The research participants believed that this would help to ensure the content given to all English language teachers would be clearer if the lecturers from ELTC were able to conduct the KSSR INSET course as subject matter experts

(SMEs) instead of having officers from the state education departments conducting the briefings and running INSET courses on KSSR.

The SISCs and teachers also explained that during most INSET courses they attended, the content and new ideas being discussed came only from the course participants themselves, and the trainers gave them comments in the form of feedback. They explained that what they actually needed was more current information for the trainers, who are specialists.

" ... we discuss among the group ... and then we come up with the ideas ... so the ... I mean the trainers, they will just contribute by giving ... us their comments but the ideas all come from the teachers... we can share it ... but we do not have more input ... on how exactly to use the approach ... how to actually apply it in the classroom. So, in that way, I think it is less ..." (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

The research participants also insisted that they wanted longer INSET courses which would give them opportunities to progress and upgrade themselves, for both specialists and non-specialists teachers. They explained that they learned a lot from the current intervention INSET course, and would prefer for it to be prolonged to a one year course. The reasons given were so that they would be equipped with all the necessary skills they needed and could contribute as state trainers by becoming JUs. In addition, they stated a necessity they hope for the future is to attend INSET which is parallel to the Malaysian education system. They added that the timing of INSET and when it is carried out has to be considered as sometimes it clashed with the examination periods in schools and teachers were reluctant to leave school for a long period of time. One such view is stated below:

"Hope they can meet our needs based on our subjects ... our target students ... also ... have to consider the time and the frequency of the courses ... to carry out, think about that". (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

The SISCs and teachers explained that the majority of teachers in Malaysia are teaching in different contexts such as rural schools and face challenging situations with very weak learners. The differences teachers face will determine their current needs, students' needs and school needs and should be taken into account when these teachers attend INSET courses. They agreed INSET programmes should not be a 'one size fits all approach' in Malaysia which has different types of schools and teachers and pupils who use English as their second, third or fourth language. They suggested that training modules for INSET courses could be tailored to the teachers' needs for those who come from certain types of schools and have similar needs. One example shared is seen below:

*"I'll look at the background ... is it rural or not rural ... check the background ... from the strategies and all, we know ... from the exam result... then create ... a module that is suitable for them. I won't use the same module for another group ..."*. (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

In addition, the research participants shared that from previous experiences, the teachers from national schools and vernacular school attended the same IN-SET courses and worked together in groups during workshop sessions to prepared resources and teaching materials. They explained that this would be difficult, and preferred to work together with group members teaching in the same type of schools, so that they could use the same KSSR syllabus document and textbook, plan lessons and create resources which would be suitable and relevant to their pupils' level and needs. One of the participants' view is seen below:

*" ... problem and difficulties when I first attended the English course for KSSR... because we are divided into 2 groups and like talking about our own textbook ... we have mixed teachers in the group from SK and SJK ... come up with the resource that suits one group only ... either for SJK or SK ... but they are talking about sharing and we cannot share everything ... done during the courses"*. (Participant C6, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

In relation to INSET programmes focusing on generic and specific content, the majority of the research participants explained that they still need help with specific content in relation to pedagogy and teaching approaches which they can use in their daily teaching. This is because they are teaching different types of learners such as advanced learners, intermediate learners, weak learners and struggling pupils. One participant shared this view, as seen below:

*"Teachers want more on pedagogy, how to approach, strategized ... their approach, because we teach the whole year, with the textbook, we see and know ... I know about the textbook, Unit 1, Unit 2 ... teach me how to approach ... ah"* (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

It was brought to the research participants' attention that English language teachers who were teaching pupils with special needs have been attending the same courses as other teachers from the National type schools and vernacular schools. They shared that based on the yearly plan of the MOE Malaysia, there was only one INSET course for English language teachers who were teaching students with special needs and it was a brief introduction to special needs. They would like to attend INSET specifically for students with one form of disability, as seen in the view below:

*" ... I'm not good at pedagogies ... special needs ... more focus on special*

*needs ... for deaf and dumb pupils. For teachers ... no courses ... even basic sign language course, also none. Last year there was one about the introduction of special needs ... 3 days ... that's why ... it was just overall ... just the introduction ... no specific courses for special needs ... and also to separate the courses. If it's for blind, then blind and the deaf, for the deaf"*. (Particpant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

Some of the research participants stressed that they also needed some generic skills, as they believed that they could manage their teaching in class and classroom management with their pupils. However, they still need generic skills which would help them in their day to day. One example is as below:

*"I prefer the generic CPD...because I think I lack that. Content base is still...so I lack ... need to equip myself with those skills"*. (Participant C3, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

The research participants expressed their need to attend INSET programmes focusing on generic skills that would help them with their proficiency in the English language, as well as technical skills of using ICT in their teaching, as seen from the view below:

*"I need some help with writing as I cannot write properly ... I really need ICT skills ... to use ICT in my lessons so it will become more interesting"*. (Participant C4, Focus Group 3: Teachers)

Overall, the research participants felt that the weightage of INSET on specific content and generic skills could be divided, as seen in the following view:

*"60-40. 60 more on the subject and 40 on more general things. Sometimes we need to know the filing system..."* (Participant D1, Focus Group 5: SISCs)

They agreed that INSET, which focuses on specific content related to ELT and pedagogy, is highly essential for all English language teachers, and that they should attend INSET to continuously update their knowledge with new approaches and content. Nevertheless, they also needed generic INSET courses which would equip them with other skills such as proficiency in terms of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary as well as ICT skills.

The SISCs and teachers highlighted that they would like future INSET courses to have a follow-up component. This would serve as a form of support from the trainers to help the teachers if they needed any clarification about using certain strategies in their teaching, as well as teaching specific content which was suggested during the INSET course they attended previously. This would then be a change from 'one off' INSET courses to a new structure of courses which include the follow-up programme, which enables the trainers and course participants to meet again and discuss their practice since they completed the course. One teacher's view

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of this is seen below:

> " … after the course, to see if the teacher is still on the correct track or whether there are on another track … just for follow-up. But they cannot give marks or assess the online feedback … just as a follow-up, whether the CPs are still on the correct track or not". (Participant C8, Focus Group 4: Teachers)

Furthermore, the SISCs emphasized that they had been attending many IN-SET programmes on literacy and pedagogy for the past year, but needed assistance in how to translate this into their roles as mentors and coaches, and shared the following.

> " … we need more on coaching … there are so many kinds of teachers … their approaches as well … how are we going to tackle them accordingly …" (Participant D6, Focus Group 6: SISCs)

It was interesting to note that the teachers were keen to attend other forms of professional development such as attending conferences. They explained that they received invitations to attend local conferences held in Malaysia but that they needed to pay for the registration fees which was rather expensive, and thus did not attend those conferences.

## 4.6 Findings from Individual Interviews

The third section in this chapter highlights the findings from the 32 interviews with 16 research participants who attended three INSET programmes. Each research participant took part in two interviews. Below is a screen shot of all the 32 interviews with the number of nodes and references coded in Nvivo (as seen in Figure 4.4 . They were coded to the same nodes as the focus group interviews, and the findings are discussed based on the five main themes discussed in section two of this chapter.

**Interviews**

| Name | | Nodes | References |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interview 1 - (Nadya) | | 24 | 52 |
| Interview 1 - (Adam) | | 15 | 34 |
| Interview 1 - (Alicia) | | 23 | 41 |
| Interview 1 - (Ben) | | 12 | 21 |
| Interview 1 - (Joyce) | | 24 | 56 |
| Interview 1 - (Kumar) | | 36 | 70 |
| Interview 1 - (Lily) | | 22 | 62 |
| Interview 1 - (Nicole) | | 23 | 43 |
| Interview 1 - (Nurin) | | 36 | 78 |
| Interview 1 - (Raj) | | 22 | 44 |
| Interview 1 - (Rita) | | 33 | 110 |
| Interview 1 - (Siti) | | 32 | 85 |
| Interview 1 - (Syah) | | 19 | 42 |
| Interview 1 - (Tina) | | 29 | 59 |
| Interview 1 - (Usha) | | 21 | 49 |
| Interview 1 - (Wendy) | | 21 | 50 |
| Interview 2 - (Adam) | | 16 | 29 |
| Interview 2 - (Ben) | | 13 | 20 |
| Interview 2 - (Joyce) | | 15 | 35 |
| Interview 2 - (Kumar) | | 27 | 54 |
| Interview 2 - (Lily) | | 15 | 32 |
| Interview 2 - (Nadya) | | 23 | 45 |
| Interview 2 - (Nicole) | | 10 | 19 |
| Interview 2 - (Nurin) | | 17 | 32 |
| Interview 2 - (Raj) | | 14 | 30 |
| Interview 2 - (Rita) | | 25 | 58 |
| Interview 2 - (Siti) | | 31 | 67 |
| Interview 2 - (Syah) | | 20 | 46 |
| Interview 2 - (Tina) | | 12 | 16 |
| Interview 2 - (Usha) | | 14 | 30 |
| Interview 2 - (Wendy) | | 7 | 23 |
| Interview 2 - (Alicia) | | 15 | 31 |

Figure 4.4: Nodes and References from Individual Interviews

### 4.6.1 Previous INSET Experiences

The first theme of previous INSET experiences was developed from the findings derived from the data coded in the individual interviews in Nvivo. The data were coded to the same list of nodes from the focus group interviews, as seen in Table 4.6.

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Table 4.6: Individual Interviews: Nodes selected for Theme 1

| Nodes |
| --- |
| Selection for INSET |
| INSET attended |
| CPD Model (Cascade Model) |
| Choice of INSET |
| Duration of INSET |
| Frequency of INSET |
| Generic CPD |
| Subject related CPD |
| INSET during term or holidays |

**Selection of INSET and INSET attended**

According to some of the non-specialist English language teachers, there are different practices in relation to the selection process of teachers to attend INSET within their districts or states. In most schools, the teachers were able to attend INSET by taking turns and were nominated to attend the INSET courses.

Wendy explained that the head of panel in her school seldom went on a course unless it was for Year 6 and the teachers attended INSET by taking turns, as seen in the following quote.

*"It depends on subject... for English language, it will be on a rotation basis. So they just nominate you and you have to go. Usually the Ketua Panitia will not go, unless it's a ... for Year 6, then they will go".* (Wendy)

Although INSET was compulsory, Joyce attended INSET voluntarily and was interested in the INSET courses when they were related to the English language, as she shared below:

*"I feel that if it is related to my professionalism or the subjects that I teach, then I would go voluntarily or agree to being nominated for the course ... but if it is not related to what I teach or what the skills are that I taught in school, then I think it's not that good, and not that beneficial ..."* (Joyce)

Usha had a different experience in her school and stated that the same teacher would attend the INSET courses on KSSR for all the lower primary levels as seen below:

*" ... for the KSSR courses, the same teacher in my school goes for the courses for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 because most of the time, they teach the lower primary classes...".* (Usha)

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In contrast, Raj who is a senior teacher and a Tamil optionist explained that the specialist teacher in his school had attended all the INSET courses for English, and he only started attending INSET for ELT in the last one year, as seen below:

*"This is my 13th year of teaching...I'm a Tamil optionist. For English, I have fewer courses because I'm a non-optionist and there is an optionist in my school and she will attend all the courses. I only started attending INSET since last year... and I have been given the opportunity to teach Year 6 this year".* (Raj)

Wendy shared that she preferred to be asked which type of INSET courses she was nominated for, as this would be helpful to plan her work, as seen below:

*"I like them to ask for my opinion to be considered... because let's say they nominate you, its compulsory to go. You have no time to plan and settle all your things in school".* (Wendy)

In terms of the INSET courses attended previously, Nurin explained that they always prepared lessons plans and did presentations during workshops, but that she needed help with pedagogy and methods as she faced certain problems in the English panel (panitia) in school, as seen below:

*"We just do the lesson plan and present what we prepared for the content of the lesson. What about the pedagogy and the methods ... the strategy ... actually I don't know how to write reflections. I don't know how to write the objectives of the lesson ... until now we are not expose to how to assess the pupils. I'm still very critical ... and need to know how to assess the pupils. From my experience, some teachers just 'tick, tick tick ... and they do not look at the students' own strengths or the right way to assess. They never expose us to assessment. We don't know how to fill in the form. It is a problem and my panitia also don't know much about assessment".* (Nurin)

The SISCs had mixed views about the selection of participants for INSET courses and the INSET they attended. Syah explained that he hardly attended INSET when he was a teacher, but since he became an SISC, he attended more INSET programmes. However, he felt that SISCS and teachers from secondary schools were often given the priority to attend INSET while those focusing on primary level had to wait for their turns, as expressed below:

*" ... but never get the chance to like ... be involved, been called or be chosen ... probably because I'm the SISC now ... been chosen la ... ELTC has been calling the secondary ... ELTC has been focusing on the secondary ... so we ... the primary SISC, we feel that we are the 2nd class SISC ... we are being overlooked ... so this year, that was last month ... I was called here ... to attend this course".* (Syah)

On the other hand, Nadya felt privileged to be given first hand information

about INSET courses and was invited personally to attend the courses, as seen below:

*"The ELO, Pn. X ... just asked me whether I wanted to go for a course conducted by ELTC, it is about Language Arts ... she just mentioned that and I said ya, I want to go. So, she just put my name down".* (Nadya)

She also shared similar views to Syah, namely that she attended more INSET courses when she moved from a primary school to secondary school, and most of them were related to assessment and the language skills as seen below:

*"In-service courses, not really much ... when I was in err ... you know, in primary school ... then when I was in secondary school, there were quite a number ... in terms of ... how to mark papers ... then emm short courses like writing ... speaking".* (Nadya)

In contrast, Syah explained that most of the INSET he had attended was related to briefings about the KSSR syllabus as seen below:

*" ... the most that I've been to ... the introduction of ... you know, for each year they call us for like ... OK they have new syllabus for Year 4, Year 5, Year 6".* (Syah)

### CPD Model and Planning of INSET

The SISCs gave their views related to INSET based on the Cascade model and explained how it was planned and carried out centrally through the State Education Department. Siti explained her role after she attended INSET courses and how she delivered the knowledge and content gained to other teachers in the state. It was usually planned at district level, as seen from the quote below:

*"If I went for courses that were supposed to be delivered to all teachers ... usually, the JPN will have a mass course, meaning they will call all the teachers and have one district or 2 districts or combine together for one course or sometimes I have to go back to my own district. I will ask all the teachers in my district to come for a course, in one place, maybe in the PKG, the PPD".* (Siti)

Kumar shared how INSET on the KSSR syllabus was done in a state in the Northern region of Malaysia by state coaches or Jurulatih Utama (JUs). First, they attended the INSET course conducted by officers from the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) and then returned to their respective states to conduct the same INSET course for teachers in the state, as explained below:

*"The KSSR courses now ... were given by CDC and the JUs. But I didn't attend the last course because I was on the way to the holy land. So this time round,*

*I don't know how. It seems the JU will come back and give the course which I'm not really happy. I prefer it right from the source".* (Kumar)

Tina, who was appointed as a state trainer in 2015, explained that she was eager to share knowledge she gained from a few INSET courses with other non-specialist teachers and specialist teachers and believed it would help them to cater to pupils needs, as seen from the quote below:

*"I want to share with teachers how to teach pupils to answer questions based on a reading text. We learned in this course how to use one reading text for many activities in a lesson, and I really want to help other teachers with this...".* (Tina)

**Frequency and Duration of INSET**

One of the SISCs explained that when she was a teacher, she was appointed and attended INSET frequently and later conducted in-house courses for the other teachers in her school and district to share the knowledge gained, as seen below:

*"I have been quite a frequent attender. I went for the course not only for myself ... err usually appointed by JPN ... and come back to the school ... and give another course for the other teachers... in my district or in my state itself".* (Siti)

Another SISC also had similar views, and stated that she was appointed to attend INSET very frequently too and has already fulfilled the requirement of 7 INSET days per year as expressed below:

*"It's like back to back courses. We started at end of March, and then had 5 days for each course, and now it's our 4th course, meaning that we have almost completed em 20 days back to back courses this year".* (Lily)

The SISCs and non-specialist teachers shared similar experiences about the duration of most INSET courses, as they often attended short courses between 1 to 5 days, as seen below:

*"Normally in short courses, the longest would be like 3 days. For SISC+, the longest was like for 5 days".* (Nadya)

*"Usually, the duration for the short courses is 2 or 3 days. Sometimes it is just for a day, but usually not longer than 3 days".* (Joyce)

Rita explained that she also attended short INSET courses of similar duration, but was fortunate to attend INSET programmes that were spaced out throughout the academic year, as stated below:

*"I think on the average...most of a 3 or 4 day course. So it's not that heavy going this year ... we were called from time to time, they were staggered you see ... it was not that demanding".* (Rita)

Nadya stressed that the duration of INSET programmes should be based on the content of the course, and planners of CPD need to take this into account as explained below:

*"We have to look at the content of the course ... if they can finish it in 1 week, why do they need to drag it out to 4 weeks? You have to see the objectives of the course. So, I believe when someone created a course, they need to say what the rationale and the objective of the course is".* (Nadya)

### Type of INSET courses

In relation to the type of INSET attended previously, Nadya shared that she has attended various types of INSET programmes at district level on assessment, the KSSR curriculum as well as content on the English language, as explained below:

*"If I go outside of the school, maybe I go for a seminar to the PPD or I attend meetings to construct questions for the whole district level, so I have to go to PPD ... and then regarding the subjects and the new curriculum ... briefings about the new curriculum".* (Nadya)

The most common type of INSET attended by many of the participants were workshops and briefings on the KSSR curriculum, and they explained that they preferred workshops because they wanted to be engaged during the sessions as explained below:

*"I prefer workshops compared to seminars. I prefer hands on. Seminars will send you to sleep".* (Kumar)

*"OK, it depends if it's helping, because I am the type who does not like to listen to lectures ... mass lecture. I prefer to do something. I prefer to do activities ... workshops".* (Siti)

Joyce had similar sentiments about the types of INSET she has attended and emphasized that she had gained skills which she used to plan her lessons as seen below:

*"Some of them are workshops ... the rest are briefings of how to manage the curriculum and how to manage the exams in school. Some of them are courses like where I have to build up my own strategies ... and so on and how do we apply those strategies in school".* (Joyce)

Rita explained that some of the INSET courses also required participants to complete extensive readings, prepare action plans and write reflections and these were quite new and demanding on some teachers, as seen below:

*"And doing action plan is quite demanding. I like the experience of doing*

*that, you know, I could reflect ... because you have to do a massive amount of reading there ... then it gives insights into what I'm doing right now ... the staggered dates there ah ... you maybe call us after 2 months it's ok, otherwise you are bogged down with work also at the same time".* (Rita)

### 4.6.2   Relevance of INSET courses

This theme was developed from the findings derived from the data coded in the individual interviews in Nvivo. The data from the interviews were coded to the following list of nodes as seen in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Individual Interviews: Nodes selected for Theme 2

| Nodes |
|---|
| Relevance of INSET |
| Factors affecting relevance of INSET |
| Importance of INSET |
| Opportunity to attend INSET |
| Opportunity to improve skills |
| Effectiveness of INSET |

**Relevance of INSET**

Most non-specialist teachers explained that the INSET courses they attended were relevant to the KSSR curriculum and this helped them in teaching English. Nurin learned about new skills related to assessment, and used scaffolding in a lesson, as seen from Nurin's experiences below:

*"What I get from here is different ... from what I get and what I heard from my place. Before, I had never heard about scaffolding, about strategies, and another one ... we cannot say ... ah ... the objectives, at the end, the pupils are able to write 5 sentences. There are many ways for us to assess the pupils, not only what they write ... and they know, so we can assess them. It is the first experience I've had about scaffolding ..."* .(Nurin)

The skills and knowledge gained from attending INSET was very helpful for Wendy as she shared that she was able to use it and prepared more interesting teaching and learning activities for her pupils, as seen below:

*" ... because everything we learnt, we can do it in school, in class, so it's very helpful ... and if it's not for this PITO course, I would not really know how to teach ... because I'm a non-optionist, maybe my activities will not be as interesting".*

(Wendy)

However, Alicia who teaches in a rural school in East Malaysia, had a different experience and felt that the trainers who came from West Malaysia did not understand the setting and cultural differences of pupils in Sarawak and commented the following.

*"50% of the courses I attended were relevant to me... some of them are not relevant for my pupils because some of the JUs come from peninsular Malaysia and they teach us very advance stuff and it is not suitable for our pupils here... English is their 3rd language... usually they have their mother tongue, Malay, and then English... and also most the pupils do not have internet at home and we also do not use internet in the school..."* (Alicia).

The SISCs also emphasized that the INSET they had attended were relevant to the KSSR curriculum and their needs with reference to methodology and assessment which is lacking as explained by Lily.

*"I attended a course for methodology and we were given an article to read on assessment where other people outside of the world is doing. The assessment, the feedback ... itself very new to our curriculum ... when we want to mmm ... shift from exam oriented to school based assessment but we don't give the knowledge to the teachers ... we don't want the students to sit for standardized test but we don't ah educate the teachers to do the assessment ..."*.(Lily)

Nadya also revealed the relevance of INSET she attended which covered all the four language skills and it has helped her in her role as an SISC to mentor and coach other primary school teachers as seen below:

*"I would say ya, it supports the KSSR ... because KSSR is what we call a modular approach ... it starts with listening and speaking, then reading and writing ... and then it's either language arts or grammar. It can be interchangeable. So, I would say that the knowledge would really help me to share with the teachers ... so they can teach their students well ... and successfully ..."*. (Nadya)

**Opportunity to attend INSET and Improve Skills**

The research participants were enthusiastic about the opportunities they had to attend INSET and Lily shared that she enjoyed attending INSET and always felt grateful that the INSET programmes were provided for teachers without any cost, as explained below:

*"I'm positive of attending courses from the 1st day I was a teacher ... I love to gain knowledge. So, I am very grateful, thankful because coming for the courses, but I don't have to pay. Ya, something is free from the government ... the knowledge is very fresh for me".* (Lily)

Additionally, Rita shared that she had the opportunity to read scholarly articles online during INSET and found the knowledge vital, but stated that time is a factor which needs to be considered in terms of completing readings as part of the INSET programme as seen below:

*"I always find the reading bits very enriching ... like the TOT, we had the chance to go online for the scholarly articles ... that's very very very helpful. Yes, ah ... it's a matter of sitting down and reading them ... It's just that we need to have enough energy and time to do it".* (Rita)

Lily also added that after attending INSET, she has reflected more on her professional development, as she discovered she needed to master other skills and improve as expressed below:

*"I have to think about my ... my professional development la, after coming here for a few courses, because the more you learn, it's like the more that you don't know ... so, I really have to think about".* (Lily)

**Importance and Effectiveness of INSET**

With reference to the importance of INSET, Siti emphasized that it was crucial for INSET programmes for English language teachers to be linked to the KSSR curriculum as this contributed to the immediate needs of the pupils and teachers, as expressed below:

*"All the courses that they handle must be linked to the curriculum. Hmm, so, they must come up with something that concerns the curriculum, related to the curriculum. Yes, they are needed, it's great for pupils, for teachers and for us".* (Siti)

Nadya shared that the INSET she attended was effective as the skills she acquired during INSET helped her to teach and keep up-to-date with current approaches in teaching, as explained below:

*" ... the courses really helped me in my teaching. You know by having the courses ... I gained more knowledge to further in my career. It really keeps me abreast with the things happening currently".* (Nadya)

In addition, Rita made the point that the range of INSET programmes for English language teachers have increased recently as seen below:

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*"Right now, I think ... the range of courses will be more now I think as compared to yesteryears ... especially when I was teaching in the primary schools. I think it was limited then ... the range of courses ..."*. (Rita)

Rita's point demonstrated that CPD planners tried to cater to a range of teachers needs in various districts and states in Malaysia. Although there are more INSET programmes for primary school teachers, Siti stated that she rated most of these courses above satisfactory, but did not favour mass lectures during INSET, as explained below:

*" ... if you give me a scale of 1 to 10, I would say 8 ... another 2, because there are still some things I have still to digest ... I have to go back and read again, especially when it comes to err ... err mass lectures. I am not very good with mass lectures. Some people can just sit and listen and understand but I have to read ... re-read afterwards"*. (Siti)

### 4.6.3 Professional Learning and Change

The third theme was developed from the findings of the data coded in the individual interviews in Nvivo. The data from the interviews were coded to the following list of nodes as seen in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Individual Interviews: Nodes selected for Theme 3

| Nodes |
|---|
| Adapting from content learned |
| Change and INSET |
| Collaborative Learning |
| Learning from INSET |
| PLC |
| Responsibilities after INSET |

**Collaborative Learning**

The non-specialist teachers shared how they learned collaboratively via INSET at school level. Wendy shared that school level INSET was carried out *"once every 2 to 3 months ... and we have meetings and then the in-house ... having the sharing sessions in school"*.

As the head of panel in her school, Joyce explained that she also carried out school level INSET too, but based on the feedback from teachers, she decided to reduce the number of programmes on ELT and include more generic INSET

programmes related to the professionalism of teachers in an informal setting, as seen in the quote below:

" ... sometimes I undertook in-house training for the other panel members but since the feedback is not that good ... maybe the other teachers feel that they already know the content or maybe they do not have enough time to attend ... so I conducted lesser in-house programmes this year. And for other teachers, usually we do in-house training related to our professionalism. This year, we have had it twice on courses related to our prestasi, so the teachers will be informed on what are the criteria for the prestasi evaluation. So mostly our in-house training in school now are related to professionalism ... and not too much related to the subjects we are teaching ... so we don't have to do too many formal courses, just informal in-house training". (Joyce)

Kumar, who is an SISC, and was a state coach (JU) when he was a teacher, shared that teachers had to attend at least 10 days of INSET on Saturdays apart from the seven days of compulsory INSET annually. However, some teachers did not find it effective because it was combined for a few subjects, as seen below:

"We had, like in-house training ... called LDP. Sometimes we called teachers from outside. Sometime we ourselves would share. We were supposed to have 10 LDPs on Saturdays ... I feel the LDP sometimes doesn't cater to everybody ... the whole school comes to school on Saturday ... we have one session for Mathematics, English or Bahasa, then that's a waste of time. But that's how it goes". (Kumar)

Another SISC, Lily shared her experience of collaborative learning during INSET at district level where she was required to share the information with colleagues after returning from the INSET programme. She explained that this practice brought on challenges in relation to the time factor and other compulsory collaborative INSET in school, which was focused on the muslim religion, as explained below:

" ... let's say one of our friends was called for CPD at district level, they have to come back to school and to do the in-house training at school level, but then most of them is like touch and go CPD ... because our schedule like pack, then we also have LADAP, lathihan dalam perkhidmatan but then personally my school, LADAP is ... because more are Muslim, so they are more like taskirah, something which is more like spiritual". (Lily)

### Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

On the topic of professional learning communities, Kumar confirmed that he learnt especially from giving and receiving feedback from the other teachers in the group, as explained below:

" ... yes, because we can ask questions as we share, for example ... someone presents and we can ask, we can comment, and then it is all our learning. We are not criticizing ... we have reasons based on evidence, and so it is ... it really helps". (Kumar)

In addition, Lily shared the advantages of PLCs in relation to her recent experience of a buddy support programme for SISCs where they gained support on their roles in coaching and mentoring teachers, as seen below:

"Ah, like buddies. So ... this week also they went for PERASA in IAB Jitra, where the arts of coaching and mentoring is delivered. So ... I need both, the arts of coaching and mentoring and also the knowledge which I want to share with the teachers". (Lily)

Siti also reflected on her experience of PLCs through INSET in school, and gave examples from her previous roles as a teacher and shared that she was involved in PLCs within her school as well as planned PLCs for teachers in other schools within the district, as seen in the following.

" ... in my old school, yes, we had LADAP... latihan dalam perkhidmatan but in ... within the school. I also ... handle LADAP for other schools when they request for it". (Siti)

In contrast, Shah was concerned about his situation in a small rural school, also known as Sekolah Kurang Murid (SKM), where they only had 2 to 3 English language teachers each academic year. He shared that they hardly have school based INSET and only shared information in an informal manner as explained below:

" ... honestly, English teachers are like ... the rare species also la ... there'll be like 2 or 3 other English teachers in the school ... very small number, so normally we don't do much. If we have things to share ... emm you know for our development, probably we do it over coffee ... we don't have like a proper ... you know ...". (Shah)

### Learning from INSET

The non-specialist teachers and SISC shared about learning new skills and teaching strategies from INSET, which are crucial to help them with their current needs. One example is given below, as shared by Nurin.

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*"Sometimes the content is different ... like I'm coming here. I wonder why during the KSSR course, they never used the scaffolding strategy. I learn that scaffolding strategy is the better way to help pupils learn English better. But during the KSSR course, they never exposed us to such strategies. And then to write the reflection, I only learnt the correct way to write here. Before that, I don't know how to write my reflection. So, it is a new thing for me to write the reflection".* (Nurin)

Prior to learning about the scaffolding strategy at INSET, Nurin explained that she was not sure about which strategies to use to teach pupils specific skills, and this resulted in the pupils not achieving the learning outcomes as expressed below:

*"Now I realize that what I have done in the school is wrong... sometimes I don't know the strategy to teach. Sometimes I scold them because they don't do the correct things as I want to... because I want to achieve the objectives of my lesson but in the end, I cannot achieve it. I did not realise at that time, I used the wrong strategy. That's why the pupils did not manage to achieve the objectives I planned".*

After learning about how to use scaffolding in planning the various stages and activities in a lesson, Nurin has a clearer view about planning her lessons with her pupils.

In like manner, Joyce was excited and shared that she has been satisfied with most of the INSET she attended as she has acquired many new skills and interacting with other course participants and the trainer, as seen from her response below:

*"I think at some point it has gone beyond my expectations ... maybe it comes from my own limited experience in teaching English ... so what I have learnt in this course is somehow overwhelming. It's an overwhelming experience because I have gained a lot. I hope I can retain all the things I have learnt and somehow apply it in my teaching. It is very good ... because other than engaging with the trainers ... I also spoke to my group members ... and also the course participants ... and also about their expectations. I think overall it's very enlightening ... ah ... eye opener in some ways".* (Joyce)

Raj shared how he was able to include what he gained from INSET into his lessons on reading and how it benefitted his pupils. Prior to that, he used to teach them using the 'chalk and talk' method and has tried including fun learning for his pupils. His view is seen below:

*"I have learned about blending, how to use the cards. After attending the course, I prefer to print out the cards and give them to the children, it helps them, they understand how to blend. Some of the JUs also teach us about fun learning and the pupils enjoy it, especially the lower achievers. The higher achievers prefer*

*reading activities"*. (Raj)

In addition, Nadya expressed her eagerness to gain more skills and paid to attend INSET courses privately run by INTAN apart from the INSET provided free by MoE Malaysia as seen in the following.

*"As for INTAN, it's a very minimal cost la, like RM30 … it's affordable … definitely willing to pay for the knowledge. Why not?"*. (Nadya)

**Change and INSET**

Learning and change go hand in hand, and some of the participants shared about the relationship of change and INSET especially after they have completed INSET programmes for ELT. Syah emphasized that it was valuable to learn new skills and acquire up to date information. However, he also explained that he has faced challenges to include the new knowledge gained into his practice in the classroom as seen below:

*"To get the new info, new input … err … it's good … it's still challenging … but coming back … to put into practice, it's a different matter. Sometimes putting things into practice, it's not as easy as … you know, as what we get"*. (Syah)

On the other hand, Lily reveled that after attending INSET courses, she realized that she should focus on the skills of oracy in her lessons with her pupils and it was necessary to plan specific lessons for oracy. She pointed out her own weaknesses in lesson planning, and knows that change after INSET is vital especially after finding out one's weakness teaching, as seen below:

*"I changed my perceptions in terms of oracy because when I was a teacher, I tend to like … you know neglected the listening and speaking part … because I thought it was like integrated skills like I teach reading and writing at the same time, they learn to listen and speak but then again it doesn't work that way … because er I really somehow … not to say agree but it's applicable where our curriculum they want us to focus on listening and speaking … meaning that the focus skill is there, listening and speaking, try to develop their oracy first … before we … it comes before em reading and writing"*. (Lily)

Tina, who is from East Malaysia and teaching in a rural school, explained that she had not been sure of how to plan effective lesson to help her pupils to grasp English but realized she had to make changes to the way she taught after attending INSET, as seen below:

*"By attending this course, it really helps me to plan activities for my lesson, before this, my pupils cannot understand and cannot cope in my lesson… but after*

*attending this course, I can see why my pupils couldn't follow the lesson, most of them ... English is their 3rd or 4th language ..."* (Tina)

### 4.6.4   Students' Needs and Teachers' Needs

The fourth theme selected focuses on students' needs and teachers' needs. It was developed from data coded to the following nodes in Nvivo. The discussion below is based on data selected from the following nodes, as seen in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Individual Interviews: Nodes selected for Theme 4

| Nodes |
|---|
| Students' needs |
| Teachers' needs |
| INSET for KSSR |
| Non-option teachers |
| Preference of type (INSET) |

**Students' Needs**

In relation to pupils' needs in Malaysian schools, the research participants explained that a minority of the pupils they taught learned English as an ESL subject, while the majority of pupils learned English as an EFL subject, as shared by Joyce shared below:

*" ... most of my pupils come from non-English speaking backgrounds so their knowledge is quite limited, their vocabulary is quite limited ... when I observe the Year 2 pupils, I can see that they lack support from their parents ... they don't have the reinforcement at home to prepare them to retain the knowledge they have learnt in the English class in school".* (Joyce)

Due to her pupils' low level of English, Joyce explained that she faced problems in teaching and needed support from the school administration and skills she gained from attending INSET. However, she explained that some of the activities during INSET were more suitable for teaching in an ideal setting, and not for pupils struggling to learn English. Her view is seen below:

*So, it's quite problematic for me because as a teacher, I need more support from the PIBG and from the school, so that what I teach ... what I've given in class will be beneficial ... and useful to my students. What I learnt from most of the courses ... usually the courses that I attended, they look at the problems teachers face in an ideal setting, so maybe we need a clear cut approach ... how do we attend*

*to pupils needs … maybe with er … very limited knowledge we … teach and then that is where the mixed abilities come into view".* (Joyce)

Kumar gave an example of how teachers should be creative and include some elements of fun learning which they learn from INSET with pupils in primary level and demonstrated how the use of songs helped his pupils to recall his lesson, as seen below:

*"I remember this Year 1 book about this song about the snake in the bush… and then the monkeys on the tree with the action. You need to sing that song with action. So, I did this with my Year 1 students and they love it very much. They can remember the song and they can sing it. After 2013, I went back to my former school and my former students, they are in Year 3 now. They remember me. They said "Sir, Sir … you remember the song". So, the impact, what I see is that my students benefited because I got 1st hand news… information and I gave them to the pupils".* (Kumar)

This example showed Kumar's pupils enjoyed learning English through songs, whereas the next example from Nurin's experience showed that her pupils had fun learning successfully through the running dictation activity, and she believed her teaching strategy helped them to learn. Her view is shared below:

*" … last time … we had learning with fun. It was very exciting especially the running dictation. I applied that in the classroom and they really enjoyed the activity. Even if the other teachers are not interested to know about my activity, I know what I'm doing is good for the students".* (Nurin)

**Teachers' Needs**

With reference to English language teachers' needs, Siti revealed she still wanted to attend INSET programmes focusing on content areas such as English literature and the teaching of phonics, as she felt she had not mastered these areas, and the other teachers the same district needed assistance on how to teach reading using phonics, as seen below:

*"I want to attend the literature course if there is any because I love literature … and then phonics because I need that knowledge … because in my district, they have been asking me about how to teach phonics, and I am not well versed in this … because I still have to get practice in the sounds … all the consonants and the vowels sounds … still there are the dipthongs. I still have to master that so I can handle courses for my teachers".* (Siti)

Nurin added that teachers actually needed the basic skills of how to teach the

English language. She gave an example of how she learned about scaffolding during INSET but stressed that many teachers are not aware of such teaching strategies yet. She believes teachers will need time to acquire this knowledge and incorporate it in their lessons to benefit students. Her view is seen below:

"... that's very important, the basic ... we learn we must start with the word, and then with the phrase, and then the sentence and the whole text. It's a really good idea but why has it never reached the teachers who are in charge of courses in our place? When I share my experiences with the teachers there in my school, they are quiet. But if I ... if we do it seriously, we can achieve our targets. Maybe pupils can learn better and master English well ... if they use the scaffolding strategy, its better". (Nurin)

Equally important, Kumar shared the fact that many new ideas are being introduced into the Education system in Malaysia but it has faced implementation problems. In addition, he believed that ideas from Western countries could work in other countries as the teacher has classes with smaller number of pupils, as compared to classes in Malaysian school, which have almost 50 pupils. His explanation is seen below:

"they come up with a lot of new things, er talking about emergent learners and things like that. It's something good which er we fail to do or carry out in our country. All these things coming up ... they are relevant but then it is our duty to bring this back to the teachers under us ... most of these ideas came about from for example, Canada, England, but their classrooms I think are smaller. I think mostly about 20, but here we have classes with 48 students in one classroom ... plus they have teacher assistants over there". (Kumar)

Usha revealed that sometimes teachers needed specific skills to guide pupils at specific levels but it was important for the teachers to adapt what they had learned from INSET. She gave an example of new teaching and learning activities she learned in an INSET course for lower primary level, but used it to address her needs to teach upper primary pupils. Her view is seen below:

"Even in regards to the methods for lower primary, I used some of the tips in upper primary ... about running dictation and flipping cards activity. I can see the difference, the pupils enjoyed it. Before this, I used to give the pictures and get the pupils to sequence...but it was not done in a fun way, and now I know how to make it fun for the pupils ...".

Her view shows that teachers also need to be flexible and adapt their teaching strategies and utilize all the skills they gain from INSET.

### 4.6.5 Future Expectations of INSET

This theme is on the SISCs and non-specialist teachers' future expectations of INSET. It was developed from the following nodes in Table 4.10. They were developed from the data coded in the individual interviews in Nvivo.

Table 4.10: Individual Interviews: Nodes selected for Theme 5

| Nodes |
| :---: |
| Future Expectations for INSET |
| Ineffectiveness of teachers |
| Planning INSET |
| INSET for SISCs |
| Quality of Trainers and Facilitators |

**Planning for INSET**

Kumar strongly believed that some teachers were sent for INSET programmes which did not match their needs. In addition, he was not keen to attend INSET during term time when he had many responsibilities in the school especially during the UPSR exam periods. Thus, he preferred to be given the opportunity to plan the most suitable time to attend INSET, as shared below:

" … the courses selected by the ELOs … sometimes you see, the course may be suitable to us, but sometimes, they clashes … sometimes I have to leave my classes and leave task sheets and someone will take over. I prefer where I can plan, I can set during over my holidays or something like that or after my UPSR …".
(Kumar)

He also shared that planning of INSET is very important to improve pupils' learning outcomes. As an SISC who had been visiting teachers in primary schools within his district, he has observed that many teachers were still unsure about the modular approach in KSSR and had poor planning of lessons. He shared the following observation.

"When I go to visit schools, I noticed that the KSSR was all upside down. The teachers don't know what modular based is. They still mix up everything. Every day, they give them writing task. They just bla bla bla for a little while and then give them a written task which is not correct because we have already allocated today you are going to do listening and speaking. Let the pupils speak. Listening and speaking is not you going to speak but the students, give them the chance. The students have no chance to speak, the teachers speak and they give minimum answers, which is not

*in line with KSSR. So that is what I'm correcting with them, as a JU and now as an SISC I can see this ... which is supposed to be a failure I would say"*. (Kumar)

In line with Kumar's view of the SISCs and their role in coaching and mentoring teachers, Nadya, who has been an SISC for 14 months, explained that there are still many problems related to INSET for primary school teachers which need to be addressed in terms of planning the programmes that met teachers' needs. Her view is as below:

*"There are so many, lots out there that I need to encounter, for me to share with my teachers ... because from what I see ... teachers are like having a one track mind. They don't want to be creative. So, I need to start from myself. I need to be creative for them to be creative. I need to coach them ... sometimes I need to demonstrate in the class"*. (Nadya)

She also shared that most teachers she had observed did not engage pupils in their lessons, and thus her role was to motivate and encourage the teachers to adapt and improve their teaching strategies which have been introduced or suggested by the coaches.

Syah echoed Nadya's point about teachers being reluctant to (accept) change or accept suggestions from the SISCs. He shared the fact that teachers who have responsibilities to help other teachers in their schools and districts needed ongoing coaching and mentoring from SISCs and senior teachers, as seen below:

*" ... like coaching and mentoring skills. We need that. We do see teachers who are reluctant to accept us ... our presence ... when we go to school. There are some sets of teachers ... who said they are not ready ... normally teachers will give excuses so we have to like ... find ways to tackle these teachers"*. (Syah)

In addition, these coaches themselves needed INSET on how to be successful in their new roles and cooperate with the teachers and work together to improve their pedagogical skills.

**Quality of Trainers**

The research participants commented on the quality of trainers in INSET as an important factor which affected their learning from INSET. As a senior educator, Rita explained that the INSET she attended was satisfactory and met her expectations, but she believed it would improve over time as some trainers were new in their roles. She shared the following:

*" ... it might not be 100% here, but overall I would say that 80% does meet my expectations. It's ok because I think some of the trainers, they are quite new*

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*also, aren't they? … and they are picking up along the way"*. (Rita)

With reference to the delivery of INSET, she shared about the importance of needs analysis for primary school English language teachers and the commitment of the trainers. She gave an example of one trainer who altered the content and activities in her session after realizing some of the course participants did not have basic knowledge about phonics, as seen below:

*"I came here … in one of the sessions with one of the trainers … was during a reading er … what er … and assuming that we had somehow had some knowledge of phonics. She was under that assumption you see. So suddenly I was saying "no", we don't know much about this. I think for me … no formal courses for where phonics is concern … so she had to somehow er modify her slots there and I appreciate that very much. Again, she looked at the needs of the course participants. I'm learning from scratch here"*. (Rita)

Nurin shared that trainers for INSET came from various departments and divisions and gave different information, which at times was inadequate for the teachers as explained below:

*" … the trainers from here and the state trainers … they seem to have different ideas … from here, I know the correct approach for the pupils to master the English language … but over there … they only prepare us to prepare the lesson plan only …"*. (Nurin)

However, Joyce pointed out a vital point that apart from gaining new skills from INSET, the participants were able to obtain feedback from the trainers. It did not stop there, as they had to go back to their teaching role and reflect on how to incorporate the new skills into their practice, as shared below:

*"We also have to do it ourselves, how can we apply these things taught by the trainer to the classroom … the activities conducted throughout the course … are very like suitable for the teachers needs… by gaining feedback from the trainers … and also discussing with the group members, how can we … modify the activities to suit our different needs then … I think it is a very good way of carrying out the workshop … and the activities given are very new to me … the things that I have learnt here are very useful"*. (Joyce)

**Future Expectations for INSET**

The non-specialist teachers and SISCs shared many insights based on their previous INSET experiences, and what their future expectations were for INSET programmes for English language teachers from primary schools in Malaysia.

Nadya shared her frustration at not getting information before attending INSET, and emphasized the fact that she preferred to be given some information about INSET programmes, the structure and sessions for the whole duration of the course before attending an INSET programme. This was based on her previous experience, as seen below:

*"You don't just ask participants to go and attend a course and then they are left in the dark … for example, Fun Learning for Language Arts … so from the title itself, we … the participants will figure out … but we didn't get the itinerary. They need to provide the itinerary for us, to know and see the slots … we need to do this and we can prepare … mentally, spiritually and physically as well …".* (Nadya)

Joyce explained that in future, she would prefer to attend INSET courses which are relevant to her current needs and are subject specific INSET. She wanted to attend more INSET focusing on the content of the English language and teaching strategies, as seen in her view below:

*"I still prefer courses depending on the content which is useful to me. The content of the course is important because you can share with the other teachers and gain new knowledge from the other trainers. So, it really depends on the course content. So the criteria is the content".* (Joyce)

In addition, Kumar addressed the importance of the type of activities introduced to teachers during INSET. He explained that he would like to learn about teaching and learning activities that can be carried out in the classroom with his pupils, and he would be able to utilize this knowledge and help other teachers in his coaching and mentoring role. He shared the following.

*"I prefer something …  the activity you can run in the school classroom because the teachers are going to ask us this … so sometimes we don't give all the theories … we want something that … For example, a teacher in Year 1, she wants something that applies to her classroom".*

As an SISC, Lily explained that at this point in her career, her current needs would be INSET on coaching and mentoring, as this is crucial for her to assist other teachers more effectively, as seen below:

*" …  the knowledge we need on those 4 skills, the principle, the strategy right, but then in terms again of coaching and mentoring, that one is another part. We need to know the art of coaching and mentoring … the effective coaching and mentoring, how to go about when we deal with human beings. I think we need that part of CP…".* (Lily)

Nadya reflected on the new assessment component in some INSET courses and shared that this component was not practical for teachers, as many of them had

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issues related to time after they attended INSET and returned to school and were likely to be over burdened with work on assignments, actions plans and other tasks for INSET, as expressed below:

*"there are courses that are really intimidating ... whereby you need to come up with an action plan, and do assignments and to come up with lots of things ... and the person who conduct the course and come up with the course needs to understand that once the participants go back to their work, they have lots of things to do and to cover ... o by giving assignments and ask the participants to revise, it will be taxing on them".* (Nadya)

She preferred the previous structure of INSET, where teachers did not have tasks to be completed after the INSET programme so that they can focus on their work after returning to school.

Additionally, Rita shared that she would like to attend other types of professional development programmes, stating that *"conferences especially, I quite like that ... especially at national level...".* Wendy added that she would prefer to attend other INSET programmes in the future.

Usha stated she needed to attend generic INSET courses on using ICT in teaching as she felt that it is in line with teaching the 21st century learning skills and her view is seen below:

*"I think I'm lack in ah... I don't have much interest in ICT...I never explore much of ICT in the class, but I think I will need the knowledge to use it in my lessons...".* (Usha)

# Chapter 5

# Discussion

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains an interpretation of the findings in Chapter 4 and discusses key themes that have emerged from the study. A brief summary is given on aims of the study, research questions and methodology used to obtain the data. The discussion addresses the research questions as outlined in Chapter 3 and focuses on key issues which emerged from the findings of the focus group interviews and individual interviews in relation to the literature review. The chapter ends with recommendations for designing and implementing more effective INSET. It is hoped that the recommendations made here might be useful to the educational authorities, CPD planners, teacher trainers, school administrators, educators and teachers to recognize the perceptions of SISCs and teachers in Malaysia of their future expectations of INSET in order to raise the standards of teaching and learning in the schools. The aims of the study and research questions that will be addressed in this chapter are as follows:

**Research Objectives**

- To identify the research participants' perceptions of previous INSET activities attended

- To identify the research participants' perceptions of previous INSET and its relevance to the KSSR curriculum.

- To identify the research participants' perceived effectiveness of INSET on changes in their practice.

- To identify the research participants' future expectations of INSET in relation to their professional development needs and pupils' needs.

**Research Questions**

RQ 1. **What are the perceptions of a group of primary school English language educators about their previous experiences of INSET?**

    i *What are their perceptions of the Cascade model and training model?*

    ii *Which type of INSET courses do the research participants prefer?*

RQ 2. **How relevant are the INSET courses in helping the educators to improve in their practice?**

    i *What are their perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of INSET courses?*

RQ 3. **What are primary school English language educators' future expectations for INSET courses?**

    i *What are their future expectations in relation to their needs and their pupils' needs?*

In gathering data for this study, my aim was to seek an an in-depth description of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The SISCs and non-specialist teachers discussed private details of their INSET experiences over a period of time and their future expectations of INSET. The data collection methods used in this study were focus group interviews and individual interviews. The research participants also completed profile questionnaires and the information was used to check against the criteria for selection using purposive sampling for the six focus group interviews. The 16 research participants for the individual interviews were gathered through volunteer sampling.

The results from the data collection have been presented in Chapter 4 based on themes and sub-themes which were derived from the data analysis and findings. The data generated from the focus group interviews and individual interviews addressed the issue of triangulation. There were consistencies from the responses of the research participants from the focus group and individual interviews. However, some inconsistencies were also present and the research participants shared varied views.

The discussion in this chapter is organized based on the five themes presented in the findings as seen below:

- Previous INSET experiences

- Relevance of INSET courses

- Professional learning and change

- Students' needs and Teachers' needs

- Future expectations of INSET

## 5.2 Findings from Focus Group Interviews and Individual Interviews

### 5.2.1 Previous INSET experiences

The first research question addressed the SISCs and non-specialist English language teachers' perceptions of their previous INSET experiences. The first sub-question focused on the research participants' perceptions of the cascade model and training model of INSET. The second sub-question touched on their perceptions on the type of INSET courses they preferred. All the three questions addressed the research participants' view about their previous INSET experiences during their roles as English language teachers in primary schools in Malaysia. As seen from the literature review, these questions refer to the models of professional development which are used in the education system in Malaysia; the cascade model, training model or INSET and coaching and mentoring.

According to Kennedy (2005), Wedell (2005), Morrison et al. (1989) and Bett (2016), the cascade model is a popular model of training used in many countries due to its cost effectiveness and ability to train many teachers within a short time where there are lack of resources or manpower such as academics and teacher trainers. Elder (1996) and McDevitt (1998) explained that the Cascade model of training uses a chain effect and has many layers of training and trainers until it reaches the target group or the final group of teachers.

A majority of the research participants who took part in the focus group in this study agreed and were of the opinion that INSET programmes and training via the cascade model was 'a good programme' and they believed the state trainers also known as 'Jurulatih Utama' or 'JUs' were 'well trained and qualified to conduct the INSET programmes for the teachers in the various states in Malaysia. In addition, they were pleased to be selected as trainers for the next cycle of training and conduct INSET courses for other teachers within the same district and other districts. They also highlighted that there was further reinforcement for them when they returned to their own schools and shared the information with their colleagues through in-houses training sessions. According to Elder (1996), this is one strength of the

cascade model as some of the teachers get an opportunity for a dual role, to be trained and to become trainers, and reach out to other teachers in schools scattered in rural or isolated places.

On the other hand, one of the research participants from the individual interviews highlighted that when the INSET courses were conducted at district level by the JUs, it was held as a mass course where English language teachers from schools in two districts were combined together at the district education department to attend the programme. Then, they had to return to their districts and in turn conduct the same course for other teachers from a few schools. Another research participant shared during the individual interviews that he was not keen to attend INSET courses by state trainers and prefers to receive the knowledge and information from 'the source' with reference to academics or teacher trainers who planned the programme and wrote the training materials.

It was interesting to note that these research participants had varied views and were aware of the disadvantages of training via the Cascade model and stated the content was 'watered down'. They explained that they were usually at the level of the first cycle and received the knowledge and skills first hand from the teacher trainers as they were SISCs or state trainers in their states. Then, they would deliver the course at the second cycle to other teachers in their state and districts. However, they felt the other teachers in the other levels of the cascade model were at a disadvantage because they 'do not get a full taste' of the course. In spite of their perceptions of the cascade model of training, the research participants expressed that they have accepted the cascade model as the norm and the main form of INSET in Malaysia as it was a requirement for them to attend courses that were planned with this model as it is an integral part of their role as SISCs and teachers within the MoE, Malaysia. The main aim of the cascade model in the Malaysian context is to reach a significant number of teachers.

According to Elder (1996), at each level of this cyclical approach, the training process needs to maintain a similar quality to avoid any dilution of the knowledge and skills to the target audience. Additionally, the approach of short-circuiting may be used in some contexts where the teacher trainers who planned and conduct the first cycle of INSET programme also train other levels of educators, such as head-teachers on the same content. González (2007) emphasized that training teachers using the cascade model often reduces the content knowledge to a trickle by the time it reaches the target audience. Hayes (2000) stated the cascade model is a replication of a model which was originally developed to be used in a culturally sensitive context in Sri Lanka and emphasized that it may not be suitable in other

contexts and suggests that professional development programmes for teachers must be suitable to the context and constructed collaboratively by all parties involved. In addition, the professional development programme should promote teachers' reflection (Hayes, 2000).

Ono and Ferreira (2010) stated one of the advantages of the cascade training model is it allows for training to be done in stages so that progress can be monitored. However, this is questionable in the Malaysian context as INSET has often been conducted as a one-off programme with no follow-up sessions. Abdul Rahman (2014a) emphasized that it was not possible for every English language teacher in Malaysia to be able to attend face-to-face training with the teacher trainers who developed INSET programmes and conduct these courses for the first cycle. Apart from the cost and lack of human resouces, Abdul Rahman (2014a) highlighted that the three tier cascade model of training, at national level, state and district level and school level had to be adopted to inform teachers about the changes in the curriculum and impart knowledge and this was the quickest method to inform as many teachers as possible. In addition, the MoE had to use the limited financial resources they had and the help of the current practicing ESL teachers to disseminate the information to other teachers (Hayes, 2000; Wedell, 2005; Dichaba and Mokhele, 2012).

This top-down approach has been used for decades in Malaysia and Abdul Rahman (2014a) suggested one way forward is to decentralize the structure within the cascade training model to the state education departments in Malaysia. Autonomy should be granted to the district education officers as well as schools to manage the professional development of teachers in the schools.

The SISCs and non-specialist teachers in this study highlighted their views about the selection process of teachers to attend INSET through a centralized system and also commented on the duration and frequency of INSET which they have attended. The participants from the focus group interviews and individual interviews noted that they would like to be given the opportunities to select INSET courses to attend instead of being appointed and forced to attend courses which were sometimes carried out by CPD planners during the examination period in school or during the term break and school holiday. This had caused them to attend the courses but they were more concerned about leaving their pupils and schools when they were most needed at work.

In addition, the research participants expressed that they had specific INSET needs which they have highlighted in their annual assessment forms but were never considered by CPD planners or higher authorities during the selection process and nomination of teachers for INSET programmes. Most of the research participants

also highlighted that they preferred more subject specific INSET programmes as it is related directly to their roles as ESL and EFL teachers and SISCs but also needed generic INSET programmes from time to time with reference to coaching and mentoring skills, procedures of organizing professional development activities for the English language panel.

Yan (2005) emphasized that it is vital to acknowledge that teachers have practical needs in their specific contexts in order to improve the selection of teachers for INSET courses, as this would be the prerequisite to achieve impact and effectiveness of the INSET training programme. In addition, Kennedy (1999) found that the content of INSET courses was the main predictor of positive student learning outcomes. INSET courses that were subject specific and focused on how to teach a specic skills for a particular subject was more benecial for students than those that concerned generic instructional strategies.

### 5.2.2 Relevance of INSET courses

Teaching in the 21st century requires teachers to be adaptable in a rapidly changing environment and teachers need new skills and capabilities to respond to a variety of demands (Ho and Yip, 2003). Brennan (1996) highlighted that apart from their responsibilies to pupils in the classroom, teachers also have responsibilities to other parties such as contributing to the school, the education system, the wider community and collective responsibilities towards other colleagues and peers in the broader profession. In addition, Sachs (2001) revealed that teachers are being strongly encourage to be autonomous in their roles but are also facing pressure from schools, governments and society to be more accountable in maintaining teaching standards to ensure pupils achieve learning outcomes which have been set.

According to Yan (2005), the relevance and appropriateness of INSET courses are linked to teachers' needs, the local context as well as influenced by the teachers' previous beliefs and assumptions. Teachers have practical needs related to teaching and learning in the classroom which feeds into their current needs of relevant INSET and this area is under researched in Malaysia.

Neil and Morgan (2005) emphasized that professional development can mean different things and various activities which comes in different forms to different people. They explained it comes in at least four forms which include official regulations and recommendations, the school administrators' interpretations of these policies and guidelines on INSET, teachers' own INSET and other teachers' interpretations of INSET such as during the cascade model training. Thus, the various stakeholders are likely to have different views of the relevance of INSET programmes in Malaysia

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depending on their aims and goals within their respective roles.

Additionally, Greenland (1983) emphasized there are various types of IN-SET programmes and this could tie in with the view of Neil and Morgan (2005) on why INSET can have different meanings to different groups of people. Greenland (1983) stated that INSET programmes falls into four different categories. Firstly, there are INSET programmes to prepare teachers and educators for new education or management roles (Greenland, 1983). In the case of Malaysia, one example would be the INSET courses for SISCs since they were only appointed in their new roles as coaches and mentors in 2014 and began coaching and mentoring in stages from 2014 and 2015. The second type of INSET programmes are for certification purposes for unqualified teachers. For example, there are INSET courses planned for non-specialist teachers in Malaysia and the research participants in the study who attended the second INSET programme were attending the 'Intensive Course in English Language Teaching (ICELT-PITO) Primary (Upper Primary)' for non-specialist primary school English language teachers. Thus, upon successful completion of this course, they would have a certificate which acknowledges they have a certificate qualification to teach English in Malaysia.

Greenland (1983) stated the third type of INSET programmes are INSET courses to upgrade teachers' skills and knowledge. These courses could be courses that focus on ESL content, literacy or pedagogy for English language teachers in Malaysia. Sometimes, the teachers in Malaysia would also be appointed to attend general INSET course related to ICT skills and using technology in their lesson planning. The fourth type of INSET programmes are curriculum related INSET programmes which are related to curriculum changes in the education system or ad-hoc refresher course (Greenland, 1983). In Malaysia, both the specialist and non-specialist English language teachers have attended INSET programmes which focus on the KSSR curriculum and most of them attend this INSET courses annually for lower or primary depending on the year groups they are teaching.

In this study, the SISCs and non-specialist teachers who took part in the focus group interviews and individual interviews highlighted that many of the INSET programmes they have attended previously were relevant to the KSSR curriculum and teaching English as an ESL subject. This is due to the reason that there are various types of INSET programmes suggested by Greenland (1983) and the teachers were selected to attend specific INSET courses for certain reasons. Some of the SISCs had stated that what they had learned in the course did benefit them when they were teachers and in the long run, the content learnt also benefited their pupils. This was because when they were specialist teachers before they became

SISCs, they attended many INSET programmes that were relevant to their needs as teachers in lower and upper primary level, such as INSET courses which were refresher courses on the KSSR curriculum as well as other INSET course to upgrade teachers on their knowledge and skills.

On the other hand, research participants from the SISCs group and the non-specialist teachers in this study were disappointed that the content and activities suggested to them during many INSET courses were appropriate for more advanced pupils and were not suitable to a majority of their pupils who were weak in the English language. They explained that in terms of theory of planning INSET programmes for ESL teachers, the activities and exercises introduced to them were perfect on paper but these activities and resources were not relevant to their contexts, as most of their pupils were still learning the alphabets and learning to read at lower primary level and still it was the same case for upper primary pupils in school in the rural areas, as English was their 3rd or 4th language. The teachers were more keen to learn about activities that were relevant to their pupils' current needs and they can apply this in their teaching after attending the INSET programmes.

The SISCs and non-specialist teachers also shared their frustrations about having to meet the expectations of the MoE, Malaysia to obtain the set targets or percentage of passes in their school results. They felt they were put under a lot of pressure to address the school needs as well as national needs but were not able to apply most of the content in the form of lesson activities suggested to them during INSET courses for their pupils.

Somers and Sikorova (2002) explained that such a situation as the above where teachers are unhappy about the content they receive during INSET is a situation of perceived detachment from the CPD planners, education system and government. Somers and Sikorova (2002) emphasized this can be seen as a strength and weakness at the same time. The strength is seen in terms of the CPD planners organising INSET programmes without an ideological reason for planning INSET courses the way they do. Day (1997) added this causes a counterbalance which is necessary for the teachers especially when they are put into situations to work collaboratively with other teachers during these INSET programmes. There will be room for them to share best practices, give each other feedback and modify the activities together to suit various contexts. Somers and Sikorova (2002) also noted that the weakness of perceived detachment from CPD planners and organizers of INSET is that the schools are seen as remote and forgotten from the daily routine of classroom teaching. The role of school administrators is vital in teachers' professional development as they need to provide support as there is potential for teachers

to use the new ideas they acquire through attending INSET programmes off-site run externally by CPD providers. There is danger when the school authorities do not recognize teachers attending INSET in its wider professional community only see INSET as a personal development to individual teachers. The teachers might not be able to use these new ideas without added support in school and may just decide not to make changes in their practice (Somers and Sikorova, 2002).

Borko (2004) explained that education reforms and visions rely greatly on teachers and these reforms will not be successfully laid in place if the support, guidance and commitment of teachers are not obtained to support the reforms. The teachers will have to be ready for changes in their classroom practice. Guskey (2000) also stated that plans for school improvement requires high quality professional development because teachers must keep up with the times and abreast with emerging knowledge and skills. This would enable them to refine their skills and craft of teaching (Guskey, 2000). This realization has led policy makers, educationists and CPD planners to provide opportunities for professional development to specialist and non-specialist teachers in Malaysian schools.

Most of the research participants in this study have attended a fair amount of INSET within the last year and commented on the selection of teachers for INSET. They explained that the selection of teachers by CPD planners and ELOs in their respective states had an influence on whether the INSET courses were relevant for teachers. They explained that almost all the INSET programmes they have attended for English language teachers in their districts, state or national level very often included both groups of teachers in the same INSET course, the specialist and the non-specialist English language teachers. They found the practice of mixing both groups of teachers in the same INSET programmes contributed to them sharing ideas and exchanging views about their best practices in their own classrooms. However, since they used a different KSSR syllabus for the national type schools and vernacular schools, the teachers found it more detrimental than beneficial because one group of teachers benefited more when they had to choose one curriculum or one textbook to plan lessons for micro-teaching activities. For example, if they had chosen the KSSR curriculum and textbook for the SJK (vernacular) schools, then it was only the teachers from the Chinese or Tamil schools who were able to use the materials immediately after the INSET programme. The other teachers from the SK (national type) schools had to spend time to adapt the activities and resource materials before they could be used.

Glover and Law (2005) suggested that sponsored or paid INSET for teachers nowadays tend to aim and plan in a contractual way. The way how INSET was

organized for English language teachers to include both the specialist and non-specialist teachers by the MoE Malaysia has been planned in a similar contractual manner. This is probably one reason why a majority of courses include a mixture of specialist and non-specialist teachers although they may actually need the different type of INSET courses as proposed by Greenland (1983). The teachers would have different needs in their own context and it would be more appropriate for them to attend one of these forms of INSET in the following four categories; INSET for teachers in new management roles, INSET for certification of unqualified teachers, INSET to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills or INSET based on changes in the curriculum. If there was a needs assessment system in placed ad their needs are identified, they could be sent for one of these types of INSET course which will be more relevant to their local contexts, their needs and pupils needs.

### 5.2.3   Professional learning and change

According to Guskey (2000), professional development is planned with aims and goals and is an intentional process which is designed to bring positive changes and improvements to pupils learning outcomes. The goals of INSET programmes would determine the processes and procedures planned as well as the content and materials which are selected for the INSET course. Guskey (2000) also emphasized that many forms of professional development which are seen as too top-down seem to be isolated from the realities in the classroom and school. Thus, the impact of professional development on teachers and pupils are questionable hoped for improvements do not often take place. Thus, although it is complex to identify the changes brought about by professional development and INSET, continuous training of teachers is still needed in efforts towards educational improvement.

Gu and Papageorgiou (2016) reported that most pupils in an EFL context are taught by teachers who are second language speakers of English. This is similar to the context in Malaysia. A majority of specialist and non-specialist English language teachers in Malaysia have another first language such as Malay language, a Chinese dialect or Indian dialect.

The role of the teacher has become the focus in recent years and more importance is being given to teachers' continuing professional development (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). In Malaysia, there have been many policy changes since 2010, with the introduction of the KSSR curriculum in 2011 and the implementation of the 'Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 -2025' in 2013. There has been a demand and urgency to improve teacher quality so that teachers will be able to perform better in the classroom (Haycock, 1998). However, the improvement of teacher quality would

greatly depend on the teachers' willingness to learn continuously and attend professional development programmes to equip themselves with up-to-date knowledge and skills (Day, 1999).

The SISCs in this study shared that they found they learn better when they were involved in hands-on activities during workshops of INSET. In addition, the SISCs shared about how they learn collaboratively with other teachers and were able to ask questions and clarify specific information with each other. In addition, they found it an enriching experience to meet and work with teachers from other districts and states during INSET. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) emphasized that it is important for teaches to know about collaboration and work collaboratively with other teachers and parents to provide a supportive environment for pupils in school and at home. In addition, teachers also need to have the collaboration skills in order to structure interactions among pupils during lessons (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005).

Studies by Glover and Law (2005) found that teachers do value INSET for the support towards their individual professional development as well as for contributing towards pupils' learning outcomes, raising school standards and improving pupils' success on a regional or national level. Teachers have highlighted INSET has been beneficial to their professional development especially in building their self-confidence in their roles as teachers and having an impact on their teaching in the classroom (Glover and Law, 2005).

McGill (2017) highlighted the fact that teachers by default have an intrinsic desire to learn and work with pupils. The research participant in this study from both groups, the SISCs and non-specialist teachers have demonstrated that they have gained knowledge and skills from attending INSET programmes and working with other teachers. They were aware of how they learned best, from doing hands-on activities and collaborating with other teachers. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) highlighted that teachers need to know about how to use the curriculum document, teaching materials and resources and incorporate ICT into their lessons in order to connect with pupils using many sources of information. This would enable the pupils to learn more effectively by exploring ideas, acquiring and synthesizing information, framing questions and solving challenging problems in the classroom (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005).

Lauer et al. (2014) reported that there are multiple issues related to the design and outcomes of INSET progammes and these issues are cognitive processing, needs assessment and transfer of learning. It was found that activities which required teachers to use new knowledge as well as self-assessment of their learning based on

feedback promoted cognitive processing. In addition, it is important to include needs analysis in the planning process of INSET to identify teachers current and immediate needs. During the implementation of INSET, course participants also bring their previous experiences, knowledge and their previous learning with them and this would have effects on their new learning. Lauer et al. (2014) explained that short INSET programmes can have a positive effect on course participants' learning. This point ties in with the experiences of the research participants in this study who emphasized that after attending INSET courses, they were looking forward to share the skills and knowledge they gained with other teachers in their school, district and state. They emphasized that the more they shared the knowledge and skills with other teachers, the more they understood about the new concepts, ideas and knowledge.

According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) , teachers in the 21st century are required to learn and understand the content of the subject deeply and flexibly in order to be able to assist their pupils to understand concepts, relate ideas to other pupils and address any misconceptions. Shulman (1987) had a similar view and stated that teachers also need to be able to connect concepts and ideas which they learn and relate it to everyday life and activities in the classroom.

On the other hand, the SISCs and non-specialist teachers in this study explained that they did not prefer INSET courses which were in the form of briefings and lectures. They gave examples of the INSET courses on the KSSR curriculum which was more theoretical and focused on pedagogical strategies whereas they preferred to learn about new teaching and learning activities that they can use immediately in their teaching with pupils. Similarly, Joyce et al. (1993) emphasized that the interests of the teachers and pupils as learners are intertwined. Thus, the teachers in this research are keen to be exposed to new activities during INSET which will work in the classroom with their pupils after attending the INSET programme.

Wallace (1991) explained that teachers also learn through the reflective model when they attend professional development courses. The teachers learned by getting 'received knowledge' from the trainers during the INSET programmes and would also gain experiential knowledge. Wallace (1991) suggested that experiential knowledge comes from two concepts introduced by Schon (1991), which are 'knowing-in-action' and reflection.

The research participants in this study had shared about many past INSET experiences and reflected on what they had learnt. For example, one of the SISC explained in detail about how she had learnt the concept of planning a lesson and then stepping back to deconstruct the steps she had planned for the whole lesson.

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She shared that she reflected on the lesson and decided how she was going to carry it out in the classroom with pupils. She also shared that the deconstructing activity gave her the skills to step back to look at her lesson planning and re-evaluated the activities for the whole lesson and stages of the lesson. She then planned the steps of the lesson again and made changes to any activity or steps in the lesson which needed some adaptation and modification. This example clearly showed that the SISC was able to reflect on the new knowledge about deconstructing a lesson from the INSET course and had learned how to include reflection in her lesson planning which is an important element of the reflective model explained by Wallace (1991) and Schon (1991).

Hager et al. (2012) suggested that professional practice, learning while teaching and change go hand in hand. Adey (2004) stated that professional development of teachers lies within school improvement, which also lies within the bigger picture of educational change. Burgess (1993) emphasized that INSET does not happen in a linear model but INSET is often given an image of a linear model which makes it looks ideal with a smooth running of the whole process. Additionally, Burgess (1993) claimed that it is indeed difficult to identify the impact of INSET on teachers' professional development and change.

According to Guskey (2002), professional development is central to improve education and aims to change the professional practices and beliefs of teachers as well as the school authorities towards the end goal, which is pupils learning outcomes. Most teachers have to take part in INSET as a contractual agreement set by their employers or the Ministry of Education, however there are still studies which have reported that teachers are keen to get involved in INSET for their own personal development. These teachers are attracted to INSET activities due to the belief that they would develop their growth as professionals, expand their knowledge base and skills as well as enhance their teaching skills in the classroom. Guskey (2002) also explained that many professional development programmes failed due to two factors which were not considered by CPD planners. The first factor is what motivates teachers to take part in professional development and INSET. The second factor is related to the process of change and how does change usually occur in teachers and their practice of teaching. CPD planners assume that after teachers attend professional development programmes, the INSET course would automatically initiate changes in the teachers' attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and teaching practices, which translates into pupils learning outcomes (Guskey, 2002). However, in reality, this may not be the real scenario as we know that other studies have emphasized about the complexity of the curriculum which has an impact on the complexity of

professional development and INSET (Eggleston, 2000; Gatto, 1992; Porter, 2004; Abbott, 2014).

Guskey (2002) also explained that most models in teacher change focus on the change of teachers' belief and attitudes and this should come first in a model. These types of models have been accepted and it is believed that is the manner of how teachers change after attending INSET. The assumption is INSET would lead teachers' change in attitudes and beliefs and these models were readily accepted by CPD planners and school administrators. Joyce et al. (1993) also added that teachers were sometimes included in the process of completing surveys to highlight what they wanted from INSET so that the new strategies in professional development were aligned with the teachers' needs. However, it has been found that such strategies and models which targeted and focused on changes in teachers' beliefs and attitudes did not work (Guskey, 2002; Hayes, 2000).

Guskey (2002) has suggested an alternate model on teachers' professional development and change which comes in the following sequence:

1. Change in teachers' classroom practices

2. Change in pupils' learning outcomes

3. Change in teachers' belief and attitudes

According to Guskey (2002), this alternate model suggests a different sequence of the three learning outcomes of teachers' professional development. The model suggests that changes in teachers' beliefs and attitudes will only happen after they adopt some changes in their teaching and learning practices after attending INSET programmes. In addition, after their improved practices has a positive impact on pupils' learning outcomes, it would lead the teachers' to have a change in their beliefs and attitudes towards the way they are currently teaching and how they taught in the past. One important factor to consider with this model is that a change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes will not come with the implementation of any INSET programme but that the professional development programme has to be implemented successfully.

The SISCs in this study have highlighted many issues related to their learning and change such as the implementation of the KSSR curriculum and teaching resources for national type schools and vernacular schools, attending INSET together with specialist and non-specialist teachers, varying levels of proficiency of pupils studying in school in the cities, towns and rural areas, support from school administrators and CPD planners as well as lack of support from parents of pupils

who speak English as their 3rd or 4th language. These multiple issues who have an effect of the process of professional learning and change for the SISCs and non-specialist teachers in their teaching and learning and coaching and mentoring roles. Guskey's model of teacher learning and change is an idea that change is an experiential process for teachers and the only evidence of changes in teachers practice which matter to the CPD planners, school administrators, teachers and parents is the improvement in pupils' learning outcomes (Guskey, 2002).

### 5.2.4 Students' needs and Teachers' needs

Husen and Postlethwaite (1994) explained that the identification and justification of 'needs' is a complex matter as several parties such as the government departments which plan policies on education, CPD planners, teacher trainers, school administrators, teachers, parents and pupils have different needs.

Pupils' achievement in schools is influenced by many parties such as their immediate family and extended family, peers in school, neighbourhood, schools and other social groups. They all play important roles in shaping pupils's progress in their educational attainment. Research has found that parental support has been the most important factor which contributes to pupils learning outcomes (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Jeynes, 2007; Harris and Goodall, 2007). However, research by Hattie (2009) found that the most important school factor which contributed to positive effects on pupils' learning outcomes was indeed the teacher factor.

Liu (1998) suggested that students who learn the English language as an ESL or EFL subject lack English language proficiency and this should not be overlooked by teachers. The SISCs and non-specialist teachers had similar views to Liu (1998) and stated that a majority of their pupils lack English language proficiency because they belief that the previous curriculum which was used before the KSSR curriculum was introduced in 2010 and implemented in 2011 did not focus much on the listening and speaking skills. Many of the research participants admitted that they themselves had focused more on the reading and writing skills in their English language lessons with pupils and often prepared reading comprehension tasks for their pupils. In addition, the research participants who were teaching in vernacular (Chinese and Tamil) schools explained that they still prefer to use drills in their English language lessons as well as getting pupils to copy sentences and do dictation activities. Joyce and Showers (2002) explained that many education models test pupils in the reading and writing skills and they are often accepted as the core areas of schools. In addition, reading and writing is seen as extremely important and teacher also have more experience in teaching these two skills and have more opportunities to develop

other skills via INSET. Teachers have also been given more help by commercial publishers in terms of materials for teaching the reading and writing skills than other areas (Joyce and Showers, 2002).Thus, it is not surprising that the teachers in Malaysia are focusing more on the reading and writing skills with their pupils based on these reasons.

Research by Goh (2000) suggested that pupils who are low ability listeners had more problems with low-level processing of words and the English language. When the teachers disregard the importance of listening and speaking activities in the classroom and focus more on reading and writing activities, the communicative activities that should help pupils with their English language proficiency are not explored. Thus, the teaching and learning activities only on reading and writing skills are rather limited to help pupils who are struggling with their English language proficiency in primary schools in Malaysia.

Huyen and Nga (2003) and Decarrico (2001) stated that pupils should not be learning words by memorization without understanding the meaning of the words in the English language. Thus, the use of drills by the research participants in this study with their pupils might not be a suitable approach to teach pupils who are already very weak in English and need to acquire language skills. Huyen and Nga (2003) suggested that teachers who teach ESL and EFL pupils could include vocabulary games to encourage pupils to use words and develop more vocabulary by learning in a fun way through games. This would also encourage the pupils to develop more vocabulary in other contexts such as learning with classmates and peers and exploring through fun learning (Huyen and Nga, 2003).

Research by Schoepp (2001), Saricoban and Metin (2000) and Eken (1996) reported that teachers have identified the need for ESL and EFL pupils to have a positive learning attitude when learning the English language and the introduction of songs for listening and speaking activities could motivate pupils to learn better in English. Research findings suggest that teachers could use songs in many stages of English language lessons. For example, song can be used to present a topic of language point to pupils, to encourage intensive listening, to encourage creativity and imagination as well as to foster fun in language learning (Huyen and Nga, 2003; Eken, 1996).

As discussed above, teachers play a big part in getting pupils interested and motivated to learn the English language and there are many creative ways for teacher to plan their lessons. Nevertheless, some teachers face the problems of not knowing how to plan their lessons. One of the research participants in this study highlighted the fact that she only realized that there are different stages in a language lesson

after attending an INSET course in 2015 and she had been teaching for more than 5 years prior to attending this INSET course. But she shared that learning about the pre, while and post stages in a lesson was very rewarding to her and it has helped her to understand how to select teaching and learning activities for her pupils. This might be a similar situation for many other teachers who are currently teaching in Malaysian schools and this is where teachers' needs has to be addressed urgently.

Pedder and Opfer (2013) reported that many professional development programme for teachers in many countries did not meet the needs of the teachers and were disconnected from the classroom context of learning.

Somers and Sikorova (2002) claimed that when teachers were able to be self-selecting and choose INSET programmes to attend, it was based on their perceived needs and what were their immediate needs that needed to be addressed. With reference to teachers needs for INSET in this study, most of the research participants explained that throughout their teaching careers, they have been appointed to attend INSET programmes planned by the MoE Malaysia and it was compulsory to attend this INSET courses as an integral part of being in the profession of a teacher in Malaysia. The INSET programmes were planned either on a national level, state level or district level and the teachers had to travel off-site to attend these courses. The requirement to attend INSET was contractual and almost all the INSET programmes the research participants attended were short INSET courses. They never had the choice to select INSET programme based on their personal preferences. It was only in 2015 that one group of course participants who attended Course 2 in this study, highlighted that some of them were able to apply online to attend the INSET course for non-specialist teachers. However, not all of them knew of this method of applying for the course and other research participants from Course 2 revealed that they were either offered places to attend the course or were appointed by their State Education departments. There was no consistency of how teachers were recruited for that specific INSET course for non-specialist teachers. Thus, some course participants were able to apply for the course based on their own needs while other teachers were selected by the ELOs based on perceived needs and this ties in with the point onthe difficulty of identifying needs as explained by Husen and Postlethwaite (1994).

Many of the SISCs in this study also explained that they had to attend up to four INSET courses back to back in the 2015, either in the capital city of the country or the capital cities within their states. This meant they had to travel and stay off-site for a long period which was around or more than a month. One participant even shared that one INSET programme on the Native Speaker programme went on

for 70 weeks. In addition, the teachers from states in East Malaysia had to travel by flight to West Malaysia. The SISCs explained that a lot of time was wasted on travelling and they were away from their families. On the other hand, many of the non-specialist teachers noted that they preferred and did not mind travelling all the way to the capital city for INSET programmes. They felt that it enabled them to network with teachers from other states around Malaysia and they found the experience enriching and rewarding to listen to other teachers' experiences with their pupils in different contexts, in terms of states and regions in Malaysia as well as urban and rural schools.

Guskey (2002) highlighted that there are two main approaches to implement professional developments models for teachers. The first one is a districtwide design and the second is a site-based design. There is also a third model which integrate the features of the districtwide design and the site-based design.

According to Guskey (2002), districtwide design of professional development involves planning INSET off-site which include teachers who come from schools in various districts. In the case of Malaysia, teachers travel from various districts and states to the capital city of the country. The advantages of having districtwide INSET is the development of a broader vision for improvement and collaboration among teachers and sharing expertise. The focus is also on school administrators who have to decide on what needs are immediately needed to have a positive difference in the classroom for pupils. Guskey (2002) stated the districtwide design of professional development is getting less popular because it has a low success rate due to one-off or one-shot INSET programmes which do not have sufficient follow-up and support and do not have much relevance to classroom practice. The site-based design is similar to school-based INSET which are likely to be relevant to the context of pupils, teachers and the school. However, one of the disadvantages of school-based INSET is that it can be too focused on the conditions within the school and do not look at the possibilities of adopting other new teaching strategies or technology in lessons.

Based on the research participants experiences of the INSET programmes in Malaysia, the current system in place for INSET by the MoE Malaysia is similar to the integrated design as suggested by Guskey (2002). The main feature of this model is that it includes both the districtwide and site-based designs. The research participants have highlighted that they attended INSET courses run off-site and had coaching and mentoring sessions at district level. They also shared that they had school-based INSET programmes such as in-house training and INSET days at school level. Thus, the current model in place is there to address the teachers needs

by combining the best possible outcomes through both models, the districtwide and site-based designs of INSET. The research participants have shared their preferences of attending INSET for either one of these models but they have not realized that the combination of both models could cater to their varying needs of SISCs and teachers.

The process of teacher learning is not a straightforward internalization process of information (Mak, 2010). Teachers learn by collaborating with other teachers, giving feedback to colleagues and other teachers, giving feedback to pupils and reflecting on their teaching approaches and taking action to make appropriate changes (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2003; Connor and Pokora, 2012). Joyce and Showers (2002) emphasized that when teachers work together collaboratively, it leads to the development of positive interdependence where there is cooperation and collective action which also celebrate individual differences among the teachers. It was also reported that the more intense the collaboration was between teachers, it led to more cooperative environments with greater effects (Joyce and Showers, 2002).

According to Mak (2010), apart from provision of the various models of professional development for teachers, the perceptions and views of currently practicing teachers should be considered before any systematic professional development reforms and programmes are launched. Based on this study, the SISCs and non-specialist teachers' views are pertinent and could assist CPD planners to improve INSET programmes for other teachers. Furthermore, Harris (2001) claimed that there should be a culture of change at all levels of the education system in order for professional development programmes to have a positive effect on teachers practices and pupils learning outcomes. Therefore, current practicing teachers can take on the roles as agents of change to improve in their craft of teaching and assist fellow teachers to grow.

### 5.2.5 Future expectations of INSET

According to Wiles (2009), Gándara et al. (2005) and Ho et al. (2001), improvements in the curriculum development is related to curriculum instruction and professional development of teachers. Guskey (2000) emphasized that professional development for teachers is a process which is intentional, on-going and systemic.Craft (1996) explained that the main aim of INSET is to assist teachers to progress in their roles and become better teachers. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) emphasized that professional development of teachers through INSET makes teachers more motivated and confident about their teaching. It will indirectly lead to positive learning gains for pupils as they will get more challenging learning standards. Thus, it is

vital to create the opportunities for teachers to have continuous learning which inspire them to improve in their teaching and create a pathway for pupils' success in education.

Zepeda (2012) and Eraut (1987) emphasized that pupils learning outcomes is the primary goal of teachers' professional development and teachers should be given opportunities to improve their pedagogical skills, increase their knowledge and keep abreast with the most up to date information related to their subject. In addition, de Vries et al. (2014) emphasized that INSET for teachers aims to increase teacher quality, improve pupils' performance and learning and the improvement of quality of schools. le Roux (2005) added that INSET also opens up lifelong learning opportunities for teachers.

In relation to planning for INSET, the research participants in this study have highlighted that one of their hopes for the future is for the planning of INSET programmes in Malaysia to be streamlined with more efficiency. The SISCs and non-specialist teachers had shared that there should be proper planning of the duration and time of INSET programmes during the academic year. They noted some challenges which they faced such as attending a few INSET courses back-to-back at a specific time of the year. They also added that there should be a reliable system in place to record the progress of teachers' professional development so that the right teachers will be selected for the right INSET programmes based on their current needs which they have included in their annual SKT forms. The SISCs and non-specialist teachers believe this is one step towards ensuring a more efficient way to plan INSET and to select teachers to attend relevant INSET programmes.

Guskey (2000) suggests that when planning professional development, CPD planners need to ensure they start planning INSET programmes with a clear statement of aims and goals, followed by ensuring the goals are worthwhile and there is a method for those aims to be assessed. Additionally, any form of INSET for teachers should not be done randomly in a haphazard manner (Guskey, 2000). In addition, INSET should be viewed as an ongoing process instead of just a 3or 4 day short INSET course. Teachers need to be able to see the value of INSET as a job embedded process and continuously learn from their day-to-day teaching and working with their peers through school-based INSET days as well as coaching and mentoring activities. If school administrators and teachers view INSET as fragmented one-off activities, the other efforts of professional development would not be able to fall into place within the bigger picture. Guskey (2002) explained that professional development has to be accepted as a systemic approach and there must be a clear vision from CPD planners of the improvements needed, together with support from

school administrators and teachers for it to become successful.

The SISCs and non-specialist in this study also commented on the quality of trainers can have a dual effect on INSET of teachers. Some of the research participants shared how some trainers had gone out of their way to change the content of their sessions based on the teachers' feedback and assisted them greatly in their professional development journey. In contrast, some of the research participants have had trainers who were inexperienced and unsure of the content they were presenting to the teachers and this made the teachers disappointed to attend specific INSET programmes. Elder (1996) claimed that the quality of the trainers, training as well as training materials presented by the trainers to the teachers will have a great influence on the quality of learning and understanding by the teachers.

Birman et al. (2000) reported that evidence which supports effective professional development for teachers highlighted six factors which have potential to improve the provision of INSET. These factors are the form, duration, collective participation, content, active learning and coherence (Birman et al., 2000). The first factor which is the form refers to the traditional form of INSET and reform activities. The traditional form of INSET includes workshops or INSET courses at teacher training institutes. It was reported that these traditional forms were becoming less popular as they did not give teachers enough time, activities and sufficient content for their current needs. In addition, INSET is changing to include more reform activities which are longer in duration with more content focus, coherence and opportunities for active learning. Birman et al. (2000) also reported that longer INSET courses had more content focus of the subject areas of the INSET course and more active learning privileges. The third factor suggested by Birman et al. (2000) is collective participation. Their findings suggested that when teachers from the same subject, department or school attend INSET together, they are more likely to discuss about concepts, problems and issues that arise during INSET and work together to integrate what they have learnt into their practices in their own teaching and the practices within the department and school. The fourth factor focuses on course content.

Birman et al. (2000) stated that their research suggests teachers do not find generic INSET programmes to be useful when it did not connect teaching strategies such as lesson planning to the content of the subject. They suggested that it is more effective to focus on specific teaching skills and have a specific focus on content. The fifth factor touches on active learning which encourages teacher to take part in discussions, planning and practice. The sixth factor is coherence and it is related to policies which increased teacher learning to improve pupils' learning outcomes.

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Birman et al. (2000) stressed that their findings suggest these six features should be present in any ideal INSET programme for it to cater to teachers needs effectively.

The SISCs and non-specialist teachers in this study have commented that their future expectations of INSET focuses on the nature of learning actively in a continuous manner. They hope to attend longer INSET programmes as they wanted more opportunities to progress in the career as English language teachers and upgrade their skills. They realized they needed more professional knowledge and skills especially in improving quality of their teaching, obtaining subject specific knowledge and pedagogical skills as well as move up in career advancement. The want CPD planners to revise existing policies of how teachers are selected for INSET programmes as well as provide opportunities for teachers to have choices on the topics and types of INSET they could attend as well as plan the best time to attend INSET, such as early in the year before the examination period.

Joyce and Showers (2002) emphasized that what works for one teacher may not be applicable for another teacher's context because all teachers are different individuals and works in different contexts which have unique features. Joyce and Showers (2002) also explained that the selection of content for INSET to address teachers needs usually receive less attention than other parts of the plans for school improvement processes in top-down education reform efforts.

It was brought to attention in this study that teachers who were teaching pupils with special needs such as the deaf and dumb were required to attend IN-SET programmes with English language teachers from National type schools and vernacular schools. The research participant who highlighted this issue explained that teachers who are teaching special needs pupils have never been provided with INSET for this group of pupils and would like INSET to be planned so that it can cater to all English language teachers who are teaching the deaf and dumb pupils so that they can share about best practices in their context and collaborate together. The research participant also mentioned that the training calender for MoE Malaysia had not planned any courses for English language teachers for the whole of 2015. The teacher felt that he was sent 'wrongly' to most of the INSET programmes for other English language teachers and the CPD planners had failed to recognize the needs of teachers who taught pupils with special needs. In addition, there was no needs analysis carried out for teachers from special needs schools. Pring (2011) emphasized that curriculum development and professional development are closely linked. Thus, it is vital for teachers who are using the curriculum in their daily teaching to be included in the planning of INSET as they can be included as an integral part of the planning process to establish a more fluid INSET network. The

INSET courses should be tailored according to the type of school and pupils such as in the past, INSET was geared to teachers from the national type schools and vernacular schools but it often materialized that only one group of teachers benefited from the INSET programme when they chose one curriculum to focus on when planning lessons and activities.

The role of the teacher has been challenged and redefined especially now that we are living in the era of ICT explosion and the focus is on incorporating technology for 21st century learning. The research participants in this study have highlighted they would like to attend more generic INSET programmes which would equip them with the skills to use ICT in their English language lessons. Technology can be used as a tool to aid teachers to improve their lessons by simulating real life situations. Some of the challenges of using technology for English language teaching in Malaysia would be the inconsistency and lack of internet facilities in schools in the rural areas and island schools. Most of these schools only have one computer in the school's office and there aren't internet facilities for pupils. Thus, this would create a greater divide among pupils in urban schools and those studying in schools in the rural areas. Teachers from rural schools would benefit more from INSET programmes which interests them and CPD planner should conduct a needs analysis to find out what type of INSET would be more beneficial to them and connected to the issue of relevancy.

In order to address the future expectation of the research participants in this study, an assessment of professional development activities is needed and suggested by a few of the research participants. This is for INSET programmes to be improved over time and meaningfully assist the SISCs and non-specialist teachers with a hands-on approach and follow-up activities to support the teachers in their professional development journey. In addition, many of the research participants highlighted that they need INSET programmes in language skills to help them with their English language proficiency, especially for the non-specialist teachers. The research participants also commented on the school needs as a focal point to enhance effectiveness in teaching. By addressing the school needs, they believe they could work on a common problem for the English language teachers within the same English language panel in the school and improve their teaching and learning strategies more effectively.

It was interesting to know that the research participants also shared that they were willing to voluntarily attend other INSSET programmes and cover the costs of these courses on their own for their professional development. Some of the teachers from the vernacular schools had already started attending private English

proficiency programmes to improve their proficiency in English as there was a lack of INSET programmes by MoE Malaysia to address their language skills. It has been on an individual and voluntary basis because the teachers realized their own needs which needed immediate attention and action. One issue which was stated indirectly by some of the research participants was the issue about fairness for teachers in being given equal opportunities to attend INSET regardless of the type of schools they were teaching in and their number of years in service. The research participants shared that although some of them are mid-career teachers, senior teachers or SISCs, they still needed professional development activities to keep them up-to-date with knowledge and skills related to the English language subject, English literature, pedagogy as well as generic INSET on ICT.

# Chapter 6

# Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapters in this thesis have successfully achieved the research goals by investigating the perceptions of a group of SISCs and non-specialist English language teachers in Malaysia about their previous INSET experiences and their future expectations of INSET. The ultimate goal was to identify the research participants' perceptions of previous INSET courses they have attended and to also identify the relevance of these programmes to the KSSR curriculum. In addition, another goal of the research was to identify the SISCs and non-specialist teachers perceived effectiveness of INSET in relation to changes in their practice and their future expectations of the INSET available to them through the MoE Malaysia. This chapter is organized into three sections and will cover the following; the contribution of this study, the limitations of this study and recommendation for future research work.

## 6.2 Contribution of this study

This qualitative study has addressed the research participants' views about INSET programmes which were conducted via the cascade model, the training model or INSET and the coaching and mentoring model in Malaysia for SISCs and non-specialist English language teachers.

The first contribution of this study is getting the views of teachers who have been attending INSET activities via a few models of professional development at the same time. The research participants have highlighted that they saw the

cascade model as having a dual role within the education system in Malaysia and have mixed views about attending INSET via this model. It was noted that the top-down curriculum model used in Malaysia for professional development activities and INSET needed the cascade model to a certain degree as the lack of resources is very prominent in terms of manpower. There are not enough teacher trainers to conduct face-to-face INSET programmes for all the teachers in Malaysia and thus the teachers who are skilled and have attended INSET programmes needed to take on the role of state trainers in their own states after completing the INSET programmes at national level. In addition, the lack of recourses in rural schools is still a major problem. Most rural schools in the villages in the interior do not have a specialist English language teacher within the school as well as lack ICT facilities.

The cascade model and training model of INSET in Malaysia has also benefited from the bottom up model of coaching and mentoring teachers. Although this model has only been implemented in stages from 2014 in Malaysia, the combination of a top-down model and bottom-up model seemed to have a positive outcome as teachers are able to attend INSET activities via school-based INSET and districtwide INSET programmes. The teachers were able to experience both and for each teacher, one of these models would be preferred based on his or her beliefs, attitudes and needs.

The second contribution of this study is the findings of the perceptions of SISCs on their past experiences of INSET during their roles as specialist teachers. The SISCs had highlighted all the problems they faced such as attending INSET courses which were too long or not relevant, not having equal opportunities to attend INSET due to the location of their schools either in the urban or rural areas as well as attending INSET courses which consisted of too many briefings and lectures. Now that this SISCs have another role to become coaches and mentors for other teachers in their districts and states, they have also contributed to the study by highlighting the immediate needs of the teachers as they are the closest point of contact with teachers in their coaching and mentoring groups. They also have follow-up meetings with the teachers and are able to address any problems at the grassroots level. The views of SISCs in Malaysia have hardly been reported in any other studies and this study has contributed to a grey area by highlighting their perceptions of INSET for English language teachers in Malaysia.

The third contribution of this study is the reported findings from minority groups of teachers seemed to have been forgotten by CPD planners along the way of their INSET journey. The issues of English language teachers who are teaching pupils with special needs and teachers who are teaching in SKMs (schools with less

than 150 pupils in rural areas) need to be addressed soon as it is unfair to group them for INSET programmes which do not really address their specific needs based on the contexts of their pupils and school. These teachers have highlighted they preferred to attend INSET progarmmes with teachers from a similar context so that they can work on and plan lessons and prepare teaching and learning materials which suits their pupils level and needs.

The fourth contribution of this study is the focus on the need of teacher education reform. The SISCs and teachers have highlighted they still have needs related to their English language proficiency, planning literacy programmes for their pupils on the four language skills with a focus on the listening and speaking skills, as well as the need for more INSET with a focus on pedagogy. How should the reforms be planned? INSET programmes can be more selective and identify teachers who have highlighted they need specific skills, such as pedagogical skills to plan the different stages in a lesson. The education reforms should also be planned and designed according to global knowledge standards and closely aligned with the KSSR curriculum. Teachers should also be encouraged to conduct action research on their own practice to promote self-improvement and maintain accountability of their teaching and professional development.

## 6.3   Limitations of this study

In conducting this research, there were a few limitations which could not be avoided and they are discussed in this section. Some of the limitations which will be discussed below are related to the problematic nature of the research, difficulties faced during fieldwork, cultural issues and language issues.

One of the problematic natures of this study was the difficulty to obtain literature and other studies which focused on the views of teachers about INSET in Malaysia. Most of the other studies which I found about research in Malaysia focused more on the use of English language as a medium of instruction and English language policies and curriculum change. Nevertheless, I was able to derive ideas from studies on professional development and INSET from countries such as the United Kingdom, USA, Thailand and other countries.

During the fieldwork process, I was only given permission to conduct my data collection process in not more than 90 days. This resulted in me only having access to the course participants who were going to attend INSET programmes at ELTC from May to July 2017. Many INSET courses were being conducted for teachers at ELTC during that period but they were for teachers from secondary schools. Thus,

I could not select those INSET programmes because the focus of my research was on primary school teachers.

I used focus group interviews and individual interviews as my data collection methods. The initial planning for the field work was done about 10 months prior to the period of May to July 2015. Although I had already received the training calendar from one of the Heads of department at ELTC Malaysia and selected the INSET programmes for potential research participants in this study, ELTC's training calendar was revised several times until the time before data collection began. Thus, it was unavoidable to include two groups of research participants in this study, the SISCs and non-specialist teachers. In the initial proposal for the research, I had intended for all the research participants to be from one group of teachers, either specialist or non-specialist teachers. As ELTC had no control over the selection of the course participants who attended the INSET courses, it resulted in me having no control over my research participants too. The selection of teachers for the INSET programmes were controlled by the State Education Departments who selected teachers to become course participants for each INSET programme based on the criteria given by ELTC.

During the data collection period, I was also permitted very limited time to meet the teachers to conduct the focus group interviews and individual interviews and had to plan the time well to interview them after they had their lunch or while they had their tea break in between the sessions of the INSET programmes they were attending. Thus, when the INSET course was a short course for 3 to 4 days, I had only the lunch breaks and tea breaks during those 3 to 4 days to interview the research participants for the focus group interviews and individual interview. Thus, although 17 research participants had volunteered to take part in the individual interviews, I was only able to interview 16 of them.

There were certain challenges which resulted from cultural issues and language issues. I ensured that I avoided any sensitive issues as Malaysians live in a multi-ethnic society. Thus, I was mindful of no discussion on anything related to race and religion when the topic discussed was on national type schools and vernacular schools. I decided to conduct the focus group interviews and individual interviews using the English language as all the research participants had different mother tongues such as Malay language, Chinese dialects or Indian dialects. Thus, it was deemed appropriate to use the English language as the medium of instruction during the process of data collection. Nevertheless, there were times when the research participants were not very sure of my questions and I had to rephrase my questions to clarify the meaning. In addition, sometimes the research participants

were lost for words in English and spoke in their mother tongue and these utterances have been translated into English.

## 6.4    Recommendations

This research was conducted in Malaysia and was aimed at obtaining the views and perceptions of Malaysian teachers about INSET. Therefore, the recommendations here are based on the findings of this study and in the Malaysian context but could be applied to other contexts as well.

The first recommendation is related to the reinvention and redevelopment of INSET. The findings suggest that INSET is a holistic approach to teacher development which covers a full range of INSET programmes and learning opportunities for teachers that includes and goes far beyond formal initial teacher training and other CPD courses. Some of the reinvention and redevelopment efforts of INSET could include developing a national teacher development portfolio. The ownership for this portfolio could be given to the teachers so that they have opportunities to have autonomy over their own professional development. Secondly, it is recommended for the MoE Malaysia to create a needs analysis model and an evaluation model which can both provide teachers, school administrators and CPD planners with appropriate and up-to-date information about teachers' professional development. This information can then be used to plan future INSET programmes. In addition, it could solve some of the problems related to the selection of teachers for INSET as highlighted by the research participants in this study.

The second recommendation is related to the structure of INSET programmes. The research participants in this study have highlighted that they would like to attend different forms of CPD activities as part of their INSET. Their future expectations of INSET included attending seminars and conferences, attending longer INSET programmes, having follow-up sessions for short INSET courses as well as continuing their tertiary education to degree level and postgraduate level for English language teaching. One of the recommendations which could be considered is to establish a framework of accredited and non-accredited professional development programmes for teachers. District officers at the State Education departments, school administrators and teachers can work hand in hand to design and build programmes which could offer teachers the opportunities to attend public or private professional development activities. The private sector or State Education department could fund part of the cost or subsidize the fees for teachers to attend privately run INSET courses and conferences. In addition, some initial efforts could be taken

to conduct some research on whether an online mode of INSET could be beneficial for teachers, such as a free massive open online course (MOOC) as we are moving towards education with 21st century learning skills.

The third recommendation is related to the role of the teachers and teacher trainers. Teachers should be encouraged to move out of their comfort zone and believe that professional development can be continuous throughout their careers. They would need on-going support, motivation and follow-up with the course participants even after they have completed the INSET programme. It is important for trainers to plan teaching and learning activities during INSET programme to encourage teachers to move from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset and this could be done by also providing teachers with a foundation and route for career-long professional development programmes, such as a buddy support system, work more closely with their mentors and coaches in their districts as well as plan open days to share best practices with teachers in other districts, states or national level. Thus, when doors are open for more collaborative INSET activities, teachers would have the opportunities to grow and develop further.

The fourth recommendation focuses on methods of teaching and learning and to stimulate changes in school practice. Teachers attend INSET to obtain solutions to address the challenges of teaching and learning in the classroom. The role of CPD planners would be to ensure the teacher trainers of INSET programmes disseminate new thinking and innovative ideas around methods of teaching and learning and this would be welcomed greatly by teachers as most of the time, they are not really interested behind the theory of teaching and learning activities but need activities which can be used in the classroom with their pupils. It is suggested that teachers associations, subject matter experts from subject associations and universities could work closely together in collaborating with government agencies such as the MoE Malaysia to improve the provisions of INSET. In addition, the curriculum for teacher development for preservice and INSET could be reviewed, redeveloped and formulated in ways that there is a link between the two and INSET provides continuity to new teachers once they enter the school system.

Professional development of teachers is extremely important for teachers at all levels in their profession; beginning teachers, mid-career teachers as well as senior and experienced teachers. The importance of the evaluation of professional development must not be overlooked from time to time as even though teachers are able to impart knowledge to pupils and teach all pupils to a high standard, teacher quality must still be looked at and addressed continuously. What is required for the success of INSET is a vision of improvements, explicit ideas on organizational

characteristics and attributes needed for success. Thus, changes at the level of the teachers must be encouraged and the teachers must be supported by organisations such as the schools, district education departments, state education departments and planners of CPD.

## 6.5    Conclusion

Society has many expectations from education and the crucial factor to fulfil those expectations is the teacher factor. Therefore, in-service education and training for teachers is a key factor to improve the quality of teachers and the standard of teaching in schools. Nevertheless, research from the past and present has shown that the criteria used and implemented in planning good INSET is often insufficient and complex in many contexts. This was found to be a similar situation in the context of this study in Malaysia.

The findings in this study found that all components of the system of INSET in Malaysia needed to be addressed and improved continuously to provide on-going professional development for specialist and non-specialist English language teachers. The research participants in this study shared their views that the cascade model and training model used in Malaysia has a dual role. Firstly, the cascade model is used to build a core group of master trainers or state trainers. They fill in the gap of the lack of resources and provide a temporary solution to the supply side of professional development by becoming the trainers in the next link in the cascade model of INSET. Secondly, the use of the cascade model in Malaysia promises scale and an increase in the number of teachers having the opportunities to attend INSET programmes in a short period of time.

This is similar in a broader world context as the cascade model is used for capacity building and promises sustainability, using local resources to increase human and social capital in a cost-effective manner. At the same time, the cascade model for training teachers promises equity as it provides access to professional development and learning for a greater number of teachers across an education system. On the other hand, the findings in this study also revealed and confirmed that training teachers in many links or tiers which cascades down lacks mechanism for support and the formal learning often ends with the last workshop.

Training teachers via the cascade model gives the assumption that the teachers have already learned all that they needed from the INSET programme and will be able to master the content and innovation in their practice in the classroom. This also causes additional questions after INSET which includes logistical burdens

for the teachers to train other teachers. In addition, these teachers face the anxiety for the them to apply new innovations in their teaching and muddle through the process without further support. There is also the question of equalising educational opportunities for teachers as the teachers who are at the first link or first tier of the cascade model would often receive the highest quality professional development from national and international experts while the teachers in the other tiers would not receive the same quality of INSET.

In a context of a broader teacher education reform across the global context, the cascade model of training teachers focuses on quantity over quality. The model implies that teachers are able to accept new learning and unlearn some of their previous pedagogical practices and accomplish these within the workshops over a few days. The cascade model of INSET has a lack of focus on a key area of professional development which is teacher change, through local intervention and further support. This is mainly due to the reason that the cascade model of training teachers attempts to do many things in a quick manner with the available resources. Nevertheless, the findings in this study addressed that the cascade model in Malaysia has benefited from the bottom-up approach of coaching and mentoring which has been implemented in stages from 2014. At the same time, there is a greater need to provide coaches and mentors with the skills of how to embrace their new roles and become good coaches and mentors to teachers from urban and rural schools as they would have different set of problems as well as various needs.

The findings from this research in the form of copies of this thesis and research papers I have written will be handed to the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia. It would benefit policy makers within the Ministry of Education to find solutions of how to address some of the issues which were found in relation to the cascade model, top-down training model and coaching and mentoring in Malaysia. In addition, it would be vital to focus on the quality of professional learning for teachers from urban and rural schools in Malaysia. My role as a researcher and a former teacher trainer for INSET in Malaysia would also assist me to disseminate more in-depth findings from this study in the form of other research papers which are currently in progress.

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# Appendix A

# Consent Form

**Consent for Participation in Research**

**Project Title**

A Study of a Group of Primary School Educators' Perceptions of their Continuing

Professional Development in Malaysia.

**Researcher Details**

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**Description of Research**

The Research will investigate teachers' perceptions of their INSET journey and capture their views on INSET and types of activities they experience based on their beliefs of what good INSET is. The research aims to identify the perceptions of a group of Malaysian primary school teachers of their previous INSET activities as well as future expectation of INSET. Their views are pertinent as it may assist CPD providers on how the whole process of INSET could be improved to cater to the teachers' individual needs, students' needs, school needs and national needs.

The research instruments used will include a focus groups interviews, individual interviews and a post questionnaire.

**Data to be collected and processed**

You are being asked to agree to take part in a focus group interview/ individual interview regarding the perceptions of primary school in-service English language teachers' perceptions of INSET activities in Malaysia. The semi-structured interview will seek to gather your personal experiences. Interviews will be recorded and later transcribed.

Consent

1.  I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2.  I understand my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without any of my rights being affected.

3.  I understand that confidentiality will be maintained at all times, that I will not be identified, and my data will be anonymised, unless otherwise explicitly stated.

4.  I understand that the data will be accessed only by the researcher. Information will be stored in a secure place and destroyed on completion of the research project.

5.  I agree to take part in this study.


…………………………..            …………………………..            …………..
Name of participant              Signature                        Date


…………………………..            …………………….. …            …………..
Name of researcher               Signature                        Date

# Appendix B

# Profile Questionnaire

**Profile Questionnaire**
*Confidentiality: All information collected from this questionnaire will be treated confidentially.*

*Instructions: The questions contained in this questionnaire are about your background, educational level, experience in teaching and information on activities you have attended for in-service training (INSET) and continuing professional development (CPD).*

**Section A: Personal Details**

1. What is your gender?

   ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your age?

   ☐ Under 29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59

3. What is your highest level of education?

   ☐ Diploma in Education
   ☐ Bachelor Degree (Arts / Science)
   ☐ Bachelor of Education
   ☐ Master degree (Arts/Science)
   ☐ Master in Education

**Section B: Teaching Experience**

4. What is your status as an English language teacher?

   ☐ Non-option ☐ Optionist

5. How long have you been teaching?

   ☐ Under 5 years ☐ 16-20 years ☐ More than 30 years
   ☐ 6-10 years ☐ 21-25 years
   ☐ 11-15 years ☐ 26- 30 years

6. How long have you been teaching the English language?

☐ Under 5 years     ☐ 16-20 years     ☐ More than 30 years
☐ 6-10 years       ☐ 21-25 years
☐ 11-15 years     ☐ 26- 30 years

**Section C: In-Service Training (INSET) & Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

*In this questionnaire, CPD is defined as a combination of INSET programmes and courses as well as other professional development activities which develop a teachers' knowledge, skills and expertise. Please only consider CPD you have attended after your initial teacher training during your diploma or bachelor degree.*

7. During the last **two** years, have you participated in any of the following types of CPD?

|  |  | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| i. | Courses/ Workshops/ On-line courses | ☐ | ☐ |
| ii. | Education conferences/ seminars | ☐ | ☐ |
| iii. | Qualification programme (E.g. Degree/ Masters) | ☐ | ☐ |
| iv. | Observation visits to other schools | ☐ | ☐ |
| v. | Participation in teachers network for CPD | ☐ | ☐ |
| vi. | Individual research (E.g. Action Research) | ☐ | ☐ |
| vii. | Collaborative Research | ☐ | ☐ |
| viii. | Mentoring/ Peer observation | ☐ | ☐ |

8. How many days of INSET did you attend in the last **one** year?

_____ days

9. Of these, how many days were compulsory for you to attend as part of your job?

_____ days

10. For the INSET you have attended in the past year, how many of it did you have to pay for?

☐ None          ☐ Some          ☐ All

# Appendix C

# Focus Group Questions

**Questions for Focus Groups Interviews**

1. What is the average duration of the INSET courses primary school English language teachers get to attend?
2. How often do you get to attend INSET during term time and school holidays? Which do you prefer and why?
3. Did you have a choice of what INSET activities you attend?
4. Do you prefer face to face training, on-line INSET courses or a combination or both? Why?
5. Have you attended more generic INSET or subject-related INSET? Was there an equal balance?
6. Has there been a shift in the type of INSET you attend, from generic INSET to subject-related CPD or the other way around?
7. In your opinion, are you given a real opportunity to improve your skills through INSET activities you attend?
8. In your opinion, were the INSET activities you attended relevant to your pupils' needs, your needs and the schools' needs?
9. If you are planners of INSET for primary school English language teachers in Malaysia, what would you change about the INSET which teachers attend?
10. What are your expectations for the provision and improvement of INSET for primary school English language teachers in the future?

# Appendix D

# Focus Group Topic Guide

**Focus Group Topic Guide**

**Introduction**

Good morning/ afternoon. My name is Elaine. Thank you for taking part in this research project.

**Give an explanation**

A focus group is a carefully planned discussion in a relaxed informal environment to explore a group of people's perceptions, views and opinions.

**Present the aim**

We are here today to talk about your various experiences of attending INSET programmes in your roles as educators for the English language teaching in the Malaysian education system. The purpose of this focus group is to share your perceptions of previous courses and workshops you have attended for your professional development while teaching in primary schools and/ or working as SISCs with primary school teachers.

I would also like you to share your opinions related to the intervention INSET course you are currently attending at ELTC as well as your future expectations of INSET which you will be attending. In addition, I hope you could also share about how INSET has helped you in your practice and your craft of teaching.

Your perceptions matter as they will be vital information for CPD providers to improve INSET offered to educators such as yourselves. There are no right or wrong answers and you can agree or disagree with other members in this group by sharing your views. You can also share other viewpoints not linked to the questions but are relevant to you. Please express how you really feel and do not hesitate to ask questions if you need to clarify about any questions.

**Discuss procedure**

As we go through this focus group, I will be doing an audio recording and taking some notes down so I will have relevant information. Everything you share will be confidential. The discussion will last about an hour and I have ten questions to cover in that time. It would be very helpful if one person speaks at a time and another person is free to pick up anytime afterwards from the points shared by any member.

**Participant introduction**

We will start with a very short introduction for everyone to share your name, how long you have been teaching and which state/ region you are coming from. You could also share whether you are teaching in a rural or urban school.

**Focus Group Interview Questions**

1.  What is the average duration of the INSET courses primary school English language teachers get to attend?

    **Prompts**: Is it usually more than 3 days? Are the courses usually in your state or outstation?

2.  How often do you get to attend INSET during term time and school holidays? Which do you prefer and why?

    **Prompts**: Tell me more about why you prefer to attend INSET during term time.

3.  Did you have a choice of what INSET activities you attend?

    **Prompts**: Has your interest for specific INSET in your annual reviews forms ever been considered?

4.  Do you prefer face to face training, on-line INSET courses or a combination or both? Why?

    **Prompts**: Tell me more how you benefited from this mode of INSET?

5.  Have you attended more generic INSET or subject-related INSET? Was there an equal balance?

    **Prompts**: Tell me how you find these useful.

6.  Has there been a shift in the type of INSET you attend, from generic INSET to subject-related CPD or the other way around?

    **Prompts**: How do you see this situation of having/not having a shift in type of INSET on your needs?

7.  In your opinion, are you given a real opportunity to improve your skills through INSET activities you attend?

    **Prompts**: That's interesting. Tell me more about that.

8. In your opinion, were the INSET activities you attended relevant to your pupils' needs, your needs and the schools' needs?

   **Prompts**: Could you give examples of how it was relevant? Did INSET help you to improve in your teaching? If yes/no, how and why/ why not?

9. If you are planners of INSET for primary school English language teachers in Malaysia, what would you change about the INSET which teachers attend?

   **Prompts**: Could you also explain in terms of the policy/ curriculum/ pedagogical approaches/ strategies?

10. What are your expectations for the provision and improvement of INSET for primary school English language teachers in the future?

    **Prompts**: What areas do you need more training in? Why do you say that?


**Closure**

Before we end our focus group discussion, does anyone want to add any more points or clarify an opinion on this? Thank you very much for coming today and taking part in this study. Your comments and your time is very much appreciated.

# Appendix E

# Interview 1 Questions

**Questions for Individual interviews**

**First Interview:**
**Questions on Research Participants' Previous INSET Experiences**

1. What type of INSET activities were the most common among those you attended?
2. What are your top three preferences for INSET activities? Why?
3. How frequent did you have the opportunity to attend INSET activities?
4. Did you have a choice of what INSET activities you attended?
5. Did you have INSET days in school as well as off-site training?
6. Do you prefer either one of the above? (INSET in school/ off site)
7. Do you prefer to be nominated for INSET courses by your headmaster and English language officer (ELO) in your state or select your own INSET activities. Why?
8. Apart from INSET activities planned by the school administration, did you also attend other INSET activities on your own and bear the cost of it? Why?
9. Is the INSET for the middle managers (e.g. head of English language panel) and English language teachers in your school similar? Please elaborate.
10. In your opinion, were the INSET activities you attended relevant to the curriculum, your pupils' needs and your needs?
11. Do you think the INSET activities you have attended previously has helped you to improve or change in your practice?

# Appendix F

# Interview 2 Questions

**Questions for Individual interviews**

**Second Interview:**
**Questions on Research Participants' Perceptions of the Intervention INSET course and Future Expectations**

1. How did you feel when you were nominated to attend this INSET course? Why?
2. In your opinion, was the content of the INSET course relevant to your needs and your pupils' needs?
3. Could you give an example in relation to your opinion about the INSET course meeting needs?
4. Do you think the INSET course met the needs of the curriculum?
5. How do you feel about the type of activities conducted during the workshops?
6. Did the INSET course meet your expectations? How/Why?
7. What is your idea of an ideal INSET course? What criteria is important to you?
8. What type of INSET activities do you hope/ intend to attend in the future? Why?
9. Do you think there should be a balance between generic INSET and subject-related INSET for teachers? Why?

# Appendix G

# Ethical Approval Application

# Application for Ethical Approval
# for Research Degrees

(MA by research, MPHIL/PhD, EdD)

**Student number**: 1358169

**Student name**: Elaine Ling Ling Pang

PhD ☒    EdD ☐    MA by research ☐

**Project title**: A Phenomenographic Study of A Group of Primary School In-Service English Language Teachers' Perceptions of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Malaysia.

**Supervisor**: Professor David Wray

**Funding body** (if relevant): Ministry of Education, Malaysia.

> Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.

## Methodology

Please outline the methodology, e.g. observation, individual interviews, focus groups, group testing etc.

In this qualitative research, I will be using the phenomenographic approach to research. It focuses on how people differ and what they have in common in relation to a phenomenon. Phenomenographic research looks at a phenomenon through the participants' eyes to attempt an authentic understanding from the participants' views.

My research is on teachers' perceptions of continuing professional development (CPD) courses they attended and what they think about the courses in relation to their pupils' needs and whether it changes their practice in the classroom.

The data in this research will be gathered by using a profile questionnaire, focus group interviews and individual interviews. The data collection period will be for 3 months as the Malaysian Government only grants researchers a maximum of 90 days for data collection in Malaysia. I will conduct the data collection from May 2015 to July 2015. The process of data collection is illustrated as below:

Profile Questionnaires

The profile questionnaires are short questionnaires which I have included 10 items for the research participants to complete about their education background, teaching experience and types of CPD activities they have attended. The participants will only need to tick eight boxes and fill in two blanks. It should take them a short time to complete it. The profile questionnaire will be given to three groups of teachers, each group comprising about 30 primary school English language teachers. Based on the information obtained from it, I will use purposeful sampling to select eight participants from each group to participate in the focus group interviews.

Focus group interviews

I will use focus group interviews which will help me to narrow down the participants from a whole group to a target group which I can interview at one time. I will conduct two focus group of four teachers from each CPD course by selecting a total of eight participants. This method will allow the teachers to discuss freely, share their ideas and opinions about the questions relating to their previous CPD activities and future expectations of CPD. One advantage of this method is the teachers can answer the questions and build on each other's answers, thus building the richness of the data.

I have prepared ten questions to ask the research participants during the focus group interviews and the session will be conducted in a relaxed environment in a training room when the other course participants are on a break. I will be using audio recording to assist me later on with the transcribing process. There will be two devices for the audio recording, one as a back-up. I will seek assistance from the IT technicians in the

organization where I will be conducting the research to assist me with the recording if I face any difficulties.

<u>Individual interviews</u>

I will be using sequential and linked interviews to select in-depth case studies. I plan to use phenomenological interviewing as it covers life history interviewing and focused in-depth interviewing in a series of two separate interviews.  I will ask for five volunteers from teachers in each CPD course to take part in the interviews. There will be a total of fifteen teachers, each one is considered as a case study.

The first interview will focus on the interviewee's previous CPD experiences. I have prepared eleven questions for the first interview. In the second interview, I will interview the research participants about their present experience of attending the intervention CPD course for this study. I have prepared nine questions for this interview. I will also ask them specific questions with reference to important points some of them made during the focus groups.

**Participants**

Please specify all participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. children; as a result of learning disability.

The participants are in-service primary school English language teachers in Malaysian Schools. They are likely to come from several states or all over Malaysia. The participants are selected by the English language officer (ELO) in their respective states in Malaysia to attend the CPD courses in the training institution, the selected organization involved in this study. The criteria of selection of course participants would be determined by the training institution.  The participants are chosen with convenience sampling as they are selected in their respective states and appointed to attend this CPD course and I will not have a part in deciding which teachers attend the CPD course.

## Respect for participants' rights and dignity

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

In my first meeting with each group of the research participants, the trainer of their CPD courses would explain my role, since I will be joining them for the whole duration of the course they are attending. I will give a brief outline of my research with as much information as possible about the research so that they can make an informed decisions on their possible involvement. The objective is to conduct research openly without deception. The research participants will be given the opportunity to decide on their willingness to participate in this study. They will have the choice of voluntary participation and given consent forms. Their consent is not just limited to the signing of the forms at the start of the study. It will be continually open to revision and questioning if they change their minds at any stage of the study. I will explain to them that they have the right to withdraw from the research whenever for whatever reason. Their consent has to be freely given in order to be valid.

I will ensure that I avoid any sensitive issues in Malaysia relating to politics, race and religion. The participants will also not be forced to answer any questions they are not comfortable with for any specific reason. The profile questionnaire which I will be distributing to the participants also does not contain items which identify their race, religion or mother tongue.

## Privacy and confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

I will be considering privacy on two levels in my research, with the knowledge that the research participants and organization in this study would want their privacy to be guaranteed. Thus, I will do the following to ensure their privacy and confidentiality. Firstly, I will not identify information of any of the individuals taking part in this study, whether in written or verbal form. I will remove any identifying information from my records. Secondly, I will not identify the participating organization where I will be doing

my data collection. The participants and organization will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be given to conceal their real identity. Thirdly, I will use caution in using long verbatim quotes, especially if they shed a negative side of the participants and organization.

In relation to confidentiality, any information I obtain from the research participants and organization will be treated in a confidential manner and not be given, exposed or shared with anyone else. Furthermore, if I realised an interview I'm conducting is heading towards a very personal issue, I will try to rephrase my question back to the topic of discussion. I will ensure I am responsible while handling the research participants' and organization's data and be more sensitive towards the information I am recording and transcribing later on. I will also make plans for the research data to be stored safely and I am the only person who has access to it.

**Consent**

How will prior informed consent be obtained from the following?

From participants:

I will obtain prior informed consent from the participants before starting my research. I have prepared a participants' consent form and will distribute it to the participants on the first day of the intervention CPD course when I meet with them. A short description of my research is stated on the first page of the consent form but I will still explain more about my research when I meet them in person. The trainer of the course would have informed the participants earlier that a researcher will be joining them on this CPD course. Thus, the participants will also have the chance to ask me any questions to clarify the nature of my study, objectives of the research, the research methodology and what steps will be involved during the data collection process. I will try to do my best to provide the complete information that they want to know before starting my data collection. The steps I will be taking will ensure the participants are assured that they are not being coerced into participating in this study. I will also inform the research participants that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time and should not feel penalized for changing their minds at any time of the research process.

From others:

I am also applying for permission to conduct research in Malaysia by submitting an application to the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) in the Prime Minister's Department in Malaysia. The process will take one month to obtain permission.

Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's status?

Yes, I have included my name and status as a postgraduate researcher in the first page of the consent forms which I will be distributing to the research participants.

## Competence

How will you ensure that all methods used are undertaken with the necessary competence?

In April 2015, I will be piloting the instruments which I will be using for the data collection process. The profile questionnaires, questions for focus group interviews and questions for the individual interviews will be piloted to a group of research students who were former teachers and have attended CPD during their careers. Based on the pilot study, necessary changes will be made to the methods.

During the actual data collection period in Malaysia, I will have direct contact with the research participants, thus they will be able to ask me about any item in the profile questionnaire or clarify the questions during the focus groups and individual interviews.

I have successfully undertaken full research training at the university before embarking upon this research, having completed both the Foundation Research Methods and the Advanced Research Methods courses. I have also attended extra research training courses (in the use of NVivo and SPSS) through the university.

## Protection of participants

How will participants' safety and well-being be safeguarded?

I will be conducting all the stages of the data collection processes in one organization, a training institution for CPD of English language teachers in Malaysia. The venue is conducive for the CPD course and thus will also be a secured and safe environment for data collection. In terms of data collected, it will be kept in a secured place and locked during office hours. I will take it back with me once I leave the premises of the training institution. I will also do all the transcribing of data by myself and will not engage secretarial assistance.

I will also explain to the research participants that my research has been approved by the university, ethics research committee and the Malaysian government and I have been given written permission to conduct this study. Hopefully, this would earn their confidence that I am a legitimate researcher with the backing of an academic institution. This might address any reservations the research participants may have regarding the safety of the content they will be sharing with me about their private lives with reference to their experiences of CPD.


**Child protection**

Will a DBS check be needed?  Yes ☐   No ☒   (If yes, please attach a copy.)

No

**Addressing dilemmas**

Even well planned research can produce ethical dilemmas. How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research?

It will be a challenge to deal with all possible contingencies in this research so that no risk is involved. Research moves in unpredicted directions and many things can go not according to how they were planned. Below are some ethical dilemmas I am mindful of even before beginning the data collection process.

1. The training / course schedule

   I have already received a copy of the current training schedule (version 2) from the head of department of Quality & Assurance in the training institution/ organization where the intervention CPD courses will be conducted. At this stage,

I have not selected which courses I will be selecting for my research as I will have to talk to the trainers/lecturers first to get their co-operation to let their participants take part in this study. The training schedule might also have changes and be updated at any time by the organization and I will have to be flexible in the choice of CPD courses available at the time of my data collection, from May to July 2015, as there are possibilities of some courses being postponed or even cancelled for any reason. In such a situation, I will select another CPD course which is taking place in the same week or the following week. The only criteria I will have is the course participants for the CPD course must be primary school English language teachers.

2. Co-operation from trainers/ lecturers

The training calendar is arranged in such a way that although the names of trainers/ lecturers have been assigned for the CPD courses, there can be changes at the very last minute. Thus, I have decided to talk to the trainers/ lecturers once I have returned to Malaysia when the time is nearer to the course in order to get their co-operation to assist me by allowing their course participants to participate in my research. If such co-operation is not forthcoming, I will need to consult with other trainers on other courses.

**Misuse of research**

How will you seek to ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

This research will also be conducted in such a way that it minimizes harm or risks to the participants. Their well-being will not be damaged as a result of participating in this study. In order to achieve this, I will ensure the data collected will be private and available only to myself or the individual research participants upon request. I will also ensure that in any reporting of the data, participants' names will not be mentioned at all and reporting will be totally anonymous.

**Support for research participants**                255

What action is proposed if sensitive issues are raised or a participant becomes upset?

Questions can be optional if participants become upset based on certain sensitive issues. At that point, I will let the participant know that the question is not compulsory to answer. They can also discuss any other concerns they have if they are not very sure if they want to continue to participate in the research. Not even one participant will be forced to respond to questions they are not comfortable with. The participants' wellbeing and dignity will be highly respected in this study.

**Integrity**

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

Once the participants have agreed to take part in the study, I will try to develop rapport in order to get them to reveal information related to their CPD experiences. I will ensure I provide an environment that is trustworthy but avoid setting up a situation where the participants think they are friends with me. If there are participants whom I know personally from previous work engagements, I will ensure there is a professional relationship during the study and they will be treated equally as others.

I will not be giving rewards in the form of food, stationary or other items to the research participants as the rewards may tempt the teachers to participate against their own judgement.

The research will be conducted to ensure the professional integrity of its design, the generation of data during analysis, the publications of the results and the acknowledgements to references. I will try to check there is no undeclared conflict of interest in my work and the sources of funding.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?

My supervisor and I will co-author a number of papers for publications from the outcome of this research. The general rule we will use is that my name will appear first in the list of authors.
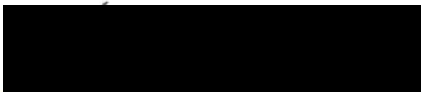
## Other issues

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.

No other issues.

| Signed: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Student: | ██████████████ | Date: 1/4/2015 |
| Supervisor: | ██████████████ | Date: 1st April, 2015 |

Please submit this form to the Research Office (Andy Brierley, room WE133)

---

**Office use only**

**Action taken:**

☑ Approved

☐ Approved with modification or conditions – see below

☐ Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below

Name: ██████████████            257

Signature:

Date:

Stamped:

Notes of Action:

**THE UNIVERSITY OF**
**WARWICK**

**CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STUDIES**

# Appendix H

# Research Approval (Malaysia)

**UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI**
*Economic Planning Unit*
Jabatan Perdana Menteri
*Prime Minister's Department*
Block B5 & B6
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
**62502 PUTRAJAYA**
**MALAYSIA**

Telefon : 603-8000 8000

| | |
|---|---|
| Ruj. Tuan:<br>*Your Ref.:* | |
| Ruj. Kami:<br>*Our Ref.:* | UPE 40/200/19/3228<br>(9) |
| Tarikh:<br>*Date:* | 28 April 2015 |

Elaine Pang Ling Ling
Room 8, 10-12 Market Way
C/O Study Inn, 165 Corporation Street Coventry
West Midlands, CV1 1GU, UK
Email : E.L.L.Pang@warwick.ac.uk

**APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA**

With reference to your application, I am pleased to inform you that your application to conduct research in Malaysia has been approved by the **Research Promotion and Co-Ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department.** The details of the approval are as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Researcher's name | : | **ELAINE PANG LING LING** |
| Passport No./ I.C No | : | **730702-12-5540** |
| Nationality | : | **MALAYSIA** |
| Title of Research | : | **"A STUDY OF A GROUP OF PRIMARY SCHOOL IN SERVICE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) IN MALAYSIA"** |
| Period of Research Approved | : | **4 YEARS** |

2.      Please collect your Research Pass in person from the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Parcel B, Level 4 Block B5, Federal Government Administrative Centre, 62502 Putrajaya, Malaysia. Bring along **two (2) colour passport size photographs.** Kindly, **get an appointment date from us before you come to collect your research pass.**

*"Merancang Ke Arah Kecemerlangan"*

3.     I would like to draw your attention to the undertaking signed by you that you will submit without cost to the Economic Planning Unit the following documents:

a) A brief summary of your research findings on completion of your research and before you leave Malaysia; and

b) Three (3) copies of your final dissertation/publication.

4.     Lastly, please submit a copy of your preliminary and final report directly to the State Government where you carried out your research. Thank you.


Yours sincerely,


**(MUNIRAH BT. ABD MANAN)**
For Director General
Economic Planning Unit
Email: munirah@epu.gov.my
Tel : 03 88882809
Fax: 03 88883798


**ATTENTION**

This letter is only to inform you the status of your application and **cannot be used as a research pass.**

# Appendix I

# Research Pass (Malaysia)