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Publisher: Routledge

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British Journal of In-Service Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjie18>

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Published online: 12 Sep 2006.

To cite this article: David Wray (1984): Case-studies of School-focussed In-Service Education for Teachers, British Journal of In-Service Education, 11:1, 39-44

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305763840110108>

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Case-studies of School-focussed In-Service Education for Teachers

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Much has been written in recent years concerning the merits of the school-focussed approach to in-service education, and several accounts of school-focussed courses are available in a variety of sources. It was thought likely that an attempt to review the range of case-studies at present available would be of some value in highlighting trends and possible implications. Twenty-eight case-studies are reviewed in this paper and are analysed in terms of five basic criteria. These criteria are as follows:

a) Need-definition. Were the in-service needs of the school, and hence the aims of the course, determined by members of the school staff or by outsiders? One of the distinguishing features of school-focussed in-service work is that it stems from the needs of particular schools, but this tends to beg the question of who decides what these needs are.

b) Planning. Was the course designed by its participants, or by outsiders, or both?

c) Venue. Did the course take place in the school, outside the school, or both? It is necessary to bear in mind that a school-based in-service course, that is, which takes place on school premises, need not necessarily be school-focussed. The latter concept makes some assumptions about the perceived purposes of the course.

d) Implementation. Was the course run by its participants, did it depend on outside help or was there a mixture of both of these?

e) Evaluation. Were the effects of the course evaluated, and if so, was this evaluation subjective or objective, and who carried it out?

The case-studies will be analysed by using a grid format, following which some general tendencies will be highlighted.

Case Studies	<u>Criteria</u> Need definition Did it involve the participants or was it carried out by outsiders?	<u>Planning</u> Did it involve the participants, outsiders, or both?	<u>Venue</u> In school, outside, or both?	<u>Implementation</u> Was the course run by the participants, did it depend on outside help, or both?	<u>Evaluation</u> Was this subjective, objective? Who carried it out?
BAKER (1981) Description of the involvement of one primary school in the SITE project	Carried out by members of staff in consultation with LEA adviser.	Carried out by members of staff in consultation with LEA adviser.	In-school and external courses were involved.	Some sessions run by staff members and some externally.	Reported by SITE project director, who carried out formal evaluation of teacher responses to project by questionnaire and interview
BEVAN (1981) Head's report of school's response to moving to a new open plan school (infant).	Needs defined by head and staff in consultation.	Planned by staff in conjunction with LEA advisers. Staff took initiative in planning work (without even head's knowledge).	Discussion groups in school, and some visits to other schools.	Discussion groups involving only staff, but some sessions had visiting speakers	Evaluation reported by head. Subjective only.
BURN (1976) Description by the deputy head of the preparation for and holding of a one-day staff conference to discuss mixed ability teaching in a comprehensive school.	Defined by an elected Staff Council.	Planned by elected Staff Council.	In-school.	External speakers were used, and discussion groups.	Not reported.

COLLIER (1978) Report of consultancy period in a British school in Brazil. Reported by the consultant.	Defined by consultant and then discussed with participants.	Planned by consultant.	In-school.	Consultancy mode	Some very limited comments, but some discussion of the difficulties of short-term evaluation of rather indistinct outcomes.
KEAST & CARR (1979) Description by consultant and head of a primary school of a course on Higher Reading skills.	Defined by head and senior teachers of school.	Planned by head and consultant.	In-school.	Consultancy mode	Not reported.
CRIPPS (1981) Description by a teacher of an attempt to revise his middle school's history curriculum.	Needs defined by head and subsequently revised with outside help.	Planned by one teacher in consultation with outside help (College of Education staff).	In-school.	Run with outside help, but involving some staff-only discussion.	Detailed description of effects of the project on the staff, by the initiator, but only subjective evaluation of these effects.
ELLIS (1976) Report by member of staff with responsibility for staff development on course on pastoral care (secondary).	Defined by reporter after consultation with staff.	Planned by reporter in consultation with LEA and National Marriage Guidance Council.	Mostly in-school but did involve a residential weekend.	Used external professionals in conjunction with discussion groups.	Not reported.
FELL (1976) Head's report of school's response to secondary reorganisation.	Determined by head as response to staff comments.	Planned by head in consultation with staff.	In-school.	School-run.	Not reported.

HAMILTON (1981) Teacher's description of her involvement of a school staff in following an Open University course (primary).	Defined by teacher herself.	By teacher herself.	In-school, with some home-based study.	Staff discussion groups based on Open University material.	Subjective only. Reported by initiator.
HEPPELL (1981) Head of department's account of the organisation of staff conferences in his secondary school.	Defined by committee of senior staff.	Planned by committee of senior staff.	School-based, with some visits to other establishments.	Visiting speakers and some staff discussion groups.	Subjective. Reported by co-initiator.
JOHNSTON & ELLIOTT (1981) Head's report of curriculum development in a combined first and middle school.	Needs defined by head, but order of tackling these defined in consultation with staff.	Planning involved Head and Deputy.	In-school.	School discussion groups with some outside involvement as a result of the school pursuing a Schools Council Project.	Some subjective comments only. Reported by initiator.
LATUS (1981) Teachers' Centre head's description of 4 in-service projects only one of which can properly be described as school-focussed, i.e. a description of the design of a 1st year integrated studies course in a sec. school.	Not fully described but hints that needs were originally defined by senior management staff of the school.	Involved teachers concerned in teaching the new course, in consultation with Teachers' Centre head.	In-school.	Run by participants, with assistance from external consultant.	Not reported.

LEES & TIMMS (1981) Description by head and member of staff of curriculum development in a primary school.	Defined by head.	Planned by head in consultation with LEA adviser.	Largely school-based, but with some attendance at outside courses for participants.	Staff discussion groups, and visiting speakers and course leaders.	Subjective. Reported by head.
MANN (1981) Description by head of staff development in a comprehensive school formed from a grammar school.	Defined by head but renegotiated later by a committee of staff.	Planned by a senior management team from school.	Largely school-based with some external visits.	Largely run by school members themselves.	Subjective. Reported by head.
MARTIN (1973) Head's report of school response to change to mixed-ability teaching (secondary).	Determined by committee of senior administrative, academic and tutorial staff.	Planned by committee of senior administrative, academic and tutorial staff.	Some in-school work some visits to other schools and some staff attendance at an external course.	Visiting lecturers and outside course presenters were used, but also some school-based discussion groups.	Subjective reporting back by participants.
MURRAY (1980) Head's description of a school-based course in school management.	Course begun as a result of requests from the staff.	Planning by a small team of staff members.	In-school.	Carried out by planning team.	Objective evaluator was appointed but his evaluation is not reported.
MOON & SPENCER (1981) Description by two senior teachers of staff development in a large comprehensive school.	Some needs defined by all staff and some defined by a senior management team of the school.	Some planning by staff in individual working parties and some by senior management team.	Both in and out of school.	Some school-led courses and some external.	Not reported.
NORTHCROFT (1978) Description by College lecturer of 5 case studies, 2 of which included substantial numbers of staff in individual schools, 1 an external studies programme and 1 a history topic.	Environmental studies work arose out of a course at a College of Ed. and was thus determined by College staff. The history course was requested by the school.	Planning carried out by staff in consultation with College lecturers.	Began with college-based course and continued in school.	Consultancy mode.	Subjective evaluation by College lecturers as consultants.

PUPPER (1972) Head's report of school programme (secondary).	Defined by staff & head in consultation with LEA representatives.	Planned by head & interested staff.	Mainly in-school with some visits to other schools.	Used visiting teachers to lead sessions but some school-led sessions.	Head's subjective comments only.
SAMUEL (1980) Head's report of work of professional tutor in his secondary school.	Head & professional tutor defined areas of need.	Planning carried out by tutor.	School-based with some visits to other schools.	Largely school-run but some involvement by external agencies.	Not described in detail.
SALISBURY (1979) Consultant's description of his work in primary schools in Suffolk.	Requests made by teachers at the schools.	Largely done by consultant.	Mixture of school-based work and external lectures.	Consultancy mode.	Not reported.
SAYER (1981) Head's description of the role of a Professional tutor in developing in-service and induction work in a large comprehensive school.	Needs crystallised by professional tutor after continued discussion with staff.	A mixture of externally planned & internally designed courses were used.	Both.	Some working parties & discussion groups, & some externally-led courses.	Head's subjective assessment. No evidence is quoted other than impressions.
SIMMONS (1980) Head's account of staff development work in her primary school.	Defined by head & staff.	Carried out by head & staff.	School-based.	Some staff running & some external help.	Some attempt to assess the effects but basically subjective. Head's report.
STARK, DORAN & McLEOD (1981) Report of a consultancy service in an Orkney primary school.	Determined by teachers at the school, but mechanism not clearly explained.	Involved teachers & consultant.	School-based.	Consultant worked with teachers in their classrooms.	Not reported.

STENHOUSE (1975) Chapter 11, pp.166-80 description of programme at Ashmead School, Reading (secondary).	Determined by Deputy Head through a committee of staff representatives.	Carried out by staff committee.	Both in-school and external.	Both school-run and externally run courses.	Subjective. report to school governors by Deputy Head.
WALTERS (1980) Head's description of a staff development course programme in a primary school.	Decided by staff requests.	Planned by head & LEA adviser initially but sub- sequently altered in light of staff comments and reactions.	In-school.	Basically school- run with occasion- al assistance from outsiders such as Teachers' Centre Warden.	Subjective; reported by Head.
WARWICK (1975) Chapter 6, pp.37-8 description of staff conference held for Norton Priory Compre- hensive School, Runcorn.	Determined by LEA which arranged conference.	Planned by the LEA.	Based in a hotel.	Led by external speakers.	Not reported.
WOOD (1979) Description by assistant headmaster of a school- based, certificated course (secondary).	Defined by staff in consultation with external providers.	Planned by staff but within constraints of external provision	School-based.	Run by outside tutor.	Formally assessed course (for a College certificate).

Case studies: general tendencies

Definition of needs

From the case-studies reviewed it is apparent that the initiative for school-focussed in-service work began in the schools themselves. Of the 28 examples, only 3 began by decisions about needs being taken outside the school. Of the remainder 4 began with consultation between staff members and outsiders to determine needs, but three-quarters of the schools involved determined for themselves, in one way or another, their own in-service needs.

The impression of grass-roots initiatives that this suggests is not completely accurate, however. Although the mechanisms of needs-definition are not always clearly explained, it appears that a number of the schools began their in-service work as a result of decisions made by the head teacher, with or without consultation with senior members of staff. There were 9 examples of this, in 5 of which the head appears to have begun the in-service work by defining needs himself without any consultation with others. In contrast, in 11 of the case-studies, needs were defined by whole staff involvement, although the mechanisms for this were again not always clear.

If the problem-solving model of innovation (Havelock, 1971) is accurate, it would suggest that the more people within a particular situation aware that they have a problem and able to define it clearly, then the more likely it is that the eventual solution communicated through in-service work will have real effect. It must be questioned whether the needs iden-

tified by the head teachers in these case-studies were really those felt by members of their staff. A head teacher would need some clearly defined mechanisms for assessing the feelings of his staff before he was in a position to accurately articulate their needs. There are case-studies in which such a mechanism appears to exist. Sayer (1981) describes the role of a professional tutor in his comprehensive school, in developing in-service work. A large element of this role seems to be the continued discussion with members of staff in order to crystallise in-service needs. Other case-studies (Burn, 1976 and Stenhouse, 1975) describe how particular schools' in-service needs were defined by committees of representatives of the staff, who may be thought more likely to reflect the feelings of the whole staff than the head in isolation.

Course-planning

Although, as with needs-definition, a majority of the case-studies reviewed show planning of in-service work being done by the schools themselves, without external help, a greater number (12 case-studies) show consultation with outside agencies at this stage. The outside agencies range from LEA advisers to college lecturers and the fact that these are involved more at this stage may be evidence of the realisation by the schools involved of the dangers of parochialism inherent in totally self-contained school-focussed in-service work.

It is unlikely that an individual school will possess the expertise necessary to run in-service courses in all

areas, and the case-studies seem to show evidence of schools' recognition of this fact.

Even where outsiders are not consulted there is a tendency for the initiators of the in-service process in the schools, often the head teachers, to seek assistance from other members of staff in planning courses. In every one of the 6 case-studies where needs were defined by the head teacher alone, others were involved at the planning stage, either LEA advisers or other staff of the schools.

Seven of the case-studies show what is perhaps an 'ideal' mechanism for course-planning, bearing in mind the need to avoid parochialism: that is consultation between the whole staff of a school and external providing agencies such as advisers.

Venue

The 28 case-studies reviewed were fairly evenly split between those which were entirely school-based in venue (13) and those which mixed external courses and visits with school-based work (14). Only 1 course was run entirely outside the school (Warwick 1975), and this seems to be the odd one out of the case-studies, having very little evidence of school involvement apart from attendance.

In the choice of venues for these in-service courses there does seem to be a move towards overcoming possible parochialism. The popularity of visiting other schools (6 case-studies) and of holding courses outside the school walls (9 case-studies) shows likely evidence of this. This is further shown in the actual running of the courses.

Implementation

By far the most popular pattern in the running of the courses was for the school to share the leadership of the course with outside speakers (17 case-studies). The school-led sessions commonly took the form of discussion groups, probably following up points made earlier by an outside speaker. In 4 cases schools dispensed with the outside speakers and attempted a total self-reliance in their in-service work. There were 5 instances of consultancy in the case-studies, where an outsider worked with the school staff over a period of time, assisting them in planning and running their in-service courses.

There is therefore an extremely strong pattern in these case-studies of co-operation between the schools and outsiders in the planning and running of in-service courses for the school staff. This seems to suggest, as earlier remarked, that these schools, at least, were aware of the dangers of parochialism inherent in school-focussed in-service, and took steps to try to avoid them.

Evaluation

Of the 28 case-studies reviewed only 2 report any formal evaluation of the effects of the work described — that is, evaluation which goes beyond subjective impressions such as 'the teachers seemed to benefit from the course'. It may be a coincidence that these were the only 2 case-studies in which an evaluation was carried out by people who were not involved in planning and running the courses themselves.

Of the remaining case-studies, 11 report no evaluation at all, and 15 are limited to subjective comments, often by people very closely involved in the work described. Unfortunately, then, these case-studies, while providing extremely interesting descriptive accounts of school-focussed in-service work, give little indication of the successful or unsuccessful elements of such work, and especially provide hardly any evidence which might assist in the more effective planning of in-service work in the future. There is clearly a need for this kind of evidence.

Conclusion

This review of case-studies of school-focussed in-service education has revealed several interesting trends. Prominent among these is the role members of school staffs seem to play in the definition of needs and the planning of courses. Whereas staff were not always involved in deciding a school's in-service needs, they were much more likely to be in planning in-service work to meet these needs. Also at this stage, and at the implementation stage, outsiders were likely to be consulted, which suggests that schools were aware that they did not have sufficient internal resources to deal with all their in-service requirements independently.

Also prominent among the trends emerging from these case-studies is the lack of evaluation, beyond subjective comments. If school-focussed in-service work is to develop along effective lines, a more systematic approach to evaluation, to investigate successful and unsuccessful features, would seem to be a high priority.

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A school focussed INSET project

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As the evaluator of a school focused INSET initiative which has been developing curricula and teaching strategies in nearly thirty primary schools in one borough of London over the past three years, I have in this paper reflected on the evolutionary changes that have transpired. I have drawn on the experiences and professional wisdom of those working in the project, the evaluations by and of the participating

schools and the experience of similar school-focused INSET projects.

Let me begin by briefly describing the project. Nine teachers are seconded from their primary schools (mainly, though not exclusively, from scale 2 and 3 positions) to work in three 'curriculum support teams' under the direction of the district primary inspector. Each team is invited to join the staff of a