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EFL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN BENIN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS: ARE WEEKLY PEDAGOGICAL
WORKSHOPS AN OPPORTUNITY? CASE STUDY OF 'CEG
AGATOGBO'; 'CEG OUMAKO' AND 'CEG DRÈ'

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this report to my dear parents Jean Kougbo and Yvette Gnonlonfoun for their contributions to my education.

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May the Lord bless you all.

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INTRODUCTION

The field of education and particularly Teaching English as a Foreign Language TEFL is obviously in constant evolution all around the world. Any language teaching system necessarily needs to keep up with the changes that this evolution requires if it ever aspires to be effective in its approach to respond to learners' needs. It is quite evident that the quality of an educational system is based on the level of proficiency of its teachers. This goes without saying that in TEFL, such proficiency is expected of all teachers. Today, teachers are asked to teach in an increasingly demanding environment with highly multicultural classrooms in which they have to place greater emphasis on integrating students with special learning needs; to make more effective use of information and communication technologies for teaching; to engage more in lesson planning within high efficiency frameworks; and to do more to involve parents in schools.

English language teaching can only be effective when the teacher is always in permanent update in so far as the development of (ICTs) has made the learning of the language so open to the world. Learners can easily get access to many notions concerning the acquisition of the language, it is in such a crucial context that teachers' professional development stands as highly necessary.

No matter how good is pre-service training for teachers, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. Therefore education systems strive to provide teachers with opportunities for in-service professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to keep a high-quality teacher workforce.

Effective professional development is a continual training that consists of teachers' research, practice and feedback on their own teaching strategies and techniques; it also requires adequate time and follow-up support. Successful programmes involve teachers in learning activities that are similar to the ones

they are to use with their students, and encourage the development of teachers' learning communities. It is at this point that teachers have to put much interest in the weekly in-service pedagogical meeting to share their expertise and experience more systematically with their colleagues.

In Benin, the secondary school system seems unfavourable to teachers' professional development. Much evidently, the weekly in-service pedagogical meeting most of the time does not respond to the professional difficulties and challenges teachers are actually facing. This situation requires reflections on the matter in order to mobilise ideas and solutions that can surely contribute to the improvement of EFL teachers' profession.

In order to contribute to this reflexion, the current study entitled EFL teachers' professional development in Benin secondary school system: are weekly in-service pedagogical sessions an opportunity? Sets to dig up the practice of EFL teachers' professional development in Benin secondary school.

In the course of this research work, the focus is to be put on the issues of in-service pedagogical sessions particularly the importance it holds for teachers as far as their professional development is concerned; the limits of these sessions in meeting the teachers' needs and among others some perspectives that can help for better benefits throughout the pedagogical sessions.

This research report is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is about the identification of the study; chapter 2 presents the literature review of professional development and specifically the different kind of professional workshops, their importance in the field of TEFL for a successful language teaching and learning process. Chapter 3 sets the methodological approach of the research work. In chapter 4, the results or the findings of the investigation are presented and finally, the last chapter concludes with discussions and suggestions.

CHAPTER 1 : THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. Problem Statement

The development of any country depends largely on the quality of its educational system. Each individual, in order to participate in such evolution, must beforehand acquire and improve their competencies thanks to the quality of education. However this is not possible to achieve without good teachers. The latter certainly constitute the cornerstone on which depends any aspect of personal development since they are the ones who facilitate learning. They know learners' needs and provide them with the necessary knowledge for their future development. Teaching English -the most important international language- is therefore, among others, a key aspect in the development of this country, and as such requires obviously skilled teachers who effectively create the learning process, taking into account all its dimensions for the appropriate use of this language. Teachers have to continue updating their knowledge in order to keep up with all the changes in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language TEFL. Only through this, can they really be able to help learners in the language acquisition and make learning easy for them.

In fact, any teacher who wants to give the best to his/her learners should keep on learning. This is why professional development is extremely important to become effective teachers. Professional development is the systematic practice of improving one's skill and knowledge within a professional domain. Teachers' professional development can be structured as an individual effort and a learning process undertaken by a teacher to improve his/her teaching and other professional skills. This has become compulsory for teachers nowadays because students have more opportunities to get information and teachers need to be more informed so as to play successfully their role as guide, facilitator and resource person in each learning process. It is obvious that in groups, the degree

of motivation and achievement of learners is higher than learning individually. To make their professional growth a reality, teachers have to work in groups; therefore, the necessity of teacher training sessions.

It is really essential that teachers use one another for professional development. Teachers' development workshops are a great opportunity for them to share their experiences and exchange over their teaching practices to have new tools for the evolution of their profession.

In Benin secondary school system, two hour session per week is allocated to hold teachers' meeting. And yet, the essential questions are:

Do all secondary school teachers actually cater for those meetings? Do they actively participate in the activities during the meetings? Considering the activities and the attendance of these weekly sessions, can they be seen as an opportunity for EFL teachers' professional development?

In the course of this dissertation, the data gathered through investigation on the field will help to give answers to these questions.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

Professional development is key to students learning. By focusing on teachers' development workshop in secondary schools, the aim of this research work is:

- Firstly, investigate the field in so far as pedagogical in-service sessions are concerned.
- Secondly, to find out how the weekly in- service sessions of EFL teachers enable them to gain in professional development.
- Finally, to shed light on the difficulties undermining the effectiveness of the weekly sessions.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to show the necessity for EFL teachers to update their knowledge and skills and suggest their way of how to make the “sessions” an opportunity for a successful teaching career. More importantly, it intends to provide teachers with the necessary tools that they need to change and improve their teaching approaches, strategies and techniques; and how they can learn from their colleagues through peer-observation.

1.4. Limitation of the Study

In the course of this research work, what can be considered as restriction or disadvantage is first of all the time period which did not allow to fully taking advantage of the research population, teachers involved in the weekly pedagogical sessions. Availability of these EFL teachers would be an opportunity to have more profound and diverse opinions and viewpoints on the issue. Even so, it has been possible to collect the reports of the pedagogical meetings in three secondary schools taken as research site for this study, and have interviews from a few school leaders and head teachers who chair the weekly sessions.

1.5. Clarification of Concepts

- **Profession:**

Profession is a type of job that needs special training or skill, especially one that needs a high level of education. Oxford (2012). From this it can be considered as a vocation (a type of work, a way of life that you believe, is especially suitable for you) requiring knowledge of some field of learning or science.

- **Professional development:**

A development is a gradual growth of something or somebody so that it becomes more advanced, stronger. Concerning professional development, it is referred to any measure, initiative or attitude that favours the novice worker in integrating changes that help acquire new skills and therefore improve their efficiency in the field.

From OECD (2009), professional development is defined as: activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher.”

This development is then made available through external expertise in the form of courses, interactive and experimental workshops or formal qualification programmes, through collaboration between schools or teachers: observational visits to other schools or teacher networks or within the school in which teachers work. All this aims at helping teachers engage in continual learning process which would be meaningful and rewarding for them and their learners.

- **In-service pedagogical sessions:**

The expression in-service pedagogical session as mentioned in the title of this study refers to the periodical meetings among teachers in Benin secondary schools, along with their subjects. These meetings consist of workshops held in schools on a specific day. During these weekly sessions teachers are supposed to discuss and carry out activities in order to bring about solutions to their everyday problems for better performance and for better results in the learning process with students.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Professional development of a teacher in any educational system constitutes a learning process undertaken by the teacher to improve his/her teaching skills in order to motivate their learners. It is also a process whereby teachers seek the necessary tools which encourage the adoption of exciting new ways of teaching. For Glattenhorn (1987) professional development is: “A growth that occurs through the professional cycle of a teacher. Much importantly another appropriate definition gives a clear meaning of professional development.”

Brookfield (2005) states:

“Professional development consists of in-service training, workshop or short term courses that offered teacher new information on specific aspect of their work.”

2.1. Importance of teacher professional development

The issue of teacher professional development has been a considerable matter for many researchers. This determines how much teachers have to seek out their professional development as they have the key to student success. Each time there are many researchers who discover new teaching techniques and a teacher who does not seek development will be boring in front of his or her learners. To vary their strategies and techniques teachers should keep on learning. Likewise Crandall, J. (2001) acknowledges the importance of professional development when he states: “learning is the best part of teaching because it is the really only beginning of

lifelong quest of teachers to better understand their students, themselves, their subject and the approaches and techniques they can use to help student become competent users of English.”

Similarly, Boyle, B. (2000) states that teachers’ professional development does not only have positive impact on teaching practices but also on students’ learning.

Dealing with teachers’ professional development, Amour and Makopoulou (2012) states:

“Without teachers' continuing professional development, it may be difficult for teacher to improve the quality of their teaching, which may eventually affect the whole-school improvement.”

OECD (1998) finds out the following objectives to the professional development of teacher:

- update individuals’ knowledge of a subject in light of recent advances in the area;
- update individuals’ skills, attitudes and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances and new educational research;
- enable individuals to apply changes made to curricula or other aspects of teaching practice;
- enable schools to develop and apply new strategies concerning the curriculum and other aspects of teaching practice;
- exchange information and expertise among teachers and others.
- help weaker teachers become more effective.

2.2. Types of Teacher Development

As it is proved that teachers should keep learning for their development, there are a variety of types of teacher development. Teachers can develop through their own efforts, meaning individual effort or in group. Reflective teaching is an individual process that is known as a tool that can help teachers develop professionally. Reflective teaching means looking at what happened in the classroom, thinking about why it happened. It is a process of self-observation and self-evaluation. By collecting information about what goes on in classrooms, and by analysing and evaluating information, teachers identify and explore their own practices. This may then lead to changes and improvements in their teaching. Reflective teachings are therefore a means of professional development which starts with teachers. In the same perspective, according to Leslie and Beckman (2006) "Reflective teaching" is:

“ Systematically and actively think about what happens in the classroom, both in terms of teaching itself and in terms of the learner response, and to try to improve it.”(p.143)

This technique requires teachers to have their teaching diary. At the end of a class, they make note of what happened in that class. Teachers may also describe their own reactions and their feelings as well as those that they observed on the part of students. Teacher professional development is studied and presented in many different ways by many researchers.

Boyle, (2004) identify four key issues that make professional development effective:

- Models of professional
- Sustaining professional development for a long-term
- The relationship between the professional processes and changes in teaching.
- The relationship between professional development and student learning.

As an EFL teacher, it is a great benefit to be a member of a professional teacher association to succeed in improving one's profession. In addition participate actively as the more you participate the more this professional association will provide you with strategies to offer a successful environment for yourself and your students.

Crandall, (2001) focuses on a number of strategic resources such as professional association and organisation, professional journals and websites and online resources to help teachers for their professionalization.

According to him:

“Naturally, one of the best ways of keeping up to date is to participate in local, state, national or international in-service workshops.”(p536).

Nevertheless, teacher may use classroom activities to facilitate their growth. Even so Borg, (1998)observes that:

“Classroom activities data from EFL can be used as tool to facilitate teacher's growth as reflective teachers.”

On the other hand, two teachers may decide together to improve their skills and knowledge by helping each other. That is what Farell, (2001) calls critical friendship. He states that:

“Critical friendship between two colleagues led to the professional development of both of them.” (p368).

The technical term referring to this professional development activity between teachers is peer-coaching.

Furthermore, Burkan, and Kauchak, (2003) claim:

“Collaborative work is a tool for teacher professional development. It offers ideas for improving classroom English teaching, promote sharing of teaching experience, and stimulate positive dispositions to learning. Study group also enhance general pedagogic knowledge and foster lifelong learning.

It should be noticed that whether a teacher takes part in an in-service workshop he or she may still be having problems. Receiving training, having a lot about theories of teaching and learning language acquisition is one thing; having aptitudes to really practice is another one. That is the reason why it is necessary to use the power of technology to allow teachers to connect with experts, teacher mentors and coaches and colleagues to integrate professional development into teachers' day to day experiences.

2.3. Ways of Professional Development

Crandall (2001) finds out strategies for teacher to continue growing and becoming better-informed EFL professionals. Here are some of them.

- Participating in professional association concerned with the teaching of English;
- Subscribing to journals and regularly reading periodicals about language teaching and learning and related fields;
- Placing your name on mailing lists of major EFL book publishers and information clearinghouses or resource centres;

- Participating in electronic (e-mail) discussion group and using the internet to access language teaching and learning websites and electronic journals;
- Being mentored by experienced colleagues and then becoming a mentor to novice teachers;
- Attending or giving in-service workshops and seminars for teachers.(p536)

Peer coaching is therefore a staff development model that can be used to help oneself and one's partners develop and try new strategies and determine what does and does not work by critically evaluating one's own beliefs about teaching and learning. Peer coaching is built upon trusting relationships that develop between teachers. It is based on mutually working together to improve teaching skills in order to improve student learning. It is a process whereby teachers observe each other in order to improve their teaching abilities and get new ideas about teaching.

As regard to the teaching profession, teachers should always learn, learn throughout their career, from their colleagues, and learn from mentors and supervisors. In view with the significance of teacher professional development, it is legitimate to wonder whether Benin EFL teachers take any advantage of these weekly pedagogical meeting. Teachers' professional development is only limited on the weekly pedagogical session.

Graduate teacher have researched the weekly sessions. Three of these papers s have attracted real attention. Souleymane Abdoulaye (2008), explains that a majority of teachers do not know about the formal notice that asks to hold the weekly pedagogical sessions in Benin secondary schools and this constitutes a lack of interest for these meeting. He also studied the way AP sessions are managed, their regularity, their activities and participant's behaviour.

In the same way, Azantchessou(2011) researched the weekly sessions. He explains that without knowing the rule that regulates these pedagogical sessions, teachers, tutors and administrative boards cannot get committed to it.

The third research work, by Michel Avocefohoun(2007) focuses on the importance of in-service training and the different types of teachers' professional workshop in Benin secondary schools.

In the light of these works, it is obvious that more remain to do on the issue of the weekly pedagogical workshops in secondary schools, in so far as many difficulties have been pointed out in the organisation, the role and the importance that it presents for teachers' professional growth.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter covers the description of the methods and techniques used to gather the necessary information about the research topic. As a matter of fact, these research methods also involve instruments for collecting relevant data on the field in order to shed light on what is really going on in secondary school as far as the professional development of EFL teachers are concerned.

To succeed in the research work, two steps have been considered

The first step involves the documentary and internet research used. This helps to explore previous research on the topic, theories developed through articles and related books.

The second step focuses on data collection and analysis procedure. At this stage, the main parts developed refer to the research setting, the research population and the research instruments where the three modes of investigation are described.

Each of these stages is designed to collect specific data which allows a deeper insight into the different aspects of teachers' professional development in Benin secondary schools.

3.1. Documentary and Internet Research

Data collection and other research work related to this study is an important procedure. For this purpose, it has been necessary to visit some libraries such as '*INFRE*', '*Ecole Normale Supérieure*', '*Bibliothèque Nationale* of Porto-Novo', 'American Corner'; to look for some documents related to this topic.

As far as internet research is concerned helpful information has been available on many websites. Processing these data offers the chance to be more aware of the importance of teacher professional development especially at the international level and how to appraise the development of the information and technologies affects ideas and knowledge in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

3.2. Data collection procedures

3.2.1. The choice of research methods

It is necessary to mention that this is a qualitative research design ; the type of research allowing the collection, analysis and interpretation of data by observing what people do and say. Qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions and characteristics, on the one hand, discovery, description, understanding, and shared interpretation on the other hand of information.

The nature of this research is exploratory. Participants are asked to respond to general questions in order to identify and define their perceptions, opinions and feelings about the topic under consideration and to examine their convergent and divergent views.

3.2.2. Research Setting

This research is carried out in the department of Mono, especially in Agatogbo, Oumako and Drè secondary schools.

“

3.2.3. Research Population

The population in focus for this study mainly consists of teachers and school authorities in the above mentioned secondary schools. Research participants are teachers who take part in the weekly pedagogical sessions. Some have been

interviewed along with school authorities. Their answers are presented in the next chapter.

3.2.4. Research Instruments

The instruments used to collect data in this research work are twofold.

First the interview concern the school authorities and session coordinators who are directly involved in the pedagogical sessions that are supposed to help develop teachers' professional level.

Secondly, the collection of the weekly sessions reports which present the detailed activities and discussions during each of these meetings. This second aspect of the investigation is with the prospect of showing what is already done on the field through the organization the sessions to foster EFL Teachers' professional growth and the problems that often undermine the effectiveness of this important pedagogical meeting.

3.2.4.1. Interview

Interview has proved instrumental in data collection, especial from the authorities and group leaders in the three secondary schools. Thanks to this mode of investigation it has been possible to gather views, perceptions and perspectives of these important educators in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The interviews in this study are composed of five open-ended questions. The answers to these different questions will be presented in the following chapter just as they are provided by the different school authorities. These data are the major from which the analysis derives answers to the research questions.

3.2.4.2. Collection of Pedagogical Sessions Report Books

With the purpose of getting reliable data that helps a deep look into the activities undertaken at each session, the effectiveness of these pedagogical meetings for professional development and obstacles which hinder their full success; it has been necessary to go through three schools in Mono region. Those schools are: CEG1 Agatogbo, CEG Oumako and CEG Drè. In CEG Oumako, the headmaster after having offered an interview on EFL teachers' performance in the school and their motivation attending these sessions, allowed the researcher to make a copy of the report book of EFL teacher pedagogical meetings as did the principals of the two other schools (CEG Agatogbo and CEG Drè).

3.3. Data Analysis Procedure

On one hand this is the last step of the methodology study. The analysis of the data from the interview is evidence of the opinions and perceptions of the school leaders as they consider the importance of the pedagogical sessions. On the other hand, a focus on the reports as factual evidence is confronted with the information collected from the interviews in order to show similarities and contrast of information. This will surely be helpful in endeavouring to find ways and means of improvement for the quality of the weekly pedagogical sessions in assuring a real professional advancement of English teachers in BENIN secondary schools.

Through the use of the instruments and data collected procedure, the presentation of the findings discovered in this study are provided in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.

This part of the study involves particularly the presentation of the data collected through the different modes of investigation. In this sense, the interviews are to be dealt with at first step, then comes the findings of the weekly pedagogical workshop books.

4.1. The Interviews

Interviews have been conducted with EFL teachers as participants of the weekly workshop as well as school leaders. First, the findings discovered from the interviews conducted with teachers are presented. The main purpose of these interviews is to inquire about the teachers' perceptions concerning teachers' professional development, the importance of the weekly workshops for their professional development, and the opportunity they offer them to improve the quality of their teaching. The answers that follow the questions inclusive in so far as cover the general opinions and analyses produced by the interviewees.

4.1.2. The data collected from interviews.

- 1. Question:** As EFL teacher, how do you appraise the importance of the AP sessions as a professional development opportunity?

Answers: Teaching English as a foreign Language is in perpetual evolution all around the world because this language is the most important tool of communication nowadays. Furthermore, the development of the Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) has rendered the acquisition of the language so accessible for learners who can create quick contact with others

who speak the language. The teacher in this context could be at some point surprised by the level of certain students. Therefore, he or she needs to be in continual quest of self-betterment. Teaching as general is a lifelong learning, any good teacher must realise this. In this special field of TEFL, the situation is much more demanding. This is why teachers' professional development is such an important issue for a real evolution in our educational system. It is evidently one of the most effective ways to increase the level of proficiency for teachers and subsequently for students. On the other hand, it is necessary to point out that the system does not put much stress on this aspect of EFL teachers' professional life through the AP sessions.

2. Question: How well are these sessions conducted in our secondary schools as contribution to teachers' professional development?

Answers: First, for some interviewees, these pedagogical workshops are, at first sight, a good way to keep teachers up to date with their teaching strategies and techniques and help them face many other difficulties in the field. They constitute a means to give a continual in-service training for teachers. But on the other hand, most of these teachers think that these workshops are not really serving the presumed purposes and there remain a lot to do for teachers to actually profit from these meetings and effectively foster the improvement of teaching skills and strategies. Other teachers and school authorities assert that, in fact, most of their colleagues do not have the professional consciousness that demands a real commitment to focus themselves on the problems they face and do research in order to find solutions for these problems. The weekly workshops are in fact instituted for this purpose.

3. Question: In your opinion, what constitutes the real difficulties observed concerning the pedagogical workshops of EFL teachers?

Answers: As mentioned earlier, it has been noticed that teachers stand as the major actors in the educational system of any nation. If they actually decide to change things for good, it can really work. That's why teachers' lack of professional consciousness comes as a real cause for their own development. It is a well-known fact that some teachers come to these sessions without any perspectives of improving their level in teaching. For them, this is just a formality and it is the reason why they come for example with students' exam papers to mark during the hours of the sessions. Even when the animators try to play their role and ask them to really focus on effective agendas; this does not often change much the situation, since many teachers do not care what their senior colleagues such as the coordinator think. They know that there is no sanction for their bad attitudes in these contexts. As a matter of fact, the atmosphere during such sessions could often become unpleasant. Many would be reluctant to cooperate freely with their colleagues in sharing their ideas, experiences and difficulties in classroom; to exchange their solutions and practices, which would certainly contribute to the evolution of all. Some teachers don't even come to those workshops regularly; they always have excuses to be absent; leaving the work to just few colleagues.

4. Question: Who could be blamed for such inadequacies in pedagogical workshops in our secondary schools?

Answers: Considering this question, almost all the interviewees agree that responsibilities are shared. Whether it is the members of the government in charge of educational issues, the teaching counsellors, the schools administrators as well as the teachers; everyone is concerned with this issue of teachers' professional development in our secondary schools. They must all be involved with real measures and decisions that foster better ways to improve each aspect of TEFL.

5. Question: What would you suggest for the improvement of the weekly workshops?

Answers: Many interesting ideas have flowed through this question. These are that:

Educational authorities should stimulate positive disposition in teachers by providing them with some reliable materials they need to much more and easily involved in research that leads to the increase of the teaching proficiency.

Tutoring teachers and helping them overcome their difficulties in the field by making more teaching counsellors available and at the disposal of the teachers. This would also mean training school and weekly workshop leaders so that they could be professionally qualified to help many of their colleagues.

Workshop leaders and experienced teachers as coordinators should initiate regular classroom visits. This would allow a clear understanding of the difficulties on the field and contribute to a successful teacher career.

Everyone and particularly senior teacher should help create a very pleasant and productive atmosphere among their colleagues since no good work can be done in a distrustful or defiant environment even more so if it is a place such as school.

Teachers must keep in mind that their professional growth is what will ever make them great teachers. A professional consciousness is therefore necessary for a real change in our teaching system.

4.2. The data from the reports of the weekly pedagogical sessions.

At this level of the research work, the research instruments have allowed to gather information concerning many aspects of these meetings. With the help of the authorities in the secondary schools concerned with this study, it has been possible to make a copy of some report books.

As mentioned earlier, three secondary are investigated. At CEG1 Agatogbo, EFL teachers have held 21 different sessions in the course of academic year 2014-2015, starting on October 29th, 2014. The data gathered through the reports are presented in the following tables.

Table 1The first session at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activity |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October 29 th , 2014 | Four (4) teachers out of 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EFL classes without teachers. - Planning of the yearly lessons |

The first session has focused on the classes which did not have an English teacher till that time; these classes where the beginners classes at junior level and senior level (6^{ème}, 5^{ème}, 2^{nde})

Secondly, they spent a little time on the yearly planning of the lessons to be dealt with. And finally, the miscellaneous were concerned with the revision to do at the different grade level. Four EFL teachers took part in this session including the session coordinator.

Table 2: The second session at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activity |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| November 12 th , 2014 | Five (5) teachers out of 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of teaching objectives - Lesson plan elaboration |

The second meeting dealt with the definition of teaching objectives and how to elaborate lesson plan. At this level, only the first point has been discussed, as they focused on the teaching of the beginners' class. The report mentions that as they were short of time, they decided to postpone this issue of lesson planning the following session. Only five (5) teachers out of six (6) were present at this session which has been held on the 12th of November, 2014

Table 3. The third session at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activity |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| November 19 th , 20 14 | Five teachers out of six | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluating the progress in the curriculum. - Assigning the writing of exam tests. |

With the third meeting on the 19th of November 2014, it was question of evaluating the progress made in the teaching curriculum; secondly, some teachers have been assigned the writing of the exam tests for the first series of evaluation of the year. Obviously, some teachers have not reached the required level for the coming tests.

Table 4 The fourth session at CEG1 Agatogbo;

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| November 26 th , 2014 | Seven teachers | -Aspects of good teaching |

On the 26th of November 2014, the session welcomed a pedagogical counsellor who coordinated the activities of the session. The agenda was about three activities around the topic: Aspects of good teaching. As conclusion, it has been noted that good teaching should have the following aspects:

- A good lesson plan.
- A learner-centre process of teaching.
- Creative, enriching, and motivating activities and strategies.
- Good teaching environment.
- Availability of teaching materials.
- Don't tell but show.
- Make your classes safe.
- Conducive atmosphere
- Break things into pieces.
- Bring unfamiliar things to familiar.
- Less is more (talk less and then teach more).
-

Table 5 The fifth session at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| December 3th, 2014 | Five teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The two productive skills: speaking and writing |

The fifth session of the 03rd of December 2014, involved only one point: the two productive skills: speaking and writing. On the issue, it has been discussed that the speaking skill concerns activities such as: picture description

or picture interpretation, pair work, dialogue or group work, case of speech. With the writing skill, the activities were gap filling; guided writing; jumbled letters, words and sentences. It has been mentioned the teaching of these skills create difficulties such as mispronunciation, “mixture of English and French”, “copying the text”.

Table 6: The sixth session at CEG1 Agatogbo

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| December 17 th , 2014 | Six teachers | -Starting a learning situation |

On the December 17, 2014; the session has focused on “how to start a learning situation” including warming up, brainstorming.

Table 7: The seventh session at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|-------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| January 1 st ,2015 | Six teachers | -Level to reach for the exam -Preparation of the exam |

Considering the 7th, it can be said that the points included in the agenda rejoined the one of the 19th of November 2014 concerning the level that should be reached before the exam; and other things concerning the preparation of the exam.

Table 8:The eight session at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| January14 th , 2015 | Four teachers | -teaching ‘If clause’ |

Dealing with the 8th session, they have worked on the teaching of “If clauses” as students have some difficulties to understand this structure.

Table:9 The ninth meeting at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 21 th , 2015 | Six teachers | -Helping student of 2 nd understand texts in learning situation 1 |

The 9th meeting involved the difficulties that students of 2nd face in the study of learning n°1. During this session it is understood by teachers that student did understand texts, and claim that this is due to the lack of motivation of students. To deal with this problem, they have decided to give students some vocabulary exercises. For example, exercises based on translation.

Table: 10 The tenth meeting at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 28 th , 2015 | Six teachers | -preparation for the summative exam -discussion about BESA |

Concerning the 10th, teachers were asked to prepare students for the summative exam. They have also discussed about BESA (Best English Students' Awards).

Table 11 The eleventh meeting at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| February 11 th ,2015 | Six teachers | -writing the correct versions of the exam papers -assisting learners in BESA competition |

During the 11th teacher have talk about the correct version of the exam at each level. On the one hand, they decide to help students succeed in BESA competition. On the second hand, how they will deal with their English club.

Table 12 The twelfth meeting at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| February 18 th ,2015 | Six teachers | -assessing learners' performance during the last test |

The 12th meeting Of February 18th took into account the assessment of students result at the end of the first semester. Generally, students did not reach the average. For some teachers, this is due to the laziness of students. Others

state that many students were sent home during the exam because they did not pay their school fees.

Table 13:The thirteenth meeting at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 04th, 2015 | Six teachers | -the level to reach for the coming tests -assigning the writing of the tests |

The session held on Wednesday, 04th Mars 2015, focused on the level to reach before the first exam of the second semester. They have shared the exam task.

Table 14:The fourteenth meeting at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| March 11 th , 2015 | Six teachers | -correcting the test papers -BESA competition |

Taking into account the 14th session, after the final touch of the exam paper which were handed to the coordinator, the second concerns the competition of BESA and the club of English have been the matter. During this meeting, it was suggested to discuss on the activities to be hold through the English club on Fridays.

Table 15: The fifteenth session at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| March 18 th , 2015 | Six teachers | -strategies for a good revision |

At the 15th meeting of the 18th of March 2015, the point was about the strategies for doing a good revision with the students who are to sit for their next summative evaluation.

Table 16: The sixteenth meeting at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 1 st , 2015 | Six teachers | -designing the correct versions -organising 'English club' |

On the 1st of April 2015, the meeting focused on how to design the exam papers' correct version and the organization of the "English Club".

Table 17:The seventeenth session at CEG1 Agatogbo.

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 1 st , 2015 | Six teachers | -level in the curriculum required for the test. -preparing the test |

The 17th session of the April the 15th concerned the level attained by each teacher and the designation of those who are to prepare the exam papers for the next test.

Table 18:

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| April 22 th , 2015 | Six teachers | -teaching writing |

On the 22nd of the same, the 18th EFL teachers' workshop was only on how to teach writing: writing an article. Actually, on this only point, it was written in the report book that they have caught up by the time and could not finish the point. And it was mentioned that they would come back on the point.

Table 19:

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 29 th , 2015 | Six teachers | -the role of language skills, functions and structures. -preparing the last test of the year |

The agenda of the 19th workshop (April 29th) is based on preparing the papers of the last test of the year, building up competencies: the role of language skills, functions and structures. As reported, it has been noticed that the focus was put on the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) to bring out the "strict link between competences and techniques".

Table 20:

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 13 th , 2015 | Six teachers | -correcting exam papers -assessing the level of progress in the year |

The last two sessions of the 13th and 27th Mai have been dedicated to making correct versions of exam papers and a broad assessment of the level of progression as far the yearly syllabus is concerned. On this point, it was reported that the teachers in charge of those classes have made great effort to finish the last learning situations in form 4 and form 7.

Table 21:

| Date | Attendance | Activities |
|-----------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------|
| May 27 th , 2015 | Six teachers | -discussing the candidates' performance. |

During the 21st session, a discussion was about the performance of the students during exams of “BEPC” and “BAC”; a note was made of the cultural and English speakers' day.

The second school taken into account in this research work is CEG Drè. During the academic year 2014-2015, they have met 26 times. The first meeting has focused on the presentation of each teacher, students' book. Only three teachers have attended the session. The first meeting is held the 05th November 2014 from 8am to 10am.

Dealing with the second session, five teachers were present. Items such as classroom management and how to put students in group after the first quiz have been discussed.

Table 22: Summary of the yearly sessions at CEG Drè.

| Number of sessions | Attendance | Activities |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 26 sessions | 3 to 6 teachers per session | -presenting the curriculums |

| | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | -classroom management -lesson plan on reading -writing a summative test -skimming and scanning strategies -assessing the yearly activities |
|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Considering each activity, there is similarities between activities carried out in CEG1 Agatogbo and CEG Drè. Instead some activities which have particularly attracted our attention are mentioned.

The fourth meeting has constituted an occasion to learn a song.

The 9th session of this secondary school mentions the lesson plan. However no development was made about this interesting point.

The 14th meeting involves the designing of a lesson plan on reading. The following session was to design a lesson plan on grammatical structure. Some teachers were asked to do quiz in order to keep themselves update concerning the minimum of tests required in the year.

The 15th session mentions some comebacks on how to design good exam paper in English with the Competency Based Approach, taking into account the different parts.

On the 16th session, the report has been about some difficulties in the execution of the yearly syllabus. No further development.

For the rest of the pedagogical meetings, the contents not have enough different from the previous sessions or the one in Agatogbo secondary school.

In the third secondary school that is in the area of Oumako, the number of the whole year sessions is 22. The contents have much to do with the above-mentioned sessions.

Table 23: Summary of the yearly sessions at CEG Oumako.

| Number of sessions | Attendance | Activities |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 23 sessions | 2 to 4 teachers | -motivating beginner learners -yearly planning of the syllabus -lesson planning -teaching speaking -importance of brainstorming. -teaching writing |

4.3. Data Analysis

It would be quite adequate to focus on the answers from the interviewees concerning their views and perceptions about the weekly workshops as opportunity for English teachers’ professional growth. From the first answer, it is obvious that the importance of EFL teachers’ professional growth is no more to be denied. As in any profession nowadays, improvement of skills is required at any stage and the English teacher is the one to realise this necessity more than anyone. Unfortunately, it has been pointed out that the system did not do enough to enhance teaching skills in teachers. Though this may be true, it is also essential to say that a professional such as a qualified teacher who is committed to his work cannot wait for the system to always set plan for his/her individual

professional evolution. It is the responsibility of any teacher to really think about the adequate means that can allow him/her to develop his/her own and personal skills.

On the other hand, educational authorities at the different level can be held as the more responsible for the inadequacies in the whole system. They are the ones supposed to inspire good attitudes in the field of education through concrete initiatives, effective reforms and regulations that can keep everyone on the right path and ensure real and harmonious evolution of the system. That is probably the case with the weekly teachers' workshops, but evidently enough this is not sufficient to meet up the high skills demand and the quick evolution in TEFL. It is obvious that the regulations concerning effective 'AP' sessions as key to professional development of teachers are not really enforced and no check and control is actually put in place for a real success of these sessions. It is fundamental that solid check and control as well as subsequent sanctions in the field are necessary to impact such a professional consciousness on teachers in order to assure that they are not let behind by the current and constant evolution in their domain.

Truly enough these problems are not only due to teachers, but also the way the system is managed.

The lack of adequate materials is also another serious cause of the inadequacies in the sessions for teachers' professional evolution. Not only teachers lack real documentation with effective teaching books that can allow them to do quite well in their teaching/learning process with students. They barely have access and abilities to use the ICTs such as computers and internet connexion for further research and enhance their knowledge and experience in any aspects of the teaching. It goes without saying that these materials are more than necessary for teachers nowadays.

Another reason for such failure during pedagogical workshops is the fact that there is no supervision and regulations which can force teachers to be fully committed to their profession. They are not really held responsible for their bad work while at the same time accusing students of not learning their lessons. Teachers must also fear sanctions when they do bad as students fear to fail and resume classes when they don't perform well in class. The responsibility must be shared.

The data from the reports show some positive points as well as negative aspects. The positive points concern firstly the planning of the syllabus for the whole year. This gives the opportunity to everyone to know how to conduct the lesson during the whole year so as to keep up with the others. The lesson planning during one workshop for example is a good way to allow some teachers discover new strategies for more effective teaching/learning process, as a lesson plan is closely related to the degree of success or failure of a particular class. It provides teachers with opportunities to integrate changes in their preparation of good teaching events.

The visit of the pedagogical counsellor constitutes another beneficial event during the workshop. The presence of such a resource person among the EFL teachers is a chance for them to discuss more intensely about problems that hardly found solutions among themselves. As a matter of fact, the contribution of the counsellor is definitely full with precious strategies, techniques and attitudes to make their teaching a success. This would certainly create confidence and envy to give better to learning during the whole year.

The motivation in the learning of the English can certainly be a reality with the creation of the English Club. This quite definitely makes learners enjoy more the language not just as an academic subject but as a tool for entertainment. They will surely gain a lot with less effort: learning while playing.

Some other good aspects can confirm that the pedagogical workshops remain to some extent an opportunity for teachers' professional development. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that problems are still obvious and need to be addressed.

First, it will be naive to take for granted all the content of these reports. There could be a great difference between what is written in those books and the reality on the ground. As we all know, these are theories on books first and what would be really beneficial is that the teachers effectively put all this into practice.

Secondly, it is noticeable through these reports that most of the time it is put that the items of the agenda cannot be totally developed since the time does not permit them to go through it till the end. Even when they plan to come back to it, this is not the case for the next session. Moreover, many of the points in the agendas of several workshops are left undeveloped. This somewhat shows the recurrent of lack of time during these sessions.

As mentioned in one report, while discussing about the poor performance of the students during the tests, the only reasons that were forwarded are the students' laziness and the fact that many were sent home while sitting for the tests. Another one is that parents are not playing the role in assuring good education for their children. But nowhere was it mentioned that teachers too have their part of responsibility in such poor performance. This surprising in so far as if the students did have a brilliant performance, everyone would acclaim that teachers did quite a good job. They would surely be congratulated.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Discussion

The knowledge of English is vital in today's fast moving world. Not only has the English language become an essential tool of communication in the world and in so many fields of life but also at the same time it teaching as a second language has also constitute a constant evolution. It has become possible for people everywhere around the world to acquire and communicate with the English language more easily, quickly and efficiently. Teaching English as a Foreign Language nowadays does not only involve the academic knowledge acquired from books, but it also asks teachers to support one another and to work for the same purpose. The world is changing at a rapid pace. How we learn is changing. How we teach and assess learning is also changing. Old, authoritarian models are giving way to gentler, more collaborative. It involves, to a great extent, to create great opportunities to teacher in use of the huge opportunities created school authorities in order to boost the efficient learning of learners by exposing them to the language inputs as authentic as it is spoken in a real life situation.

It is a well-known fact that any process of progress and development demands not only certain individual and/or group concrete disposition but also a constant effort whether physical, moral and spiritual. When there are conditions such as professional commitment that urges any professional to do his job very well, we cannot expect any real progress if the situation on the ground is not favourable. When decision makers do not think of how to facilitate working and living conditions of any worker whether they are teachers, traders, farmers etc. nothing is going to change for better. Educational, political and economic leaders have to continually call on schools to help students develop new skills and competencies for the modern world. We always want students to be prepared for their future; we want them to become good and competent citizens.

And yet the real question would be if the adults as elders are doing what is required of them to make this possible? Are we actually the model in hard work, honesty and good will that we fiercely demand from our young brothers and sisters? As a matter of fact, this demand is more imposing on teacher than any other. They are obliged to be the model in classrooms, in the streets and in at home. All that is linked to a constant search of betterment everywhere; professionally, spiritual and morally. Only through a real self-organization and state of consciousness can this be possible. Teachers must always keep in mind the level of importance and esteem they must inspire to their students and people in general. And they cannot fulfil this mission successfully unless they are resolved to make a change in their profession.

While the focus is on meeting the high needs of students for a 21st Century education is more serious than ever, we must not overlook the needs of teachers. Good teachers are those who see themselves as ‘life-long learners’ who constantly reflect on their teaching and reinvent teaching methods as educational trends and the needs of students change. So, if we want Benin educators to have the skills to teach 21st Century learning ‘skills’, we need to offer them effective professional learning.

5.2. Suggestions

5.2.1. Suggestions to educational authorities

The findings from the research work reveal that special measures should be taken to provide teachers with effective ideas and pedagogical suggestions on how to plan and conduct those pedagogical workshops. Nevertheless, teachers need consistent help to carry out all that they have learnt from these sessions. Some of these are firstly addressed to the educational leaders in terms of organisation. They are inspired from articles of the British Council “teaching English”:

- **Collaborative planning** and implementation with state educational agencies and/or core teams of educational representatives from government, based on a comprehensive needs analysis on the teaching fields.
- **Selection** of master trainers/teacher educators conducted by the language teaching experts to help integrate better teaching of language ability, motivation, skills and knowledge.
- **Core training for trainers** and teachers using course materials linked to national and state curricula and textbooks, and using films of local teachers in typical classrooms, usually conducted in a split training model (phases of face-to-face training conducted in blocks over an extended period of time).
- **Teacher training** assured through peer coaching trainers/teacher educators evaluating for progress and impact of performance indicators (separate indicators for trainers and teachers) as well as learning assessments and, where appropriate, language assessments.
- **Orientation sessions** and access to professional development opportunities, such as workshops in managing change in ELT, for principals and education officers.
- **Follow-up activities** (between phases of face-to-face training).

These include, for example:

- learning assignments.
- providing teachers with the Information and Communications technologies for developing self-empowerment
- Creation of teacher support networks (facebook, call centre, email groups, teacher association branches)
- professional development competitions
- regular use of journals and portfolios to develop a team of curriculum designers

- to develop assessment profiles and assessment specifications for each course as well as exit tests of language proficiency
- to develop sample teaching materials to deliver the new courses
- to provide systematic and timely support for teachers on implementing the new curriculum

Teachers' education can make a difference to student achievement, but it depends on the type of education program and support that is put in place. Specific factors such as the years of teacher education (general, initial, and in-service), the teachers' verbal fluency, subject matter knowledge, having books and materials and knowing how to use them, expectations of pupil performance, time spent on classroom preparation, and frequent monitoring and feedback of student progress are some of the key factors identified in the research that have a positive bearing on the quality of teachers' performance and consequently student achievement. Many of these factors were confirmed in the case studies undertaken during the course of this study.

When teachers are actively involved and empowered in the reform of their own classrooms and schools, even those teachers with minimal levels of education and training are capable of changing the classroom environment and improving the achievement of their students. Conversely, when teachers are ignored, and when reforms come from above or are not connected to the daily realities of the classroom and local environment, even the most expensive and well designed interventions are almost sure to fail. Poorly educated, underpaid, overworked teachers can become reflective, empowered professionals.

5.2.2. Suggestions to school leaders

Fundamental changes in the following areas are required if the quality of teaching is to be significantly improved. Some key recommendations identified from studies of British Council "teaching English" are the following:

- Establish commitment in the form of vision, policies, plans, and actions for long-term professional development of teachers even though some crisis management may be required in some communities in the short term.
- Delegate to the school the authority, flexibility, and responsibility to develop relevant programs and school schedules to establish this long-term professional development commitment and plan through enriched programs of workshops.
- Define the rights and responsibilities of the various administrative groups within the education system to clarify issues of needed legislation, infrastructure, functions, and communication.
- Allow freedom of professional associations and some form of collective human resource development strategies that depend heavily on school-based programs, and link training and upgrading to a career-path structure.
- Hire committed teachers and provide adequate training and support to enable them to do their jobs. While it is preferable to hire teachers with at least nine years of general education (the number is not key, just the need for more general education) and with some teaching training, conditions in many countries prevent this. High expectations should still be held for long-term reform, and human capacity building.
- Consider a range of incentives for different stages of teachers' careers to attract suitable candidates, establish job satisfaction, and improve instructional practice. Incentives can be direct monetary benefits (e.g., teacher salary, allowance and fringe benefits), and indirect monetary benefits (e.g., professional training, teacher guides, textbooks, instructional supervision, subsidized housing, food, or transportation), or nonmonetary benefits (e.g., professional status in the community,

location of teaching position, recognition of performance). They must match the needs of teachers if they are to be true incentives.

- Require school supervisors to inform teachers and head teachers of promising teaching practices and assist staff in trying these out.
- Assist schools to provide necessary teaching resources to achieve instructional goals.
- Reform initial teacher education programs to attract and retain suitable candidates, and then provide the necessary general knowledge foundation, and initial pedagogical and classroom management skills to achieve instructional goals.
- Provide focused instruction for new teachers. Beginning teachers need initial preparation in their subject matter, fluency in the language of instruction, knowledge of how to use instructional materials, and some basic classroom management and reflection skills.

Most of these skills are best learned through on-the-job practice with coaching, which can either be done through a traditional pre-service program with substantial supervised practice teaching, or with close supervision and ongoing in-service while on the job.

- Consider a range of alternative teacher preparation programs that might be used depending on the local needs and constraints.
- Programs such as shorter school-based initiatives with ongoing mentoring and support should be considered, particularly in education systems where there is a great shortage of trained teachers.
- Establish an appropriate system of standards accreditation to match the preparation program so that all teachers can work towards both high standards and professional status.
- Require teacher education faculty to be active in classroom and school research, model good practices in their own teaching, impart clearly

subject pedagogies, have an understanding of how adults and children learn, and take time to reflect with students about teaching practice.

- Establish induction programs. These are essential to guide and support beginning teachers in their first few years of teaching to develop sound teaching practices as well as help retain teachers in the system.
- Broaden the concept of in-service programs and support to be a growth continuum of ongoing, participatory learning that is closely tied to the realities of classroom needs.
- Focus in-service programs on specific training for instructional management that is appropriate to the current needs of the teacher.
- Ongoing guidance, support, sharing ideas and concerns among other teachers, having the support of the head teacher, and obtaining sufficient release time to participate in training are some of the key factors highlighted in this study.
- Extend the evaluation of teacher education programs beyond informing facilitators and administrators on the modes of presentation, relevance, adequacy of facilities and instructors, etc. It must involve an investigation of whether attitudes and practices of participants have actually changed for the better and whether these changes are manifested in classroom and school practices.
- Aim classroom supervision by inspectorate supervisors, head teachers, and peers at improving teacher performance in the classroom. An effective teacher is able to discern from alternatives what enhances student learning, and to that end of raising student achievement the teacher improves what is done, how it is done, in what kind of setting, and for what purpose are all important.
- Evaluations of teacher performance should help teachers make a better learning environment for students.

Those practices should also be applied to the improvement of teacher effectiveness via professional development.

5.2.3. Suggestions to teachers

Pedagogical workshops would really help teachers gain professionally in numerous ways if they are planned for:

- Developing more analytical ways of thinking about their teaching.
- Generating more in-depth ways of reflecting on teaching practices.
- Rethinking routine, taken-for-granted practices.
- Developing confidence in their ability to conduct research.
- Articulating their personal professional knowledge as a legitimate aspect of their practice.
- Developing deeper notions of learner-centeredness through closer consultation with learners.
- Being more willing to integrate learner participation and learner decisions into their practice
- Gaining greater appreciation of the knowledge, skills and learning preferences learners bring to classrooms.

For their development during in-service, it is very essential for teachers that they undertake some sort of continual training course; most preferably that they have a serious timetable from the educational authorities depending upon their Ministry of Education. It is clear that most of EFL teachers would like to attend further training courses or workshops if they were available. Some of the reasons they said they would like further training include:

- to learn about classroom management and dealing with discipline issues
- new methods of teaching
- to focus on group work and group management
- learn how to use technology
- children's psychology and how they learn at different ages

- to keep up to date
- teaching methods for large classes
- meeting other teachers at workshops to share experiences and ideas
- to learn how to motivate students
- to refresh ideas
- to learn how to deal with parents
- to improve their speaking ability
- to help enrich knowledge
- need to know how to teach students who are always changing

Teachers like professional development and see it as an essential part of their job. However many teachers are still not receiving any in-service training. More in-service courses and workshops need to be made available for teachers, and these need not cost a great deal of money.

- Heads need to recognise that in-service workshops provide valuable professional development for teachers, and this has to be taken into consideration when allocating staff timetables.
- Attendance at professional development sessions could be legitimised by linking participation to promotion.
- Experienced teachers could be encouraged to present workshops at their school which would be open to teachers within their district.

CONCLUSION

Through the percentage of success from national exams in Benin, the popular thought is that our educational system becomes worse every year especially in public secondary schools and most frequently the blame is put on teachers. By far, it can be argued that the government and the educational leaders in power are the first to blame since they are the ones who should make good decisions and ensure that these decisions are implemented in order to make things right. Teachers have to play their role as well. They need to make a change in Benin educational system; to achieve this goal of education which consists in helping each child to build his own life.

Overall, the findings of this study have shed significant light on the different complications concerning the actual contribution of the weekly pedagogical workshops in developing EFL teachers' professional aptitudes. Surely, the existence of this workshop is for the benefit of teachers, but the realities on the field show that teachers lack a lot of organisation and planning during these workshops in order to really elevate their professional status. It is essential that they widen their knowledge base of TEFL concepts, be equipped with a critical understanding of language learning theories, methods and approaches, improve their linguistic skills, and expand their range of teaching techniques and activities with views to the improvement of the language learning processes at the classroom level. The in-service pedagogical workshops are fully indicated to achieve such objectives if educational decision-makers, teaching experts, school authorities and teachers really focus on the problems.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Interview protocols

1. As EFL teacher, how do you appraise the importance of the AP sessions as a professional development opportunity?
2. How well are these sessions conducted in our secondary schools as contribution to teachers' professional development?
3. In your opinion, what constitutes the real difficulties observed concerning the pedagogical workshops of EFL teachers?
4. Who could be blamed for such inadequacies in pedagogical workshops in our secondary schools?
5. What would you suggest for the improvement of the weekly workshops?

APPENDIX B: Pages of weekly pedagogical sessions