English Language & Literature Teaching, Vol. 19, No. 3 Fall 2013

A Case Study of a Storytelling Workshop: The Impact on Teachers' Classroom Practice and Perception Change

Ju-Youn Sim*
(Soongsil University)
Eun-Hyun Kim**
(Seoul Theological University)

Sim, Ju-youn & Kim, Eun-hyun. (2013). A case study of a storytelling workshop: The impact on teachers' classroom practice and perception change. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 19*(3), 271-293.

The central focus of this study concerns the impact of a storytelling teacher workshop course on after-school teachers' teaching practice and their perception change. A qualitative case study involving questionnaires, observations and interviews was carried out before and after the workshop. The four-week workshop course was observed. This was followed by a focus-group interview after the workshop to investigate general outcomes of the workshop, teachers' perception changes and difficulties in putting new ideas into practice. The study results suggested that most of the teachers' perceptions about using storytelling techniques obtained from the workshop had a positive effect on their teaching skills, giving them practical tips on storytelling techniques. The analysis also showed that the teachers' confidence and motivation increased, and this enhanced confidence affected their professional identity. The learner differences, lack of training for expertise in material development, and intervention of parents were identified as constraining factors. Some important implications of the study of a storytelling workshop are discussed to highlight how the potential impact of the workshop could be optimized: (i) ongoing mentoring support should be provided to promote developmental continuity for the teachers after the course; and (ii) the workshop should consider teaching contexts sensitively, especially with regards to diverse learner styles and limited materials.

[teacher training/classroom practice/perception change/storytelling workshop/ follow-up course/mentoring]

---

* First author
** Corresponding author

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

I. INTRODUCTION

English has taken a special position as a global language that is recognized throughout the world. With the societal trend, English teaching in educational settings reflects a greater emphasis on childhood English education. Using storybooks in English education functions as a springboard for learning both English language and contents the stories are intended to convey. When we consider the increasing demand for utilizing storybooks in current educational settings in Korea, the need for designing a storytelling curriculum and for developing materials is apparent. Particularly, teacher training programs for storytelling techniques and skills are keenly needed.

Previous research about using English storybooks centered on the benefits of using storybooks in the classroom, instructional techniques for teaching stories, and ways to utilize stories in the classroom (Chun, 2006; Chung, 2008; Yang, 2008). To date, limited studies have been conducted about the effects of English storytelling in the Korean context (Chung & Kim, 2012; Kim, 2004; Lim & Lim, 2005). Some studies concerned the value and effects of English drama activities on language learning of elementary students (Kim & Lee, 2006; Park, 2011). There is no known study regarding a teachers' workshop for English storytelling in the Korean context. Multilateral efforts to help teachers acquire more expertise in storytelling should be made through well-designed teachers' workshops (Chung & Kim, 2012).

The central focus of this study concerns the impact of a storytelling teacher workshop course on after-school teachers' teaching practice and their perception change. The following research question drove this study: What are the facilitating factors and constraining factors of a storytelling workshop on teachers' classroom practice and perception change?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Storytelling and English Language Learning

Children enjoy stories. They are eager to listen to stories, understand what is happening, and enjoy looking at illustrations (Slattery & Willis, 2001). Storybooks can be used to reinforce language development in children (Ellis & Brewster, 2002; Slattery & Willis, 2001). Stories can help children enjoy learning English, be exposed to new words in a meaningful context, and become aware of the structures of the language. Many stories contain repetitive words or structures. The repetitions encourage students' participation and provide children with chances to practice patterns in context.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Stories themselves have the diverse educational benefits for children, but ways to tell the stories are very important in order to maximize the educational benefits. There are several modes of telling stories. According to Ellis and Brewster (2002), diverse modes of telling stories include reading a book aloud, telling a story orally without a book, and telling an anecdote or a joke. The effects of storytelling itself are diverse. Ellis and Brewster (2002) pointed out three features of storytelling effects. First, storytelling is motivating and fun and can help children develop positive attitudes toward foreign language learning. Second, it encourages children's social and emotional development through a shared response of laughter, sadness and excitement as they identify with story characters. Third, storytelling helps children become aware of the pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of the English language. Ellis, Brewster, and Mohammed (1991) also emphasized that when teachers tell stories, they can revise vocabulary and sentence structures in order for children to be exposed to language in understandable and memorable contexts. Those contexts will enrich children's thinking and gradually help the development of their own speech.

Some people are good at telling stories naturally, but many people might encounter challenges and thus need practice to become good storytellers. According to the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English (IRA/NCTE, 2009), a well-told story is enjoyable for listeners, focuses on clear and well defined events, uses transitional words to put the sequence of events in order, uses dialogue to create characters, and provides a clear point of view from the story. Slattery and Willis (2001) suggested specific teaching tips of telling a story to children who are learning English. When teachers tell a new story, they can tell the bare storyline in English using lots of actions, gestures, sound effects, pictures, or other materials. Teachers should allow children to predict what will happen next and ask questions in their mother tongue. They can modify a story to make it suitable for children. Ellis and Brewster (2002) pointed out storytelling techniques in order to provide support for children's understanding and enjoyment. Using gestures, mime and facial expressions is a way to convey the meanings of feelings and actions. Varying pace, tone, and volume of voice can encourage children's involvement in listening to stories. Telling a story slowly and clearly is important in that it can give children time to look at pictures, to think, and to ask questions. Storytelling can encourage student interaction with the teacher and the story and strengthen comprehensibility of language input (Al-Shamali, 2010).

When children act and perform a story, they quickly become familiar with the language they use. Storytelling will help EFL learners increase their self-confidence through speaking practice, and become more competent speakers and storytellers (Al-Shamali, 2010). In order for storytelling to be more effective for language learning, it should be connected to task-based language teaching. Otherwise, storytelling will be just

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

another way of presenting language without necessarily giving children opportunities to use the target language. Ellis and Brewster (2002) suggested guidelines for a story-based methodology by applying a three-stage model, the Plan (pre-storytelling activities) – Do (while-storytelling activities) – Review (post-storytelling activities) model. The activities in the Plan stage of this model include an informal chat in order to build up rapport with students, reviewing work covered in the last lesson, and informing students of what they are going to do with the lesson. During the Do stage of this model, teachers have one or more activity cycles, plan-do-review sequence(s), depending on the length of lessons. Planning activities in a cycle involves introducing the topic, activating learners' prior knowledge, and explaining the purpose of the activity. In the Do stage, children are involved in the activities by using the target language. The Review stage helps children extend and personalize what they learned in the previous stage. The Review stage in the whole model includes rounding up and reviewing of the lesson, setting homework, and a routine fun activity.

2. The Role of the Teacher Training

Every teacher training course involves the goal of change. A teacher training course is designed aiming at the development of teachers and is an attempt to implement some form of change. In this vein, teacher training programs are crucial in bringing about change in teachers' classroom practices, their attitudes and beliefs, as well as students' learning outcomes in the initiation and implementation of any change (Guskey, 2002). Freeman (1989) proposes that "language teacher training serves to link what is known in the field to what is done in the classroom". Therefore, one aim of teacher training should be to foster awareness in teachers of these often implicit influences on their practices.

Numerous general principles (e.g., Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Kennedy, 1987; Richards & Nunan, 1990; Rudduck, 1981) about teacher training courses have been suggested in order to successfully implement the knowledge and ideas learnt from teacher training courses in classroom practice, but based on the work of Fullan and Hargreaves (1992), Kennedy (1987), and Hayes (1995), there is a general consensus that effective courses need to focus on participants' needs, be sympathetic to the context, and demonstrate an awareness of participants' motivation in attending.

1) Focus on Participants' Needs

The purpose of teacher training is to meet the perceived needs of the participants and their educational and cultural context. But even if the goals of the program are relevant to the teachers' needs, the program also needs to show an awareness of those teachers'

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

particular concerns. Thus determining relevancy means being clear about the purpose served by the program and the program objectives and organizing the program in such a way that it can be sensitive to the individual concerns of the participants.

2) Be Sympathetic to the Context

Teacher training course must be sympathetic to the context in which it occurs. Holliday (1994) argues that the existing communicative approach should focus on its more culture-sensitive features, and reduce its less culture-sensitive features for the role of the initial becoming-appropriate methodology. In other words, transferring methodologies developed for predominantly private Western language teaching contexts, for example, to non-Western contexts may not be suitable (Holliday, 1994 cited in Bax, 1997). To be more sympathetic to the context, teacher education has been responding more sensitively to the working contexts of teachers in training – making teacher training more 'client-centered' (Nunan, 1989) or 'context-sensitive' (Bax, 1995a, 1995b cited in Bax, 1997, p. 232). The concept of the 'culture of teaching' is fundamental to any program which is trying to change teachers' practice. Various researchers (Fullan, 1982; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Invargson & Greenway, 1984 cited in Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, p. 43) have indicated how occupational culture determines the way in which change is perceived, experienced, and realized in schools; changes in teachers' classroom practices, their attitudes and beliefs, as well as in students' learning outcomes from the teacher training program.

3) Demonstrate an Awareness of Participants' Motivation in Attending

It is hardly controversial to say that motivation is crucial for language teachers to embrace the concept of professional development. Ideally, activities stimulating participants to explore their own motivation in terms of their own vision of their students' achievements, will perhaps encourage them to be motivated to develop their teaching skills and linguistic competence. Teacher training courses need to understand what has motivated teachers to attend a course; but they also need to motivate the teacher to develop what they term a sense of purpose, to give them a sense of control that they are in charge of their own learning, to feel supported in this endeavor and finally to encourage them to believe they can succeed. Perhaps this 'fourth dimension' is particularly important for non-native language teachers who have to demonstrate their own language skill throughout a lesson, and for whom this can present a real challenge.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research methodology employed in this study is a qualitative, in-depth case study and involved survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observation to achieve triangulation. For practical purposes, video recording of four-week storytelling workshops and focus group interview of participating teachers were conducted.

1. Process

The whole research was conducted from July to August 2012 and was designed in three stages. The research started from the survey questionnaire to analyze participant teachers' needs and expectations to the storytelling workshops (stage one). Observation during the storytelling workshop, which was of three hour days every Fridays for four weeks, was conducted (stage two). After the course, the teachers were interviewed in groups (stage three). Based on the in-depth interviews and questionnaires with teachers (trainees) before and after the workshop period, and observation throughout the four-week training course, we hoped to investigate the extent to which the workshop training affected teachers' classroom practice and their perception change. The following table provides an overview of research stages.

TABLE 1

A Summary of the Phases, Data, and Structure of the Study

Dates	Phase	Data	Program
July 2012	Pre-workshop (phase 1)	Questionnaires	Prior to the course
August 2012	Middle of program (phase 2)	Observations; field notes	4-week workshop training course
September 2012	Post-workshop (phase 3)	Focus group interviews; questionnaires	After the 4-week workshop training

2. Interview

1) Participant Sampling

The 17 participant teachers majored in English or general education in college. They were mostly in their twenties and some of them were in their thirties. As for the gender of the teachers, three teachers were male and the other fourteen teachers were female. None of the teachers have had any teaching experience using storytelling before attending the workshop. This research used a "purposively homogeneous sampling" approach (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 127-129) in the first and third stage of data collection.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

With regard to participants sampling, many researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton 1987) present a comprehensive list of sampling strategies. This study used purposeful homogeneous sampling to build up more relevant responses to the research questions, and to gain common patterns of responses and in-depth information about a particular group with similar characteristics (Dörnyei, 2007; Patton, 1987).

2) Interview Types

Since interviews can reach data other methods cannot, by allowing the eliciting of views and perspectives which are otherwise unobservable, in-depth focus group interviews were chosen for this study. A focus group interview is "an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic" (Patton 2002, p. 385). This in-depth group interview was particularly useful because observation or questionnaires cannot easily obtain in-depth information such as people's feelings or inner perspectives. In addition, group interviews can provide different kinds of data from individual interviews in that a "group interview can get a variety of perspectives not only between the interviewer and respondent but among all participants in the group" (Gillham 2005, p. 61; Patton, 2002, p. 386). In this sense, the qualitative interview, indeed, enabled the researcher to enter interviewees' worlds by seeking what was 'in and on their mind'. In this study, three focus group interviews were conducted by three trainers at the end of the program to gather perceptions about outcomes and impacts.

3. Observation

During the workshop, the researcher used a participant observation approach while observing training sessions. Participant observation enables the researchers to develop more intimate and informal relationships with participants in the course, to be a full insider[1] researcher. This has two advantages: (i) gaining familiarity with the case; and (ii) a desire to experience the program as a participant. There was, of course, the danger that once a researcher gains familiarity, the position of participation and observation is likely to change. However, overall the researchers were able to not only create a rapport with the participants, which made it easy to get research samples for my further research, but also to help understand what the program was like and become capable of understanding the course as an insider.

[1] Merton (1972, cited in Hellawell, 2006, p.484) defines an insider as an individual who possesses a priori intimate knowledge of the community and its members.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

4. Data Analysis

Since the qualitative case study aimed to generate theories rather than to test existing theories, this study used inductive approaches in the analysis in that initial categories emerged through pre-coding (inductive process). Also, the researchers were able to refine and devise new categories through continuously revisiting the data, since "developing categories involves looking for recurring regularities" (Merriam, 1988, p. 133), and thus the analysis process in this study is essentially iterative and cyclical rather than using a linear logic, and it is an ongoing process. In brief, the data analysis in this study follows three steps: pre-coding, open-coding, and coding. As Dörnyei (2007) mentions that the first step in data analysis begins by transcribing the recordings into textual form, one of the researchers first transcribed the mp3 recordings into English and then, the first transcription was sent to the other researcher to double-check the accuracy.

Broadly, two themes emerged in this study: impact on classroom practice and on the psychological aspects of teachers' perception change about teaching storytelling. The linking of the two broad variations arose from the concept that the impact on classroom practice cannot come about without the psychological developmental process and vice-versa; it does not stand alone and is interdependent. More specifically, both survey questionnaire and interview data were used to generate themes of impact on classroom practice; however, only in-depth interview data was used for analyzing perception change since perception changes are neither objectively measurable nor observable.

5. Program

The whole program is an after-school program for elementary students, which was organized by a university in Gyeonggi province. This program offered a chance to work to the university graduates and provided an opportunity to learn English stories to children residing in the city. Seventeen teachers who had less than five years of teaching experience participated in this program. The teachers had visited an individual students' house to teach him or her English storybooks for several months before they participated in the teachers' workshop. They had already had opportunities to learn how to teach stories using task-based methodology, but had never had chances to learn the theory behind storytelling or to improve their English storytelling skills. In summer, they participated in a four-week teachers' workshop for English storytelling.

Two instructors co-taught the workshop classes. Both of them were college instructors majoring in English language education. They had studied ESL/EFL education in a graduate school in U.S. The goals of the workshop were to introduce storytelling to the participants as an effective strategy for teaching English and to enhance trainees'

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

storytelling skills and linguistic competence. Two parallel course components were delivered at this workshop: speaking practice and diverse storytelling activities. Since it was only a four-week short course, practical components such as micro teaching were not included. More hours were assigned for the storytelling-skill-oriented class, focusing on pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm rather than theoretical background of the storytelling in order to enhance teacher trainees' speaking competence, and, to improve classroom teaching. The workshop classes consisted of lectures, discussions, and individual and small group practices. A detailed course curriculum is shown in the table 2.

TABLE 2

Four-week Storytelling Workshop

Date	Program
1st day workshop	The definition of storytelling; the effects of storytelling on children's development; the example of storytelling contest and evaluation criteria; what storytellers should prepare, how to select stories, diverse ways of storytelling, and how to revise stories; storytelling examples from multi-media resources
2nd day workshop	Techniques for remembering, speaking practices (stress, intonation, rhythm), speaking activities, simplifying language, real practice
3rd day workshop	pronunciation skills (emphasis, intonation, speak in chunks), storytelling rhythm, real practice with two books
4th day workshop	knowing when to pause, practices (pausing, vocalizing feelings, using body movements, facial expressions, and waving actions)

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section structures the findings and discussion into three sections: (i) general analysis of expectations and outcomes of storytelling workshop; (ii) the impact on teachers' classroom practice and perception change; and (iii) constraints on putting ideas into practice. To explore these issues in greater depth, pre- and- post workshop questionnaires and focus group interviews were conducted.

1. Teaching Practice

Overall, the workshop had a positive impact on the teachers' practices with storytelling. According to the post-workshop survey result, 46% of the teachers replied that the workshop gave a very good impact on their teaching practices, 38% responded it was good, and 15% said it was adequate. The survey data also revealed that the teachers gained diverse aspects of pedagogical content knowledge for storytelling practices from

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

the course; these include components such as the concept of storytelling, assessment criteria, text selection criteria, varieties of storytelling skills (e.g., using mimes, dance moves, props, etc.), ways to crop and retell stories, activities that assist content comprehension and memorization, storytelling demonstrations and speaking practices (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, rhythms, voice animation), and so forth.

1) Aspects of Speaking Practices

When we asked them to prioritize the knowledge and/or skills they gained, they specifically pointed out two of them as having the most importance. Firstly, the course gave a positive influence on the teachers' own speaking skills and their teaching practices of speaking. The storytelling demonstrations by the trainers and speaking practices (e.g., stress, intonation, rhythms, voice animation) utilizing storybooks were affirmatively emphasized by the trainees.

Effective storytelling practices accompany teachers' confidence in their own storytelling competence. This workshop helped promote the teachers' pronunciation skills, which in turn affected their confidence in modeling and teaching storytelling. One teacher displayed the positive impact of the course on her practices, especially stressing the benefits of pronunciation practice. She reported feeling satisfied with the improvement of her pronunciation skills through the workshop.

> I feel the same way. I wondered how to express certain parts of the book… things like pronunciation were really helpful. I gained more confidence when demonstrating some storytelling skills in front of my students.

Another teacher particularly emphasized that the practices of modifying stresses was helpful and fun for her teaching.

> Practical teaching methods… Before this workshop, I simply told kids to read books. Afterwards, I learnt ways to modify stresses… just like singing a song… in such a fun way. I used to let kids know how to pronounce or memorize some words and let them repeat after me. But through this workshop, I learnt that there were some options to make this lesson fun.

In addition to stresses, rhythm and intonation of English opened the teachers' eyes on dynamic aspects of speaking practices. One of the teachers pointed out that learning rhythmic aspects of English positively affected her storytelling demonstrations.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

> I originally read kids stories [I did make demonstrations even before this workshop]. However, this class helped me to spice up my demonstration. For instance, I used to put no special meanings to commas but in this class I learnt that sounds tend to elevate after the comma. This lesson really made me consider these points when making demonstrations.

Some teachers also put more emphasis on the voice animation for performing the story in dramatic ways than other aspects of speaking practices.

> I used to lack skills in illustrating things in animated manner. After the workshop, I try to apply those animated skills when I read storybooks to my students. I try to use bigger motions, or try to modify voice tones in varying ways.

> Before the workshop, I used to focus on getting the meaning (of the book) across. I mostly used CDs to let them hear sounds. But after the workshop, I interact with the story, as if I became the hero of the storybook. [I guess my focus got changed when delivering a story].

The session on voice animation spurred them on to better teaching practices. The trainer herself beforehand demonstrated how to animate voices depending on characters. Then, the trainees attempted to enliven their voices, but their first attempts did not go through a smooth process. The voice animation practices required them to stretch their performative competence beyond their current level. Most of the teachers were bashful in voice performances. However, after repeated practices, they were more engaged in these practices during the workshop.

2) Diverse Ways of Telling Stories

Secondly, the teachers emphasized that they were able to identify diverse approaches of telling stories using dances, songs, musicals, and various story props, and the exposure to these various approaches aided them with choosing appropriate approaches to guide target students. At the beginning of the workshop, some teachers asked how to coach students who were beginners in English language learning, but were eager to practice in order to take part in the contest. Most of the teachers presumed that there was a typical storytelling approach. However, this workshop provided an opportunity to be exposed to diverse approaches.

One teacher expressed her understanding of various storytelling approaches. Through this workshop, she came to be flexible in adopting the approaches while considering individual student's language proficiency, personal characteristics, grades, and learning styles. For example,

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

> One thing I got from this workshop is that there are many different approaches that I can use to deliver a story (just like using different ingredients to cook different foods). Also, I learnt that I should approach each learner differently, according to their personal learning style (e.g., some kids may prefer meaningful approaches, and some kids may prefer a silent approach while other kids may prefer a kinetic approach, and so on). With this in mind, I came to be flexible in customizing my class.

One of the teachers revealed her liking for telling stories in a musical manner. Her enthusiastic attitude during the course bespoke her fondness for the musical approach to telling stories.

> Professor Kim demonstrated "The Elephant and the Baby" in a musical manner during the workshop. I learnt that 'Wow, that may be another option to conduct my lessons'. In fact, we choose books based on the pictures but in these workshop sessions, instructors explain various kinds of stories…The trainers here were so wonderful. Even when we made little progress, they encouraged us and tried to give us confidence. This was good because it gave us courage. I think I will do the same to my pupils when I go back to school.

Identifying and practicing diverse approaches of telling stories could be useful chances for the trainee teachers. They commented that the workshop helped them to be able to customize their instruction considering each student's characteristics and proficiency level. Some teachers revealed what they personally enjoyed among the approaches. Overall, informing and providing chances to practice diverse ways to tell stories were essential curriculum components for the trainee teachers who would guide their target students.

2. Perception Change

1) Positive Factors of the Workshop

The focus of this section is to gauge the participant teachers' positive perceptions of storytelling workshop through the analysis of focus group interview data. In particular, the data pointed to two main perception changes as a result of the workshop: (i) increased confidence and motivation played a key role in helping the trainees to reconstruct new storytelling activities and put them into practice; and (ii) collaborative work of the trainees also generated a positive synergy effect on these teachers' classroom practice.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

(1) Changes in Teachers' Perceptions: Professional Confidence and Motivation

In many studies, increased confidence has usually improved the quality of teaching or increased attempts to adopt new approaches (Cope, Inglis, Riddell, & Sulhunt, 1992; Davies & Preston, 2002; Powell, Terrell, Furey, & Scott-Evans, 2003). Professional confidence is a useful, and even necessary, precursor for implementing new knowledge and skills into practice (Harland & Kinder, 1997). More specifically, in this study, since most of teachers point to their lack of confidence as a major obstacle to conduct effective storytelling classes (pre-workshop questionnaire), professional confidence is clearly essential in a storytelling class. The teachers (participants) said throughout the interviews that they gained motivation and confidence through the course. Also, this increased confidence played a crucial role in teachers' ongoing attempts to acquire new storytelling skills in their teaching practice and naturally helped teachers to reconstruct and adapt obtained knowledge according to their students' level. For example, two teachers commented:

> When I instructed students [before the workshop], I used to worry not only about pronouncing the words right way, but also about performing the story the right way. I acted out the story more confidently than before when I taught kids, saying [confidently] that 'Now, see what I do. This is how you do it.'

> I used to let kids memorize some words and let them repeat after me. I didn't know exactly how to teach storytelling, nor very confident in using storytelling techniques such as pronunciation and intonation before the workshop. But I now feel more confident.

The link between confidence and the improvement of teachers' classroom practice is not straightforward and thus is debated (Cope et al., 1992). However, the data from the teachers below illustrates a positive interplay between their acquired confidence and improved classroom practice. For example,

> Before this workshop, I simply told kids to read books. Afterwards, I learnt where I put the stress with a rhythm … just like singing a song… in such a fun way. I was able to get more confidence in using that since students looked more confident and attentive than before […].

> I used to lack skills in illustrating things in an animated manner. After the workshop, I will try to apply those animated skills when I read storybooks to my students. I will try to use bigger motions, or modify voice tones in varying ways.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Thus, it is possible to say in these cases that the teachers gained great awareness of their personal confidence about teaching storytelling skills during the course, which was used as a catalyst to enhance their classroom repertoire. This highlights two issues. Firstly, teachers' increased confidence obtained through the workshop enabled them to start using new teaching approaches, which were unfamiliar to them and different from their previous routines. Furthermore, teachers' increased motivation through the workshop strengthened the wish to challenge their students by participating in a storytelling contest scheduled to be held in December. In this light, the workshop course can be regarded as a vehicle for personal professional development.

> Through this workshop, I learnt that there are various ways to make the class fun. I never realized teacher training can be fun. In fact, I now want to participate in a storytelling contest. Before attending the workshop, I never imagined teaching storytelling class in interesting ways.

> The workshop gave me challenges and motivation to really learn more. I hope the course will be longer and more constant than now. It would be ideal to learn more during the session and I could envision being a certified and qualified English teacher if I study English hard.

From the interview data, it was clear that trainees perceived the storytelling workshop to have had an impact on their professional development in a variety of ways.

(2) A Community of Learning

Even those who were more critical about the workshop acknowledged the general value of a community of learning. For example, one teacher expressed the following critical view:

> When I taught kids about intonation and rhythm of English all of a sudden after the course, kids got stressed out. I used to just read things off from page one and all of a sudden I had to implement what I learnt … I really didn't know what to do.

However, overall, she was satisfied with the course. Amongst various positive impacts, many trainees felt especially encouraged and supported by collaborative learning. Naturally this support helps reshape teachers' roles and gives them a better grasp of their future teaching plan.

A teacher support group can be defined as "two or more teachers collaborating to

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

achieve either their individual or shared goals or both, on the assumption that working with a group is usually more effective than working on ones' own" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 51). Much literature has stressed the importance of collaborating with other teachers in professional development (e.g., Day, 1999; Eraut, 1994; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1998; Lieberman & Wood, 2002; Wenger, 1999). This collaborative learning or peer support group can be set up during any kind of teacher training courses or after the courses (Sim, 2011). The teachers mentioned positive experiences of group learning in the workshop course and cited this as being one of the factors which influenced the impact of the course on their subsequent teaching. Two teachers commented:

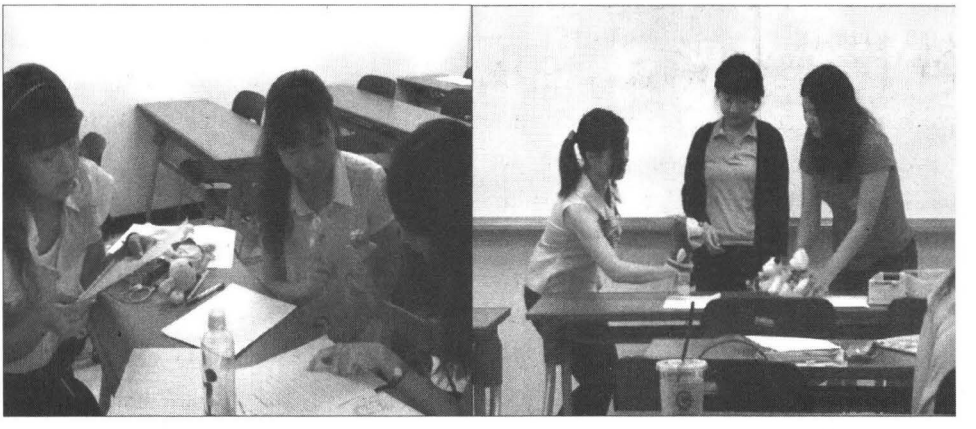
> Storytelling methods also provided some sentiment of doing things together. We [...] sang it out loud altogether. I think it's greatly helpful when it (the course) provides participating teachers with a feeling of 'working things out together'. I felt a sense of rapport during the session.

> I am stimulated and encouraged by the teachers (peers) here. They work so hard and understand learners very well.

The workshop course also emphasised lots of group discussion with co-learners scaffolding each other's learning. This also corresponds with Wenger's (1999) concept of 'communities of practice', which claims that learning occurs in the interaction between people who share a concern or a passion for something they do (cited in Sim, 2011). The following photos show how participant teachers worked collaboratively with their peers.

FIGURE 1

The Photo of teachers' collaborative work



교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

2) Perceived Difficulties from Training to Teaching

This section attempts to explore teachers' perspectives about the perceived difficulties that impinged on the transfer process from the workshop into their own teaching. The constraints emerged as being of three types: learner differences, lack of training in developing materials, and parental intervention. Constraining factors here refers to the obstacles to teachers' attempts at innovation in their own teaching context.

(1) Learner Differences

Drawing on the data, this section will describe in more detail different learner styles and how this factor hampered the implementation of the teachers' new skills. Given this feature, it was clear that some teachers could not implement their gained knowledge (storytelling skills) from the workshop.

> It seemed to work fine for lower grade kids. However, my kids are in upper grade and are really shy when they need to pronounce (particularly 'R' sound) or actively express their feelings. Sometimes I felt I was doing a monodrama by my own when kids did not follow me. Shy kids find being expressive and animating the story hard. For kids who usually do not speak or respond, this lesson is hard.

> When I taught kids intonation and rhythm of the story, kids got stressed out. They whined and complained [...]. They said they didn't want to do it. So, sometimes what I learnt in the workshop does not work out as I expected.

These comments from teachers suggest that the course trainers or designers may not have contextualised the workshop course in relation to the participants' real practice. With regard to creating differentiated learning materials to accommodate the needs of all types of learners (e.g., visual learners, auditory learners, kinaesthetic learners, etc.), "the workshop course should be directly cantered on the everyday teaching situation so that teachers are able to see immediately the relevance of the discussion to their own classrooms" (Hayes, 1997, p. 107). Millrood (2002) also suggests ways to teach such heterogeneous classes by adapting activities according to students' different learner styles; for example, extrovert, introvert, visual, and kinaesthetic learners.

As suggested, it is obvious that the workshop course should have introduced a way of catering for different learners' needs rather than delivering ready-made methods which were not embedded in the participants' professional practice. These 'ready-made' (a term borrowed from Bax, 1995, p. 348) activities sometimes lose their relevance to the

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

trainees' particular teaching situations due to the lack of attention to the specific social and educational contexts in which an individual trainee works. Thus, the training course should provide sufficient recognition of the teaching context and realistic preparation for the everyday teaching repertoire. For example, trainee teachers could be encouraged to create the storylines for storytelling activities that were more appropriate for their own learners considering diverse learner styles, rather than being passively introduced to storybooks during the course. This is linked to Tomlinson's (1988) idea that "the course provides lots of recipes for the participants to follow but does not help them to develop ideas and materials of their own" (p. 2).

Some authors such as Prabhu (1990) and Holliday (1994) have also asserted that attention must be given to the context and the culture-bound nature of language teaching and highlight the need for 'exploratory teaching' (Ferguson & Donno, 2003). Hayes (1995, p. 256) argues that "all teacher development activities should be classroom-centered". That is, the teacher development activities should be ones that teachers can easily continue, adapt, and apply to students' needs, and that are easily put into practice, in order to have direct relevance to the teachers' everyday school situations.

(2) Lack of Training for Expertise in Material Development

Teachers have been provided insufficient opportunities for teacher training programs in the past (Li, 1988). Lack of training has long been regarded as one of the difficulties teachers perceive in attempting to develop knowledge or an innovative curriculum. In this study, all of the 17 teachers mentioned that a lack of training for developing materials for storytelling is the main obstacle they faced in implementing storytelling skills in their classrooms. This lack of systematic training made it difficult for the teachers "to choose what storybooks are appropriate and how to deliver the stories we learnt at the workshop". Another teacher also comments as follows:

> We are not the experts of storytelling. So I think it would be better to have a chance to make a storybook list and activities that we can immediately teach in our classes during the course. Now, I feel somehow disoriented by randomly selecting books and simply teaching about them.

(3) Parental Intervention

In addition to the issues above, parental intervention was also perceived by the teachers to be a further constraint. Teachers think that the authority of management in decision making regarding their teaching subjects should be given to teachers. However,

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

parental intervention in how subjects are taught was one of their perceived difficulties. Two teachers said:

> When I told students' mothers that we will practice storytelling during class time, they complained that the class does not stick to the curriculum.

> When I apply storytelling skills such as gesture, rhythm, and intonation in practice, some parents do not understand and make comments like 'Is this really an English education?', or 'Is my child's proficiency that low to conduct a lesson this way?' Such misunderstanding really makes me confused as well.

The teachers felt the implicit pressure from the parents. It could be said here that according to Shim and Baik (2003, p. 246), teachers in South Korea are "caught between government recommendations on the one hand and the demands of pupils and parents for a more examination-oriented (textbook-oriented) classroom instruction on the other". This external constraining factor did not allow teachers to rationalise theory into practice. Both these quotations from teachers' comments above indicate the power that parents and students have in a particular educational context, and suggest that such power can override teachers' positive attitudes towards a change and influence the success of implementation of new ideas.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has responded to the research questions: What are the facilitating factors and constraining factors of a storytelling workshop on teachers' classroom practice and perception change? Although the degree of impact of the workshop varied according to participants' personalities and the factors underlying them, overall all teachers felt that they had benefited considerably from the course. It has been shown that most teachers perceived internal confidence and motivation, and collaborative work with peers as the most facilitating factors in the workshop. These factors encourage teachers to develop their teaching competency and professional self-identity. However, lack of contextual sensitivity of the workshop course, insufficient training, and parental intervention were identified as constraining factors that hampered the implementation of the teachers' new skills into their teaching practice. On the basis of the findings of this study, the two following suggestions are made for the storytelling workshop course.

First, further consideration of teachers' teaching contexts in designing a teacher training program is important in order to ensure that the training course can lead to the

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

implementation of change in teachers' practice. Trainee teachers mentioned in their interviews that preparing materials and choosing appropriate storybooks are very difficult because of the individual differences of learners and the discrepancy between the workshop course and actual classrooms. Accordingly, training activities should pay due care and attention to contextual features in order to confirm that teachers (trainees) use on the job what they learnt during the training course. Thus, teacher trainers, designers, or directors should be able to help teachers who have to cope with the difficulties they encounter by developing a more realistic program that fits into the real context (Sim, 2011).

Second, the trainee teachers mentioned they have been provided insufficient training for storytelling. When considering the length of the course, this four-week storytelling workshop seems to be just a one-off event. However, the course should provide ongoing support to teachers through follow-up monitoring, mentoring, and peer group support both during and after the course to ensure that the pedagogical and practical activities learnt from the course are not employed on a 'one-off' basis only. For example, as teachers mentioned in their interviews, they benefited from the collaborative work with their peers, the training course should help to develop peer group teaching, and to create a network of like-minded teachers to regularly share and exchange new ideas or writing materials that will actually be used, etc.

Moreover, the impact is not always immediate and thus continuing post-course support can connect valuable input from a teacher training course to real teaching practice as closely as possible. Thus, through continuing support such as mentoring, 'hands-on' contact between trainers and teachers, or peer group support, trainee teachers who participate in any training course should not be 'remote from the ongoing development'.

REFERENCES

Al-Shamali, F. (2010). *A development workshop for EFL teachers of young learners or very young learners on using storytelling in their classrooms in the Jordan Valley region.* Retrieved May 15, 2013, from the World Wide Web: http://umbc.uoregon.edu/eteacher/projects/200904_E-Teacher_PD_Shamali.pdf

Bax, S. (1997). Roles for a teacher educator in context-sensitive teacher education. *ELT Journal*, *51*(3), 232-241.

Chun, E. (2006). Use of storybooks in primary English teaching. *Journal of Research in Curriculum Instruction*, *10*(1), 55-71.

Chung, Y. (2008). The development of methods for teaching alphabet utilizing stories. *The*

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Modern English Society of Korea, *9*(3), 232-256.

Chung, Y., & Kim, H. (2012). The effects of English lessons utilizing storytelling on listening, speaking, and affective aspects of elementary students. *The Research of Educational Science*, *43*(1), 63-89.

Cope, P., Inglis, B., Riddell, S., & Sulhunt, O. (1992). The value of in-service degrees: Teachers' long-term perceptions of their impact. *British Educational Research Journal*, *18*(3), 297-307.

Davies, R., & Preston, M. (2002). An evaluation of the impact of continuing professional development on personal and professional lives. *Journal of In-service Education, 28*(2), 231-254.

Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. London: Falmer Press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, G., & Brewster, J. (2002). *Tell it again!: The new storytelling handbook for primary teachers.* London: Penguin.

Ellis, G., Brewster, J., & Mohammed, S. (1991). *The storytelling handbook for primary teachers.* London: Penguin.

Eraut, M. (1994). *Developing professional knowledge and competence*. London: Falmer Press.

Ferguson, G., & Donno, S. (2003). One-month teacher training course: time for a change? ELT Journal, 57(1), 26-33.

Freeman, D. (1989). Teacher training, development and decision-making: a model of teaching and related strategies for language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly, 23*(1), 27-45.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1992). Teacher development and educational change. In M. Fullan & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Teacher development and educational change*, (pp. 1-9). London: Falmer Press.

Gillham, B. (2005). *Research interviewing: The range of techniques.* Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 8*(3), 381-391.

Harland, J., & Kinder, K. (1997). Teachers' continuing professional development: framing a model of outcomes. *British Journal of In-service Education*, *23*(1), 71-84.

Hayes, D. (1995). In-service teacher development: some basic principles. *ELT Journal, 49*(3), 251-261.

Hayes, D. (1997). Helping teachers to cope with large classes. *ELT Journal*, *51*(2), 106-116.

Hellawell, D. (2006). Inside-out: analysis of the insider-outsider concept as a heuristic

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

device to develop reflexivity in pupils doing qualitative research. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *11*(4), 483-494.

Holliday, A. (1994). *Appropriate methodology and social context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English. (2009). *Qualities of good storytelling*. Retrieved May 8, 2013, from the World Wide Web: http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/goodstorytellingR. pdf

Kennedy, C. (1987). Innovating for a change: Teacher development and innovation. *ELT Journal*, *41*(3), 163-170.

Kim, H. (2004). The effect of post-storytelling activities on the improvement of English language abilities of elementary students. *Studies in English Education*, *9*(2), 99-124.

Kim, H. J. & Lee, J. A. (2006). The effects of rehearsed primary English drama activities on the learner variables and L2 achievements. *English Language & Literature Teaching*, *12*(1), 183-204.

Li, D. (1998). "It's always more difficult than you plan and imagine": Teachers' perceived difficulties in introducing the communicative approach in South Korea. *TESOL Quarterly, 32* (4), 677-703.

Lieberman, A., & Grolnick, M. (1998). Educational reform networks: Changes in the forms of reform. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *International handbook of educational change,* (pp. 710-729). Boston: Kluwer Academic.

Lieberman, A., & Wood, D. (2002). *Inside the national writing project: Connecting network learning and classroom teaching.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Lim, B., & Lim, C. (2005). The study of ways to promote listening, speaking, and interests in elementary English classrooms. *The Korean Association of Language Studies*, *21*, 71-90.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. London: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis. London: SAGE Publications.

Millrood, R. (2002). Teaching heterogeneous classes. *ELT Journal, 56*(2), 128-136.

Nunan, D. (1989). A client-centered approach to teacher development. *ELT Journal*, *43,* 111-118.

Park, C. J. (2011). An applied English drama in primary English education. *English Language & Literature Teaching, 17*(2), 161-180.

Patton, M. Q. (1987). *How to use qualitative methods in evaluation.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Powell, E., Terrell, I., Furey, S., & Scott-Evans, A. (2003). Teachers' perceptions of the impact of CPD: An institutional case study. *Journal of In-Service Education, 29*(3), 389-404.

Prabhu, N. (1990). There is no best method – why? *TESOL Quarterly*, *24*(2), 161-177.

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning.* New York: Cambridge University Press

Richards, J. C., & Nunan, D. (1990). *Second language teacher education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rudduck, J. (1981). *Making the most of the short in-service course.* London: Methuen Educational.

Shim, R. J., & Baik, M. J. (2003). English education in South Korea. In H. W. Kam & R. Wong (Eds.), *English language teaching in East Asia today: Changing policies and practices,* (pp. 235-251). Singapore: Times Academic Press.

Sim, J. Y. (2011). *The impact of in-service teacher training: A case study of teachers' classroom practice and perception change.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Warwick University, England.

Slattery, M., & Willis, J. (2001). *English for primary teachers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tomlinson, B. (1988). In-service TEFL: Is it worth the risk?' *The Teacher Trainer, 2*(2), 17-19.

Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yang, H. (2008). English language education utilizing storytelling. *The Modern English Society of Korea*, *52*(2), 115-134.

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: College or university

Ju Youn Sim
Soongsil University
369, Sangdoro, Dongjak-gu
Seoul, Korea
TEL: 010-5676-1665
Email: joan7475@gmail.com

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre

Eunhyun Kim
English Department, Seoul Theological University
101 Sosabon-dong, Sosa-gu, Bucheon,
Gyeonggi, Korea
TEL: 010-2273-5066
Email: ekim315@gmail.com

Received in July, 2013
Reviewed in August, 2013
Revised version received in September, 2013

KYOBO
교보문고

교보문고 KYOBO Book Centre