In-service Teacher Training for Second Language Teachers of Colleges and Universities: The Philippine Experience[1]

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In-service teacher training is a crucial component of faculty development at the tertiary level. More often than not, in-service teacher-training aims to update teachers on current trends in second language teaching or innovative techniques, strategies and approaches in second language education.

This paper describes some short-term in-service teacher training programs in the Philippines which focus on both the development of pedagogical skills and enhancement of proficiency in English. It describes recent and on-going initiatives of the national government and private organizations that show how they have responded to calls for more innovation in second language teaching, and how they are addressing the perceived worsening decline of the English proficiency of Filipino college students, via short-term in-service teacher training.

The paper likewise discusses some concerns and problems in designing and implementing training programs.

1. Introduction

A key component of the educational system is the teacher. This truism was underscored in 2004 in a policy note prepared by a team of World Bank staff, consultants, and a technical panel of experts, that dealt with the state of Philippine basic education, thus:

How well schools perform and students learn are the results of several factors, but the

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single most influential factor is the performance of teachers. Although tangible re-
sources (buildings, textbooks, etc.) affect schooling outcomes, research indicates that
it is teachers who have the largest impact on student learning. (World Bank
Philippines, "Teachers' development, recruitment, and performance: Key to improving
Philippine basic education," p. 1)

Indeed, no amount of investment in computers and physical infrastructure will translate
to better student performance if teachers are bad. Conversely, effective teaching brings
about effective student learning.

1.1　The literature

That there is a causal link between effective teaching and learning has been confirmed by
studies on teacher quality and student achievement. Goldhaber (2003), in his review of the
literature, claims that "high quality teachers raise student performance," arguing further
that "it appears that teachers are the most important education factor influencing student
outcomes" (pp. 7-9). Goldhaber, Brewer and Anderson's (1999) study, for instance, used
data from a national survey of about 24,000 eighth grade students who were followed into
high school and resurveyed in tenth and twelfth grade to estimate both the effects of specific
teacher characteristics — e.g. teacher race and gender, degree and experience levels, and cer-
tification status — and overall teacher effects on student achievement in mathematics in the
tenth grade. The study found that overall teacher effects accounted for approximately 8.5%
of the variation in students' tenth grade achievement. A much larger proportion of this
8.5% is explained by unobservable teacher-related factors than is explained by observable
factors such as teacher degree and experience level. Goldhaber (2003), further explains,
however, that their 1999 study did not address the potential that some portion of the effect
attributed to teachers actually results from non-random grouping of teachers and students
together (e.g. students grouped together by high or low ability level and subsequently as-
signed to particular teachers) (pp. 7-8).

For their part, Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin (2002) aimed to determine whether there are
differences among way schools and teachers in their abilities to raise student achievement
and how important differences in teacher quality are in determining learning outcomes, and
whether these outcomes are related to class size, teacher degree, and teacher experience.
Using data from the University of Texas at Dallas Texas School Project, demographic data
from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), and test score re-
sults, the study confirmed that teacher quality is the most important schooling factor ex-
plaining student achievement. The researchers found that differences in the effects that
schools have on students are largely a result of differences in teachers within those schools.

Further, their study showed that the effects of teacher quality were found to be much larger than other commonly measured school attributes, such as class size.

Other studies such as those by Sanders and Horn, 1998; Sanders and Rivers, 1996; Jordan, Mendro and Weeasinghe, 1997, all of which dealt with the long-term effects of teacher quality on student performance, confirmed the above finding that teacher quality has a greater impact on students than any other schooling factor. In summing up the findings of studies he had reviewed, Goldhaber (2003) posited the following: (1) There is a wide range of effectiveness among teachers, (2) Effective teachers are effective with students at diverse achievement levels, and (3) The impact of teacher effects can persist long after students have particular teachers.

Leigh and Mead (2005) share the same view. To them, "teacher's knowledge and skills are the most vital in-school factors influencing [students'] learning," adding that "for [students] from disadvantaged backgrounds or troubled home environments, quality teaching is even more important" (p. 1).

But how can teacher quality be defined? While there is no one observable characteristic that is synonymous with the term teacher quality, educational researchers seem to agree that a number of variables are presumed to indicate teachers' competence. For example, Darling-Hammond (2000), basing her list upon findings of previous studies, enumerates the following attributes: (1) general academic ability and intelligence, (2) subject matter knowledge, (3) knowledge of teaching and learning, (4) years of education, (5) years of teaching experience, (6) certification status, and (7) teaching behaviors in the classroom. It is the second and the third characteristics — subject matter (or content) knowledge and knowledge of teaching and learning (or pedagogical knowledge) — that are related to teacher training since the what (content) and how (the delivery of subject matter) are two issues usually dealt with in training programs.

Investigations conducted in recent years on the effect of teacher training on student learning have yielded mixed results. Kennedy's (1998) meta-analysis showed that of the 93 studies he had reviewed, only 12 established positive effects of staff development (i.e. in-service teacher training) on student performance, a finding that is consistent with those of Corcoran (1995) and Little (1993) who found that "typically staff development is a low intensity affair that lacks continuity and accountability" (p. 4). However, studies by Bressoux (1996), using a quasi-experimental research design, and Dildy (1982) who examined results of a randomized trial, found that teacher training increased student performance. Similarly, Wiley and Yoon (1995) and Cohen and Hill (2000) found that teacher development programs have at least small impacts on student performance. Using difference-in-difference and matching strategies to estimate the causal effect of teacher training on student math and reading performance in Jerusalem elementary schools, Angrist and Lavy (2001), for

their part, found strong effects of teacher training on student performance. Readers, however, are cautioned against jumping into conclusion based on Angrist and Lavy's findings as the intervention features implemented may limit the generalizability of the results. These include the non-random assignment of schools included in the study, the inclusion of other components in the intervention program (e.g. establishment of a learning center to assist failing students) that may have increased student achievement, and the highly structure training component of the program (Jacob & Lefgren, 2002). Finally, Jacob and Lefgren (2002) used regression discontinuity strategy to estimate the effect of teacher training on the mathematics and reading performance of elementary students. They found that marginal increases in in-service training have no statistically or academically significant effect on either reading or math achievement, suggesting that modest investments in staff development may not be sufficient to increase the achievement of elementary school children in high poverty schools. The mixed results of the above studies notwithstanding, the state of higher education in the Philippines underlines the need for intensive teacher training programs. It is this topic that I now turn to.

1.2 State of higher education in the Philippines

In 1994, Republic Act 7722 was passed in the Congress of the Philippines, creating the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), based on the recommendations in 1991 of the Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM), a bicameral body that had studied the state of Philippine education. The creation of CHED effectively tri-focalized the educational system, with CHED overseeing higher education (postgraduate, graduate, and undergraduate programs), DepEd (Department of Education, formerly the Department of Education, Culture and Sports) taking care of basic education (elementary and secondary education), and TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority) which is responsible for technical and vocational education (Vea, n.d.).

CHED, in particular, is charged with the gargantuan task of governing higher education institutions (HEIs) and of overseeing degree-granting programs and implementing policies and standards (Vea, n.d.). Foremost in CHED's mandate is system governance over 1,479 higher education institutions (HEIs), broken down as follows: 1305 (or 88% of the total) private institutions and 174 (or 12%) state or public colleges and universities (based on figures in academic year 2002-2003). These figures suggest that the burden of providing higher education to Filipinos is in the hands of the private sector (Vea, n.d.).

The concentration of enrollment in private HEIs seems to confirm the observation that indeed higher education in the Philippines is privatized (Gulosino, n.d.). During the same academic year (2002-2003), for instance, 66% (1,605,294) of the 2.4 million college and university students nationwide were enrolled in private HEIs, while only 34% (or 815,910

students) studied in public or state HEIs. Of the number of students enrolled in private HEIs, 45% were concentrated in non-sectarian schools and 21% in sectarian schools (the latter referring to institutions run by religious groups). Of those enrolled in public or state HEIs, 30% went to SUCs (state universities and colleges), 3% LUCs (local unit colleges), and 1% other government schools (Vea, n.d.). In terms of discipline group, the highest enrolment was registered for business administration and related courses, followed by education and teacher training, engineering, and medical and allied courses, in that order (as of school year 2003-2004) (National Statistics Coordination Board, 2006). I suspect that the trend might have changed owing to the huge popularity of nursing and caregiver courses brought about by the great demand for nurses and caregivers in the US, UK, Canada, and Japan.

That much of Philippine higher education is in the hands of the private sector has brought about other problems. Since there is basically no subsidy from the national government, private schools have to rely on tuition and other fees for operation. A few universities like De La Salle University-Manila, Ateneo de Manila University, and the University of Santo Tomas, have benefited from the generosity of alumni and private institutions through donations and endowments that are earmarked for research grants and professorial chairs. But that is more of an exception to the rule.

The large enrolment figures in private colleges and universities which have meager resources that are drawn mainly from tuition and other school fees have given rise to another school-related problem — large classes. In so many colleges and universities, the minimum class size (including that of English) is 40, but the class size can go up to 70 or even 80. If, as some studies have found, student learning is positively correlated with class size, then this is a serious problem that Philippine higher education has to grapple with.

In addition, college teachers in the Philippines in both private and public institutions, like their counterparts in elementary and secondary schools, are underpaid but overworked. This is because of schools operating on a shoestring budget, thus resulting in low pay. To augment their income, they have to teach more classes, probably even more than what the mind and body can carry. It does not come as a surprise therefore to hear college teachers teaching 21 units (which is equivalent to seven three-credit classes), or even 24 or 30 units, or more.

This situation has given birth to more problems, two of which are academic in character. These include the lack of qualified college faculty and the absence of a research or scientific culture in so many HEIs. In her study, Gulosino (n.d.) highlights the former in saying that "only about 7% of faculty hold doctoral degrees [based on figures in the late 1990s], while a large majority [teachers with Instructor and Assistant Professor ranks] do not have advanced degrees" (p. 25). She further posits that this means that "public and private

institutions compete from a limited pool of academic experts" (Gulosino, n.d., p. 25). Money and the lack of time due to many teaching loads have often been cited as the reasons for failure to go back to school to obtain an advanced degree despite an age-old government policy requiring college teachers to be at least M.A. holders.

Side by side with the first is the absence of a scientific culture in colleges and universities. With the exception of a few universities such as De La Salle University-Manila, there is hardly any research and publication going on in Philippine universities and colleges. I can venture a few reasons for this problem, based on personal observation: (1) heavy workload, as mentioned above; (2) negative attitude towards research as an academic endeavor and as an inherent task of a university teacher; (3) inability to embrace the research vision of a university one is part of; and (4) funding problems and reluctance of HEIs to invest in re-search due to low return of investment.

These problems faced by Philippine higher education may be inferred from the results of national and international assessments. A case in point is a five-year study (1994-1998) jointly conducted by the Commission on Higher Education and the Professional Regulations Commission which found that of the 875 HEIs participating in licensure ex-aminations, "only 199 (or 22.7%) may be considered as good performing HEIs" (Commi-ssion on Higher Education, "Proposal for Project ENRICH", 2005, p. 1). It is worthy to note that all licensure examinations in the Philippines are given in English. Whether lan-guage is the primary factor responsible for the dismal performance of HEIs in licensure ex-aminations is beyond the scope of this paper. In addition, only four Philippine universities (De La Salle University-Manila, Ateneo de Manila University, the state-run University of the Philippines, and University of Santo Tomas) landed in *Asiaweek*'s (2000) list of top 500 universities in Asia and the Pacific. It is the same four universities that have made it to the world's top 500 universities, according to the THES-QS World University Rankings 2006-2007. While this may be an achievement for the four universities, it is insignificant if one will factor in to the picture the less than 1,500 other HEIs in the country that failed to make the cut.

1.3　The need for in-service teacher training

The above problems underscore the need for in-service teacher training programs for both public and private college and universities. As early as 1991, this was acknowledged by the Congressional Commission on Education as a priority area in the effort towards educational reform. Among other things, the bicameral body recommended that the following be imple-mented in all levels: (1) professionalizing teachers and teaching, (2) creating well-defined career service paths for promotion and career planning for teachers and administrators, (3) strengthening pre-service teacher education, and (4) improving and expanding in-service

training programs for both public and private teachers (pp. 25-29).

Furthermore, the World Bank Philippines echoed the same call in order to address the current crisis in Philippine education. Among other recommendations, WB pointed out that there was a need to design in-service training. While it targeted basic education, the call may be extended to cover higher education, given the gravity of the problem.

In response to these calls, the national government through the Commission on Higher Education and private organizations such as the Foundation for Upgrading the Standard of Education, Inc. (FUSE), have designed and implemented in-service teacher training programs for teachers of colleges and universities.

1.4 Purpose and scope of the paper

In this paper I describe some short-term in-service teacher-training programs for tertiary-level teachers in the Philippines which focus on both the development of pedagogical skills in L2 teaching and enhancement of proficiency in English. These recent and on-going government and private sector initiatives have received funding from the national government through CHED and private organizations such as FUSE. In addition, the paper identifies and describes some problems and concerns in designing and implementing the programs.

I shall limit my presentation to those programs that have been implemented on a national scale and in which De La Salle University-Manila through the Department of English and Applied Linguistics, has participated in their design and implementation.

Moreover, I use the term *teacher training* following Richards and Farrell (2005) to refer to those "activities directly focused on a teacher's present responsibilities and is typically aimed at short-term and immediate goals" (pp. 4-5). Teacher training, they maintain, is different from *teacher development* in that the latter "generally refers to general growth not focused on a specific job" (Richards & Farrell, 2005, pp. 4-5). The notion of teacher training from this perspective appears to be consistent with Tayao's (2005) view that it deals with "equipping the teacher with lesson plans, formulae and strategies on how to get things done" (p. 321). Furthermore, in teacher training, "the teacher is viewed as a craftsman in need of pedagogic skills, and so [it] underscores how to do things to get optimum results" (Tayao, 2005, p. 321).

2. The FUSE workshops

The Foundation for Upgrading the Standard of Education (Inc.) (FUSE) is a full-fledged non-government organization that belongs to the Lucio Tan Group of Companies headed by Dr Lucio Tan, a successful Chinese businessman. Created on December 1, 1994, the foundation, in partnership with the TanYan Kee Foundation, has been training teachers

of science, mathematics and English, in line with its mission of improving teaching standards in the three subject areas (Alled Bank, 2005).

A major project of the foundation is the Continuing Studies in Education via Television (CONSTEL), a multi-media approach that helps teachers become specialists in their respective areas. This is in partnership with the National Broadcasting Network (NBN) (formerly the People's Television Network or PTV-4), a government-owned television station, the Department of Education, the Department of Science and Technology, the University of the Philippines-Institute of Science and Mathematics Educational Development (UP-ISMED), and Philippine Normal University (Allied Bank, 2005). Since 2004, FUSE has been training elementary and high school teachers on how to improve the teaching of English, Science, Chemistry, and Physics through the use of CONSTEC telelessons and Teacher Support Materials. Trainors' training sessions have also been held to expand the pool of trainors in the subject areas mentioned. The workshops have also been facilitated by a team of outstanding university and college teachers (Allied Bank, 2005). Since the target clientele of the CONSTEL project consists of elementary and secondary teachers, this paper will not further deal with it.

A few years after its founding, i.e. from 1997 to 2000, the foundation had initially funded teacher-training programs for college/university English teachers conducted nationwide, in tandem with De La Salle University-Manila through the university's Department of English and Applied Linguistics. Primarily because the university was — and still is — the country's center for English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the topics covered had to do with this approach to second language teaching. The recurring themes of workshops conducted anchored on the teaching of reading and writing in ESP classes, particularly in natural sciences, engineering, and computer science.

Nine cities were covered during the three-year period of implementation of the project. These were San Fernando, La Union; Naga City, Camarines Sur; Puerto Princesa City, Palawan (for Luzon); Dumaguete City and Iloilo City (for Visayas); and Davao City, Surigao City, and General Santos City (for Mindanao). The training sessions were facilitated by the faculty members of the Department of English and Applied Linguistics, De La Salle University-Manila. Approximately 500 teacher-trainees, all of whom were college teachers, benefited from the seminar-workshops each of which ran for a week (or a total of about 40 hours per workshop).

Presumably because of a change of priorities, since 2000, FUSE has stopped accepting proposals for teacher-training at the college or university level, and has concentrated on training elementary and high schools via CONSTEL, among other projects. In addition, to my knowledge, aside from the usual evaluation by workshop participants, there has been no formal assessment of the entire program to find out if the content knowledge and

pedagogical skills the teacher-trainees had learned from training sessions led to more effective and innovative actual teaching in their respective classes.

3. The CHED training programs

Pursuant to its mandate of raising the standard of higher education in the country as provided for in Republic Act 7722, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has embarked on two multi-million peso initiatives that target college and university teachers as the primary beneficiaries. These are *Project ENRICH* and *Project SPELL*. As they are related to second language teaching in the college/university level, a discussion of their rationale, goals, and methodology is therefore in order.

3.1 Project ENRICH

Project ENRICH is the Enrichment Program for College Freshmen (Prebaccalaureate/bridging program. While teacher training is only one of the several components of the initiative, its rationale, as articulated in the project proposal, is worthy to note, and underlines the stark realities of Philippine higher education that I have presented earlier. I shall now talk about some of these realities, as outlined in the proposal.

First, the proposal (Commission on Higher Education, 2005a) acknowledges the fact that compared to other countries, the Philippines adopts a shorter period for basic education, i.e. ten years (six years of elementary and four years of high school education), a far cry from the 12-year curriculum program in other countries. The project thus suggests that adding one more year in college, which is the bottom line of the proposal, might improve the quality of education in the Philippines.

The second point raised has to do with the population growth of 2.3%, arguably one of the highest in Asia, acknowledging further that this translates to about 1.8 young Filipinos going to school every year. This then impacts the quality of education since, given the low budget allotments for schools, this would mean shortage of classrooms and books, among other problems.

The next concerns the performance of HEIs in licensure examinations conducted by the Professional Regulations Commission, which, as has been mentioned before, reveals that only 22.7% of the total number of participating schools may be said to be performing well. Another CHED report "Philippine higher education in the 21st century" shows that only a few HEIs in the country are performing well.

The inadequate preparation of high school graduates to pursue higher education and eventually enter the job market is also cited in the proposal. Hence, the proposed bridging program is believed to address this problem (Commission on Higher Education, 2005a,

p.1).

Project ENRICH is described in the proposal as follows. First, it is an institutionalized bridging program in Mathematics, Science, and English for incoming first-year college students. Among its features cited are the following: (1) It is institution-based so that the program becomes acceptable to all stakeholders, including students, parents, the entire academic community, etc.; (2) It provides an assessment system for placement of incoming first-year students; (3) It requires the most competent and experienced teachers to deliver the bridging courses; (4) It includes an intensive teacher training component to ensure the quality of delivery of the bridging courses; and (5) It initially includes financial support from CHED in the form of scholarships (50 grantees for each pilot HEI). Furthermore, it aims to: (1) improve the quality of students admitted to HEIs, (2) reduce the drop-out and mortality rates of students in the HEIs, and (3) upgrade or maintain the academic standards of the HEIs (Commission on Higher Education, 2005a, p. 2).

The project consists of three phases, namely, pre-project implementation, project implementation, and project assessment. The development of a placement test in Mathematics, Science and English, development of instructional materials and modules, and the conduct of teacher training, comprise the first phase. The project implementation stage, on the other hand, includes the following activities: administration of the placement test, checking of placement test results, identification of 'scholars,' briefing/orientation of 'scholars,' conduct of bridging courses, and conduct of class observations The project assessment phase will involve interviewing students, faculty and HEI administrators, writing and consolidating a Project Assessment Report, and submitting recommendations and improving the implementation of the project (Commission on Higher Education, 2005a, p. 3).

The placement test, aimed at screening senior high school students to determine those who need to go through the bridging program and those who do not, has been developed and pilot-tested. As a member of the team that designed the test for English in 2004, I believe that it may be good to briefly talk about it. First of all, the test was designed by selected faculty of De la Salle University, Ateneo de Manila University, the University of the Philippines, Philippine Normal University, the University of Santo Tomas, and the University of the East, all of which are located in Metro Manila (or the National Capital Region). Second, the test targeted the least mastered skills, i.e. higher-order thinking skills such as getting the main idea, inferencing, drawing conclusions, and the like. The list of skills covered by the placement test was based on the results of the National Secondary Assessment Test (NSAT), the successor of the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), until it was phased out in 2001 by the late former Education Secretary Raul Roco. Cognizant of the fact that the test takers were prospective first-year college students who would be preparing themselves for the professions, the testing committee decided to make

the test content-based, making sure that the reading texts would revolve around topics in the Social Sciences, the Humanities, Information and Communications Technology, and the Natural Sciences. In addition, different text types were included in the test, namely, personal recount, factual recount, procedural texts, expository essay, and argumentative essays.

Teacher training, still part of the pre-project implementation phase, is concerned with the development of guidelines for teacher training, selection of faculty, and the teacher training proper.

The expected outputs of the project when it shall have gone through all the phases include the following: (1) data bank for placement test, (2) validated/administered placement test (at least two forms for each course: English, Science, and Math), (3) bridging curriculum, (4) instructional modules/materials and teachers' manuals, (5) advocacy/communication plan for the program, (6) issuance of implementation policies, (7) assessment report of pilot implementation, and (8) recommendations and improved implementation plan of the project (Commission on Higher Education, 2005a, p. 3).

3.2 Project SPELL

The acronym SPELL stands for Strengthening the Proficiency of English Language Learners. The background and rationale of the project recognize the perceived deterioration of the quality of education in the Philippines, and cite several initiatives that CHED has been undertaking to address the problem. Among these is Project SPELL.

Project SPELL has as its general objective the improvement of the delivery of higher education in the Philippines using the medium of English to enhance the employability of college graduates. Specifically, it aims to: (1) determine the level of proficiency of teachers in the English language, (2) enhance the proficiency of teachers in the use of the English language, and (3) improve the teaching methodologies of teachers using English as the medium of instruction. Target beneficiaries of the project are teachers in colleges and universities (Commission on Higher Education, 2005b, p. 2). It appears then that English proficiency and pedagogical skills are central to this project.

Six components make up the project. These are: (1) Provision of scholarship for a non-thesis master's degree program in the English language, (2) Development of Certificate courses, (3) Development of multi-level short-term packages, (4) Identification of Centers of Training for Language Proficiency (CENTRELP), (5) Subcomponent HELPP (Higher Education Language Proficiency Program), and (6) Monitoring and evaluation of the project (Commission on Higher Education, 2005b, pp. 2-4).

With regard to the first component — provision of scholarship for a non-thesis M.A. program in English — this will involve designing and developing a 14-month intensive non-thesis graduate degree in English, as well as selecting at least four HEIs (one each for

Luzon 1, Luzon 2, Visayas, and Mindanao) that will serve as delivering institutions of the graduate program. 160 scholars who are teachers of undergraduate programs such as Bachelor of Arts (English) and Teacher Education are the target beneficiaries. The number is based on 10 recipients per region, provided each province is represented (Commission on Higher Education, 2005b, p. 2).

The development of Certificate courses, the second project component, specifically addresses the requirement for language skills. It involves five activities. These are as follows: (1) Development of two types of Certificate programs — Certificate A or Certificate Program for English Language Teachers and Certificate B or Certificate Program for Non-English Language Teachers; (2) Development of modules, including the instructional materials for the Certificate Program courses; (3) Conduct of two trainors' training programs, one for each type; (4) Identification/tapping of potential CENTRELP trainors from graduates of the non-thesis M.A. English program, as well as from the certificate program trainees; and (5) Conduct/delivery of thirty sessions of the Certificate Program, to benefit 1,800 college teachers (Commission on Higher Education, 2005b, p. 3).

The third component — the development of multi-level short-term packages — is envisioned to be another approach to address the need to upgrade the language skills of teachers of other courses/programs (English for Specific Purposes). To accomplish this, six activities need to be done: (1) Design/ development of at least three levels of short-term packages, (2) Development of training modules for the courses, (3) Conduct of the first cycle of the short-term package, (4) Identification/tapping of potential CENTRELP trainors from graduates of the non-thesis M.A. English program, as well as from the certificate program trainees, and (5) Conduct/delivery of ninety sessions of short-term package/training, to benefit 2,250 college faculty members (Commission on Higher Education, 2005b, p. 3).

The fourth component — the identification of Centers of Training for Language Proficiency (CENTRELPs) — involves choosing HEIs that will serve as the base of instruction for the nationwide implementation of the project components, specifically the Certificate and Short-term courses. The CENTRELPs will make the training more accessible to the target beneficiaries (Commission on Higher Education, 2005b, p. 3).

An initiative of the CHED Region 1 and the North Luzon Growth Quadrangle Area-PMO (NLGQA-PMO), Subcomponent HELPP, the fifth project component, is intended specifically for Regions 1 and 2 and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). It is composed of two parts: (1) Student component, and (2) Teacher component. The first part involves the development of modules specifically for the conduct of training for graduating or senior college students to improve their proficiency in the use of the English language, deputization of HEIs (both public and private) as training centers, and training trainors. This is a self-sustaining component, and therefore, no project fund will be allocated for the

project. The second part of Subcomponent HELPP — teacher component — involves the conduct of short-term training sessions to improve the English language proficiency of college teachers in Regions 1, 2, and the CAR. The initial phase will be handled by CHED Regional Office 1 and NLGQA-PMO; subsequent editions of the training program will be handled by identified CENTRELPs in the area (Commission on Higher Education, 2005b, p. 4).

Finally, the sixth project component — monitoring and evaluation of the project — involves the development of assessment instrument/s for each level or project component; the conduct of regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of each project component; and the review, reevaluation and rewriting or improvement of modules and instructional materials developed for the project (Commission on Higher Education, 2005b, p. 4).

Only two project components have been implemented so far, and they both relate to teacher training. These are the short-term packages or training programs and the subcomponent HELPP. These two training programs dealt with five modules, namely, Language Skills Enhancement (the module I was involved in), Education/Teaching/Instruction-related Skills (e.g. facilitating discussion, art of questioning), Reading in the Disciplines and Critical Thinking, Grammar and Communicative Functions, and Assessment and Evaluation. Since the first module was divided into the written and oral modes, each constituting a separate module, the total number of modules was six, with each module running for one day (seven hours), or a total of 42 hours logged in by each training participant. All training sessions were held on the campus of the University of the Philippines-Diliman, and all participants were billeted at the university hotel.

The first edition of the training program was held in November 2005, and it was participated in by college teachers who were teaching courses other than English; in other words, these were content teachers. At least 30 participants, presumably recommended by the department chairs and deans of their respective schools and coming from all the regions (except Regions 1 and 2 and the Cordillera Administrative Region which are covered by the Subcomponent HELPP), underwent training. They represented both public and private colleges and universities in disciplines as varied as Psychology, Mathematics, Engineering, Chemistry, Accountancy, Management, and the like.

The second training, held in December 2005, was under the Subcomponent HELPP covering, as has been mentioned, Regions 1 and 2 and the Cordillera Administrative Region. It specifically targeted teachers of Region 2 represented by 29 participants — 21 from private colleges and universities and eight from state schools. They were selected by the regional director, in consultation with school heads. The number of hours logged in by each participant was 42 (seven hours per day for six days).

4. Some observations and issues

Having described three programs that aim at training college teachers or that have components toward that end, I now make some observations and talk briefly about issues pertaining to in-service teacher training at the college or university level. Since the FUSE workshops have stopped, and because the CHED programs involve all regions of the country and are funded through millions of pesos drawn mainly from taxpayers' money, I shall focus on the latter.

First, the design of a placement test for Project ENRICH was a step in the right direction. Since 2001 when the late Secretary Roco abolished the National Secondary Assessment Test (NSAT), there had been no national examination that would measure the competencies of high school students.

Second, like most faculty development programs in the Philippines, a top-down approach has been adopted in the planning, design, implementation, and most likely, in the evaluation of the programs. In the case of Project ENRICH, even the placement test has been prepared by college teachers from Metro Manila schools such as De La Salle University-Manila, Ateneo de Manila University, the University of the Philippines, Philippine Normal University, etc. The members of the Technical Working Group for both Project ENRICH and Project SPELL, as well as the module writers and trainors, all come from basically the same universities. CHED must have decided to adopt this approach for purely practical reasons owing to the difficulty in coordinating with teachers from regions outside the National Capital Region. In addition, the programs might have cost more if they involved non-Metro Manila faculty members. While the reasons may sound legitimate, it would be good for agencies such as CHED to explore the possibility of getting teachers or their heads involved in all stages of program design, implementation and evaluation, because unless they have a stake in a program, there may be potential resistance to it. Time and again, we hear of complaints from provincial teachers about programs and projects that are rammed down their throats because they have not been consulted about them.

Third, the CHED training programs have followed the cascade model. In this approach, the first set of trainees pass on knowledge and skills to the next tier who, in turn, echo the same to the next tier, and so on. While the cascade model had been used successfully in teacher training in Thailand and India, it may suffer from the potential danger of diluting or watering down knowledge and skills and of glossing over specific needs of those participants in the lower tiers. The effect of the cascade model on teacher training has been established by studies conducted in recent years. One such study was reported in Tayao (2005). The investigation aimed at finding out the results of the monitoring and evaluation of 2002

Basic Education Curriculum (BEC). The 2002 BEC was first introduced to key administrative officials, e.g. regional directors, in a seminar where the rationale, objectives, methodology, etc., were discussed. The regional directors, in turn, met with division superintendents and supervisors to map out plans for echoing the curriculum to department heads and master teachers. The master teachers, in turn, passed on the same information to the rank and file classroom teachers (Tayao, 2005, p. 323). She reported that "those holding administrative positions obtained the highest mean score because they were in the first tier of the cascade and got first-hand explanation of the concepts directly from the resource persons tasked with clarifying the key features of the BEC... and showing how they may be made operational" (Tayao, 2005, p. 325). Tayao (2005) clearly explains the danger associated with the cascade model, thus:

> Aside from the danger of dilution as knowledge is passed on from one tier to the next one, the model is often limited to disseminating what was shared initially with no provisions made for the additional needs of the participants in the next lower level. Being concerned mainly with the echoing and passing on of knowledge obtained from resource persons tapped to address the participants in a given level, the model fails to take into account concerns peculiar to the participants in the next lower level. (Tayao, 2005, p. 322).

Fourth, from a world Englishes perspective, it might be good to look into the wisdom of having to require training participants, especially non-English teachers, to discriminate sounds of the English language following standard American English. These include aspirating stops [p], [t], [k] in initial position and producing intonation patterns that are clearly American. These are not features of Philippine English, not even the educated variety, according to Bautista (2003) who found that spoken Philippine English follows endonormative standard, whereas the grammar of Philippine English adopts an exonormative standard, i.e. American English. That being so, teacher training programs, at least those participated in by college English teachers, should give emphasis to grammar, and perhaps academic writing. Besides, speech habits get fossilized, so no amount of one-week training sessions can undo habits that have been formed through the years.

Finally, empirical studies should be conducted to assess the effects of the FUSE and CHED teacher training programs on a teacher's pedagogical skills and probably content knowledge and on student performance. Findings of these studies should inform policies formulated at the national level and programs and projects implemented on a national scale. Doing this might result in more meaningful and relevant training programs for college and university teachers.

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper I have delved into recent and ongoing initiatives that aim at enhancing the teaching competencies and English proficiency of college teachers in the Philippines. These include the workshops that were funded in the late 1990s by the Foundation of Upgrading the Standard of Education, Inc. (FUSE) and ongoing training programs financed by the Commission on Higher Education. I have described these in terms of rationale, objectives, and methodology, and have made some observations and raised issues in relation to their planning, design, implementation, and evaluation.

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