

Chapter 13

Teacher Learning in Collaborative Professional Development: Changes in Teacher and Student Practices



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Introduction

In Ethiopia, as in many other African countries, English serves as a medium of instruction at the secondary and higher education levels. However, the quality of the English teaching at these levels has been challenged (MoE, 2005) by various factors. The rapid and massive educational expansion in higher education is one crucial factor (MoE, 2010). The number of public universities has risen from 2 in 1994 to 31 at present. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in student enrolment, while the number of academic staff at the MA and PhD levels has failed to grow proportionally. This situation has prompted universities to recruit many under-qualified teachers at a bachelor's degree level, who have little or no pre-service teacher education or prior teaching experience. Running the universities' teaching services with such under-qualified teachers is believed to negatively affect students' English language learning (HERQA, 2008). Another challenge the universities face regarding English language teaching is moving teachers away from predominantly using teacher-dominated language *teaching* to interactive student-centred language *learning*, focusing on the use of the language for common communicative purposes. To address these challenges, support for English language teachers has been proposed, involving a collaborative professional development program (CPDP) focused on communicative language teaching (CLT), an effective language teaching approach (Harmer, 2007; Ur, 2003).

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To guide the design and development of the CPDP, a context and needs study was conducted to assess English language teachers' current status regarding CLT use and to identify their learning needs (Anto, Coenders, & Voogt, 2012). Based on the findings of this study and a literature review, the following six design guidelines characterizing qualities of effective professional development (Austin, 2002; Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 2010) were generated and used to design and develop a CPDP. The guidelines include:

1. Set up an in-service professional development program that enhances the teachers' ongoing workplace CLT learning and enables them to use this kind of learning sustainably in their actual teaching practice (Harmer, 2007; Ur, 2003).
2. Peer collaboration has a central position in the design, development and implementation of the professional development program, as it promotes teacher learning through collegial sharing, reflective discussion, collaborative design of and practicing with curricular materials and provision of feedback (Austin, 2002; Harmer, 2007; Hord, 2004; Little, 1990).
3. Teachers with good teaching experience and preparation in CLT are provided with training to assume teacher leadership roles as facilitators in the CPDP (Fischer, 2004; Guskey, 2000; Harrison & Killion, 2007; Lieberman & Miller, 2004).
4. Teacher guides are considered important tools to foster teacher professional learning (Ottevanger, 2001) and therefore to enhance curriculum implementation (Richards & Farrell 2005; Van den Akker, 1988). Collaborative design of exemplary lessons as part of the teacher guide helps teachers collectively interact with CLT content to better understand the innovation and to facilitate lesson enactment (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Voogt, 2010).
5. Separate workshops are organized for facilitators and teachers to prepare the facilitators for teacher leadership roles and to introduce the teachers to the essentials of CLT (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Sparks, 1997).
6. Listening skill is given considerable attention in the program, as it was rated as the most difficult skill to teach when using the CLT approach by the largest number of teachers (Anto et al., 2012).

The Interconnected Model of Professional Growth (IMPG) developed by Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) was used to frame the study. In the next sections, the professional development program (CPDP) and IMPG are briefly described.

Collaborative Professional Development Program

CPDP has three main components: a seminar (24 h), followed by CLT implementation in class (8 weeks) and finally an evaluative workshop (4 h). The aim of the seminar (consisting of eight 3-h workshops) was to introduce the teachers to the main ideas of CLT, and to prepare them for using these ideas in their teaching practice. Joyce and Showers (2002) argued that explanation of theory and demonstration

of skills in a training setting foster participants' understanding of the theory and increase their knowledge and skills. During the workshops, teachers were provided with a hand-out on *essentials of CLT*. They were also offered training on the essentials by an expert in English language teaching, supported by facilitators and the researcher. The training included presentations of CLT content, group discussions, collaborative design of teacher guides, and presentation of these guides for some lessons in the course they taught, *Communicative English Skills*, as well as practice of the lessons supported by the teacher guides and general reflections on group presentations and lesson practice.

During CLT implementation in class, the teachers, in pairs supported by facilitators, used CLT ideas in their teaching of *Communicative English Skills*. Workplace coaching allowed teachers to master and implement new skills in their instruction (Joyce & Showers, 2002). The teachers also used the teacher guides to support their actual lesson enactment, as the guides enhanced successful implementation of innovative instructional approaches such as CLT (Ottevanger, 2001; Voogt, 2010; Voogt, Tilya, & Van den Akker, 2009). The facilitators observed three lessons taught by each teacher and provided feedback. During the evaluative workshop, the participants collectively reflected on the teachers' CLT implementation experiences.

Interconnected Model of Professional Growth (IMPG)

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) described learning outcomes from teacher professional development in terms of change. Changes are realized in knowledge and skills, beliefs and attitudes, classroom practice and student learning behaviors (August & Shanahan 2006; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Guskey, 2000). Organizing professional learning opportunities that introduce teachers to new approaches to teaching and learning such as CLT requires consideration of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes (Guskey, 2000; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010). Guskey (2000) argued that teacher knowledge and beliefs are situated and affected by the teacher's experiences in the classroom. Improved student learning outcomes are also often taken as the ultimate goal of teacher professional development efforts (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Guskey, 2000; Harris & Muijs, 2005).

IMPG (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002) is an empirically grounded non-linear model consisting of four change domains and two mediating processes, enactment and reflection, interlinking the four domains. The domains include: *the personal domain (PD)*, representing teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes; *the domain of practice (DP)*, consisting of all forms of professional experimentation; *the domain of consequence (DC)*, referring to the salient student learning outcomes; and *the external domain (ED)*, dealing with external sources of information/stimulus. In this model, change in one domain triggers and affects change in another through the mediating processes of reflection and enactment. In the current study,

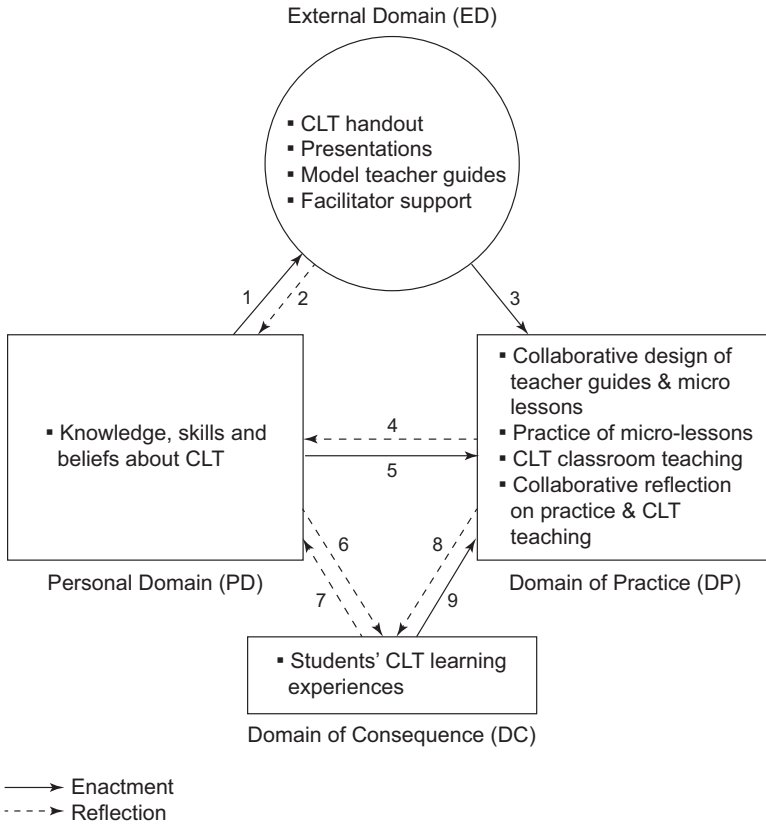


Fig. 13.1 The interconnected model of professional growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002) as used in this study

the model is used to explore teacher learning in the CPDP. The constituents of the four domains of the model in our CPDP context are presented next (see Fig. 13.1).

External domain: this represents external inputs offered to teachers in the form of a CLT hand-out, a resource person’s presentations and explanations of CLT content, model teacher guides, and facilitator support made available during the seminar and suggestions during CLT implementation.

Domain of practice: this includes the collaborative design of teacher guides and practice CLT teaching in micro-lessons during the seminar, as these collective design and practice activities help the teachers interact with CLT content in order to better understand it. This domain also involves actual classroom teaching of *Communicative English Skills* lessons during CLT implementation and collaborative reflections conducted on the actual teaching of the course and on the micro-lesson

practice. The domain further consists of experiences shared and reflections about CLT implementation during the evaluative workshop.

Consequence domain: this includes students' learning experiences as a result of teachers practicing CLT in *Communicative English Skills*. *Student learning* in this study refers to their *increased motivation to learn the English language* and their *increased participation in the teaching-learning process*; we did not collect data on improved language skills, because achieving this would require an extended period of time.

Personal domain: This encompasses teachers' CLT-related knowledge and beliefs, as well as any changes occurring due to participation in the CPDP.

The purpose of this study is to assess changes in English language teachers' CLT practices (DP), the teachers' changes in knowledge and beliefs (PD) and changes in student learning (DC). In reporting the results, changes in the domain of practice are considered more reliable than changes in teacher learning in the personal domain, because most of the data on changes in teacher practice were provided by external sources, compared to teachers' self-report data to determine changes in the personal domain. Teachers' self-report data about their learning gains were used to validate changes in teacher practice. The following general question was posed to guide the study:

What are the effects of the CPDP on English language teachers' CLT beliefs, knowledge and practices and on student learning?

The following sub-questions were formulated:

1. *How did the classroom teaching practices of English language teachers change as the result of their participation in the CPDP?*
2. *How did the CPDP affect student learning experiences?*
3. *What learning gains (changes in CLT-related knowledge and beliefs) are reported by the teachers? And what components of the intervention contributed to these learning gains?*
4. *What environmental factors facilitated or constrained teachers' learning?*

Methods

Design

A case study design (Yin, 2003) using individual teachers (N = 4) as units of analysis was applied to study teachers' learning. To understand similarities and differences in patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of CLT learning and implementation among the teachers, a cross-case design was used to frame the results of the study.

Table 13.1 Teachers' background information

Facilitator name	Teacher name	Sex	Age	Teaching experience	Qualification	Previous CLT training
Dagi ^a	Aman ^a	M	20	1 year	BA in English	No
	Tola ^a	M	28	3 years	B. Ed in English teaching	Yes
Bini ^a	Shire ^a	M	21	1 year	BA in English	No
	Kara ^a	M	26	3 years	B. Ed in English teaching	Yes

^aPseudonyms

Participants

Facilitators, teachers and students participated in the study (see Table 13.1). Two male teachers (whom we call Dagi and Bini) were deliberately selected as facilitators, in consultation with the department head, for their good professional competences and reputation among the staff (Lieberman & Mace, 2009; Lieberman & Miller, 2004). Both of the facilitators held an MA in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). Four male teachers (who worked in two teams) took part in the program. Two of them (Aman and Shire) had a bachelor's degree in applied English, and they did not take any courses on CLT before they started teaching. Both of them had 1 year of teaching experience. Tola and Kara had a bachelor's degree in teaching English and took some courses on CLT before they started teaching. Both of them had 3 years of teaching experience. Throughout the program, Aman and Tola were supported by Dagi, and Shire and Kara by Bini. All the teachers were teaching *Communicative English Skills* at the time the program was piloted.

One-third of the students from each of the four classes in which the teachers taught *Communicative English Skills* were randomly selected to complete pre- and post-seminar questionnaires on their teachers' CLT practices. In consultation with their respective teachers, 16 other students were purposefully selected (4 students from each class) for focus group discussions about the teachers' CLT practices and students' learning experiences. Students of Aman and Shire (teachers with no CLT training) were assigned to group I, and students of Tola and Kara (teachers with CLT training before they started teaching) were made group II. Students of teachers with similar educational background were put into the same focus group because it was thought that their teachers' performance would look more similar than the performance of teachers in the other group. This would enhance drawing similar conclusions from each student group's discussion.

Instruments

Interviews, questionnaires, observations and focus group discussions were used to collect data. Teachers were interviewed on three occasions: (a) *before the intervention*, to gather information on teachers' initial knowledge, beliefs and practices related to CLT; (b) *after the seminar*, to examine changes in teachers' CLT-related knowledge, belief and practices resulting from the seminar workshops, as well as factors enhancing or hindering teacher learning during the seminar; and (c) *at the end of the intervention*, to identify changes in teachers' CLT-related knowledge, belief and practices resulting from CLT implementation and the evaluative workshop; factors enhancing or hindering teacher learning from CLT implementation; and changes in student learning. Similar data were collected by teacher questionnaires at various stages of the program for validation purposes. Class observation was used to obtain data on the teachers' CLT classroom implementation and to validate what teachers reported having learned. Further, a student questionnaire was administered and focus group discussions were organized before and after the intervention to secure information on teachers' initial and final CLT practices. The focus group discussions were also used to gather information on student learning experiences resulting from their teachers' new teaching approach. Table 13.2 shows the relationship between the research questions and the data collection instruments.

Data Analysis

A mixed methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative techniques was used to analyze the data. For the quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were used. Mann Whitney *U* non-parametric analysis was used to determine whether the CPDP intervention made any significant contributions to individual teachers' CLT practice as perceived by students. Cohen's *d* was calculated to measure the effect size of the intervention. The qualitative data collected via interviews were transcribed, coded, transported into Atlas.ti (Version 6.2), and analyzed using thematic codes generated from the data. Interview quotations from two teachers were randomly selected and recoded by another coder to determine inter-coder reliability. Agreement was computed to be outstanding (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.80$). The inter-rater reliability between each facilitator and the first author was also calculated for the lesson observation for one teacher. Accordingly, the inter-rater agreement between facilitator 1 and the researcher (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.63$) and between facilitator 2 and the researcher (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.62$) were found to be

Table 13.2 Relationship between research questions and data collection instruments

Specific research questions	Instruments				
	Teacher interview	Teacher questionnaire	Classroom observation	Student questionnaire	Focus group discussion (students)
How did the classroom teaching practices of English language teachers change as the result of their participation in the CPDP?	X	X	X	X	X
How did the CPDP affect student learning experiences?	X				X
What learning gains (CLT-related knowledge and belief changes) are reported by the teachers? And what components of the intervention contributed to these learning gains?	X	X	X		
What environmental factors facilitated or constrained teachers' learning?	X				

substantial. Moreover, the internal reliability of the items (22 items) on the students' questionnaire measuring teachers' CLT practices was computed to be excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.9$). Data obtained through focus group discussions were analyzed using a descriptive summary. In conducting the analysis, teachers' CLT practice and learning of the CLT features were emphasized.

Main Findings

Teachers' Changes in CLT Practices

In the IMPG domain of practice, students of all teachers revealed in the focus group discussions that their respective teachers made essential changes in their CLT practices after the seminar (Table 13.3).

Before the intervention, the students reported that the teachers used limited CLT features in their teaching of *Communicative English Skills*, except Tola, who had CLT training before he participated in the CPDP. The students said that all of the

Table 13.3 CLT features practiced by teachers after the intervention (which were not/rarely practiced before) as reported by students, facilitator and researcher

CLT features and related issues (PD)	Teachers			
	Aman	Tola	Shire	Kara
	<i>Reported after intervention by</i>			
Active involvement of students in teaching-learning process	Students			
	Facilitator			
	Researcher			
Use of authentic materials and experiences	Students		Students	Students
	Facilitator		Facilitator	Facilitator
	Researcher		Researcher	Researcher
Use of an integrated-skills approach to teaching of language	Facilitator			
	Researcher			
Preparation/use of lesson plans and communication of lesson objectives	Students	Students	Students	Students
	Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator
	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher
Integration of assessment with language teaching	Facilitator			Students
Use of audio text to teach listening	Students	Students	Students	Students
	Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator	Facilitator
	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher	Researcher

teachers facilitated collaborative learning by their students and used English for classroom communication. All of the teachers, except Aman, usually involved students actively in the teaching and learning process. In addition, Tola used students' authentic experiences and materials in his lessons, let them use and practice the language items he taught in the classroom, and often tolerated students' language errors.

After the intervention, however, the students disclosed that all of the teachers communicated lesson objectives at the start of their lessons and taught listening lessons using audio materials they had never used before. One of Tola's students expressed Tola's change in CLT practices as follows, "*The teacher has started to do many things he did not do before. Now he communicates lesson objectives at the start of each lesson; he uses audio materials to teach listening skill. He never accomplished these activities before.*" All teachers (except Tola) began to use authentic materials in their teaching. Aman was able to actively involve students in his lessons. One of his students witnessed his change in practice changes, saying, "*After our last discussion, our teacher has changed his teaching much. He often involves students in the teaching-learning process using interactive group and pair work, uses authentic materials such as newspapers and advertisements to make his lessons more meaningful and interesting.*"

Mann Whitney *U* non-parametric analysis of students' pre-post questionnaire data, used to measure the teachers' use of CLT features in their teaching, confirmed that all the teachers made significant improvements in their CLT practices after participating in the CPDP, as reported by their students: Aman ($n = 22$, $Z = -3.7$,

$p = 0.003$, $d = 2.0$); Tola ($n = 20$, $Z = -2.9$, $p = 0.002$, $d = 1.2$); Shire ($n = 20$, $Z = -4.4$, $p = 0.003$, $d = 3.0$) and Kara ($n = 15$, $Z = -2.1$, $p = 0.021$, $d = 1.7$).

However, even after being exposed to the workshops, the teachers failed to implement some CLT features. None of the teachers contextualized grammar and vocabulary in their teaching. Only Aman used an integrated-skills approach in his teaching and treated his students' language errors properly. Aman and Shire did not provide chances for students to practice and use language items that had been taught in the classroom and outside the classroom for their actual communication.

Students' Change in Learning Experiences

In this section, the results are reported from pre- and post-intervention focus group discussions held with two student groups (each with eight students) formed from four classes (four students from each class). Students of Aman and Shire were assigned to group I and students of Tola and Kara made up group II. The teachers also confirmed these findings in the interviews.

From the discussions in the two student groups, it became clear that as the result of their respective teachers' changes in CLT practices, the students experienced substantial changes in their learning of *Communicative English Skills*.

Before the intervention, students stated that their respective teachers applied limited CLT features in their teaching practices and that this resulted in a limited role for students in the teaching-learning process. They revealed that they only sometimes had chances to actively participate in the teaching-learning process and do some communicative activities in groups and pairs. Students in group II said that often they were not given chances to practice the language items that had been taught (e.g., introducing oneself to others) in class, but they were usually encouraged to ask or answer questions irrespective of errors they committed. Tola's students added that every now and then they learned English using authentic materials such as newspapers. Students in both groups clarified that they never learned listening skills using audio materials.

After the intervention, however, the students in both groups explained that their respective teachers had improved their teaching of *Communicative English Skills* and therefore the students experienced improved learning. All of them reported increased involvement in the learning process. Students learned English more meaningfully, as they (1) felt supported by authentic experiences and materials such as newspapers and advertisements, (2) could more interactively participate in group and pair work, and (3) learned listening skills using audio materials. They particularly felt enthusiastic about and appreciated the use teachers made of audio materials (not used by any of the teachers before the seminar) to teach listening skills lessons. Moreover, all of them explained that as their respective teachers now often communicated the lesson objectives before commencing their lessons, the students were more attracted towards the lessons. They further stated that as the result of the

teachers' improved teaching performance, the stage fright of most students during oral presentations was reduced, and their rapport with their respective teachers was enhanced. They seemed to be pleased and satisfied with the performance of their respective teachers. One of Tola's students expressed his feeling as follows,

After our last discussion, our teacher's way of teaching has changed much, and it changed our learning behaviors as well. As he often comes to class with a bright face, we are much more motivated toward his lessons. His communication of lesson objectives at the start of each lesson grabs our attention to the lesson. We are now more involved in the lessons than we used to be; we are intensively engaged in group work. Moreover, we listen to interesting audio materials.

Teachers' Learning Gains

In terms of the IMPG change domains, while the CLT-related features and other related issues represent the personal domain, the various program experiences yielding teacher learning refer to the external domain, the domain of practice, and the consequence domain.

Teachers' Learning from the Seminar

The teachers reported that they made important learning gains during the seminar. All four teachers reported that through the seminar activities (CLT hand-out, presentations, facilitator support, collaborative design, and microteaching) they either updated or acquired new understanding of CLT and its inherent features. For instance, Aman explained his learning gain regarding CLT concepts and inherent features from CLT hand-out reading and presentations as follows, "*Before the workshop, I had little knowledge of CLT. My reading of the hand-out, the resource persons' presentations and the collaborative design activities really assisted me to understand its concepts and to grasp the main ideas of its features.*" The teachers became familiar with the lesson plan format and its content, as well as with the lesson procedures of a CLT lesson, including communicating lesson objectives. Shire expressed his learning from the collaborative design of teacher guides as follows, "*The collaborative design activities of the teacher guide helped me critically look into and understand the format, contents and implementation steps of a communicative lesson and to identify the importance of communicating lesson objectives at the start of a lesson.*"

All of the teachers (except Tola) also clarified that they learned about the use of authentic experiences and materials in students' language learning from CLT hand-out reading (Aman), presentations (Aman, Shire and Kara) and group discussions held in collaborative design teams (Shire). Aman reported about his learning in this way, "*From the presentation, explanations and hand-out reading, I understood that*

linking language teaching with student authentic experiences such as asking students to greet their classmates makes language learning interesting and meaningful to students.” Kara also explained the use of such materials over artificial ones in language learning as follows, *“Authentic materials provide students with real language for communication whereas artificial materials require students to fabricate language for their communication. Such materials make the teaching learning process meaningful and interesting, and stimulate students to actively participate in the process.”*

Even though Aman practiced an integrated skills approach as observed by his facilitator and the researcher, he did not mention any learning gain related to this particular CLT feature (DP). Shire, on the other hand, explained that through collaboration with his fellow teacher and the facilitator, he learned how to use integrated skills to teach a language, but he was not seen integrating skills in his teaching. He explained his learning thus, *“My collaboration with Kara and the facilitator during CLT presentations and discourses enriched my understanding of CLT through experience-sharing and negotiation of the meaning of issues such as using integrated skills approach to teach a language.”* In addition, Aman, who was observed by his facilitator to integrate assessment with language teaching, disclosed that he learned this from the presentations and discussions following the presentations. He stated his learning gains as follows, *“From the presentations and collaborative group discussions, I learned that in CLT, assessment is integrated with language learning and focuses on checking students’ actual language abilities using observation, portfolios, checklists, quizzes when students are performing various language learning tasks.”*

Teachers’ Learning Gains from CLT Implementation and Evaluative Workshop

From their use of CLT in class and associated experiences (facilitator support and students’ reactions), the teachers reported having strengthened their existing CLT-related knowledge or their knowledge gained from the seminar. All of them reported having achieved important learning gains concerning lesson planning that facilitated their understanding of various aspects of lesson objectives, and this came particularly from peer collaboration and facilitator feedback. For example, Shire explained that from planning his lessons, he learned how to state specific lesson objectives. He discussed his learning as follows, *“Preparing lesson plans enabled me to learn that specific lesson objectives need to be stated in precise terms and used with specific daily lessons.”* Tola also reported his learning regarding this point as follows, *“My facilitator’s feedback on my lesson plans, and my own practical teaching experience taught me that planning a lesson is very useful to have a clear focus of lesson execution.”* In addition, he said that *“Communicating objectives at the start of a lesson is essentially helpful to catch and focus students’ attention on the lesson.”*

From using audio materials to teach listening skills (Aman, Tola, Kara and Shire) and from lesson execution enriched by lesson reflection (Kara), the teachers learned that using audio materials motivates students more than teacher-read texts do in teaching listening skill. Aman discussed his experience of using audio text to teach listening skill and his view about it as follows, *“I found my students more interested in listening to audio texts than listening to my reading while teaching listening skills...This convinced me that audio materials are more effective than teacher-read texts in teaching listening lessons.”* Again, Kara explained his learning from his practical teaching accompanied by reflection on the lesson in this way, *“As students did not experience such materials before, they found the lessons quite interesting and actively participated in them. After reflecting on the lesson, I realized that in teaching listening skills audio texts motivate students more than teacher-read texts do.”*

Moreover, Aman described improving his learning about actively involving students in the teaching-learning process based on his own teaching practices and from his colleague’s sharing of experiences during the evaluative workshop. He expressed his learning gain from sharing experience from a colleague during the evaluative workshop as follows, *“During the workshop, a teacher shared his practical experience of moving around the class and checking each student’s contribution to group work. I found it very helpful to overcome the problem of students’ low involvement in group work as it encourages everybody to contribute when the teacher is around. I adopted this experience to improve student involvement in my lessons.”*

All of the teachers asserted that their students felt quite delighted with the listening lessons that were conducted through audio materials, something they had never done before. All of them again validated that students increased their involvement in the learning process and their motivation to learn *Communicative English Skills*. They disclosed that the students’ stage fright about making oral presentations diminished. Shire and Kara added that as the result of the change in their teaching practice, students built better rapport with them (teachers). The teachers further revealed that their reflection on the positive changes in student learning increased their self-confidence and motivated them to further strive for the improvement of their CLT-related knowledge and practical implementation of it.

Environmental Factors Facilitating or Constraining Teachers’ Learning

As noted in Table 13.4, the teachers identified a variety of factors that facilitated or constrained their learning. During the workshops, all of the teachers, except Shire, mentioned the resource persons’ (researcher and English expert) abilities to organize and deliver the workshop activities in attractive ways as a vital source of motivation for their learning. Aman and Tola also considered consistent cooperation from the department head to flexibly change their classes and his generous support of all seminar activities as essential factors enhancing their learning. Moreover, Shire and Kara considered the availability of such collaboration as another factor

Table 13.4 Factors facilitating or constraining teachers' learning in various components of CPDP

CPDP components	Factors facilitating or constraining learning	Aman	Tola	Shire	Kara
Seminar	Factors facilitating learning				
	Resource persons' competencies to conduct training	+	+		+
	Department head's cooperation in changing class and supporting the program	+	+	±	±
	Facilitators' strong commitment and abilities				+
	Factors constraining learning				
	Teachers' parallel involvement in teaching and training	+	+	+	
	Shortage of common time to undertake activities		+		+
	Lack of well-functioning language lab facilities		+		
CLT implementation	Factors facilitating learning				
	Working with a teacher with CLT background	+		+	
	Facilitators' strong commitment and abilities		+		+
	Consistent department head support and participation			+	
	Factors constraining learning				
	Shortage of time to implement CLT ideas	+	+	+	+
	Poor network connectivity			+	+
	Poor transportation service			+	+

promoting their learning. By contrast, the teachers' parallel involvement in teaching and seminar activities was identified by Aman, Tola and Shire as a factor impeding their learning.

During CLT implementation, the teachers indicated different external factors that promoted or hindered their learning. Aman and Shire indicated being teamed up with teachers having a background in CLT as a good source of learning. They said that such an arrangement encouraged their collaborative discussion and reflective sharing. Their facilitator's strong commitment and good facilitation competences were also noted as valuable source of learning by Tola and Kara. However, all of the teachers pointed out that they usually encountered a shortage of time to properly practice CLT ideas in their classrooms. Because of the large number of students in their classes and their students' insufficient language abilities, the teachers often needed more time to involve all students in the learning process and to provide them with chances to practice the language items that had been taught. Shire and Kara reported that poor internet and network connectivity sometimes hindered their communication with their collaborating teachers and facilitators via email and cell-phone and limited their learning. They further mentioned the university's poor transportation service as another factor that limited their learning from implementation. For instance, Kara described his experience as follows, "*Once I arranged a classroom observation with my facilitator, but because of the university transportation arrangement problem, the facilitator could not come and observe my lesson at Chamo Campus.*"

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher learning from the CPDP aimed at enhancing English language teachers' understanding and implementation of CLT. Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) IMPG was applied to frame teacher learning from the program; therefore, the discussions and conclusions of the study are presented using this model as a framework.

In the *Domain of Practice*, this study showed that after having been exposed to the CDPD, the teachers improved their classroom CLT practices, which resulted in improved student CLT learning experiences. Teachers (a) involved students more actively in the teaching-learning process than they did before and encouraged students' collaborative learning, (b) linked language teaching to student real-life experiences, (c) planned their lessons and used the plans to guide lesson implementation, (d) communicated lesson objectives at the start of their lesson delivery, and (f) taught listening lessons using audio materials, which they had never done before. The results are consistent with the results of other studies (Tellez & Waxman, 2005; Watzke, 2007) in which in-service training on content knowledge and pedagogical skills for English language teachers, followed by mentors' coaching of the teachers' classroom practices, improved the practices of the teachers.

Representing the *Consequence Domain*, the ultimate goal of a professional development initiative is improved student learning. This study demonstrated that the teachers' changed CLT practices (*Domain of Practice*) led to more positive student learning behaviors (*Consequence Domain*). The students (a) increased their involvement in the learning process, (b) were more motivated to learn and reduced their stage fright during oral presentations, (c) listened to audio materials which they had never practiced with before, and (d) strengthened positive relationships with their teachers.

In the *Personal Domain*, the teachers obtained or refreshed their *knowledge* of the concept of CLT and of its main features from presentations during the seminar and the teachers' own CLT hand-out reading. From collaborative design of teacher guides and micro-teaching, teachers became familiar with the CLT lesson plan format and CLT content and its execution procedures, and they realized that teacher collaboration enhances CLT learning and implementation. From their actual classroom teaching, supported by facilitator feedback and collaborative reflections, teachers developed their *pedagogical skills* and learned how to relate language teaching to students' real-life experiences as well as how to involve students actively in the teaching-learning process. The teachers concluded that facilitator support of different CLT learning activities enhanced their CLT learning and practice. Realizing and reflecting on students' positive reactions and considering the reactions as salient, the teachers obtained professional satisfaction from their work, boosted their self-esteem and were motivated to further improve their future CLT learning and practice. The results of this study are consistent with other studies (Tellez & Waxman, 2005; Watzke, 2007) where teachers' workplace learning accompanied by mentors' classroom observation and provision of feedback enhanced the participating teachers' subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills and classroom teaching practices.

Again belonging to the *Domain of Practice*, after the CPDP, the participating teachers encountered challenges in implementing some CLT features, such as integrating assessment with language teaching, using an integrated skills approach in their teaching, and contextualizing grammar and vocabulary when teaching other skills. A possible reason for the teachers' difficulty in implementing these features successfully is that the features encompass broad and complex concepts in CLT, and that the teachers therefore need more intensive and extended training to clearly understand and properly implement them in their teaching. Regarding assessment, McNamara (2009) confirmed that communicative language assessment is a highly technical and complex process that demands the involvement of many skills and operates under circumstances that impose heavy practical time constraints. In order to help the teachers have more in-depth understanding of relatively less implemented CLT features, a more comprehensive in-service professional learning opportunity that intensively addresses those features should be arranged and implemented over a longer time. Moreover, in addressing lessons related to those features in *Communicative English Skills*, more practical examples of activities could be provided in the teacher guides. Our study shows that after the seminar, teachers with a CLT background applied most of CLT features better than the teachers without CLT background. This can possibly be explained by a renewal of CLT ideas for teachers having a CLT background. This renewal could promote the teachers' CLT-related understanding, leading to better CLT practices in their actual teaching.

In line with the contentions of different authors (Guskey, 2000; Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010), this study revealed that teachers' and facilitators' keen interest to participate in the program, as well as the strong commitment of the department head to support the program, were factors enhancing teacher learning. However, teachers' and facilitators' parallel involvement in teaching and training activities, and shortage of time to implement CLT ideas in their classroom teaching, were identified as factors hindering teachers' learning. Despite the reported hindering factors, it is crucial to capitalize on factors enhancing teacher learning to further investigate the potential of the CPDP in supporting larger number of teachers to learn and implement CLT in their teaching practice. Moreover, as having adequate numbers of facilitators might not always be feasible, looking for an alternative form of support for teacher professional learning opportunities appears to be essential. In further research (see Anto et al., 2012), we have explored the use of peer-support as an additional professional development strategy in learning from implementation of CLT, because Thijs and Van den Berg (2002) showed that peer support/peer coaching can be an effective strategy for promoting the professional development of teachers.

Despite the stated success of the CPDP, some challenges were encountered. First, the teachers were challenged to properly implement certain complex features of CLT: integrating assessment in language teaching, contextualizing grammar and vocabulary in their teaching practice and involving students actively in the teaching-learning process. The challenges of integrating assessment in language teaching and contextualizing grammar and vocabulary in the teaching of other skills were thought to emerge from the complex nature of these CLT features (McNamara, 2009).

Scholars such as Richards (2006) have advised providing extended time for teachers to learn and properly use the features in their communicative lessons. The challenge of actively involving students in their teaching-learning process is possibly attributable to the students' inadequate English ability, the way they were taught English at lower levels, and the cultural traditions of Ethiopia (Lakachew, 2003). Students develop insufficient English language proficiency in the lower grades to practice English communication in their classes. Grammar teaching and learning is emphasized. Moreover, Ethiopian cultural traditions and values do not encourage (especially for youngsters) speaking in front of others. This might discourage the students from expressing their ideas in front of their classmates and the teacher as well. To address the issue of involving students in the language teaching-learning process, English language teachers of primary and secondary schools should also be given appropriate training on CLT so that they are able to apply it in their teaching and offer fair attention to all language skills. In this way, students will have a chance to practice expressing themselves in English from the lower grades onwards. By the time they enroll in higher education, they will already be used to communicating their ideas in front of others. English language teachers in higher education should also be open and feel free to create a conducive learning environment and persistently encourage students to convey their thoughts in English freely both inside and outside the classroom.

Second, consistent with the view of Fullan (2007) that the introduction of educational change usually encounters resistance from the people affected, the implementation of CPDP faced resistance from a few participating teachers. The resistance became apparent through teachers' reluctance to attend training sessions and unwillingness to allow facilitators to observe the teachers' lessons. Studies by Al-Mekhlafi and Ramani (2011) and Cherkowski (2012) showed that teacher attitude plays a vital role in determining teacher learning of innovative instructional approaches and implementation of them in their classroom teaching practices. Guskey (2000) and Fullan (2007) reported that becoming a better teacher, that is, improving one's professional knowledge and skills and thereby improving student learning, is the primary motive for most teachers to participate in professional development activities. Their findings may reflect the reality of developed western countries. However, in the context of Ethiopia, where most teachers (even higher education teachers) cannot properly fulfill their basic needs with their normal salary, it is less likely that improving one's professional knowledge and skills to raise student learning outcomes becomes the top motive for teachers to participate in a professional development initiative. The teachers usually associate professional development undertakings with extrinsic rewards (external benefits) in the form of extra payment, higher salaries, or career promotions. Teachers seem to be more motivated to carry out additional part-time jobs than to participate in professional learning activities.

In the context of developing countries like Ethiopia, provision of external rewards such as financial incentives, career promotion and certificates could be useful to make the teachers part of a professional development endeavor and let them see the value of the endeavor to their professional growth.

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