Inservice Education of Teachers in the Old Commonwealth

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Background to INSET

A distinctive feature of the British educational system is that it operates on a basis of shared responsibility between central government, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), and the teaching profession. This 'partnership' is often referred to by the Department of Education and Science as a 'national system locally administered' (DES 1978). One outcome of this system is that national policies and priorities sometimes vary between the four countries which make up the United Kingdom as do local policies and priorities. This applies no less to INSET than to other aspects of education.

Nevertheless major developments in INSET in recent years have been broadly similar in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. As most of the available literature relates to England and Wales the emphasis in this survey is however upon developments in these two countries.

Purposes of INSET

There appear to be three main reasons for the recent growth and commitment to INSET: first, that it is inherently important that teachers, of all people, should continue with their personal and professional education: second, that the rapid, intensive, and fundamental nature of present day change whether it be technological, economic, cultural, social, or political, makes it imperative for the education system in general and teachers in particular to review and modify teaching methods and curricula: and third, that for widely prevalent demographic reasons, the

demand for new teachers is dropping sharply and the INSET needs of a stable teaching force are especially important (Bolam 1978).

In the White Paper of December 1972, which followed the publication of the James Report, the government proposed a significant expansion in both the induction and in-service education of teachers in schools:

(a) All teachers were to be entitled to full-time release for in-service purposes for periods equivalent to a minimum of one term in every seven years of service - eventually however this was to be increased to one term in every five years of service. Opportunities were to be preserved however, to allow some teachers to attend in-service activities lasting longer than three months.

(b) The first steps in implementing this policy were to begin in the school year 1974-75, and thereafter were to continue progressively so as to reach a target of three per cent of the total teaching force being released at any one time by 1981.

(c) All first year teachers were by 1975-76 to receive added help during their first (induction) year of teaching, including release from teaching duties for in-service education for not less than one-fifth of their time.

The worsening economic crisis has however prevented the full implementation of these policies although some initial steps have been taken and INSET participation rates are encouraging. A recent DES enquiry into teacher participation in INSET in England and Wales concluded that in maintained nursery, primary, secondary, and special schools about ninety per cent of teachers taking up first full-time permanent appointments in 1978-79 were involved in some sort of induction programme, and teacher participation in in-service activities exceeded the numbers of teachers in regular service (DES 1980).

Priorities of INSET

Although INSET needs are likely to be many and varied, the following appear at the present time to be applicable to most of the U.K. and require prompt attention.

(a) The need to equip headteachers with the skills and expertise necessary to help them cope with the increasingly complex task of headship. (It should perhaps also be noted here that there is little in-service provision available specifically for other senior educationists, such as LEA administrators and advisers).

(b) The need to devise appropriate activities which will help schools to cope with the impact of falling rolls. These include equipping some teachers, especially in secondary schools, to teach more than one subject, or to retrain to teach another subject, to equip increasing numbers of teachers in primary schools to teach more than one age range of children within the same class, and to help sustain the morale and interest of teachers during a period of limited promotion prospects.

(c) The need to assist schools in obtaining maximum benefit from new technology such as the introduction of microcomputers.

(d) The need to ensure that there are sufficient teachers available to teach shortage subjects such as crafts, physics, and mathematics in secondary schools.

Costs of INSET

The cost of INSET consists of a number of items, which include:

(a) The salaries of teachers released for in-service purposes in school time.

(b) Expenditure on the provision of activities. This includes such items as the salaries of organisers and tutors, and where appropriate their travelling expenses, and administrative costs.

(c) Financial support to teachers, for example, full or part payment of tuition fees, travelling, and subsistence.

(d) Expenditure on LEA advisory services and LEA administrative costs (Bolam and Porter 1976).

At present, payment for (a), (c), (d) and part of (b) is met by LEAs. Each LEA however, is free to determine what proportion of its total income (which is largely drawn from local rates and the government's rate support grant) is to be spent on INSET and, within that, the distribution of that sum among the various forms of INSET. Certain elements of the expenditure, for instance 79 per cent of the salaries of teachers released for the equivalent of full-time courses of four weeks or more, are at present shared among all LEAs through the expenditure pool for advanced further education. Of the total LEA expenditure on INSET in England and Wales during 1978-79, the salary costs of released teachers accounted for more than one-half, the expenses of teachers and the salaries and expenses of advisers and officers one-third, and the actual provision of training and other costs the remaining one-fifth (DES 1980).

Excluding LEA activities and after taking account of income from tuition fees, the cost of the provision of other activities is met in a number of ways:

(a) In the case of University activities, it comes from general university funds derived from the University Grants Committee annual grants. Decisions on resources allocated to activities for teachers are a matter for the authorities of individual institutions and vary from one university to another.

(b) In voluntary (direct grant) institutions of higher education such as Church of England and Roman Catholic colleges of higher education, funds come from the DES as part of the cost of maintaining the institutions.

(c) In institutions maintained by LEAs such as polytechnics, colleges of higher education, and colleges of further education, funds are provided by the maintaining LEA which is able to charge the costs of approved courses lasting four weeks or more (full-time or the equivalent part-time) to the expenditure pool.

Arising from the above, a number of significant features are discernable in relation to the total cost of INSET in the U.K.

(a) The total cost is shared by a number of agencies although the major cost falls upon LEAs.

(b) Within LEAs and institutions of higher education, demands for resources for INSET have to compete against demands for other services, although it should be remembered that colleges of higher education are staffed so that the equivalent of two-ninths of their teacher training staff can be devoted to INSET. Thus, the resources available for INSET vary from county to county.

(c) There is little earmarked money for INSET from central government funds other than that provided by the DES for Regional Courses (see page 13).

Because resources for INSET are vulnerable to other competing claims, there have been demands for earmarked grants from central government, but because of local authority opposition to earmarked grants of any sort, the likelihood of this happening remains remote. Furthermore, if demands for INSET continue to lose out to other claims, it is possible that demands will grow for alternative cheaper forms of INSET. Whilst there may be some sense in this, steps will need to be taken to ensure that cheapness does not become the overriding consideration at the expense of quality.

Responsibility control and co-ordination of INSET

Overseas visitors might find themselves surprised at the fragmented nature of INSET provision in the U.K. and at the number of providing agencies. It has been estimated that, nationally, more than 500 agencies are involved (Willey and Maddison 1978), while in just one area of England covering the counties of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire over 40 organisations act partly or exclusively as providers (Henderson et al 1975). The major providers however include the following:

Local Education Authorities

The vast majority of LEAs, some 104 in England and Wales, see it as their duty as employers to provide INSET for teachers working in their schools, and most do this through two channels, namely teachers' centres (discussed below) and LEA advisers or inspectors.

The number and function of advisers vary considerably between LEAs, but a recent study (Bolam et al 1976) showed that 93 per cent of advisers were involved in one way or another with INSET. This involvement mainly takes the form of organising activities, particularly those that take the form of evening meetings and day conferences on a wide variety of practical issues, and participating in consultancy work.

The study also rightly points out that there are distinct advantages in having advisory teams involved in INSET, for, by virtue of their close involvement with teachers in schools on the one hand, and with LEA administration on the other, they are likely to be best informed as to needs of teachers and schools. Furthermore, they are also likely to be in as good a position as any to follow up in-service work. That said, however, pressure of other duties does not always allow them sufficient time for this.

Colleges of Higher Education

Other than in Scotland, most of these institutions are relatively new to the provision of INSET; consequently, their role is discussed below as an example of a recent innovation.

Universities

Most universities through their schools or institutes of education have been involved in INSET for many years. Their main contribution has been and remains, the provision of a wide range of part-time and full-time courses leading to awards such as advanced diplomas, B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees, although some such as London and Bristol also provide a variety of non-award bearing activities. Two recent developments however are beginning to affect the traditional pattern of university involvement in the award bearing field, and demand adjustments on their part. First, in some areas of the U.K. the monopoly of the universities is being challenged by the emergence of colleges of higher education and polytechnics as major providers, and secondly, because of the lack of opportunities for staff of schools to move to teacher training establishments on the scale that they used to, there is increasing demand by LEAs and teachers for the content of award bearing courses to be more directly related to the needs of schools.

The Department of Education and Science

The DES makes three types of contribution to INSET. First, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, numbering about 450 across England and Wales influence schools and colleges during their regular visits and through their contributions to INSET activities organised by other agencies. Secondly, HMIs organise short full-time courses on a national basis. Thirdly, they participate in the provision of DES regional courses which have been influential in encouraging joint planning between the major providers and in encouraging courses of an innovative nature. The national programme during recent years has reflected the emphasis of central publications such as the Bullock Report 'A Language for Life' (DES 1975) and the Warnock Report 'Special Educational Needs' (DES 1978), while outside the national programme HMIs have initiated various courses and conferences to stimulate professional debate on a number of issues arising from their surveys and discussion documents. Up to ten per cent of HMIs' time can be devoted to specific INSET activities (Perry 1980).

Schools

Until recently, the vast majority of INSET provision took the form of courses, conferences, workshops, etc., being held at centres away from the school and attended by individual teachers. During recent years however, more provision has been focused upon the needs of individual schools, and some schools have become in part their own providers. This development is further discussed below.

Comment

It will be noted from this list that professional associations are not major providers of INSET in the U.K. Thsy are important however, in promoting the cause of INSET through their representatives on local and national committees, and through the publication of policy documents.

It is almost impossible to obtain up-to-date accurate data as to the volume of INSET provision provided by each of the main agencies; Bradley (OECD 1978), referring to a DES study conducted in 1970 shows that in 1967 LEAs and universities provided 33½ per cent each, the former colleges of education contributed 15 per cent and the remainder was shared between the DES, subject and professional associations and other bodies. Although the percentages may have changed, LEAs universities, and colleges between them still provide the bulk of the provision. Bradley also shows that the overwhelming concentration then as now, was upon short courses, while the universities and colleges then as now had a virtual monopoly of courses lasting longer than fourteen days.

There are obvious strengths and weaknesses in having a number of in-service providing agencies who between them can offer a wide ranging package of activities. It means, for example, that no one agency is allowed to dominate what is provided; therefore, in many parts of the U.K. shools and teachers are free to choose from a varied menu and to seek support from a number of agencies in order to meet their needs. It ought

also to be possible for many needs to be met. On the other hand, over provision of some activities and under provision of others continues, as does competition between providing agencies for students.

In seeking to rectify this situation though, the suggestion which has been made that each of the major agencies be associated with specific types of activity may not be as beneficial as it first appears, nor should any co-ordination machinery be so tight that it stifles initiative and prevents immediate response to short term needs. In the U.K. where each of the providing agencies values its freedom, a better approach would seem to lie in the setting up of machinery whereby a spirit of co-operation is generated so that co-ordination is achieved without coercion and hostility.

The White Paper of December 1972 envisaged that new regional machinery would be established for the promotion, co-ordination and supervision of teacher education but lack of agreement among the interested parties as to the role and membership of regional committees has so far delayed their establishment, although some LEAs have taken the initiative in appointing in-service co-ordinators and setting up local in-service consultative committees. At national level the proposal of the White Paper that a national committee for England and Wales be established to advise the government on the discharge of its central responsibilities for teacher supply and training led to the formation in 1973 of the Advisory Committee for the Supply and Training of Teachers (ACSTT) on which LEAs, teaching profession and the training institutions are represented. ACSTT has produced a number of helpful discussion documents though its role remains a limited one.

Motivation of teachers

Participation in INSET in the United Kingdom is voluntary, which results in some teachers being regular participants but others not. As Bolam and Porter (op cit) rightly point out, those who do participate are probably encouraged to do so by one or more of three incentives namely, the

intrinsic merits of a particular activity, academic awards, and possible improved career prospects. A fourth possible incentive - financial gain - does not appear to be a major feature. Of the various activities which teachers can participate in, short activities offer neither financial gain nor academic award, but they may offer improved career prospects in two senses. First, the fact that a short activity has been attended can be included in a teacher's curriculum vitae, and secondly attendance at LEA short activities sometimes brings teachers into contact with LEA advisers whom they may perceive to be influential in the hunt for promotion. Most of the longer activities, lasting one year full-time or two and three years part-time, normally lead to advanced qualifications such as B.Ed. degrees. Although some teachers receive an addition to their salary if they obtain one of these awards, the main incentive appears to be the possession of the award itself and the prospect of promotion that goes with it.

To offset these incentives there are a number of factors which can deter a teacher from participating in INSET. These include the fact that the majority of INSET takes place during evenings, weekends, and vacation periods presenting an obvious deterrent to less motivated teachers and married women with families; attendance at some activities involves travelling expenses and tuition fees, and although most LEAs try to make some contribution towards these, it is seldom sufficient to reimburse the full cost that falls upon teachers; because of falling rolls and the current economic situation, promotion prospects are far more limited than they used to be. Thus, despite the encouraging response to INSET opportunities, the fact remains that many teachers do not participate in INSET or their participation is of a very limited kind.

In order to encourage greater teacher participation, some LEAs now allow schools to close for two to three days per year for INSET purposes, thereby hoping to involve every member of staff from a school. There have also been suggestions in the educational press and elsewhere,

that up to five days compulsory INSET should be included in a teacher's contract of service as in in Sweden. As laudable as these developments and suggestions are, however, it needs to be stressed that they have important implications for the quality of INSET, not least the fact that any compulsion would mean that the provision of INSET would have to be seen by those participating as worthwhile and relevant and of the highest quality.

Evaluation and follow-up

At a time when attempts are being made to make the education service more accountable, it is not unreasonable to ask whether the provision of INSET justifies the expense involved, particularly in terms of improving teacher and pupil performance in the classroom. This inevitably raises the question of evaluating INSET activities and although there has been increasing discussion about this in the U.K. during recent years, the extent of evaluation has been limited. As part of a fact finding study undertaken for the DES four years ago (Taylor 1980), it was concluded that the main means of evaluation were as follows, and there is no reason to believe that the situation has changed much since then.

(a) The distribution of questionnaires to teacher participants either during or at the end of an activity, or both, often asking them to rate various aspects of a course or programme of activities.

(b) Examination and continuous assessment techniques - particularly in the case of award bearing programmes.

(c) Informal subjective assessment of classroom effect by LEA advisory staff and, to a lesser extent, by college and university tutors and others who regularly visit schools.

(d) Reports from course organisers and tutors.

(e) Evaluation conferences or meetings.

(f) Occasionally, the appointment of part-time or full-time evaluators using more sophisticated techniques.

Although most of these means are relatively easy to arrange, and although they can sometimes produce helpful process data and 'soft' product data, they can only make a very limited contribution to assessing the impact of INSET upon what goes on in the classroom.

Because of the time and cost involved few external evaluation studies are likely to be undertaken in the forseeable future, but it should and ought to be possible for course organisers and tutors to undertake more limited but nevertheless informative self-evaluation studies, particularly in relation to process. To assist in this, an OECD study (Bolam) suggests that the following would be helpful:

(a) The appropriateness of formal self-evaluation agents and procedures (for example, the appointment of professional tutors, LEA co-ordinators and the setting up of units and committees) should be reviewed at each system level - whether school, providing agency, LEA or national.

(b) Relatively simple and easy-to-use self-evaluation procedures should be developed. These will need to build upon existing practice in schools, colleges and LEAs, and be further refined by drawing upon the methods of professional researchers.

(c) Key people like professional tutors and INSET co-ordinators should be given the opportunity to attend short practical evaluation training courses.

Innovations Adopted

Distance techniques

The use of radio and television in schools has a substantial history in Britain. However the movement in the 1950s and 1960s to extend

educational opportunities saw considerable development of distance techniques which have come to play an important role in INSET.

Television and Radio

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the various independent television companies, and in some instances local radio stations each broadcast radio and television programmes each year, some of which can be described as indirect and others as direct INSET. Of the indirect type, a large number of radio and television programmes are transmitted to schools and colleges throughout the U.K. each week. Although programmes of this type are designed for use by teachers in teaching their pupils, an evaluation study carried out in 1974 (Bolam op cit) drew some important conclusions about the value of them to teachers as an INSET experience. Amongst the conclusions were:

(a) Teachers appreciate having access to up-to-date information, to curricula developments, and in some cases to the methods used by other teachers who have been commissioned to assist in the production of broadcast materials.

(b) Rethinking on the part of teachers, individually and in groups, as to how they might best use broadcasts increasingly involved them in consideration of the whole education process within the classroom and the school. Furthermore, the use of broadcasts by a teacher within the context of class aims and school objectives, whether working individually or as a member of a team, creates an in-service training situation within the school, the natural and most effective centre for it.

Although evidence of their success is hard to come by, some notable examples of programmes of the direct type have included one designed to help teachers to deal with the problems of raising the compulsory school leaving age from fifteen

to sixteen years, another designed to assist teachers in examining some of the problems and issues related to teaching nine to thirteen year olds, and more recently one designed to assist teachers of young children in stimulating language development during the crucial early years.

The Open University

The Open University was established by Royal Charter in 1969 mainly with the intention of providing 'second chance' opportunities for those adults who for a variety of reasons had hitherto been prevented from following a course of higher education. It is an independent, autonomous institution supported by government funds, which is authorised to confer its own awards which until recently had been mainly first and higher degrees, particularly the former. However, as the University becomes more involved with the provision of 'continuing education', an increasing number of 'non degree' courses leading to the award of diplomas and certificates or no award at all are being offered.

Undergraduate studies are based upon a credit system, six credits being necessary for the award of an ordinary B.A. degree and eight credits for an honours degree. A credit is awarded on the successful completion of a one-year course of study demanding about four hundred study hours, and a maximum of two such courses can be taken in any one year. Courses not leading to degrees vary in length from a few weeks to more than one year, and some carry credit within the degree structure.

The vast majority of Open University students are mature students studying on a part-time basis. In the case of most courses there are no entry requirements, students being accepted on a 'first come first serve' basis. Students' time is spent at home working on specially prepared correspondence material supplemented by television and radio broadcasts. In addition, they can attend local study centres for individual and group tutorials and discussions

or to see and hear broadcasts that they may have missed. Some courses also require attendance at summer schools for one week or more. Self administered tests and written assignments are included, the latter being marked by local tutors appointed on a part-time basis. These are combined with a final examination to obtain a credit.

Since its opening, the University has been a great attraction. In 1968 there were 71,000 students registered of whom 61,000 were on the undergraduate programme, 9,000 on the post-experience programme, and 500 registered for a higher degree. Since 1971 when teaching began, 136 courses have been presented of which some 117 are in the undergraduate programme and over 20 in the post-experience programme (Raynor 1980).

Although the number of teachers applying for OU courses has declined from 35.9 per cent of total applications in 1970 to 21.2 per cent in 1978, they still form a sizeable percentage of the total. Amongst its attractions to teachers has been the opportunity to obtain a degree at a time when teaching is moving towards being an all graduate profession in the U.K., and the fact that the OU has been prepared to exempt them from up to three credits by virtue of their possession of a teachers' certificate. Success has brought returns in some instances in the form of improved salary and promotion chances. Allied to these attractions has been the quality of some of the courses, especially in terms of their relevance to school and classroom practice.

Hitherto, the courses taken by teachers have been provided by all six university faculties with the Faculty of Educational Studies providing the majority. In keeping with the increasing attention being given to the need for more 'continuing education' however, the University has now established a Delegacy of Continuing Education with an INSET 'line of development' within it. As indicated earlier, the University is no newcomer to the provision of 'post experience' courses for teachers having for example pioneered a very successful school focused course relating 'reading development'. This latest development

however will hopefully increase its contribution to INSET particularly in terms of school focused and classroom based provision without having to withdraw teachers from school.

Comment

The advantages of using a distance teaching approach to INSET can perhaps be best summarised as follows. First, if teachers are sufficiently motivated, it should enable more of them to participate, especially those working in rural areas or those who for other reasons cannot attend existing activities. Secondly, the uniqueness of the teaching approach may be better suited to achieve certain purposes than other more conventional approaches. Thirdly, costs should be reduced. In the latter case it has been estimated that despite the fact that fees are paid by OU students (sometimes reimbursed by LEAs) the cost per student is only one-third of the cost of a student at a conventional university. Furthermore, after the initial investment has been made to produce courses, costs ought to reduce as student numbers grow.

Some possible limitations of distance teaching ought however to be highlighted. These include the fact that it is less appropriate for some activities than others. For example, it would seem to be a useful approach for purposes of updating subject matter, informing teachers of the relevance for their teaching of recent research studies, or helping them gain additional certificates, diplomas or degrees in certain subjects. However, it could be an inappropriate approach to preparing teachers to teach art and craft subjects, or to equipping headteachers with certain management skills which ideally require them to work at specific tasks with fellow heads. Secondly, the teaching materials need to be carefully prepared and presented, given that they are likely to be studied by teachers with differing backgrounds, differing levels of ability and differing expectations. Thirdly, the amount of face to face contact between tutors and students is likely to be very limited even if, as with the OU, some courses

have a summer school element built into them, and local study centres are set up where students can meet their tutors and other students for limited periods. And finally, there has hitherto been a lack of research into the effectiveness of this mode of teaching, so while it has promise, it needs to be approached with care.

Involvement of Colleges of Higher Education in INSET

In recent years there has been gradual acceptance of the need for greater integration between initial and in-service teacher education which had been virtually non-existent, and consequently of the idea that any institution involved in initial training should also be involved in in-service training. The reorganisation of teacher education which took place from 1975 resulted in the closure of some colleges of education, the merger of some with universities and polytechnics, and the transformation of most of the remainder into colleges of further and higher education. To meet the increased need for INSET provision and to offset a substantial reduction in the scale of initial training, those colleges retaining a teacher training role were allowed to allocate two-ninths of their staffing to INSET activities. Although prior to reorganisation all Scottish Colleges of Education had a substantial commitment to INSET, this had not applied to most English and Welsh colleges and this recent development therefore constitutes a considerable innovation.

The problems facing the colleges have however been considerable:

(a) The commitment to INSET emerged at the same time as many of the colleges have been diversifying into other forms of higher education. This has resulted in a number of major changes during a short period of time, often into areas of work in which many members of staff have little experience.

(b) Staff morale has often been low as a result of reorganisation.

(c) Staff suitable for participating in INSET are often those who are also required for other duties.

(d) It has not always been easy to enter a field where other providers, for example, teachers' centres, LEA advisory staff, and universities are already well established.

(e) Suspicion on the part of teachers and advisory staff that college staff are out of touch with schools.

To their credit, many colleges have overcome these problems by engaging effectively in INSET.

In recognition of the importance of this new aspect of their work, some colleges have appointed a senior member of staff to act as in-service co-ordinator. Although the duties of co-ordinators vary, most are responsible for helping to identify needs, identifying staff to participate in INSET, liaising with other INSET agencies, keeping in close touch with schools and LEAs, and being responsible for organising college programmes. Other initiatives which some have taken include a reorganisation of college committees so that INSET receives appropriate attention and resources; ensuring that LEA advisory staff, teachers, and HMI are represented on appropriate committees; the appointment of new staff with INSET responsibilities; and arranging for the retraining of some staff so that they can make a contribution to INSET.

Most colleges have mainly concentrated upon provision of part-time degree or diploma courses, many of which have however broken new ground in that they are based upon a school-focused philosophy which asserts that advanced study should build upon the experience of participating teachers, relate very directly to classroom situations and needs, and provide greater opportunities for 'try out' and 'feed back' activities by participants. Some colleges are also playing an important part in providing retraining programmes to help overcome the continuing shortage

of specialist secondary school teachers in such areas as science and mathematics. There has been a considerable development of short course provision designed to meet specific local and regional needs, whilst the growth of less formal school based and school focused activities is contributing substantially both to the capacity of the colleges to provide consultancy and support services to schools and to increasingly co-operative working between colleges and schools. Encouraging links, sometimes involving job exchanges between teachers and college lecturers for short periods have been created and are leading to growing mutual understanding and confidence.

Comment

There are, however, still a number of difficulties associated with this development. For example, college financing tends to be based upon full-time students on taught courses, but future development of INSET, for instance a growth in consultancy, is likely to require a different deployment of staff and funding. Many members of staff who are required for INSET are those who are required for other college activities as well, hence some have very heavy workloads, while others are under-employed. Because of economic cutbacks, there is not the turnover of staff that there used to be, consequently there is a distinct danger that the contribution of the colleges to INSET in the future will be determined by existing expertise which could become outdated as the needs of the educational system change.

Finally, there is the ever present problem of duplication of provision particularly in the award bearing field where, as the demand for in-service B.Ed. courses begins to decline, colleges are beginning to provide courses leading to M.Ed. degrees, a field which has hitherto been mainly the preserve of the universities.

Teachers' Centres

Although envisaged in the McNair Report of 1944, Teachers' Centres were the outcome of two significant developments which occurred during the

1960s. The first was the introduction of a number of innovations into the school system including teacher-controlled local examinations in secondary schools, a spurt in the move towards a comprehensive system of secondary schools, and the beginnings of 'centrally produced' curriculum development materials. All resulted in the need for teachers to be adequately equipped and supported in order to prepare to cope with these new demands. The second emanated from the Schools Council which had a particular interest in curriculum development and which in 1967 produced Working Paper No. 10 which encouraged LEAs to establish teachers' centres whose functions the Council saw as:

> (a) To give teachers a setting within which new objectives can be discussed and defined, and new ideas relating to content and methods in a variety of subjects can also be discussed.
>
> (b) To contribute to the evaluation of centrally produced curriculum materials before they are finally produced, and to feedback comments, criticisms, and suggestions for improvements.
>
> (c) To keep teachers informed about research and development in progress so that they can prepare themselves to appraise and modify according to their own estimation of individual and local needs the materials which may eventually become available.

The Working Paper concluded however, by stating that 'the motive power for curriculum development should come primarily from local groups of teachers accessible to one another, and that there should be effective and close collaboration between teachers and all those who are able to offer co-operation'.

As a result, many LEAs set up centres so that within a ten-year period over six hundred had been established throughout the United Kingdom. As befits the English educational

system, though, there has been no uniform development of centres so that each has developed in a different way depending upon such factors as the needs of local schools and teachers, geographical location, the particular interests of the centre leader (the vast majority of whom have had no training for this job) and the level of support provided by the LEA. Despite these differences, some common factors are discernable.

Some LEAs have tended to set up numerous small centres within easy reach of the teachers they serve, and with a minimum of supporting staff and resources, so that the onus of most of the work falls upon the warden, if there is one, and those teachers who use the centre. These centres are usually housed in shared premises or small disused schools. Other LEAs have chosen to set up much larger centralised centres with full supporting professional, secretarial, technical and domestic staff, and with extensive library and workshop facilities. Such centres carry much heavier responsibilities both for policy and organisation of curriculum development and INSET. Centres of this kind are frequently found in urban areas and tend to be based in spacious and elegant old buildings with facilities for catering and recreation.

Centres undertake a wide range of activities. For most centres, the provision of INSET courses and conferences make up a major part of their programme. In some areas LEAs conduct all of their activities through the centres; in others, LEA advisers have their own centres. In areas with no separate advisers' centre, the teachers' centre leader is often closely involved with the Chief Adviser in planning extensive programmes. Most of the courses and conferences are mounted with the direct needs of teachers and schools in mind, and thus tend to be orientated towards the practical, and relevant day to day problems that teachers face in their classroom. In some instances, however, award bearing courses leading to advanced diplomas and B.Ed. degrees are also mounted at the centres by outside agencies.

A second form of INSET activity has been the involvement of most centres, though to varying degrees, in national and local curriculum development work. Involvement in national projects can be generated either from the 'centre' or 'grass roots'. For instance, some centres have been involved with national projects because of LEA co-operation with the Project team, while others have been involved because the published materials attracted the interest of local teachers. Involvement in local curriculum development work can be initiated by individual teachers, groups of teachers, or LEA advisers deciding to produce their own materials, in which case local centres may well be able to help by providing consultancy services, a variety of back-up services, and by acting as a link between the developer(s) and other teachers.

Teacher working groups are formed for a variety of purposes, but more recently the trend towards greater accountability has prompted many LEA advisers, with the help of centre leaders, to set up groups of teachers to produce county guidelines particularly in areas such as mathematics, language development, and science. The role of the centre leader in the formation and continuation of working groups, be they adviser or teacher initiated, seems to be a key one in helping to ensure that momentum is sustained, and that groups do not quickly disintegrate.

The vast majority of centres provide or can arrange for a variety of reference materials, for example, books, tapes, slides, maps, film-strips, films, reading schemes, science and mathematics kits and curriculum materials from different projects to be available for teachers. Centre leaders are also approached by teachers for both professional and personal advice, and some make important contributions to in-school working parties and committees.

Attendance at centres varies, but available evidence suggests that nationally some 20 per cent of teachers participate in centre activities. The majority of these however are from primary schools, and this tends to be reflected in the

kinds of activities offered. Some secondary teachers tend to obtain part or all of their professional support from colleagues, or to look towards local subject associations or colleges and universities when wishing to update their subject knowledge.

Comment

Although in some areas of the United Kingdom the initial enthusiasm which greeted the setting up of teachers' centres has been maintained and excellent work is being undertaken, in other areas this is not so. In part, the loss of enthusiasm where it has occurred has been due to factors outside the control of LEAs and the centres themselves. These include the rejection by teachers of many of the curriculum packages produced centrally by the Schools Council for reasons which are summarised by Prescott (1976), and hence a weakening in what in many cases was to be one of the main areas of work for centres. Secondly, because of lack of time, enthusiasm, expertise, or incentive, teachers have not been as active as it was once hoped in producing their own curriculum materials for which centres were to act as a base. Thirdly, due to growing economic difficulties, a growing number of centres have been starved of resources, hence limiting the variety of professional support services that they have been able to provide for teachers and schools.

That said, however, some blame must also be directed towards LEAs and the centres themselves. When setting up centres, some LEAs gave, and have continued to give, careful consideration to important questions such as the function of centres, their relationship to LEA advisory staff and other support agencies such as universities and colleges, the role and status of centre leaders and steering committees, and the extent to which centres should be free to develop as the leader and his committee think fit. Other LEAs have not done this, with the result that some centres are inhibited in what they do, others sit uneasily between their LEA owners on the one hand and other INSET providers on the other, and some

leaders find that they are answerable to many masters. As a result, these centres have not been able to respond as rapidly or decisively as they ought to the needs of teachers and schools, and have subsequently lost support. The current pursuit of economies poses a potent threat to their effective survival.

Management Training Centres

The professional development of senior members of staff of schools, for example, heads of primary schools, and head deputies, and heads of departments in secondary schools is becoming increasingly important if they are to be adequately equipped with the necessary skills and expertise which will enable them to cope with the new demands and pressures that are, and will continue to face them in the forseeable future arising from such developments as falling rolls, less mobility amongst staff, diminishing budgets, and moves for schools to be held more accountable for what they do.

Unlike some European countries such as Sweden and France where carefully planned national training programmes have been introduced for heads and deputies of schools, no national programme exists in the United Kingdom. Rather, in-service provision exclusively for senior members of staff of schools is left to the initiative of the major providing agencies, some of whom are more active in this field than others.

Two initiatives have occurred during the last decade however, which are at variance with the approach described above in that they have resulted in the setting up of establishments which specialise wholly or partly in the training of senior members of schools or those aspiring to such posts.

North West Educational Management Centre

The North West Educational Management Centre is situated near Warrington in Lancashire. It was set up in September 1972, by a consortium of 17 LEAs in the North West of England who between them are responsible for 3,000 primary and 750 secondary schools. Thus it is independent of

any one institution or LEA, but through it, a regional approach is adopted to providing in-service education and training for heads and deputies of secondary schools, for heads of primary schools and for other senior members of the education service.

The Centre's particular concern is with the philosophy of primary and secondary education, and with the management, organisation, and administration of schools. It tries to meet this concern by offering to staff nominated by their LEAs study conferences and other activities relating to contemporary and relevant current issues of the day. For example, topics include the role of schools in society, academic and social organisation and management of the school, curriculum development, the management of innovation and staff development, evaluation and accountability. No certificates are awarded.

The Centre is controlled by a steering committee representing the regional consortium, but the directing staff of the Centre have all had extensive experience as heads. They are supported by a team of visiting lecturers and by a panel of practicising heads who act as tutor consultants. The latter are closely associated with the planning of course programmes; they also assist with the preparation of teaching material, and act as tutors of discussion groups when required.

In addition to initiating in-service activities, the Centre offers a consultancy service to schools in the region, and a number of Fellowships to heads of schools. Fellows are nominated by LEAs and spend a substantial period of sabbatical leave at the Centre pursuing their own particular field of study, and offering both consultative and tutorial help to the Centre's programme of conferences and courses.

Arguments in support of a regional approach in the U.K., rather than the setting up of a national staff college or initiatives by single LEAs are seen by Esp (1980) to be as follows: A national staff college would not fit the size

of the U.K. problem nor the differing needs arising from regional variations. It would also be difficult to sustain follow-up and there is a risk that a national institution would soon become remote from the real needs of schools. A single LEA approach could be uneconomic and might become parochial in outlook. Those who have been involved with the North West Centre for some years claim that:

(a) it enables LEAs to make maximum use of the limited resources that they have available for the professional development of senior members of staff

(b) it enables them (particularly the smaller ones) to call upon a range of expertise and experience which would not otherwise be available to them if they acted alone, and

(c) through the Regional Steering Committee, the LEAs are able to recommend changes in the content and pattern of courses and offer assessment of their value.

In this case, a regional approach also justifies the appointment of a full-time directory staff, although many part-time tutors are also used. The close involvement of LEAs in the selection procedure also encourages them to devise a personal development programme for heads who are already in charge of schools and for others who have been identified as being ready for further responsibility.

Regional Management Centres

Regional Management Centres of which there are 12 originated in the early 1970s and represent a major initiative from the further education sector in the field of management education. Each of the centres has responsibilities for developing the provision of management education in its region not merely for the education service, but also for senior people in industry, commerce, and a range of public services. Most attempt to do this by:

(a) Providing for individual development through the provision of long courses.

(b) Providing appropriate centre-based and in-company courses.

(c) Ascertaining the management education and development needs of individual managers and of organisations in both the private and public sectors.

(d) Engaging in relevant research and consultancy.

The extent to which each of the centres caters for the needs of senior members of staff of schools and LEA administrators varies, but between them they offer those involved in education a variety of support services including non-award bearing courses and conferences, courses leading to advanced diplomas and higher degrees, research facilities leading to higher degrees, and consultancies in the field of educational management.

The fact that some members of their teaching staff contribute to more than one of the centres' areas of interest can have advantages for schools, in that some of the management and innovation techniques and strategies hitherto applicable to industrial organisations have been introduced to teachers for use in schools.

Comment

It is difficult, as yet, to assess the impact that Management Centres have had upon improving the skills and expertise of senior members of staff of schools and LEA administrators, but they are a clear recognition that management expertise is essential if senior members of the education service are to cope with the increasing demands of their posts. They are also a recognition that there are advantages to be gained from a pooling of resources whether it be on a regional basis or some other pattern, and that those who are responsible for planning and tutoring activities of this nature need ample time to

do this if they are to produce structured and relevant management programmes. This is in sharp contrast to many other INSET programmes in the U.K. which are often planned and taught by people who have many other duties to perform as well.

School focused INSET

As noted earlier, until recently, the vast majority of INSET activiteis in the U.K. were held away from the school and were attended by individual teachers. Increasingly, however, the subjective assessment of many of those involved in INSET has suggested that, while for some purposes the external activity may appear appropriate, it may not be effective. Henderson (1980) suggests this may be the result of a mis-match between the needs of teachers (whether personal needs or those arising from the school context in which they teach) and the content of activities, and more generally the inability of many teachers to use new knowledge and skills which they have acquired because of their failure to influence what happens in school. This may be due to lack of status, lack of resources, lack of feedback mechanisms, or some combination of these.

Recognition of the limitations of external activity has caused some new styles and approaches to be introduced, including school based INSET. this involves more INSET taking place within the school itself and is normally aimed at the whole staff, of the school, department, or other appropriate group. It can be organised by the staff themselves, or by an outside agency upon request, or by both working together.

The main arguments which are put forward in support of this development are that the analysis of needs is easier, the activities which are mounted can be closely matched to needs, and by involving the whole staff or groups of staff, barriers to implementation are lowered or perhaps disappear altogether. While there appears to be some strength in these arguments, it needs to be pointed out that school based INSET also has its limitations. For example, if a school draws exclusively upon its own resources there is

danger of parochialism developing. Secondly, it presumes, sometimes wrongly, that schools are capable of assessing their own needs. Thirdly, there are obvious limitations as to what any school can do by itself, especially smaller schools even with the help of outside agencies.

More recent thinking has brought together elements of the external approach and of the school based approach under the heading of school focused INSET. According to Bolam and Baker (1978) "the distinguishing characteristic of school focused INSET is that it is targeted on the needs of particular schools or groups within a school. thus the actual activity may take place on-site and, equally important, may be internally provided by school staff or externally provided by an outside agency such as a college or university". The school focused concept thus recognises that the headteacher and staff have an important part to play in planning and executing a school's INSET programme, but that others, for example, teachers' centres, colleges of higher education, and LEA advisory staff also have an important role, although not all parties will necessarily be involved on the same occasion. As with school based INSET, therefore, on some occasions schools will be able to plan a programme without outside help, but on others outside help will be needed.

The essence of a school focused INSET programme is that it should meet the needs of the school as an institution. These include, but in sum amount to more than, the needs of individual members of school staff. Thus, the nature of school focused INSET provision may be wide ranging, and could include some needs being met within the school through staff conferences and curriculum development activities, while other needs may be met by individual members of staff attending outside courses, or by members of staff visiting other schools, or by obtaining the services of an outside consultant to work with one teacher or a small group of teachers.

In theory, as Henderson also points out, the school focused approach is supposed to combine the advantages and minimise the disadvantages

of the wholly external and the school based approaches in that, if INSET activities are developed from a school's identified needs, the mismatch often found with external activities can be avoided. As a result classroom/school implementation becomes much more probable, since all staff or groups of staff are engaged in planning from the start, and account can be taken of the constraints of human and physical resources which the school has available to it. The combination of on-the-job and off-the-job INSET can also help to avoid the dangers of parochialism and take advantage of the potentialities of the different settings. Furthermore, the involvement of teachers with teacher trainers, LEA advisory staff and others in both the planning and execution of an INSET programme ought to offer the best opportunity of meeting the legitimate, even if sometimes conflicting needs of the individual teachers, the school, the LEA and the wider national context.

Comment

Despite the initial enthusiasm which has greeted this approach, it needs to be stressed that the development of school focused INSET is still in its early stages, consequently no firm decisions about its worth can be made. However, the findings of one of the few major INSET evaluation studies undertaken so far in the U.K., indicate that the benefits to both the providing agencies and schools appear to justify efforts to increase this type of INSET activity. The study also concludes, however, that school focused and school based INSET pose several problems. One of these concerns the costs and logistics of provision for employers and INSET providing agencies. Another, is that teachers' hopes of quick solutions to almost any problem can be unduly raised if school focused INSET is not presented with caution. A third is that once schools have submitted their programmes they usually want a quick and positive response which may not be easy to provide (Baker 1980).

Careful attention also needs to be given to the sort of machinery to be established (if any) within schools in order that they can satisfactorily identify needs, and ensure that suitable outside expertise can be located when required.

Bibliography

ACSTT (Advisory Committee on the Supply and Training of Teachers) — In-Service Education and Training: Some Considerations, London. DES 1974.

ACSTT — Discussion Paper on INSET Provision, London, DES 1975.

ACSTT — The Contribution of Colleges and Departments of Education to INSET, London DES 1976.

Baker, K. — Planning School Policies for INSET: the Site Project in World Yearbook of Education 1980. Professional Development of Teachers. London, Kogan Page 1980.

Baker, K. and Bolam, R. — The Schools and In-Service Teacher Education (SITE). Evaluation Project Paper. University of Bristol School of Education, 1978.

Baker, K Bolam, R. and McMahon, A. — Teacher Induction Pilot Schemes: Final National Evaluation Report. University of Bristol School of Education 1979.

Belbenoit, G. — In-Service Education and Training of Teachers in the European Community. Education Series No. 8, Brussels. Office for Official Publications of the European Community, 1979.

Bolam, R. — Innovation in In-Service Education and Training of Teachers, Paris, OECD, 1978.

Bolam, R. — Innovations in the In-Service Education and Training of Teachers: Final Synthesis Report on an OECD/CERI Project. Paris. OECD.

Bolam, R. Carter, H. and Smith, E. — Local Education Authority Advisers and Educational Innovation. University of Bristol School of Education. 1976.

Bolam, R. and Porter, J. — Innovation in In-Service Education and Training of Teachers in the United Kingdom. Paris. OECD. 1976.

Bradley, H. — In-Service Education after the White Paper - A survey of the opinions of teachers. University of Nottingham School of Education. 1974.

Bradley, H. — Cost and Efficient Utilization of INSET Resources. Paris. OECD. 1978.

Cane, B. — In-Service Training. Slough. N.F.E.R. 1969.

CMND 5174 — Education: A Framework for Expansion. London. H.M.S.O. 1972.

Dale, I. R. and Taylor, J. K. — A Survey of Teachers in their first year of Service. University of Bristol School of Education, 1971.

D.E.S. (Department of Education and Science) — Statistics of Education Special Series No. 2. Survey of In-Service Training for Teachers. LONDON. H.M.S.O. 1970.

D.E.S. — Teacher Education and Training. London. H.M.S.O. 1972.

D.E.S. — In-Service Training: The Role of the Colleges and Departments of Education. London. DES 1977.

D.E.S. — The Educational System of England and Wales. London. DES 1978.

D.E.S. — Making INSET Work. London. H.M.S.O. 1978.

D.E.S. — Primary Education in England. London. H.M.S.O. 1978.

D.E.S. — Aspects of Secondary Education in England. London. H.M.S.O. 1979.

D.E.S. Induction and In-Service Training of Teachers Serving in Maintained Schools and Further Education. Establishments in England and Wales: 1979 Survey Statistics Bulletin 9/80. London. DES 1980.

Esp, D. Selection and Training of Secondary School Senior Staff: Some European Examples. Education 17.10.1980.

Garnham, A. The Role of the Local Authority. British Journal of In-Service Education. Vol. 5, No. 2. 1978.

Gloucestershire L.E.A. Assessment of Teachers In-Service Needs. 1974.

Henderson, E. S. The Evaluation of In-Service Teacher Training. London. Croom Helm. 1978.

Henderson, E. S. and Perry, G. Change and Development in Schools. Maidenhead. McGraw Hill Book Co. Ltd. 1981.

Henderson, E. S. Perry, G. and Spencer, M. The Coordination of In-Service Training for Teachers. Department of Educational Studies. University of Oxford. 1975.

Marker, W. J. In-Service Education in Scotland. British Journal of In-Service Education. Vol. 3, No. 2, Spring 1972. 1977.

McGarry, J. Selected Innovations in Methods of Teacher Education in World Yearbook of Education 1980. Professional Development of Teachers. London. Kogan Page. 1980.

North West Educational Management Centre Making INSET Work. 1979.

Perry, P. Professional Development: the Inspectorate in England and Wales in World Yearbook of Education 1980: Professional Development of Teachers. London. Kogan Page. 1980.

Prestcott, W. Innovation at National Level Unit 24 Open University Course Curriculum Design and Development. Milton Keynes. The Open University Press. 1976.

Scottish National Committee for the In-Service Training of Teachers — Survey of In-Service Training. 1974.

Taylor, P. — A Review of In-Service Evaluation Practices in the United Kingdom in 'Evaluating In-Service Training for Teachers'. (Ed. McCabe, C.) Slough. N.F.E.R. 1980.

Thornbury, R. E. (Ed.) — Teachers' Centres. London, Darton. Longman & Todd. 1973.

Raynor, J. — The Role of The Open University in World Yearbook of Education 1980: Professional Development of Teachers. London. Kogan Page. 1980.

Willey, F. T. Maddison, R. E. — An Enquiry into Teacher Training. London. University of London Press. 1971.