

The Effectiveness of one In-service Education of Teachers Course for Influencing Teachers' Practice

John Somers, University of Exeter, Department of Drama, (J.W.Somers@ex.ac.uk)
Eva Sikorova, Dept of Primary Education, Uni of Ostrava, Czech Republic. evasikorova@yahoo.com)

(Published in:*Journal of In-service Education*, Vol. 28, no. 1, 2002, pp. 95-114)

Abstract

A four-day Drama in Education Inservice Education of Teachers (INSET) course, conducted at the University of Ostrava, Czech Republic, is evaluated in the context of indicators identified by various authors, but particularly in relation to the typology of INSET outcomes developed by Harland and Kinder. Data were collected by means of three, staged questionnaires and selective interviews conducted eighteen months after the course ended. It is argued that the data reveal evidence that, in meeting six of Harland and Kinder's items, the course succeeded in creating the right conditions for the work undertaken to impact positively on the teachers' practice.

Introduction.

The Inservice Education of Teachers (INSET) that forms the focus of this article was undertaken over 4 days at the University of Ostrava in the Czech Republic from September 18th-21st, 1999. The participants were 21 teachers and teacher education students who enrolled for a Drama in Educationⁱ (DIE) workshop with John Somers. He had been invited by the Department of Primary Education at the University of Ostrava to advance these teachers' understanding of the use of drama in the particular phases of education in which they worked. The majority of the course was devoted to involving the participants in practical DIE work. Time was also spent in making explicit the techniques and approaches being used, and in exploring the relevance of the work to the teachers' professional contexts.

The providers were interested to discover if the course, which was generally accepted by all concerned to be highly successful, had impacted on the practice of the participants. An analysis of three teacher questionnaires and selective interviews with targeted teachers is included, set in a review and discussion of relevant literature to set the study in a wider framework of understanding about factors affecting INSET effectiveness.

The purpose of INSET

In 1982, Bolam defined the Inservice Education of Teachers as:

Those education and training activities engaged in by secondary and primary school teachers and principals, following their initial professional certification, and intended

mainly or exclusively to improve their professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order that they can educate children more effectively.

Bolam, R. (1982)

This still serves as a succinct description of INSET activity. It is universally recognised that a teacher's professional education does not finish at the end of the initial training period. Quite apart from the learning that takes place in the act of teaching, and the professional development that comes from working with more experienced colleagues, most education systems institute development that aims to initiate change in areas they deem necessary for improvement, or in which an authority has introduced new policies. This latter is called 'mandated change', and large resources can be devoted to bringing about development in teacher knowledge and behaviour to institute educational reform.

Greenland (1983) identifies four kinds of INSET that exist internationally:

1. INSET for unqualified teachers (mainly certification courses);
2. INSET to upgrade teachers;
3. INSET to prepare for new education/management roles;
4. Curriculum-related INSET (mainly courses linked to planned curriculum change or *ad-hoc* refresher course).

The purpose of the Ostrava DIE INSET course loosely falls within 2 and 4 above. There was an intention to 'upgrade' – i.e. enhance - the teachers' professional competencies to include drama approaches or strengthen existing ones. The work was also curriculum-related and was *ad-hoc*.

INSET in the Czech Republic

Inservice education of teachers in the Czech Republic is organised mainly by regional Methodology Centres. These centres offer courses, seminars and workshops accredited to qualified and unqualified teachers. The courses are advertised in booklets sent to schools each semester. The Ministry of Education must accredit all the courses. Ministry accreditation is a crucial condition if a teacher claims financial support from the school management. Depending on the financial situation of the school, teachers choose seminars they wish to attend and the school pays the fees for them.

The courses are taught by inservice teacher trainers, university educators, mentors or other experts hired by the Methodology Centres. The length of the courses varies from 90-minute seminars, to a series of several 90-minute seminars. Courses for unqualified teachers are usually longer; they can take one or two semesters.

It is usually not enough for unqualified teachers to attend accredited courses run by Methodology Centres. They are very often required to obtain a university degree. Therefore these teachers apply to universities that offer distance learning programmes or programmes for part-time students. Universities also provide new distance learning programmes for qualified teachers and headteachers, e.g. a programme in school management. Most programmes are, however, called “combined” as they combine distance self-study with compulsory lectures, seminars and tutorial hours that teachers are required to attend.

The political changes after the fall of the communist totalitarian system in 1989 had an obvious impact on education. The content of some subjects has been revised (History mainly) or completely changed (Civic/Citizenship Education, for example, which was, prior to 1989, heavily influenced by the communist ideology). A few “new” subjects could be introduced into the school curriculum – foreign languages other than Russian, Religious Education and Drama.

Such changes in the curriculum could not be introduced without new qualifications and training. There has been a great need, therefore, for inset courses offering new knowledge and skills, particularly for teachers of the above-mentioned subjects. Some teachers gained ideas in shorter inset courses run by methodology centres or other institutions – foundations, for instance. As many fewer teachers of Russian and Civic Education were required, the majority was required to obtain new university qualifications. Most of them have chosen to study English or German as foreign languages as there has been a great shortage of such teachers in Czech schools since the beginning of 1990s.

It seems that teachers of English have been given the greatest INSET support in the past 10 years. The British Council has been very active, establishing eight British Council Resource Centres in the country which will function until November 2001. These serve as libraries and training centres offering afternoon seminars to teachers and students of English. About 70 preset and inset teachers from all over the country have also been trained to become teacher educators. These teacher trainers now run summer schools and seminars for qualified and unqualified teachers of English in their regions. Thanks to the support given by The British

Council, teachers of English are among the most active, eager to gain and disseminate new experience, this regardless of the fact that their efforts are hardly ever appreciated by their headteachers and colleagues.

One of the participants of the Ostrava course said:

In my school, and I dare to say that not only in my school, the teachers of English seem to be the most active ones; they take part in quite a few events. But they are often regarded to be foolish by other teachers for their willingness to do something extra in their free time.

(Primary teacher of 20 years)

Nevertheless, despite the training provided by the British Council, the need for foreign language teachers is permanently growing for at least two reasons: Younger and younger children start with foreign language learning (the first foreign language is compulsory for everyone from the age of 9) and young qualified language teachers find much better paid jobs outside schools. Unless the Government allows greater financial support to young teachers, they will continue to leave schools.

In comparison with English, Drama has even shorter history and is still not common in Czech schools. Since the early 90s primary schools have been given the choice to follow one of the three available national curricula. Drama is taught as a subject in its own right to children aged 6 to 11 in *one* of the curricula and recommended as one of the teaching methods in the other *two* curricula. To meet the need for qualified drama teachers, The Creative Dramatics Association, in collaborations with departments of drama-in-education runs courses over 10 to 12 weekends for teachers who wish to learn more about drama and also follow-up courses of the same length for qualified drama teachers. Moreover, teachers and students of drama can participate in seminars organised annually within the two national drama festivals. These festivals and seminars have a high reputation and are quite popular. However, not all interested teachers can afford the time, the fee, travel and accommodation costs. For these reasons, local seminars and summer holiday courses are more accessible.

Other inservice training sessions are presented by foundations and grant-giving authorities, such as the Open Society Fund or Jan Hus Educational Foundation whose programmes for teachers often focus on new, alternative approaches. Teachers seeking opportunities for professional development can apply to the European Union Educational Socrates programmes. For instance, the programme called Lingua B belongs to the most attractive

ones as it allows language teachers to take part in foreign language methodology courses abroad.

The Ostrava DIE INSET course

The aims

The principal objective of this course was to enrich the pedagogic practice of teachers who professed an interest in drama in education. It would introduce a number of approaches new to the teachers and, although the majority of the time would be spent on practical work, clear theoretical frameworks would be inferred from practice.

Timing

The course took place over 4 days, a total of 20 hours in September 1999. The course was advertised to graduates of the Primary Drama programme, practising teachers who had completed a one-year course in drama,

The content

The course started with basic drama activity and involvement, progressing from games, warm-up activities and simple 'fun' improvisations to more complex uses of drama. There was a particular emphasis on showing how improvisations are structured and their use as exploratory tools. Special emphasis was placed on techniques that could take participants into and support them within a fictional drama world. These ranged from using simple documents and objects to the use of complex, themed combinations of photographs, letters and artefacts found in related containers. Underlying dramatic and pedagogic theory was drawn out from most activities.

Research approaches adopted

We knew that we would, for a variety of reasons, have little chance of an in-depth study of the effect of the INSET experience. We thought it worthwhile, however, trying to use questionnaires to gain a series of 'snapshots' of teacher response. During the workshop, we asked participants to complete a questionnaire that gave basic information of their professional context and their reasons for attending (see Appendix A). Twenty-one did so. As we were looking for impact on practice in serving teachers, the data collected from three students were disregarded, together with those from a teacher-education lecturer from a neighbouring country. This resulted in 17 first questionnaires. A further questionnaire was issued at the end of the course asking participants to evaluate the course and to predict its affect on their practice (see Appendix B). Sixteen teachers responded. A third questionnaire was issued six months later in an attempt to judge whether changes in practice had occurred

(see Appendix C). Ten teachers responded. On the basis of the questionnaires, the researchers targeted three participants for interview eighteen months after the INSET experience. A semi-structured interview was conducted, using several lead questions, but allowing the interviewee to dictate much of the interview's direction and content.

An expected decay in post-course questionnaire response was expected and duly experienced between questionnaire two and three. This occurred in spite of a reminder of return of the third questionnaire and inclusion of self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Nevertheless, the returns constituted 100% of the sample in questionnaire one, 94% in questionnaire two, and 62% in questionnaire three. Whilst the sample size is relatively small, it is large enough to draw inferences.

Interestingly, all participants were women. This may not be surprising given the age group that many teach, but it reflects a widespread trend of female participation in many workshops and seminars led by John Somers in seven countries over the last four years, and is worthy of further investigation.

Data analysis

The teachers

These data derive from questionnaire one. Eight questions were asked – see Appendix A.

1. For how long have you worked as a teacher?

Responses generally fell into three categories: seven teachers who had been teaching from between 11 and 22 years; three who had been in post for between 2 and 4 years; seven newly qualified teachers had only been employed for 21 days.

2. In what type of school do you work?

The majority, ten, worked in Primary schools, (in the Czech system of education called “the first stage of Zakladni skola”, attended by children from 6 to 11 years of age in grades 1 to 5) whilst four worked in lower secondary schools (i.e. the second stage of Zakladni skola for children aged 12 to 16 in grades 6 to 9) and a further two in special schools (for children with Special Educational Needs) and one in a school for children suffering psychiatric disorder.

3. Why did you attend this course?

Typically, teachers attend INSET sessions to enhance their understanding and use of particular pedagogic approaches. The majority of our participants conformed to this

motivation, wishing to gain greater understanding of teaching methods which they used to a greater or lesser extent in their work. Three teachers came expecting something other than that provided. Two thought they were coming to a workshop on the teaching of English, and a third thought it was about the teaching of texts. One came for inspiration and the joy of partaking in something creative, whilst another wanted to know more about British approaches to drama teaching in order to make comparisons with her own work.

We believe that, in many countries, teachers who attend INSET courses gain kudos. Their managers, and perhaps their colleagues, may see them as initiators who are interested in new ideas. This can have a pronounced effect on their promotion prospects, or the chances of them being supported for postgraduate study. It is hard to imagine that this latter motivation played any part in the decisions of our participating teachers as, currently, there is no promotion system in teaching apart from the length of practice. Though experience is taken into account when appointing heads of subject and deputy headteachers, experience is still often only seen in terms of length of practice. As all teachers graduate after 4 or 5 years with the academic title “magister”, the chances of them being supported for postgraduate PhD study are few, and the few who do gain their doctorate tend top move out of schools.

4. Did you study drama in the course of your studies at college/university?

Without exception, none of the more experienced teachers had studied drama as part of their initial teacher education. One had undertaken a two-day course eight years previously, and was now studying drama as part of a distance-learning course. Another had also attended a course sometime ago. Conversely, ten of the young teachers present had studied drama as part of their degree. This seems to reflect that, as a relatively recently introduced subject in Czech teacher education, drama is in the process of developing its teacher education mechanisms.

The involvement of more experienced teachers who ‘discover’ drama sometime into their career reflects the situation in England in the 1960s when, before the widespread introduction of teacher education courses in drama, teachers of other disciplines became involved through experience of courses such as this one. This situation was also observed recently by John Somers in Greece, where mathematicians, scientists, teachers of Greek etc, attended the inaugural conference of the Greek DIE Association in Athens.

5. What is your previous experience of teaching drama?

Understandably, the experience of the young teachers was mostly gained on teaching practice. The more experienced teachers ranged from ‘none’ to a teacher of 20 years standing who had

'discovered' drama some years into her career. She was the only one with extensive experience.

6. *Have you received any financial support to attend this course? If 'yes', from whom?*

Half of the participants had received no financial support, whilst the other half had gained backing from their school or local education authority. There was some evidence that financial support could only be secured for courses accredited by the Ministry of Education; most of such courses are organised by LEAs. If this is a widespread policy, it obviously impacts on courses mounted by universities. Participants attending at their own expense made an additional commitment to be there. As the course took place on Sat and Sun from 9am to 5pm and on Monday and Tuesday from 2 to 6 pm, it meant that most of the teachers came after they had finished their classes, so most did not need leave of absence as most Czech schools start at 8.00 a.m. and finish 1.30 p.m.

7. *Does your headteacher know you have attended this course?*

Two thirds of the participants' headteachers knew of their attendance. There was naturally a close link between the headteacher knowing and provision of financial support. Surprisingly, perhaps, the successful drama teacher of 20 years' experience stated that she had no financial support and her headteacher did not know of her attendance.

8. *Has any other teacher from your school attended this course?*

An evenly divided response. Eight participants had at least one colleague present, and three from a particular Zakladni Skola had come together. Theoretically, those who attended with a colleague would have greater understanding and support in their school to institute change.

Thoughts immediately following the course

These data derive from questionnaire two. Four questions were asked – see Appendix B.

How would you describe the significance/usefulness of the course for you?

Responses were entirely positive and extremely enthusiastic. They were complimentary of the content, style, appropriateness and relevance of the work undertaken. Comments such as 'inspiring' and 'inspirational' were common. Several mentioned how refreshing it was to be a participant rather than the teacher and that how the course provided fresh thinking about their own creative potentials. A teacher of twenty-years' experience mentioned the explicit rationale behind day one of the course – rediscovering the spirit of playfulness: 'I met teachers who think the same way as me. They are not afraid to play and their profession is their hobby.' Several mentioned coming across ideas that were 'new' and 'interesting' whilst

two talked of taking ‘energy’ from the work. Unable to return questionnaire three due to ill health, a respondent stated ‘I have fond memories of this course and treasure the experience deeply’.

A number commented on how the methodology was woven into the practice and how they had gained insight from the teaching style of the workshop leader. One teacher who had arrived expecting a course about the teaching of English commented: ‘It has changed my negative attitude to drama and introduced me to a method of working I had not known.’ Another, young teacher realised how much she missed the input she received in her university course. For her, the course allowed her to adopt the stance of ‘learner’. The responses reflect the participants’ general vote of confidence in the course.

In what ways do you expect the course to influence your teaching practice?

All respondents admitted to expectations of change, some of which, such as ‘increased confidence to go my own professional way’, would be very difficult to detect. Seven respondents attested to having more theoretical understanding of drama work whilst four spoke of ‘inspiration’ gained for their own practice. Six respondents mention discovering specific ideas they wish to pursue in their own teaching. Of two who are not teachers of drama and who had expected a different course content, one said she would try out drama teaching in her English and Mathematics teaching, whilst the other said she would attempt drama activity in her Czech, reading and communication skills. Three respondents mentioned the greatest influence being the style of the lecturer and that they drew inspiration for their own approach from this.

Describe the activities you would like to try out in your teaching.

All respondents claimed they would try out ideas – in fact, one or two already had experimented in their teaching that took place parallel to the INSET course. Eight said they would try more improvisation, or approach it in different ways, whilst an equal number of responses mentioned using objects, letters and compound stimuli as starting points for story-making in drama. Six claimed to want to use ‘warm-up activities’ and a further four wished to use song in the way it had been employed in the course.

Do you expect support from any source to realise your ideas?

Only three participants expected no support from any source. One of these felt it was up to her to prove the value of drama before others would support her and it. Several mentioned having a very supportive headteacher and some looked to the children they taught to provide the ‘enjoyment’ that would support and validate the teacher’s use of drama. Three

specifically mentioned getting support from books although another wished that there were more articles on DIE in generalist teaching publications such as *Ucitelske noviny*, as she would not be buying a specialist drama journal.

Impact six months later

These data derive from questionnaire three. Five questions were asked – see Appendix B.

Have you applied in your teaching any of the activities that you learned on the course?

All ten respondents mentioned inclusion of course ideas in their teaching. Seven mentioned using story-making using objects or the compound stimulus as starting points. Several had used specific approaches to improvisation and a few were using adapted techniques in the curriculum generally – PE, Czech, speaking and listening skills, dramatised reading - and Civic Education, where drama had been used to examine issues of racism and cultural diversity.

Have you developed any new activities?

There was clear evidence that teachers had adapted course activities to their professional context. We imagine this is a precursor to designing completely new activities. There were excellent examples of sustained use of drama techniques gained from the INSET experience, including one primary school teacher who had worked on story-making from objects before using a sophisticated compound stimulus to look at the theme of ‘friendship’, linking it with Mlejnek’s book, *Detska tvoriva hra*. Another creative response was the adaptation, to examine the theme of bullying, of a structure used in the course to explore a charge of child abuse against a teacher. Teachers who previously had not taught drama now included it in their day-to-day pedagogic approaches.

Has the course influenced your teaching practice? If so, do you consider these changes significant?

Respondents claim the course did have significant affects for them. One whose other responses showed greatly increased use of drama was now using it to initiate more cross and inter-curricular work. Another claimed to be more aware of continuity and gradation of activities. Several alluded to an increased sense of ‘freedom’ in their work, typified by this teacher’s comment:

I am not afraid of drama anymore. Although I feel I need to study a lot more, and although I apply John’s advice to take small steps, I still use drama more than my

colleagues. And for my children, drama is something special; they enjoy school more when they can use drama. They have found out that they can trust me. They are also more confident, not afraid to make friends with the opposite sex.

(Primary teacher of 20 years)

A newly qualified teacher seemed to have undergone a similar release:

It is hard to judge [whether I have been influenced]. This is my first year of teaching and the course happened at the very beginning of my first year, so, if fact, I have entered my teaching with experience from the course. But I distinctly remember the finding I made that it is possible to provide children with a great amount of freedom for their work. Before, I thought that, for example, any differences from a given text are not desirable. This view freed me and convinced me that a larger amount of freedom allows children to put themselves into the learning process. I have spent the time experimenting with what I can afford to do with special school children.

(Newly qualified teacher in a special school)

As had a newly qualified teacher who said:

Yes [I have been influenced], in my approach to children. I try to have more time for them, listen to them attentively. From time to time, I prepare a lesson that provokes their interests and that differs from 'typical' lessons.

(Newly qualified primary teacher)

Even where drama was not an established subject, there was some evidence of increased use:

Drama is not taught in my school. I use miming more to show actions, but also notions/terms in various subjects – Czech, Science, PE etc. I also focus more on work with words, making them up, seeking their meaning, guessing, altering, connecting words into a story etc.

(Primary teacher of 20 years)

Would you like a further INSET drama course?

All respondents answered 'yes.'ⁱⁱ

Please write any further feelings you may have about the course and its influence on your practice

All respondents, save one who gave no additional comment, commented on their satisfaction at having taken part. One was realistic about what could be achieved in her teaching of very young children. She also commented on the constraints of time, the given syllabus and the loneliness she experienced in attempting to integrate drama ideas, commenting that she had little possibility to consult with anyone over the difficulties she encountered. Another seemed to value highly the caring professional atmosphere the course engendered among its participants:

The course was time spent in the best possible way. The things that made me happy were often little things that one does not usually notice but which were important to me – when somebody put chairs in their places and tidied the room, when somebody gave me a bite of their bread, or a sip of beer.

(Primary teacher of 20 years)

Interviews

Three in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted eighteen months after the INSET course took place (see Appendix D for lead questions). The first was with a primary teacher of 20 years experience who works in a school in which drama is not taught in its own right. In the year following the INSET course she taught an optional course in drama for 14/15 year olds (EVA - In a neighbouring school????) but the school preferred other options such as Information Technology, and the option was discontinued. She had just finished a distance-learning course in Primary Teacher Education but did not study drama as a specialisation. She retained strong memories of the INSET course, particularly commenting on the atmosphere created by the participants:

What was wonderful about the course was the fact that people of the same qualities attended it. All the participants were open, willing to work and play. They were relaxed - did not put up barriers to doing that type of activity. They had similar attitudes to what it is to be a teacher.

This teacher took detailed notes during the course and tried out many activities from it, selecting them on the basis of what she felt confident to do and suitability for the age group taught. There was strong evidence of adaptation of ideas. She had, for example changed the INSET activity that centred on accusations of child abuse to one of peer group bullying. She

had also tried out an INSET drama story exercise and adapted it to a completely new structure.

When asked about the significance of the course for her, she said:

The course showed how important drama is for children - drama has great potential. It prepares children for life; it can influence their behaviour. I do not think any other subject teaches 'human skills' such as looking the other person in the eyes. I have found out that the teacher must be very flexible, must have a rich source of activities prepared and adjust the activities to the mood and atmosphere in the group and other circumstances.

These seemed significant shifts for this teacher's professional perception. She hoped to expand her commitment to drama through running an after-school drama club although her preferred option was for the school to reinstate drama as an option course in grade 9.

The second interview was with a teacher in a primary school where drama appears on the curriculum. She studied drama as part of her initial teacher education course at Ostrava University and at the time of the INSET course she had experienced just three weeks of service. She was completing a distance earning Masters degree from the University of Prague. Her strongest memories were of the use of the compound stimulus, frameworks for setting up improvisations, the necessity to progress gradually and the ways in which graphic representations can support the drama. She had tried out many of the course ideas and claimed a greater confidence in using drama. The latter was particularly related to being able to cope with the sometimes uneven levels of student 'success'. She retained strong memories of the course activities and how they affected her. She felt Czech teachers often restricted drama work to basic exercises and thought the course had given her insight into how basic activity could be extended into more complex, related drama work. She claimed the drama syllabus aims for primary schools was too general, citing 'ability to work as a team' and 'to develop children's creativity' as examples. The course had given her insight into more subject-specific and demanding objectives.

The third interviewee was a teacher of English of 22 years experience in a Zakladni skola. She thought she was coming to a course on the use of drama in English teaching (although the course announcement did not claim this). She works with children in the 9-15 age range and her school introduced a curriculum seven years ago that included drama as a separate subject,

only to change back to one without drama four years later. At no time has there been a qualified drama teacher on the staff.

The INSET course had enabled her to change her teaching style and learning processes. She had successfully adapted several of the course activities to her own needs, but the main developments seemed to be in the way she approached her work generally. She felt that:

I think more when preparing my classes. I try more to make my classes interesting and enjoyable. I try to prepare my classes in such a way that children feel they control their learning. If possible, I try to employ all of the senses and I use movement more and total physical response activities in English.

She seemed to have developed greater understanding of student motivation:

Children are more interested in their work when they are motivated, when they are led in such a way that they feel ownership of their work, when they are given opportunities to explore and research. The course encouraged me to let children be creative - children can create tasks for themselves and develop ways in which they want to explore issues.

Discussion

Several issues emerge from the research. These will be discussed in the context of notions of inset effectiveness that come from our reading of relevant literature.

Provision by higher education

The perceived detachment of university departments of education from schools is seen both as a strength and weakness – strength in that they do not have a particular ideological reason for presenting the courses they do – weakness in that schools can see them as remote from day-to-day classroom practice. The best courses are based on effective understandings of school needs. Although recognising their ‘detachment’, Day (1997, p. 44) maintains that provision by staff in higher education institutions can provide a necessary counterbalance to the predominant diet available to most teachers whilst being ideally placed to work in collaboration with teachers to evaluate outcomes. He also maintains that much INSET is instrumentalist, catering for limited notions of what it is to be a teacher (p. 45). The Ostrava INSET course was not mounted to serve instrumentalist or ‘mandated change’ aims. The Czech teachers seemed to look naturally to the universities to provide such INSET.

Perceived needs

The identification and justification of need is not a simple matter. Several parties may have a view of ‘need’ – government, local authorities, school managers, teachers and parents and the students themselves. In England since the introduction of a common National Curriculum in 1990, Government has driven the prioritising of much INSET provision. As Husen and Postlethwaite point out, ‘if INSET participants do not recognise a need as having sufficient priority for them, activities aimed at meeting that need will be judged irrelevant’ (Husen and Postlethwaite, 1994, p. 5967).

In that the participants were self-selecting, it is to be expected that they came to a course for which they felt they had a need. Two thought they were coming to a different form of course. This was either due to poor publicity or a mistake on their part. One of these returned all three questionnaires and showed a marked increase in awareness of and use of drama. Except for these two, we presume teachers’ perceptions of their needs were met by the course description.

The school context

It is clear that a school must provide the potential for employing the ideas that a teacher acquires through INSET. If a school fails to recognise in its wider professional community, the ideas acquired by teachers who attend INSET courses, it may give the impression that it sees INSET experience as a private matter for the individual teacher. This can probably be said about majority of Czech schools. When teachers choose to attend courses that upgrade knowledge, refresh pedagogic approaches or explore the subject specific curriculum, they are usually given “quiet” support (i.e. no explicit support but no impediments either) from their headteachers to apply new ideas in their practice. School managements do not monitor the effects of such courses. The situation is, of course, different if the school management sends teachers on courses to prepare for mandated change. This phenomenon is identified by Harland and Kinder who comment that, when a school’s INSET policy is ‘school focussed’ rather than ‘teacher focussed’, lack of control by senior management may mean ‘lack of concern by senior management about the outcome and value of staff’s INSET experiences for the school’ (Harland & Kinder, 1994).

As a matter of policy, some INSET schemes train two teachers from a school to maximise the impact and in order that they may provide encouragement and assistance to each other (*Ibid* p. 5972).

In order to support the teachers' efforts to report back on their Ostrava INSET experience, and to increase the chances of their being able to apply their new knowledge, we wrote to the headteacher of each school from which the participants came. We thanked the headteacher for allowing them to attend (even though we knew some were ignorant of the fact) and outlined the course content. We expressed our wish that the school and its management provide circumstances in which the participant might have the best chance of applying what she had learned on the course. There was no evidence from the third questionnaire or interview responses that schools had presented any obstacles to participants applying and developing their drama knowledge.

Practice and theory

For time and other resource reasons, it is tempting to reduce INSET to theoretical constructs from which providers expect teachers to develop classroom practice. Several problems occur from such a thesis. Firstly, although teachers operate embedded theory in every professional action they make, they are not necessarily able to state explicitly the theoretical frameworks within which they work. Thus the expectation that new theory will give rise to changed practice may not be borne out. Husen and Postlethwaite posit that if INSET ‘.. is to develop new and valid practice, it will have to combine the use of theoretical and practical knowledge in some kind of dialogical relationship ...’ (1994, p. 5968). The Ostrava INSET DIE course attempted this. It required participants to derive theory from practice, as practical work undertaken by the participants was frequently deconstructed to expose its underlying theory. Discussion followed on the use of this theory to devise further practical work appropriate to their professional context. The post-course data would suggest that participants' theoretical understanding of the work was sufficient to allow them to move away from the specificity of the activities to their adaptation for their own professional contexts and needs.

Quality of provision

Not unnaturally, there is a direct link between the impact of INSET and the quality of the provider (Harland & Kinder, 1994). For effective outcomes to be achieved, effective planning and teaching of the course is paramount. The evidence suggests that this course was well planned, executed and received. We feel that it would have been difficult to exceed the levels of practical involvement, theoretical discussion and real social cohesion and enjoyment. Where it fell short is in providing effective support to the teachers subsequently. Attempts were made to draw together those participants who felt the need at another, two-day course led by John Somers in November 2000, but his foundered due to his available dates coinciding with Czech holiday closures. No booklet or other publication was given to the participants, although they were able to keep all course materials used.

Long-term effects of INSET

There are few studies that deal with the long-term effects of INSET provision, as the assessment of change over time is difficult to identify. Harland and Kinder (1997) do draw on a study that examined the effects of ISET activity on teachers over a 3-4 year period. This enabled them to develop a typology of INSET outcomes. These fell into nine categories. Briefly (and drawing heavily on their descriptive terms) these constituted:

1. *Material and provisional outcomes* – the physical resources that result from INSET provision – worksheets, equipment, for example;
2. *Informational outcomes* – being briefed about the background facts to do with the curriculum, for example;
3. *New awareness* – described as a ‘perceptual or conceptual shift from previous assumptions;
4. *Value congruence outcomes* – to what extent the messages of good practice embedded in the INSET provision coincides with the teacher’s own notions of good practice;
5. *Affective outcomes* – acknowledge that there is an emotional experience inherent in any learning situation. The affective experience seems able to, for example, make teachers excited about the ideas received or, conversely, to demoralise them;
6. *Motivational and attitudinal outcomes* – describe the increased enthusiasm and motivation to practice the INSET ideas received;
7. *Knowledge and skills* – indicates the deeper levels of understanding, critical reflexivity and theoretical rationales regarding pedagogy and curriculum content;
8. *Institutional outcomes* – refer to increased collective impact in the school from which the teacher(s) come;
9. *Impact on Practice* – acknowledges the changes in practice achieved.

They further prioritised these outcomes in order of importance in changing practice. Least important were third-order outcomes - *Provisionary, Information and New Awareness*; next in

importance were second order outcomes - *Motivation, Affective, and Institutional*; and most important were first order outcomes - *Value Congruence, Knowledge and Skills*. Harland and Kinder recommend that these prioritised outcomes, should be present in INSET activities and observe that the larger the number of outcomes met, the greater the chance of change in teacher behaviour. Interestingly, they discovered from teachers' accounts of the same INSET experiences, that individuals felt that they had received outcomes different from others.

Harland and Kinder recognise that there is a lack of research into the effects of particular forms of INSET. The orthodoxy would seem to suggest that bringing about changes in practice is a long-term process, but they acknowledge that some INSET outcomes can be achieved quickly, especially with teachers who already meet many of the outcome conditions described above (P. 82).

They further suggest that 'Modelling the new skills' should form an important part of changing practice. We thought it helpful to compare the outcomes of the Ostrava DIE INSET course to those categorised by Harland and Kinder.

Material and provisional outcomes – no formal materials were provided other than those generated by the participants' own note taking and the rolecards, letters and associated material used in the course. The latter would have acted as *aides memoir* when teachers wished to remember the course content and the principles embedded in the exercises;

Informational outcomes – nothing of this nature was covered. It may have been helpful to link directly the work of the course to the Czech curriculum, for example;

New awareness – there is evidence from the questionnaires and interviews that new awareness was generated;

Value congruence outcomes – there is evidence that value congruence was present. This may have been enhanced through voluntary attendance;

Affective outcomes – there is ample evidence that many of the participants underwent an effective experience on the course. There was evidence of excitement and enjoyment;

Motivational and attitudinal outcomes – there was evidence of enthusiasm and motivation to practise the approaches gained on the course;

Knowledge and skills – evidence that teachers felt they had gained new knowledge and skills;

Institutional outcomes – weak. Other than the letter to headteachers, we did not support the teachers in their attempts to employ the techniques in schools, or to maximise each school's awareness of what the individual had gained from the course;

If we now examine Harland and Kinder's order of importance of the above, the Ostrava DIE INSET course would seem to have succeeded, at least partially in meeting both first order effects, *value congruence* and *knowledge and skills*. It met two of the second order effects, *motivation* and *affective*. It did not meet the requirements of *institutional effect*. It met two of the three third order effects, *provisionary* and *new awareness*. It did not provide the *information effect*.

Impact on Practice – there is evidence that teachers changed their practice as a result of course attendance. Given that the course seems to have led, at least partially, to the achievement of six of the eight outcomes identified by Harland and Kinder as being necessary for change in practice to occur, this was to be expected.

Conclusion

We are aware of the methodological and procedural holes in this research and are loath to claim too much from its outcomes. We believe, however, that the quality of the experience provided for the participants on the Ostrava DIE INSET course led to identifiable impact on their practice. Given the variety of contexts from which these teachers came, there is heartening evidence that an intensive, short course can make a difference to teachers' practice and the learning environments they create.

Appendices

Appendix A:

1. *For how long have you worked as a teacher?*
2. *In what type of school do you work?*
3. *Why did you attend this course?*
4. *Did you study drama in the course of your studies at college/university?*
5. *What is your previous experience of teaching drama?*
6. *Have you received any financial support to attend this course? If 'yes', from whom?*
7. *Does your headteacher know you have attended this course?*
8. *Has any other teacher from your school attended this course?*

Appendix B

1. *How would you describe the significance and usefulness of the course for you?*
2. *In what ways do you expect the course to influence your teaching practice?*
3. *Please describe the activities you would like to try out in your teaching.*

4. Do you expect support from any source to realise your ideas?

Appendix C

1. Have you applied in your teaching any of the activities that you learned on the course?
2. Have you developed any new activities?
3. Has the course influenced your teaching practice? If so, do you consider these changes significant?
4. Would you like a further INSET drama course?
5. Please write any further feelings you may have about the course and its influence on your practice

Appendix D

1. What do you remember about the Ostrava course?
2. Have you applied in your teaching any activities, methods or approaches you learned at the course? Did they work?
3. Were any of the activities completely new to you?
4. How would you describe the significance of the course for you?
5. Any other thoughts?

REFERENCES

- Bolam, R. (1982) *Inservice Education and Training of Teachers: a Condition of Educational Change*, Final Report of CERI Project on INSET, Paris, OECD
- Day, C. 'In-service Teacher Education in Europe: conditions and themes for development in the 21st century', *British Journal of In-service Education*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1997
- Greenland, J (Ed) (1983) *The In-Service Training of Primary School Teachers in English-speaking Africa: a Report*, London, Macmillan
- Husen, T. and Postlethwaite, T.N. (1994) *International Encyclopaedia of Education*; Oxford, England New York: Pergamon
- Harland, J. & Kinder, K. 'Patterns of Local Education Authority INSET Organisation', in *British Journal of In-service Education*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1994

NOTES

ⁱ Drama in Education employs the technique of 'acting out' to allow participants to experience, through the use of the dramatic medium, life situations that are analogous to their own. In this way it is thought that new learning takes place, both in relation to the material explored within the drama, and in the reordering of understanding of previous experience to which it links.