English Language Teachers' Perceptions and the Impact of a Standardised Professional Development Program in Sabah, Malaysia: A Mixed Methods Study

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEFR	Common European Framework for Reference
CPT	Cambridge Placement Test
DELO	District English Language Officer
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETA	English Teaching Assistant
ETeMS	English for Teaching Mathematics and Science
GNI	Gross National Income
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IProBI	Insentif Profisiensi Bahasa Inggeris (English Language Proficiency Incentive)
JPN	Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri (State Education Department)
KBSR	Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (Primary School Integrated Curriculum)
KP	Ketua Panitia (Head of Panel)
KPLI	Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Ijazah (Postgraduate Teaching Course)
KPM	Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (Malaysian Ministry of Education)
KSSR	Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (Primary School Standardised Curriculum)
MBMMBI	Memartabatkan Bahasa Melayu, Memantapkan Bahasa Inggeris (To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to Strengthen the English Language)

MEd (TESL)	Master of Education (Teaching English as a Second Language)
MOE	Ministry of Education
PD	Professional Development
ProELT	Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers
PKG	Pusat Kegiatan Guru (Teacher Activity Centre)
PPD	Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah (District Education Department)
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

Abstract

Professional development of language teachers can be of enormous benefit if conducted in an effective way, but can sometimes result in unsatisfactory outcomes and sub-optimal use of resources. This study investigates EFL teachers' perceptions and the impact of the ProELT (Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers) which was a nationwide, one-year program designed and conducted by the British Council Malaysia. A review of previous studies revealed a paucity of research focusing on large scale, standardised teacher professional development programs that involved participation of EFL teachers from both heterogeneous teaching levels (i.e. primary and secondary schools) and heterogeneous districts (i.e. urban and rural). The limited published studies available have been critical of this mode of professional development for a number of reasons, and the purpose of this study was to investigate these issues in the Malaysian context. A mixed methods explanatory sequential design was adopted, which utilised a questionnaire survey, interviews and focus groups with the teachers and District English Language Officers (DELOs), and a coursebook content analysis.

Four major weaknesses of the ProELT were identified. First, the selection method of the program participants was ineffective because it did not align with the program objectives. The selection was based solely on a measure of the participants' language proficiency, but no attempt was made to assess the teachers' instructional competency. It resulted in the experienced teachers feeling dissatisfied that their teaching experiences were disregarded and some of them were negatively and emotionally affected. In addition, the standardised program coursebook was mostly irrelevant to the teachers' curriculum specifications, with the outcome that the majority of the teachers interviewed failed to implement the program

resources in their lessons. Finally, there was no follow-up from the program trainers in the form of classroom observations and visits, and meetings, amongst others, at the end of the program. Participants also reported a lack of support and communication from the Malaysian Ministry of Education who was the program provider.

The findings of the study further problematise the application of standardised or "one-size-fits-all" professional development programs in the EFL context in the developing world such as Malaysia which places high emphasis on enhancing teachers' and students' English proficiency by allocating RM135 million (AUD44 million) for English language enhancement programs, and have theoretical and practical implications for PD on a broader scale.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, and that, to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any unattributed material previously published or written by any other person. I also declare that the work in this thesis has not been previously submitted to any other institution for, or as part of, a degree.

This study was granted approval by Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (REF: 5201400380) and conducted in accordance with the guidelines stipulated.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study seeks to investigate teachers' perceptions and the impact of a nationwide, one-year, standardised teacher professional development (hereafter PD) which combined primary and secondary school teachers.

In this chapter, the study is introduced through nine sections. In the first section, discussions of PD programs and projects for English language teachers conducted in developing countries, and the background of the research context of this study, which took place in Sabah, Malaysia, are presented. The second section describes the two modes of delivery of the studied PD program, namely the cluster and centralised mode. In the third and fourth sections, the rationale for investigating this topic and the significance of the study will be discussed, respectively. In the subsequent sections of this chapter, the research frameworks that guided this study, and also the research aim, objectives and questions, will be presented.

In the seventh section, the parameters of the research focus will be presented, and in the eighth section the operational definition will be outlined. In the last section, an overview of the nine thesis chapters will be provided.

1.1 Setting the scene

1.1.1 English language teacher PD programs and projects in developing countries

The literature has reported numerous studies of English language teacher PD programs and projects in Asia and developing countries, which were funded by international organisations such as the British Council, the World Bank, and the Department for International

Development in the United Kingdom (Balassa, Bodo´czky, & Saunders, 2003; Courtney, 2007; Dushku, 1998; Hamid, 2010). For example, Bangladesh received funds worth US$500 000 and US$155.7 million for two, long-term teacher PD projects, from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, respectively, to conduct the *Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project* and *Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project* (Hamid, 2010). On the other hand, the *Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers* (hereafter ProELT) program was fully funded by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (hereafter MOE) and was delivered by the British Council. The latter was selected among eight potential program consultants who fulfilled the 6Cs criteria that were listed by the MOE, namely competence, capacity, content, customisation, context, and cost (Hasreena & Ahmad, 2015). The duration of the programs and projects ranged between one year and an astounding fourteen years, the latter time being for the *English Language Teaching Improvement Project* in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2010).

Most of these teacher development activities shared similar approaches. Skills- and knowledge development-based approaches are highly favoured by administrators, because they are 'clearly focused, easily organised and packaged, and relatively self-contained' (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992, p. 3). However, these approaches are criticised for placing little value on teachers' knowledge and experience in classroom development skills. Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) argue that 'the skills in which teachers are trained are too often implemented out of context – their appropriateness for the teacher as a person, for the teachers' purpose, or for the particular classroom setting in which the teacher works, being overlooked' (p. 6). One of the core reasons for this lack of relevance between teacher development programs and teachers' needs is centralised planning and decision-making in which top bureaucrats decide what teachers ought to be doing (Dyer et al., 2004), and the design of a training program is based on the required behavioural change (Courtney, 2007).

Studies by Dyer (1996) and Uysal (2012) on English language teacher PD projects in India and Turkey, respectively, reveal rising issues resulting from centralised development projects. For example, the £250 million *Operation Blackboard* project in India aimed to enhance the quality of school education and teaching methods with a shift from textbook-centred to learner-centred, by supplying a second teacher to existing single primary teachers (Dyer, 1996). The project was undertaken via a mass orientation in the form of cascade trainings 'with little attention to how the gap between teachers' current practice and the desired behaviour was to be narrowed' (Dyer, 1996, p. 33). As a result, some teachers rejected the teaching and learning aids, which they claimed to be irrelevant to their teaching needs and of poor quality, and the lack of explanation and training by the program provider on strategies to implement the aids (Dyer, 1996). On the other hand, for a one-week, compulsory In-service Education for Teachers (INSET) training for primary English language teachers, which was organised by the Turkish MOE, aimed to familiarise teachers with the new curriculum goals and teaching techniques for young language learners (Uysal, 2012), teachers' perceptions of the aforementioned training revealed a lack of relevance between the content and teachers' needs, and a lack of discussion regarding their own problems, the material development component, and course evaluation (Uysal, 2012). These studies support C. Kennedy's (1988) argument that a top-down planning approach rarely gathers feedback from the implementers, and the feedback seldom reaches the program providers. In addition, these studies also revealed the importance of including potential teacher participants in the planning and decision-making of a program, who would be able to provide first-hand views of the suitability of the content for their teaching context and needs. It is indeed a waste of financial aid and a waste of the participants' invested time if these expensive programs and projects fail to deliver their intended objectives and to fulfil the needs of the participants.

1.1.2 Background of the study

In this section, the researcher will narrow the focus to Malaysia, which is the context of this study. Malaya achieved independence from the British colony on 31 August 1957. Malaysia was formed on 16 September 1963 when North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak joined Malaya and Singapore to form a new federation. Singapore subsequently left the federation in 1965, due to conflict of interest between Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-haj and Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Malaysia consists of thirteen states, namely eleven states in Peninsular Malaysia (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Pulau Pinang, Selangor, Terengganu), and the states of Sabah and Sarawak in the island of Borneo. In addition, Malaysia also includes the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya in Peninsular Malaysia, and the Federal Territory of Labuan off Sabah. Malaysia practices a system of Parliamentary democracy with constitutional monarchy. The Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary form the three branches of the government.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country made up of the principal ethnic groups of Malay, Chinese and Indian, and also the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak including Kadazan Dusun, Bajau and Murut in Sabah as well as Iban, Bidayuh and Melanau in Sarawak, amongst others. The population, as of May 2016, is 31.4 million with an estimated employment rate of 14.1 billion and unemployment rate between 3.3% and 3.5% (Economic Planning Unit, 2016).

Malaysia is categorised as a developing country, based on economic conditions that are determined by the United Nations, one of which is the gross national income (GNI) per capita. Malaysia's GNI was RM290.6 billion in 2016, with services contributing to the highest income at 54.6% followed by manufacturing at 23.0% (Department of Statistics

Malaysia, 2017). Malaysia's GNI per capita was RM40 005 (USD8 980), which the United Nation categorises as an upper-middle income country[1] (United Nations, 2012). Despite undergoing rapid economic development over the past fifty decades, Malaysia is classified as a developing economy, in par with China and Singapore, because of its Gross Domestic Product, GNI, per capita income, level of industrialisation, and overall standard of living, which are not yet on par with other developed countries (United Nations, 2012).

Malaysia adopts a centralised educational organisation, i.e. top-down implementation of policies and curriculum. It is different from other countries such as Australia, in which each state has independent autonomy in governing its own educational system and plans. The federal organisation of the Malaysian MOE is led by the Minister of Education, who is assisted by two Deputy Ministers, a Chief Secretary and a Chief Director of Education. Forty units, department, institutions, and boards are governed under the Ministry, including the Technical and Vocational Department, the Private Education Department, the Special Education Department, the Teacher Education Institution, the Curriculum Development Department, and the Malaysian Examination Board, amongst others.

As for the state educational organisational structure, it is led by the Director of Education Department, who is assisted by a Deputy Director. In Sabah, as well as the other states, the Director and Deputy Director are responsible for overseeing the management of ten sectors such as the Academic Management Sector, the School Management Sector, the

[1] Less than USD1,005 (low income country)
Between USD1,006 and USD3,975 (lower middle income country)
Between USD3,976 and USD12,275 (upper middle income country)
More than USD12,276 (high income country)

ICT Management Sector, and the Examination and Assessment Sector, amongst others. In addition, both officers are also responsible for overseeing twenty four education districts, while being assisted by a Director and Assistant Director of District Education Office in each district.

Malaysian children start their formal education at age five in kindergarten level for two years, and they proceed to primary education (six years) followed by secondary education (five years). Students who intend to pursue a pre-university education would need an additional two years. Bahasa Malaysia is the national language and medium of instruction in governmental national schools, and English is taught as a second language. Vernacular schools such as Chinese and Tamil schools are permitted to use their mother tongues as the mediums of instruction, but Bahasa Malaysia and English are compulsory subjects. Students in governmental schools undertake four national exams: the Primary School Assessment (*Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah*) for Year 6; the Form 3 Assessment (*Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga*) (Year 9); the Malaysian Certificate of Education (*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*) for Form 5 (Year 11); and the Malaysian Higher School Certificate (*Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia*) for Form 6 (Year 13).

The Malaysian government views English as an important language for learners to master, in order to access information and to gain knowledge, which is mostly available in English, and subsequently to spearhead the country's development and education progress. Hence, the Malaysian government has adopted several plans to enhance the English language proficiency of students and teachers. One such plan was the implementation of the *English for Teaching Mathematics and Science* (ETeMS) policy in Malaysian public schools. Prior to this policy, all subjects in national-typed public schools, except for language subjects, were taught in Bahasa Malaysia. Mathematics and Science teachers were given teaching

methodology trainings by MOE-appointed English teachers to assist them with the transition. However, opponents of the ETeMS argued that non-proficient learners were negatively affected by the policy, as they found it difficult to cope with the language, especially within such a short transition period. Within six years of its implementation, the policy was withdrawn in 2009 and replaced with an alternative policy, viz. *To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and To Strengthen the English Language* (MBMMBI) effective 2012, which functions as a soft landing approach for students to revert their learning of both subjects from English to Bahasa Malaysia progressively according to the stages of their studies.

In addition, the Malaysian MOE also receives teaching assistance from the United States Embassy through the ongoing *Fulbright English Teaching Assistant* (ETA) program. The purpose of the ETA is to improve students' English language abilities and knowledge of the United States[2]. The teaching assistants consist of recent college graduates and young professionals from the United States, who are assigned to selected states in Malaysia for ten months[3].

The three-year *English Language Teaching Development Program* (ELTDP), which ran from 2010 until September 2013, is a joint venture teacher PD program between the Malaysian MOE and British Council. It involved 286 English native speakers who worked as mentors to assist local English language teachers and lecturers to improve their instructional techniques and students' language learning ("Giving teachers a helping hand," 2011, May 15).

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[2] See the US Embassy website at https://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/fulbright-english-teaching-assistant-program

[3] See the *US Embassy in Malaysia* website at https://my.usembassy.gov/eta2017-jan2017/

In an effort to reform the Malaysian education system, the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Preliminary Report, which was launched on 11 September 2012, outlines eleven strategic and operational shifts to transform the country's education system in line with the current knowledge, innovation and technology advancements ("PM launches bold education blueprint for excellence," 2012, September 12). Prior to the launching of the blueprint, the Malaysian MOE garnered views from various international bodies such as the World Bank and UNESCO, local universities, organisations, and stakeholders, viz. parents, community, teachers, students, principals and state education department, through roundtable and town hall discussions over the previous year. After the launching of the preliminary blueprint, the Ministry continued to engage with and gather feedback from the stakeholders. The information gathered was fine-tuned and compiled in the final blueprint which was launched, just under one year after the launch of the preliminary blueprint, on 6 September 2013 ("11 shifts to transform education," 2013, September 7).

The planned education transformation takes place over thirteen years, involving *Three Waves of Changes*: the recently completed Wave 1 (2012-2015), which focused on efforts in raising the teaching quality, school leadership quality and improvement of student literacy in Bahasa Malaysia, English and numeracy; the ongoing Wave 2 (2016-2020), which focuses on structural changes aiming to promote teachers and principals via new career packages, and also the introduction of a standard secondary and revised primary curriculum that addresses concerns regarding knowledge, skills and values; and Wave 3 (2021-2025), which aims to cultivate a peer-led culture of professional excellence (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2013). The present study focuses on Wave 1 (2012-2015), specifically on the efforts to improve teachers' teaching quality.

Although the Malaysian government endeavours to improve the teaching quality of all school teachers, special emphasis is placed on the language proficiency levels and teaching qualities of English as a Second Language (hereafter ESL) teachers in primary and secondary schools. According to *The Star Online* ("Majority of teachers not proficient in English," 2012, September 26), two-thirds of 70 000 English teachers in Malaysia failed to reach a proficient English level, based on the assessment outcome of the *Cambridge Placement Test* (CPT) that was conducted nationwide starting from May 2012. The CPT measures teachers' language proficiency in all of the four English skills (i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening). It was conducted to obtain profiles of Malaysian ESL teachers pertaining to their language proficiency levels in order to identify teachers who would be sent for retraining programs. One of these programs was the ProELT.

The ProELT is a British Council project funded by the Malaysian MOE. The program is an in-service training for ESL teachers as part of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, which aims to improve the language and teaching skills of primary and secondary school ESL teachers. The selection of the first batch of ProELT participants was conducted via the CPT, which was based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) proficiency scale (see Appendix 13). The scale is divided into three categories of user, namely *basic user* (Bands A1 and A2), *independent user* (Bands B1 and B2), and *proficient user* (Bands C1 and C2). As mentioned earlier, the assessment outcome of the preliminary CPT showed that two-thirds of the 70 000 teachers failed to reach a proficient level of English, and the MOE had mandated that teachers who scored B1 and B2 were required to participate in the ProELT. For the second cohort, the British Council adopted its own self-developed English proficiency test, called *Aptis*, in lieu of the CPT.

1.2 ProELT modes of delivery

The ProELT was delivered as a blended mode, which included face-to-face learning with qualified, native speaker trainers from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand, amongst others, and also online learning with certified e-moderators. There were two blended modes of training, namely the *cluster* and *centralised* modes. Table 1.1 outlines the comparison between both modes of training.

Table 1.1 Comparison between the cluster and centralised modes of training

	Cluster Mode	**Centralised Mode**
Target group	• Teachers in the urban and rural schools. • English language teachers from the primary and secondary schools.	• Teachers in the interior and remote schools. • English language teachers from the primary and secondary schools.
Number of participants	• Each cluster has four groups, which consist of twenty five teachers per group.	• Each training centre consists of twenty five teachers.
Training duration	• 480 hours for forty weeks (240 hours face-to-face and 240 hours online learning)	• 480 hours for sixteen weeks (240 hours face-to-face and 240 hours online learning)
Approach	• Face-to-face: six hours/day x forty weeks (240 hours) • Online: 240 hours	Implemented in **<u>four phases</u>**: • Phases 1 and 3: Face-to-face and online • Phases 2 and 4: Online
Training centres	• Teacher Training Centres and schools	• Teacher Training Centres and other designated centres, e.g. hotels

Source: Adapted from the Office of the Deputy Director-General of Education Malaysia (2014)

The number of participants at the training centres differs between the cluster and centralised modes. The former consisted of four groups, which included twenty five

teachers[4] per group, and a trainer trained each group on separate days between Monday and Thursday at the same training centre (Figure 1.1). The latter mode consisted of more than one training centre, each of which catered for twenty five teachers (Figure 1.2).

The training duration also differs between the two modes. The cluster mode involved a forty-week training program, while the centralised mode duration was shorter, being conducted intensively for sixteen weeks in four separate phases. Despite the difference in the length of the programs, the total number of training hours was the same. The centralised and cluster modes utilised the same blended mode approach, via face-to-face and online training. 240 hours were allocated for face-to-face training and another 240 hours for online training. The former mode was conducted once a week, six hours a day for forty weeks, while the centralised mode was divided into four phases: Phases 1 and 3 for face-to-face and online training; and Phases 2 and 4 for online training only.

Due to proximity and the higher number of Teacher Training Centres and schools in the urban and rural districts[5], the cluster mode training was conducted at these two venues. Conversely, the long distance between the Teacher Training Centres and schools in the interior and remote districts made it quite difficult for the teachers and trainers to meet up on a weekly basis. As a result, some of the centralised training sessions were conducted at a

[4] Based on interviews with the participants, some groups ranged between eighteen and twenty three people.

[5] The researcher was not able to obtain any official definition of urban and rural schools from the literature on Malaysian education nor from the Sabah State Education Department, as the Department does not have documents such as circulars that provide these definitions. However, the 1/2016 circular from the Malaysian MOE refers "remote" schools as schools that are located in isolated districts with difficult accessibility, which require multiple modes of transportation, high cost and long duration, and have minimum or no basic facilities. The definition includes schools located by the sea shores, on islands, by the rivers, and mountainous areas (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2016) .

hotel for the convenience of the teachers and trainers during the two 4-week intensive training phases.

For the purpose of the present study, the research only focused on the cluster mode, because there were 1182 participants compared to sixty one participants in the centralised mode. This larger sample size enabled the researcher to sample a sufficient number of participants for the questionnaire survey to make it possible to use inferential statistics in the analysis. The centralised mode of teacher professional development had to be excluded from the scope of investigation, because it would have required substantial additional time to conduct the fieldwork, which would not fit into the time frame to complete this research. For example, teachers in the centralised mode training were from the remote and interior districts. This would have required a much longer period of fieldwork to gather a sufficient number of interview and focus group participants.

Even if this had not been the case, there was another obstacle. The State Education Department did not have the contact numbers of the teacher participants; the trainers were the only intermediaries between the candidate and the teachers, in order to obtain the latter's consent to participate in the study. As previously shown in Table 1.1, the centralised mode was conducted in two separate, intensive face-to-face phases, i.e. Phases 1 and 3, as opposed to the cluster mode which was a weekly training. Therefore, it was not feasible to conduct research on the centralised mode when the training was not in session. Based on these justifications, a study of the centralised mode would have required a separate research from the cluster mode in the present study, in order to compare the findings from both training modes. It would be useful to undertake this as a follow-up, but it was not essential to this study.

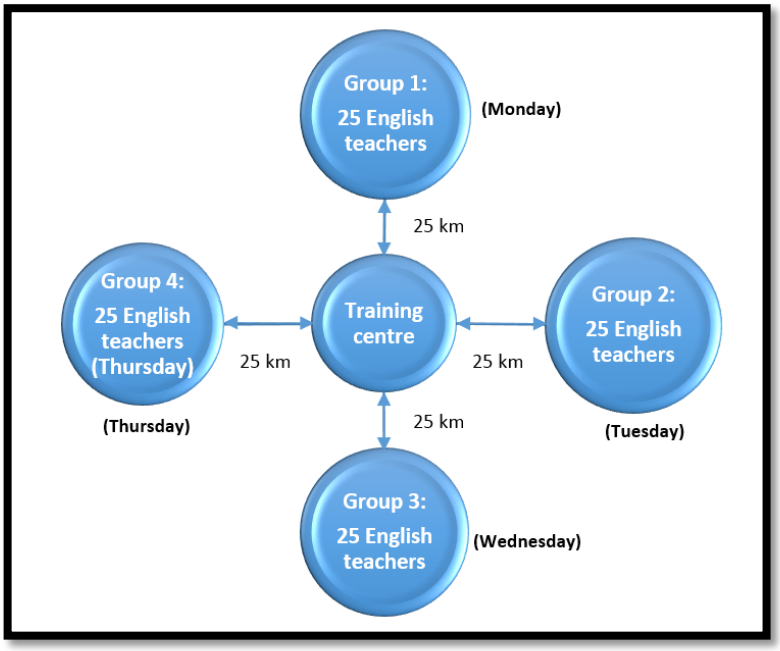

Figure 1.1 Cluster mode training for the ProELT program in the urban and rural districts.
Source: Adapted from Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (2012)

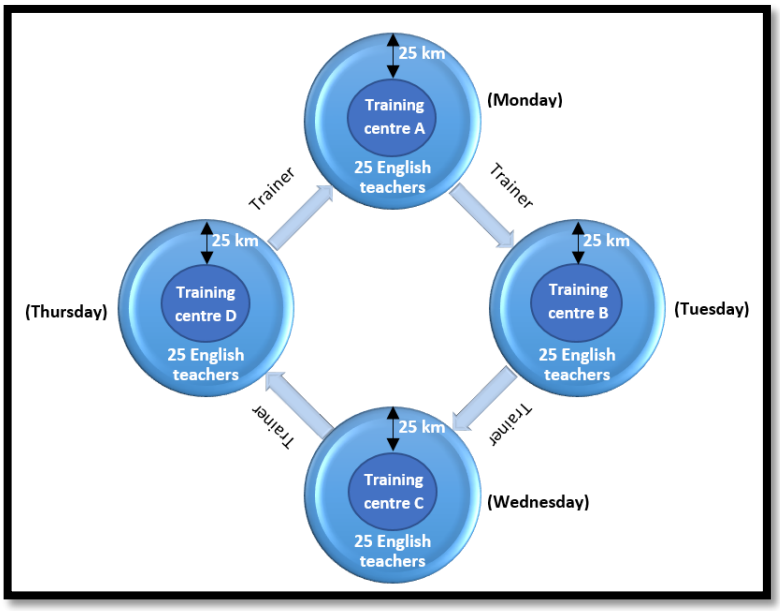

Figure 1.2 ProELT centralised mode training in the interior and remote districts.
Source: Adapted from Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (2012)

1.3 Rationale for the study

Scholarly investigations on teacher PD have been dedicated to the perceptions of either primary or secondary school teachers, to examine their understanding, beliefs, professional needs, and factors affecting their participation in PD (Borg, 2011; de Vries, van de Grift, & Jansen, 2014; Kabilan & Veratharaju, 2013; Wan, 2011). There is a paucity of research that has compared the views of primary and secondary ESL teachers *and* also the views of urban and rural school district ESL teachers who have participated in the same standardised PD program within a developing country context. In addition, there is also no research that has included the views of education officers who are responsible for overseeing the PD programs, pertaining to their views on the teacher participants and program. In the present study, the participants in the ProELT are a combination of primary and secondary school teachers, which is rather unusual as teachers from both levels do not attend the same PD program. Unfortunately the researcher's request for access to the program providers was refused, and so she was not able to obtain information about the rationale for this combination of participants.

Therefore, the present study intends to fill these gaps in the research, with the specific intention of identifying the perceptions of teachers from mixed teaching levels and locations in regard to participating in the same national-level, standardised PD, and the impact of the program due to the differences in their teaching levels and curriculum specifications, students' level of proficiency, and geographic locations. It is pertinent that two perspectives are explored and investigated, namely from the teachers' perceptions of and experiences with PD, and also from the District English Language Officers' (hereafter DELO) views about the impact of the ProELT on the teacher participants. Aside from triangulation purposes, this approach provides insights into the effectiveness of communication and

information transfer between the teachers and DELOs. Furthermore, there is no literature currently available on the Malaysian context that explicitly addresses the impact of a standardised PD program on teachers from both teaching levels and locations.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study aims to contribute to the literature on teacher PD within a developing country context. The focus of the study is on the field of standardised PD in the primary and secondary schools, and also in the urban and rural districts, in Malaysia. The findings and analyses from this study can help further explore the effectiveness of the ProELT, on whether it is appropriate to integrate the ESL teachers from the primary and secondary levels into the same standardised PD program due to the differences in their teaching levels and curriculum specifications. Both teaching levels require different teaching methods and approaches, although the language skill enhancement training components in the ProELT program may be applicable to the teachers at both the primary and secondary levels. In the first instance, the study will enable the program designers to improve the design and content of the ProELT. In addition, this study will specifically outline the impact of and issues with the ProELT, and it will offer suggestions to the program providers and designers to improve the program design and/or content, in order to increase the effectiveness of the PD for teachers, who are regarded as 'the most significant change agent' (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p. 7). As teachers' perceptions of values of PD and their need for PD are often varied (Day, Sammons, Stobart, & Kington, 2007), these perceptions and needs may affect the effectiveness of PD planning (Chan, 2004; Wheeler, 2001). It is noted that PD will only have a positive impact when it is carefully designed to meet the contextual needs of the teachers involved and contains built-in monitoring and sustainable components through examination of their needs and

perceptions (Wheeler, 2001). Hence, teachers' perceptions and needs should be understood more clearly in the process of PD planning.

Therefore, it is hoped that the results of this study will influence teacher PD program providers and designers to improve the planning and delivery of future national-level and standardised PD in order to maximise the programs' effectiveness and to minimise frustration among the participants and administrators involved. The results will also provide new insights to researchers of teacher PD on the benefits of incorporating the views of the administrators with those of the teachers in order to compare and triangulate their views rather than analysing the findings from a single perspective.

1.5 Research framework

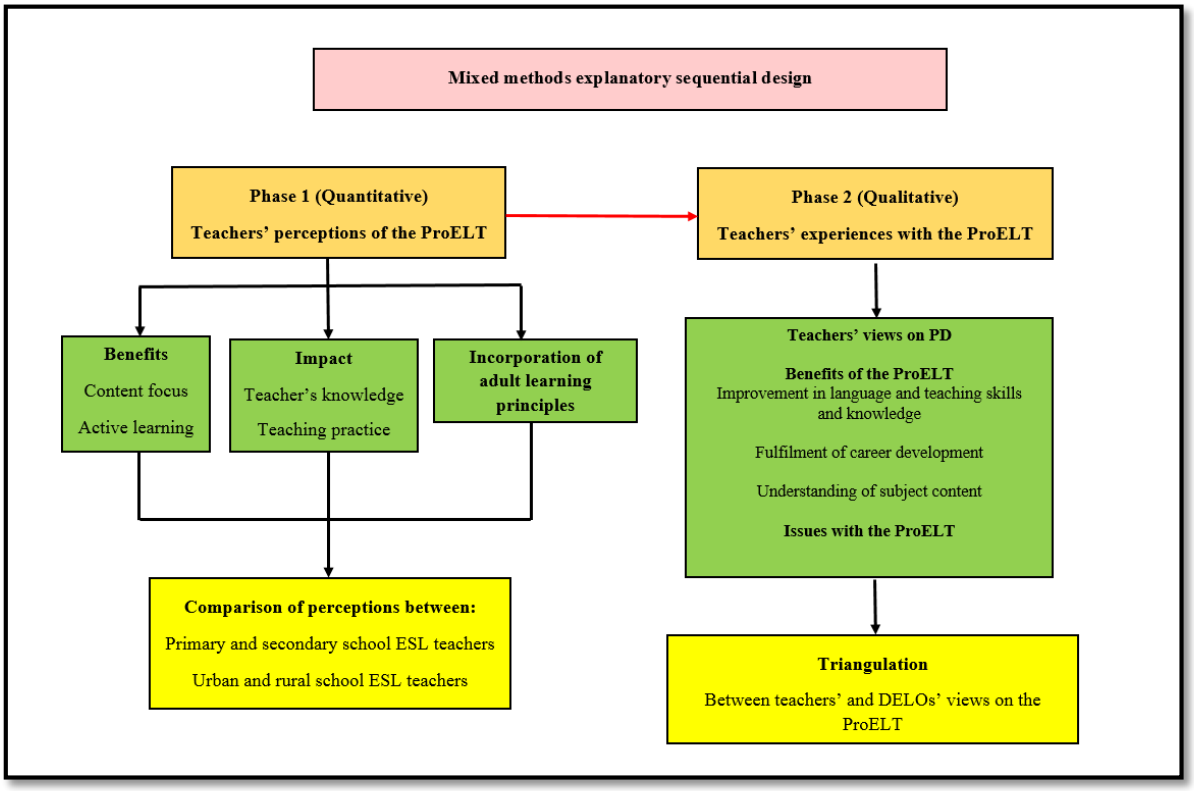

Figure 1.3 Research framework.

The research framework, as illustrated in Figure 1.3, above was conceptualised based on the paucity of teacher PD research that explores and compares the views of primary and secondary ESL teachers and also the views of urban and rural teachers who have participated in the same PD program[6]. In addition, there is also a paucity of the research that includes education officers as part of the research sample to triangulate with the views of the teachers. The research framework illustrates how the present study focuses on teachers' perceptions and

[6] A comparison across primary urban/rural and secondary urban/rural was not undertaken in this study, because of the imbalance in samples among the primary urban/rural and secondary urban/rural teachers, due to the cluster sampling which was utilised in this study. An analysis of the survey data using the Mann-Whitney U test would not have produced valid results of the comparison. See Section 3.6.1 for an explanation of the researcher's subsequent decision to utilise cluster sampling over random sampling.

the impact of the ProELT. As mentioned in the significance of the study (see Section 1.4), the samples include teachers from two categories: teaching levels (primary and secondary school levels), and teaching locations (urban and rural districts). The figure also shows that this study is based on a mixed methods explanatory sequential design, whereby the quantitative data collection phase is undertaken prior to the qualitative phase of the research. The quantitative data were collected through questionnaire surveys, while qualitative data were collected through interviews. The data were analysed separately, and the quantitative and qualitative findings were compared and triangulated. A detailed explanation of the sampling procedure, pilot study, data collection and data analysis will be presented in Chapter Three on methodology.

1.6 Research aim, objectives and questions

The aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of the primary and secondary school ESL teachers from the urban and rural districts in Sabah, and the impact of the ProELT on the teacher participants. The specific research objectives are listed as follows:

1. To investigate the ESL teachers' views on elements that they want in a PD program.
2. To investigate the ESL teachers' perceptions of the ProELT as a PD program.
3. To investigate the ESL teachers' experiences with the ProELT and to gather their suggestions for the program.
4. To investigate the compatibility between the standardised ProELT coursebook content and the Malaysian curriculum specifications.

Based on the research objectives, the study attempts to answer the following four central questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of a PD program that would fulfil their PD needs?
2. How is the ProELT perceived as a PD program?

3. What experiences and suggestions can be gathered from the ProELT participants?
4. How does a standardised coursebook fulfil the learning needs of teachers from different teaching levels?

The first central question, '**What are teachers' perceptions of a PD program that would fulfil their PD needs?**', considers the ProELT teachers' perceptions of what they want from a PD program, via three research questions:

RQ1: What elements do teachers want in a PD program?

RQ2: Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding PD programs?

RQ3: Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding PD programs?

This information is pertinent to compare the teachers' preferences and needs with the training design and module of the ProELT, in order to understand to what degree the ProELT fulfils the teachers' expectations and preferences.

Using the first central question as a "baseline" to understand teachers' needs in PD programs, the second central question, '**How is the ProELT perceived as a PD program?**', intends to gauge the benefits and impact of the ProELT on the participants via three research questions:

RQ4: What are the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT?

RQ5: Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding the ProELT?

RQ6: Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural teachers regarding the ProELT?

The third central question, **'What experiences and suggestions can be gathered from the ProELT participants?**', aims to uncover strengths and issues in the ProELT, and to gather the teachers' suggestions to improve the program. There are two research questions:

RQ7: What are the teachers' experiences with the ProELT?

RQ8: What are the teachers' suggestions to improve the ProELT?

The fourth central question, '**How does a standardised coursebook fulfil the learning needs of teachers from different teaching levels?**', aims to investigate to what extent the ProELT coursebook would be able to cater to the learning needs of primary and secondary school teachers who utilise differing curriculum specifications, via the final research question:

RQ9: To what degree does the standardised ProELT coursebook content match the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test?

This information is crucial to further explore whether the participants are able to successfully implement the course materials and activities into their lessons.

Linking the aforementioned four central questions, the implications of this study are considered in the fifth central question, '**What lessons can be learned from the study and ProELT, and their applications to other teacher PD program within the context of a developing country?**'. The main rationale is to consider the implications arising from the study in order to make contributions to increase understanding of the implementation of

nationwide and standardised teacher up-skilling programs within a developing country context. Figure 1.4 below summarises the schematic overview of the organisation of the thesis.

English Language Teachers' Perceptions and the Impact of a Standardised PD Program

Central Questions			
1. What are teachers' perceptions of a PD program that would fulfil their PD needs?	2. How is the ProELT perceived as a PD program?	3. What experiences and suggestions can be gathered from the ProELT participants?	4. How does a standardised coursebook fulfil the learning needs of teachers from different teaching levels?

RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	RQ4	RQ5	RQ6	RQ7	RQ8	RQ9
What elements do teachers want in a PD program?	Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding PD programs?	Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding PD programs?	What are the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT?	Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding the ProELT?	Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding the ProELT?	What are the teachers' experiences with the ProELT?	What are the teachers' suggestions to improve the ProELT?	To what degree does the standardised ProELT coursebook content match the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test?
Chapter 4	Chapter 4	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 5	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 6	Chapter 7

Implications
5. What lessons can be learned from the study and ProELT, and their applications to other teacher PD program within the context of a developing country?

Figure 1.4 Schematic overview of overall organisation of thesis.

1.7 Research focus

In order to avoid misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the data and findings that this study will engender, it is pertinent to outline the research focus that will help navigate this study. The research focus is detailed as follows:

1. This study focused on the ProELT Cohort 2 cluster mode training instead of the centralised mode for two reasons. As mentioned above, there were more participants in the cluster mode, providing a bigger sampling size. Secondly, the cluster mode was conducted once a week for a year, which made it ideal to collect data from the survey respondents and to conduct interviews with the participants within the set fieldwork time frame, compared to the centralised mode, which was divided into two separate, intensive phases that did not fit the data collection time frame.

2. The study focused on primary and secondary school ESL teachers in Sabah.

3. The study focused on ESL teachers from the rural and urban districts of Sabah. Interior and remote school teachers were not included, as they were specifically assigned to the centralised mode training, which made data collection not ideal or feasible, as explained in the first research focus point above and Section 1.2.

4. The study focused on Sabah, the second largest state in Malaysia out of 13 states and three Federal Territories. As a local Sabahan and a former secondary school ESL teacher for seven years prior to joining academia, these two factors benefited the researcher both academically and logistically due to the fact that she was familiar with the local cultures and customs, and was acquainted with the head officer of the English Department at the Sabah Education Department. The latter factor enabled

her to obtain permission from the gate keepers of the State and District Education Departments to conduct the research. However, the researcher acknowledges that her semi-insider status could potentially influence the framing of the research questions and cause the approach to be less objective. In addition, the researcher's position could also result in potential biases in interpreting and reporting the data. Hence, the researcher needed to guard against the aforementioned circumstances through the following actions:

i. Avoid framing the research or interview questions that impose the researcher's personal thoughts, e.g. "What problems did you encounter during the ProELT?". On the contrary, the research or interview questions should be framed as, "What do you think of the program, in regard to its contents and activities?".

ii. Approach the research objectively as a neutral outsider with the intentions of investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and without any preliminary presumptions of the program.

iii. Interpret the data as it is without making baseless assumptions and/or imposing the researcher's thoughts into the interpretation.

iv. The researcher should follow-up with the interview participants in case of any doubt or need for further clarifications, in regard to their responses in the interviews.

Data were collected using these principles in mind.

5. The study methodology utilised questionnaire survey and interview. This research did not utilise pre- and post-tests to compare changes in teachers' language and teaching, and perceptions, because the ProELT had already commenced when the data collection was underway, i.e. there was no data available to conduct a comparison test. In addition, classroom observations for pre- and post-test were also unfeasible due to the aforementioned reason.

1.8 Operational definition of terms

Definition of the key terms used in this study is essential to understand the interpretation of the study's findings. Given that there are alternative or complementary definitions in the literature, the following terms pertain to selected meanings in relation to this study.

i. English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers

ESL teachers refer to primary and secondary school teachers from the urban and rural districts in Sabah who have been selected to participate in the ProELT cluster mode. In this study, only certified ESL teachers with at least a certificate in education majoring in English language-related subjects such as TESL, TESOL or TEFL were selected as study samples. There are cases of non-English trained teachers being appointed by their school heads to teach English due to the lack of qualified ESL teachers, which occurs mostly in the rural districts. Therefore, non-English trained teachers were excluded from the study.

ii. Experienced/senior teachers

Experienced teachers refer to educators who have been teaching for at least five years (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). In this study, the terms *experienced* and *senior* teachers are used interchangeably.

iii. District English Language Officer (DELO)

DELO (or *DELOs* in the plural form) refers to an education and English major-trained district officer from the urban or rural districts, who is responsible for matters pertaining to English language trainings and academic. In this study, DELO is a specific acronym used in the ProELT program. A DELO is responsible for overseeing the undertaking of the ProELT, assisting the teacher participants, trainers and Sabah ProELT project manager in logistical matters, and being the intermediary between the Directors from the District and State Education Departments, and the ProELT participants and trainers.

1.9 Overview of the chapters

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. The introduction to the thesis (Chapter 1) contains a review of English language teacher PD programs and projects that have been undertaken in developing countries, and the background of the study. This is followed by descriptions of the ProELT mode of delivery. The rationale of the study is highlighted based on the research gaps that are identified, and the significance of the study's contribution is stated based on the researcher's argument on the need to investigate the impact of combining ESL teachers from mixed teaching levels and locations in the same standardised PD program. The research framework that guided this study is provided, and the research objectives and

questions are explicated. The operational definitions of terms are defined and the research focus of this study is outlined. Finally, an overview of chapters in the thesis is presented.

In Chapter 2, an overview of the literature related to the meanings and models of PD is presented. This is preceded by scholarly review of the arguments between traditional and reform-type PD programs. Next, this study which adopted Huber's theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation on PD and the Adult Learning Theory are presented, and followed by a review of the Adult Learning Theory, specifically *andragogy*. Factors that contribute to the effectiveness of teacher PD are reviewed in the following section. Lastly, the study gaps in the literature are outlined, and it is shown in detail how this study addresses these gaps and contributes to the existing literature.

In Chapter 3, the mixed methods approach used in this study is described in detail, and the justifications for the selection of this research approach, the sampling method and instruments are explained. The procedure for conducting the study and analysing the quantitative and qualitative data is also explicated.

The findings of this study are reported in four chapters (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7). In Chapter 4, the quantitative findings from the questionnaire survey pertaining to the ProELT participants' perceptions of the elements that they want in a PD program are presented.

In Chapter 5, the findings of the ProELT participants' perceptions of the benefits and impact of the ProELT on their language development, instructional skills and knowledge, and self-perception, are presented. This chapter also presents the participants' perceptions of the degree of incorporation of the adult learning principles in the ProELT.

In Chapter 6, the findings pertain to the teachers' experiences during the ProELT and their suggestions to improve the program.

In Chapter 7, a description of the 18-module ProELT coursebook and the eight sections that made up each module will be presented. The coursebook will be analysed by comparing seven sections (excluding the *Reflection* section) in each module with the Malaysian primary and secondary curriculum specifications. The purpose is to gather a snapshot of the amount of the coursebook contents that are transferable into the classroom lessons and are related to developing teachers' teaching methodology in accordance with the program objectives. In addition, the coursebook is also reviewed in order to identify sections of its contents that are relevant to the Aptis test components.

In Chapter 8, four key issues in regard to the ProELT and the significance of the incorporation of adult learning principles in teacher PD programs are discussed. Based on these key findings, an enhanced framework of Huber's theoretical framework is presented, and followed by a discussion of the implications of this study for the program providers and program designers.

In the final chapter (Chapter 9), a summary of the study's findings and conclusions that can be drawn from the findings of this mixed methods study, and recommendations for future research, are presented.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The following literature review will first look briefly into the definitions of teacher PD, and the models of teacher PD that are available up to this point. This will be followed by a comparison between the traditional and reform approaches in PD, a review of critiques regarding traditional approaches, and recommendations of the reform approaches that are more widely-accepted. Two theoretical frameworks which are adopted in this study, namely Huber's theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation on PD, and Adult Learning Theory, will be presented. Critiques pertaining to the theory of adult learning will be reviewed. The chapter will also present an evaluation of the five elements that constitute an effective teacher PD, namely teachers' needs, content of the program, active learning, program duration, and follow-up support. The review will then draw attention to three study gaps that were identified from the literature and will conclude with a summary of this chapter.

2.2 Professional development: Its meanings and purposes

2.2.1 What is meant by teacher professional development?

The term 'teacher professional development' has been used interchangeably with other associated terms such as 'in-service training', 'In-service Education for Teachers' (INSET, which is commonly used in the United Kingdom), 'teacher development', 'staff development', and 'continuing professional development'. The term 'teacher professional

development' was adopted in the present study as it is ubiquitous within the Malaysian civil service context, and this term is used as an equivalent for all of the aforementioned terms.

Various definitions of teacher PD have been formulated over the years, but there is no one concise definition, because teacher PD is viewed from multiple perspectives: namely those of its stakeholders, specifically teachers, students and school leaders. From a teachers' perspective, teacher PD is defined as any form of teachers' learning experiences and PD activities (Muijs, Day, Harris, & Lindsay, 2005) that consolidate their instructional practices (Bredeson, 2002; Day, 1999; Day & Sachs, 2004; Diaz-Maggioli, 2003), and also the development of teachers' critical knowledge and emotional intelligence (Day, 1999; Day & Sachs, 2004) through orientation, training, and support (Coetzer, 2001). Another definition of teacher PD, which is viewed from the perspective of students, focuses on the improvement of students' academic outcomes as a result of the development of teachers' instructional knowledge and skills (Guskey, 2002; Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gallagher, 2002) and also teachers' attitudes and approaches (Day & Sachs, 2004), through their participation in PD.

For the purpose of the present study, the researcher has adopted Day's (1999, p. 4) definition of teacher PD, as follows:

> Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives.

The justifications for adopting Day's definition were based on the research objective, which investigated the impact of the ProELT on teachers' language proficiency, instructional skill

and knowledge, and self-perception via their perceptions of and experiences with the program. Day's definition takes into account the direct and indirect impacts of PD upon different stakeholders, which in the present study pertains to the ProELT teachers who were from different teaching levels and locations. Three significant phrases in the definition determined the researcher's selection of Day's definition, as follows:

'… direct or indirect benefit to the individual…' – The present study examined the degree of the ProELT's *direct* impact on the participants' language and teaching development, and also its *indirect* impact on the participants' experiences of the program.

'…acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills…essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice…' – This study examined the degree of knowledge and skills that the teachers have acquired from the ProELT, and the implementation of those knowledge and skills in their lessons.

'…through each phase of their teaching lives.' – The ProELT was a standardised program which consisted of teachers from various stages of their teaching careers, but the selection of the participants was based solely on their CPT and Aptis test results. This study sought to explore the perceptions of the participants who were mandated by the MOE to participate in the program based on their language proficiency test, not their professional needs.

2.2.2 Models of professional development

There is no definite number of teacher PD models, as the list is constantly expanding. Borg (2014) outlines 11 models that he had experienced as an education consultant and trainer, and acknowledges the existence of other models of PD (Table 2.1); while A. Kennedy (2005)

categorises nine models (Table 2.2). Meanwhile, D. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) present five models of staff development; and Drago-Severson (2002) list six models (five of the models are similar to that of D. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989)) (Table 2.3). Within each model is a list of activities that serve to accomplish the objectives of a program, such as workshop, conference, peer coaching, examining students' works, and discussing case studies. However, a review of the literature denotes some variation and contradictions between scholars in their categorisation of a model, an activity and a strategy.

Table 2.1 List of teacher professional development models (1)

11 models of professional development
1. Input-based training programs distributed over time – e.g. ten hours of sessions a week for twelve weeks 2. Two-phase programs (input-based phase followed by school-based phase) 3. Two-phase programs (input and school-based phases alternate over a period of time rather than having all the input before the school-based work) 4. Cascade model 5. Mentoring model 6. Blended model 7. Short seminars, e.g. a three-day event 8. One-off short workshops, e.g. half a day or less 9. Teacher research programs 10. In-Service Training (INSET) sessions 11. Technology-driven programs

Source: Borg (2014)

Table 2.2 List of teacher professional development models (2)

9 models of professional development
1. Training 2. Award-bearing 3. Deficit 4. Cascade 5. Standards-based 6. Coaching/mentoring 7. Community of practice 8. Action research 9. Transformative

Source: A. Kennedy (2005)

Table 2.3 List of teacher professional development models (3)

Models of professional development	
D. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989)	Drago-Severson (2002)
1. In-service training 2. Observation/assessment 3. Development/improvement process 4. Inquiry/action research 5. Individually guided activities	1. In-service training 2. Observation/assessment 3. Development/improvement process 4. Inquiry/action research 5. Individually guided activities 6. Mentoring

Sources: Drago-Severson (2002) and D. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989)

For example, A. Kennedy (2005), Borg (2014) and Drago-Severson (2002) categorise *mentoring* as a model of PD, but Guskey and Yoon (2009) and Diaz-Maggioli (2003) contradict their view by representing it as a form of PD activity and strategy, respectively. In addition, Drago-Severson (2002) and D. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) list *training* as a model, while Odden et al. (2002) categorise it as an activity. A third example is the contradiction between *study group* as an activity (Odden et al., 2002) and as a strategy (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003). In spite of these contradictions, *activity*, *orientation* and *strategy* are

used interchangeably in the literature to denote the same reference (see Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Guskey and Yoon, 2009; Muijs et al., 2005; Hayes, 2000; and Odden et al., 2002).

Despite the varying definitions of PD and its delivery system, they all 'pertain to adult education and are designed to generate positive change in beliefs, skills, and behaviours' (Lauer, Christopher, Firpo-Triplett, & Buchting, 2014, p. 207).

2.3 Approaches to teacher professional development

2.3.1 Traditional versus reform approaches

In this section, arguments for and against *traditional* and *reform approaches* will be considered and evaluated. The structure of teacher PD has undergone profound changes since the 1980s (Mundry, 2005). From traditional approaches such as one-size-fits-all workshop, course, seminar, and conference, teacher PD has evolved, and has established more ongoing, subject- and need-focused programs that are currently known as reform approaches, namely study group, teacher networking, mentoring, coaching, committee or task force, internship, individual research project, or teacher research centre (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; H. J. Lee, 2004).

In a review by Guskey and Yoon (2009), it was argued that workshops have been the most disparaged of all the traditional approaches due to their short-term, one-off strategy, which do not cater to the professional needs of the teachers; and that they are unsustainable due to the absence of follow-up support by the program provider.

However, not all workshops are ineffective, as demonstrated by the conceptual change science teaching project (Neale, Smith, & Johnson, 1990), and the *Educational Leaders in Mathematics* (ELM) *Project* (Simon & Schifter, 1991). The former was a four-

week summer institute[7] that was designed to assist Kindergarten to Grade 3 science teachers develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge to teach a unit on light and shadows. The training activities included teachers conducting pre- and post-interviews with summer science camp children to gauge their concept about lights and shadow, and teachers developing preliminary teaching plans of the units for their classrooms, amongst others (Neale et al., 1990). Eight out of ten teachers were generally successful in implementing the conceptual change unit and in changing students' conceptions (Neale et al., 1990). Meanwhile, the ELM was an intensive, two-week summer institute that was designed to introduce the constructivist view of learning as a basis for mathematics teachers' instructional decisions. Teacher participants learned about selected mathematics units, participated in group discussion, and studied students' understanding and misconceptions of mathematics, via videotaped and live individual interviews with students (Simon & Schifter, 1991). A year after the program almost all of the project participants were reported to have successfully adopted a constructivist teaching strategy in their teaching (Simon & Schifter, 1991).

Despite both aforementioned programs being conducted as short-term workshops, their success was attributed to the incorporation of reform-based activities into their training programs, such as group discussion, information sharing and peer observation, and also the incorporation of follow-up supervision and support in the classroom after the completion of the workshops. Instructors from the conceptual change science teaching project held monthly meetings with the teachers, coached the teachers, and gave them encouragement and suggestions for their lesson plans (Neale et al., 1990). The ELM provided extensive

[7] A summer institute is a teacher PD program that is commonly known in the United States and, as its name implies, is conducted over the summer school holiday.

post-training classroom support and supervision by arranging for a consultant to visit each participant in his or her classroom weekly as an observer, sometimes as co-teacher or demonstration teacher, from September to May of the year following the program; and a half-an-hour discussion was held with the classroom teacher after the lesson to address lesson-related matters (Simon & Schifter, 1991). Meanwhile, a case study reported by Garet, Birman, Porter, Desimone and Herman (1999) also involved follow-up support and supervision. In this study, Garet et al. conducted ten in-depth case studies, in addition to a national survey, on American mathematics and science teachers who participated in PD programs sponsored in part by the *Eisenhower PD Program*. In their district case study in Maple City, Ohio, which offered half- to full-day training by grade level, Garet et al. describe that teachers were supported by mentors in their classroom to help them plan their lessons, team-teach, and gather necessary instructional materials, and were also allocated time by the district during the school day to gather and discuss matters pertaining to their instructional practice. However, when follow-up support and supervision for teachers subsequently ceased, it had negatively impacted students' academic achievement; as Robbins and Wolfe (1987) also discovered in their longitudinal study. They reported that both students' activity engagement rate and achievement in reading and mathematics, which had shown significant improvement in the first three years of the four-year staff development program had declined by the fourth year. Robbins and Wolfe (1987) justify that the plausible reasons for their findings are due to the absence of prior, regularly scheduled classroom observations by the trainers, and the teachers' involvement and added responsibilities in new programs, both of which resulted in their receiving little feedback on their teaching (Robbins & Wolfe, 1987). These crucial findings by Robbins and Wolfe indicate that ongoing follow-up support and supervision are vital to sustain teachers' instructional practice and growth. These findings show that, despite most of the aforementioned PD programs being conducted using a

traditional approach, i.e. being conducted as short-term workshops, the participants' successful learning outcomes were attributed to the program's fulfilling the learning needs of the participants and the incorporation of some element of reform approaches such as active learning and/or follow-up support.

Meanwhile, research has shown that reform approaches are effective in improving teachers' instructional practice (Good & Grouws, 1987; G. M. Sparks, 1986) and in encouraging team participation (Little, 1981). Sixteen fourth-grade teachers participated in a 10-session, half-day mathematics training program that involved group discussion, information sharing, writing activities and lesson development. Post-training observations showed that the teachers' lesson development skill and mathematics presentations had improved; and the students scored better in the Stanford Achievement Test and mathematical problem solving (Good & Grouws, 1987). G. M. Sparks (1986) report that teachers who participated in peer observation demonstrated improvement in their teaching practices because they were able to pick up new teaching ideas and self-analyse their instructional behaviour in order to make significant changes to their own teaching. In Little's (1981) study, one of her six case studies shows that teachers from Reed Junior High who participated in a one-week mastery learning training program reportedly achieved great success in implementing mastery learning in their lessons. The program required the teachers to cooperate as a team to design and plan the curriculum units. The camaraderie among the teachers was also a crucial, peer-support factor in sustaining their interest, excitement and hard work in their new learning and classroom implementation. Similar to the earlier review on traditional approaches, these studies indicate that some of the aforementioned programs also incorporated both traditional and reform approaches, and have produced successful learning outcomes amongst the teachers.

This review has shown that traditional approaches such as short-term workshops have evolved with the incorporation of reform-based features such as group discussion, peer observation, coaching and mentoring, amongst others, into the program designs, in order to produce effective learning outcomes similar to those of reform-approach programs. The incorporation of the aforementioned features into workshops resulted in teachers' successful adoption of new instructional skills, which subsequently has led to students' learning achievement. The studies in this section of the review partially fulfil the *structural features* (e.g. appropriate duration, form, and participation), and *core features* (content focus, active learning, and coherence) that Birman, Desimone, Porter and Garet (2000) list as features of high quality teacher PD programs based on their findings and summary of the Eisenhower PD Program. Therefore, it would be justifiable to consider traditional approaches as being equally effective as reform approaches, depending on the structural and core features of the programs.

2.4 Research evaluating professional development programs

Many scholars have endeavoured to clarify some characteristics and principles that constitute effective teacher PD that are crucial to increasing teacher knowledge and skills, improving their practice, and enhancing their student learning outcomes (Birman et al., 2000; Desimone et al., 2002; Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Guskey, 2002, 2003a). Some of the common elements are program duration, collective participation, follow-up support, fulfilment of teachers' professional needs, active learning, content focus, coherence, and program approaches, e.g. traditional and reform approaches, amongst others.

In the following section, five elements that constitute part of the elements of effective PD programs will be reviewed, namely *teachers' needs*, *content focus*, *active learning*, *program duration*, and *follow-up support*.

2.4.1 Teachers' needs

Based on Steffy and Wolfe's (2001) *Life Cycle of the Career Teacher* model, teachers go through six phases in their career: *Novice*, *Apprenticeship*, *Professional*, *Expert*, *Distinguished*, and *Emeritus*. Novice teachers' early career falls into the *Novice* and *Apprenticeship* phases, while senior teachers' mid-career extends between the *Professional*, *Expert* and *Distinguished* phases, and potentially the *Emeritus* phase (Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). This model offers a precise representation of the researcher of the present study's previous career as a teacher prior to transitioning into academia. The researcher's seven-year teaching experience would have categorised her as under the *Professional* phase. Lyons (2008) argues that novice teachers require considerably more guidance in the early phases of their teaching careers, which he discovered in his study among Australian teachers teaching Science at primary and secondary levels in the metropolitan, provincial, and remote schools. He substantiates his argument effectively based on the results of the national survey conducted by the National Centre for Science, ICT, and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia, which reports that primary teachers felt under-prepared to teach science after their pre-service training (Lyons, 2008). In an earlier case study conducted by Garet et al. (1999) in Commuteville, Virginia in the United States, novice teachers were provided with assistance in their first year of teaching by being paired with experienced teachers who offered the latter guidance, assistance and support over the course of a school year. The research reviewed above strongly suggests that novice teachers PD needs are qualitatively different from those of their more experienced colleagues.

Educational researchers have argued for the importance of conducting surveys on teachers' needs in order to identify the types of training that they require in order to enhance their professional needs. A. Kennedy and Clinton (2009) explored the PD needs of teachers in Scotland who were in between the second and sixth year of their careers, and found that the teachers had different instructional and career development needs, e.g. topic-based concerns, a desire to implement current curriculum initiatives effectively, and issues pertaining to their career advancement and development, amongst others. This finding substantiates the aforementioned *Life Cycle of the Career Teacher* model, which categorises teachers in between the second and sixth year of their careers under the end phase of *Apprenticeship* and beginning phase of *Professional*. Khandehroo, Mukunda and Alavi (2011), who surveyed 1035 English language teachers in the Melaka state of Malaysia, report that 99% of the respondents indicated very high or high levels of PD needs for instructional skills training, e.g. maintaining language skills, assessing students, and incorporating cooperative learning into their lessons. Interestingly, a majority of primary school English language teachers in Malaysia who participated in Kabilan and Veratharaju's (2013) survey (n = 1561) indicated that their students' needs take precedence over their professional needs in the development, planning and organisation of a PD program. In addition, Quick, Holtzman, and Chaney (2009) report that teachers in seven case-study schools noted that PD programs should address topics that are pertinent to their classroom works and address the specific needs of teacher-learners according to their grade levels. There are strengths and limitations amongst the aforementioned three studies. Khandehroo et al.'s (2011) and Kabilan and Veratharaju's (2013) studies were conducted within a short time-frame, and survey questionnaires were the sole instrument that was utilised in the data collection. However, both studies were able to obtain good return rates, which included more than 1,000 survey respondents. In contrast, Quick et al.'s (2009) study was reported based on substantial

findings from the first year of a three-year study between 2004 and 2005 in San Diego, California. Even though the number of case-study teacher participants were less substantial, i.e. 100 participants compared to the more than 1000 survey respondents, qualitative data was collected by Quick and her colleagues via 100 case study interviews and quantitative data was obtained via 624 teachers' PD logs, which detailed reports on 2427 PD activities. Hence, Khandehroo et al.'s (2011) and Kabilan and Veratharaju's (2013) studies were quantitative and more generalisable, while Quick et al.'s (2009) study offers a combination of quantitative and rich, in-depth qualitative findings.

The differences in the aforementioned teachers' needs suggest that PD programs must be flexible as opposed to being standardised (A. Kennedy & Clinton, 2009). This substantiates Sandholtz's (2002) earlier findings, which reported that there was also no consensus across teachers regarding the type of PD activities that they would prefer to participate in. She justified teachers had preferences for different programs, because an activity that is applicable to one teacher might not be applicable to another (Sandholtz, 2002), due to differences in their classroom settings and students' levels of proficiency (Khandehroo et al., 2011). When teachers are forced to participate in a program that is irrelevant to their PD needs, they become disengaged from the learning activities (Cannon, Kitchel, Duncan, & Arnett, 2011). Failure to meet teachers' needs could result in their feeling incompetent as a professional and within the classroom, and this could subsequently lead to burnout (Friedman & Farber, 1992). This was documented in Friedman and Farber's (1992) study, which investigated the relationship between teacher burnout and teachers' perceptions of themselves as professionals, and their perceptions of how others within the educational system view them. They found a strong negative correlation between teachers' professional satisfaction and burnout. Day (1999) argues that neglecting the concerns of individual teachers' PD needs and having poorly conceptualised PD programs that do not

relate teachers' learning experiences to workplace conditions would have little positive impact upon teachers' and students' learning outcomes. Therefore, these researchers suggest the multiple domino effects that could affect teachers and students as a result of PD programs that do not cater to the varying professional needs of teachers.

In order to fulfil teachers' needs, research emphasises the importance of active engagement and collaboration between PD provider and teachers, which provides opportunities for the latter to select, plan, carry out and evaluate the PD activities that they are involved in (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Hayes, 1995; Sandholtz, 2002). This substantiates Knowles's (1980) Adult Learning Theory that adults should be active participants in the planning process of their learning activities and experiences. Even though Hayes (1995) was one of the proponents of this recommendation, he also acknowledges that it is difficult to live up to, and that teachers' ''involvement' has often been reduced to asking teachers which topics they would like to see dealt with on subsequent courses' (p. 257), while citing an example of the Rural Primary English Program in Malaysia.

Based on the emphasis and findings from the aforementioned literature in regard to the importance of PD programs fulfilling the learning needs of teachers, education researchers such as J. M. Lieberman and Wilkins (2006) have designed an extensive four-step PD model called the *Professional Development Pathways Model* (PDPM), which takes participants' needs into account as one of the top and preliminary emphases in designing a PD program. The needs assessment results are subsequently used as baselines to design the program. A unique aspect of the *Conducting the needs assessment* phase in the PDPM is the inclusion of adult learning theory, teacher's development level, and certification requirements, in order to accommodate the varying teachers' needs; which, to the knowledge of the present study' author, have not been incorporated by other models. The PDPM has

since been adopted in the twelve-step *Instructional Process Model* for teachers to plan and execute effective instruction (Balan, Manko, & Phillips, 2011). In addition, H. J. Lee (2004) developed a PD program model based on teachers' needs by gathering extensive information through interviews with teachers and administrators, a survey, students' standardised test results, and local schools' improvement plans, in order to design personalised and individualised programs for the teachers. The programs were constantly evaluated and modified throughout the year, which ensured maximisation of the positive effects of the PD programs on teachers' instructional practice, and to sustain teachers' long-term learning (H. J. Lee, 2004). The strength of this model is the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the evaluation process at the end of the program.

2.4.2 Content: Emphasis on subject matter and how students learn specific content

Several studies have documented the profound importance of program content, which impacts teachers' knowledge and skills, and student learning. Birman et al. (2000) argue that *content knowledge* was directly related to teachers' increase in knowledge and skills in their nationwide study in the United States on teachers who participated in the Eisenhower PD Program. Quick et al. (2009) examines the practices of teacher PD in San Diego, California, and their effect on literacy instruction, and concludes that emphasis on teachers' understanding of *subject matter* over *instructional strategies* was more likely to improve student learning outcomes. This is because teachers must know the content of their subject area well enough to anticipate student misconceptions and engage students in learning through a wide range of instructional strategies (M. Kennedy, 1999). Shulman (1986, pp. 9-10) called this *pedagogical content knowledge,* which he described as:

> an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult: the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and background bring

> with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons. If those preconceptions are misconceptions, which they so often are, teachers need knowledge of the strategies most likely to be fruitful in reorganizing the understanding of learners, because those learners are unlikely to appear before them as blank slates.

Findings from the above two studies by Birman et al. (2000) and Quick et al. (2009) could be considered substantially reliable, based on the total samples and rich data sources. Birman et al. (2000) conducted a national survey of more than 1000 teachers who participated in PD programs sponsored the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, using probability sampling. As previously mentioned, in Section 2.4.1, findings from Quick et al.'s (2009) study were obtained through case studies of 100 teachers, which included interviews and 624 PD logs.

Several authors argue that PD requires a dual focus, on both knowledge of subject matter content and how students learn specific content. For example, Hiebert et al. (1996, p. 16) argue that the teaching of mathematical concepts requires two forms of knowledge:

> knowledge of the subject to select tasks that encourage students to wrestle with key ideas and knowledge of students' thinking to select tasks that link with students' experience and for which students can see the relevance of the ideas and skills they already possess.

This point is supported by a number of studies on the effect of PD on student achievement. For example, D. Cohen and Hill (1998) conducted a study of California mathematics reform among elementary school teachers, based on a survey data on teachers' PD experiences and student performance on a mathematics test administered by the state. They found that schools with teachers who had participated in PD programs that focused on the teaching of specific mathematics content had higher numbers of students with average mathematics achievement, as opposed to schools in which teachers had not participated (D. Cohen and Hill, 1998). M. Kennedy (1998) found similar results in her review of twelve well-designed

experimental studies of the relationship between PD and student achievement in mathematics and science, which claimed that PD programs that focus on *subject matter knowledge* and *how students learn particular subjects* — as opposed to general PD, generic learning, and teachers' behaviour — had larger positive effects on student achievement outcomes, especially achievement in conceptual understanding. Despite the aforementioned similar claims by D. Cohen and Hill (1998) and M. Kennedy (1998) pertaining to the importance of PD programs that focus on content knowledge, subject matter knowledge and student learning, the study undertaken by D. Cohen and Hill (1998) was considered more extensive in regard to the total sampling, which utilised data from the 1994 survey of California elementary school teachers and 1994 student California Learning Assessment System, and more robust in regard to the analysis of the survey data, which utilised regression coefficient to determine the relationships between the impact of workshop curriculum and teachers' practice, amongst others. In contrast, M. Kennedy (1998) conducted a review of studies of PD programs that aimed to enhance mathematics and science teaching, by focusing specifically on studies that examine effects of programs on student learning.

Many current state-of-the-art PD programs are content-focused, which emphasise content knowledge, subject matter and/or understanding student learning. For example, Diamond, Maerten-Rivera, Rohrer, and Lee (2014) designed a PD intervention program for Grade 5 Science teachers in order to enhance teachers' content knowledge and student achievement outcomes. In addition to conducting workshops and providing school site support, a unique feature of this intervention program was the comprehensive stand-alone science curriculum, which was specifically aligned with the benchmark tested by the state science assessment by consulting the state science content standards. This clearly showed that the intervention was not a standardised program but was personalised for the program

participants. Results from the intervention showed significant effect on teachers' content knowledge but not on the students' learning outcomes. This was probably due to the timing of the study, which was conducted in the first year of the intervention program, which was planned to continue for three years (Diamond et al., 2014). Another, similar example of a state-of-the art study was conducted by O. Lee, Hart, Cuevas, and Enders (2004), who designed an inquiry-based science PD program for Grades 3, 4 and 5 teachers who taught diverse student groups, which enhanced teachers' knowledge of science content and developed their instructional skills in teaching science to diverse student groups. The intervention program was carried out for three years. Statistical analysis indicated overall positive performance by the students at the end of each school year. Hence, content-focused PD programs have been shown to be beneficial for teachers' and students' learning outcomes, and worthwhile especially if they involve long-term time investment by the teachers and trainers.

2.4.3 Active learning

Active learning is one of the three core structural features, in addition to *content focus* and *coherence,* that Garet et al. (1999) list as an important feature of PD based on their review of literature and findings from the Eisenhower PD Program. This form of learning offers teachers the opportunities to participate in interactive programs that engage them socially through opportunities to share problems and ideas, and to cooperate toward teaching and learning solutions (Guskey, 2000). In addition, interactive programs engage teachers physically, cognitively and emotionally through activities such as problem-solving, simulations and role play (Knowles, 1984), and application and follow up (A. Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008), as opposed to sitting 'silent[ly] as stone' (Sandholtz , 2002, p. 816) during workshops.

A number of good PDs have incorporated extensive interactive learning activities for teachers into their programs. Teacher participants in the Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) program participated in small-group seminars to examine different mathematics curricula and enrichment materials, and their application to facilitate children's problem solving using CGI principles; and also participated in discussion with other participants and training staff (Carpenter, Fennema, Peterson, Chiang, & Loef, 1989). In addition, the four-week summer institute that was organised by Neale et al. (1990) was designed to help Science teachers develop subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge to teach a unit on light and shadow. In order to gauge children's concepts pre- and post-teaching, the teachers conducted interviews about light and shadows with the children during the first and fourth weeks of the program, respectively. On the second and third weeks, the teachers conducted lessons on the aforementioned unit to groups of summer campers (Neale et al, 1990). As for Simon and Shifter's (1991) program, which aimed to stimulate and develop teachers' constructivist view of learning to serve as a foundation for their instructional decision-making, the activities included group discussion to discuss the teachers' learning experience, lesson structure and construction, and studying students' understanding and misconceptions via videotaped interviews and one-on-one interviews with students. The significant difference between the study by Carpenter et al. (1989) and those by both Neale et al. (1990) and Simon and Shifter (1991) is the inclusion of children in the latter's programs. This allowed the teachers to have direct interaction with the children and to experiment with their new instructional skill and knowledge on the children, and to gain instant feedback from them. In contrast, teachers in Carpenter et al.'s (1989) study only watched videotapes of children solving numeracy problems.

Other forms of active learning also include school/university partnership activities (Allen, Howells, & Radford, 2013; Sandholtz, 2002). School/university partnership PD

programs offer teachers unconventional learning activities, unlike in schools, including designing programs, developing and co-teaching university courses, interdisciplinary team-teaching, and conducting teacher research (Sandholtz, 2002). One of the limitations that was identified, by the present study's author, in Sandholtz's study was the absence of representatives from the university as part of the interview participants. This inclusion would have added more value and perspective to the findings of the study, in addition to the 24 teacher participants. Similarly, the pre-service, postgraduate teachers who participated in a school/university partnership program in Australia successfully gained effective instructional skills and knowledge in teaching literacy and numeracy (Allen et al., 2013). Meanwhile, an alternative form of active learning that is beneficial for teachers' PD is a teaching practicum for pre-service teachers. For example, six pre-service Malaysian teachers spent six weeks in the Maldives undergoing their teaching practicum, and reportedly gained better teaching confidence and skills, interpersonal skills, self-adaption in a new environment, and world view of education and culture, despite facing language barriers, challenging working conditions, and a new working culture (Kabilan, 2013). In addition, a teaching practicum provides pre-service teachers with the hands-on opportunity to integrate theory into their instructional practice and vice versa (Allen, 2009).

With the advancement of technology, state-of-the art PD programs can now be conducted virtually. For example, an online collaboration project, in a study by Kabilan, Adlina, and Embi (2011), promoted meaningful professional development learning experiences amongst in-service and pre-service teachers. In this study, 142 TESL/TESOL undergraduates from three universities in Malaysia participated in the *Collaborative Learning in a Virtual Environment* (CLVE) project, and gained better language, problem-solving and computer skills, amongst others, by the end of the project. The project offered opportunities for the teachers to share and exchange information on varying teaching

activities, and new teaching approaches and methodology (Kabilan et al., 2011). This sharing was particularly beneficial for pre-service teachers, who were able to gain useful advice from the experienced, in-service teachers (Kabilan et al., 2011). Thus, PD program designers are now able to incorporate on-site and virtual learning activities as part of their program content. The researchers from all the aforementioned studies have reported achieving positive learning outcomes from the teachers and students. To the present author's knowledge, there are no studies that have disputed the inclusion of active learning in teacher PD programs.

2.4.4 Program duration

There are conflicting arguments between educational research scholars as to whether duration (i.e. contact hours and time span) of a PD program affects teachers' learning and instructional practice, and/or student learning outcomes. Garet et al.'s (2001) national survey on 1027 mathematics and science teachers shows that the duration of an activity significantly affects teacher learning, and they argue that PD programs should be sustained over time and include a considerable number of contact hours. Supovitz and Turner (2000) report two findings that strongly link longer PD duration with teachers' use of inquiry-based teaching practices, after approximately eighty hours of PD, and teachers' use of investigative classroom culture, after 160 hours of PD, respectively, based on a random survey sample of 3464 science teachers. Meanwhile, the four-week, eighty-hour Cognitively Guided Instruction summer institute program conducted by Carpenter et al. (1989), which focussed on improving teachers' understanding of student learning in elementary arithmetic, showed positive effects on teachers' instructional skill in teaching problem solving and in students' understanding and problem-solving abilities. Another four-year study, also on the Cognitive Guided Instruction program, which involved twenty one Grades 1 to 3 teachers, by Fennema

et al. (1996), produced similar findings to those of Carpenter et al. (1989). The program included coaching and mentoring in the classroom, and multiple workshops each year, as follows: Year 0 (induction) – one 2 ½-day workshop; Year 1 – one 2-day workshop before the start of the school year, and fourteen 3-hour workshops during the academic year; Year 2 – four 2 1/2-hour workshops, and one 2-day 'reflection workshop'; Year 3 – one 3-hour reflection workshop, and two 2 ½-hour review workshops.

However, these findings conflict with the review by M. Kennedy (1999) and the findings of Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis (2005) and Desimone et al. (2002). For example, M. Kennedy (1999) reviews ten studies on mathematics and science subjects, and argues that programs that provided longer contact hours or time span (e.g. 150 hours, or between eight to sixteen months) surprisingly had either smaller or no effect on *student learning outcomes*, compared with programs with shorter-contact hours or time span (e.g. between three and 100 hours, or between four and eight months). She concludes that the program content has more influence on student learning than the total contact hours. This is because longer duration programs do not necessary yield any benefits if the program activities are not effective, presumably because doing ineffective things longer does not make them any better (M. Kennedy, 1998). Meanwhile, the findings from Ingvarson et al.'s (2005) study on 3250 Australian teachers, regarding their PD activities and perceptions of how the PD affected their instructional practices and student learning outcomes, shows that the number of contact hours yielded no effect on *teacher knowledge* and *practice*, and *student learning outcomes*. A similar finding was reported in a three-year longitudinal study by Desimone et al. (2002), who surveyed 207 mathematics and science teachers on the effects of PD on specific instructional practice, i.e. that there is no significant relationship between contact hours and time span, and teachers' *teaching practices*.

There are three probable factors that could strongly justify these conflicting arguments: total samples, purpose of the study, and choice of statistical analysis. Firstly, Garet et al.'s (2001) and Ingvarson et al.'s (2005) studies were quite similar in their focus on the relationship between features of PD and teachers' knowledge and practices (Ingvarson et al.'s study also looked into teacher efficacy), and their data were analysed using a standardised regression coefficient. However, their samples varied extensively: e.g. Garet et al. (2001) had 1027 samples, while Ingvarson et al. (2005) had more than triple the number of samples at 3250. Similarly, Supovitz and Turner's (2000) and Desimone et al.'s (2002) studies also focused on teacher's instruction, and shared similar statistical analysis, i.e. a two-level Hierarchical Linear Model, to estimate the coefficient. However, Supovitz and Turner (2000) sampled 3464 teachers as opposed to 207 teachers in Desimone et al.'s (2002) sample.

The differences in the purpose of these researchers' studies could have also contributed to these conflicting findings. M. Kennedy's (1999) review focuses solely on *student* learning outcomes, while studies by Garet et al. (2001), Supovitz and Turner (2000), Ingvarson et al. (2005) and Desimone et al. (2002) focus on *teacher* learning outcomes. Meanwhile, Carpenter et al.'s (1989) and Fennema et al.'s (1996) studies focus on both *teachers and students*, e.g. to examine changes in teachers', knowledge, beliefs and instruction, and the impact of those changes on student learning.

Lastly, there were variations in the statistical analyses that were adopted by the researchers, despite sharing a similar purpose of study. For example, in examining the relationship between the features of PD and teachers' teaching practice, Supovitz and Turner (2000) utilised a two-level Hierarchical Linear Model to estimate the coefficients, as opposed to Ingvarson et al. (2005) who adopted a standardised regression coefficient

statistical analysis. In order to measure student learning achievement, Fennema et al. (1996) analysed students' test scores using standard deviation, while M. Kennedy (1999) adopted the standardized effect size to compare findings from her review of studies. Meanwhile, Carpenter et al. (1989) compared student's pre- and post-test achievements in between groups using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Despite these conflicting findings, Garet et al. (1999), Birman et al. (2000) and Desimone et al. (2002) argue that reform activities tend to have longer duration, which provides more active learning opportunities for teachers as opposed to traditional activities. Darling-Hammond (1997) also argue that reform types of activities are more accommodating to teachers' needs and goals. Hence, program duration remains one of the crucial features of effective PD.

Current state-of-the art PD programs, especially reformed types, still conduct short and long-term trainings programs. For example, Goos, Dole and Geiger (2011) designed and conducted a one-year PD program in South Australia to improve primary and secondary school teachers' instructional skills in teaching numeracy. In contrast, the science intervention program that was designed by O. Lee et al. (2004) to improve the academic performance in science of Grades 3, 4 and 5 students lasted for three years. While the research approaches were different, both studies claimed significant achievement of the learning outcomes of the teachers and students. In Goos et al.'s (2011) study, teachers were the targeted participants, while O. Lee et al.'s (2004) participants consisted of students. In addition, the data in Goos et al.'s (2011) study were obtained via lesson observations, teacher and student interviews, and teachers' written tasks. The data in O. Lee et al.'s (2004) study were gathered via the students' pre- and post-standardised test results. Despite these researches being conducted over different durations, this substantiates earlier findings by

Desimone et al. (2002) and Ingvarson et al. (2005) that program duration does not impact teacher knowledge and practice, and student learning outcomes.

2.4.5 Follow-up support

Studies have shown that PD programs that provided follow-up support for teachers after the completion of the programs were able to successfully assist teachers in transferring new instructional strategies into the classrooms, which consequently led to improvement in student learning (Cobb et al., 1991; Fennema et al., 1996; O'Sullivan, 2002; Wood & Sellers, 1996). In the four-year Cognitive Guided Instruction program for mathematics teachers, the program staff members visited each teacher about once a week during the first year, then subsequently reduced the visitation frequency to about once every two weeks by the second year, and only visited them occasionally by the third year (Fennema et al., 1996). By the end of the program, teachers had experienced changes in their beliefs and method of instruction, which resulted in an improvement in their students' problem-solving skills (Fennema et al., 1996). Meanwhile, Cobb et al. (1991) and Wood and Seller (1996) conducted similar projects pertaining to problem-centred mathematics instruction, but targeted second-grade and third-grade students, respectively. Cobb et al. (1991) provided extensive support to teachers during the one-year mathematics project via weekly classroom visits by project staff, which increased to biweekly visits as the year progressed, and four 2-hour workshops; while teachers in Wood and Seller's (1996) study also received extensive intensive follow-up support, which included weekly classroom visits by the project staff and monthly after-school group meetings. As a result, teachers from both studies gained better knowledge about their students' arithmetic solution strategies, and the students reported higher levels of conceptual understanding in mathematics and improved problem-solving skills (Cobb et al., 1991; Wood & Sellers, 1996). In O'Sullivan's (2002) article, based on her doctoral research,

on the PD of 145 unqualified and underqualified primary English teachers in Namibia, she proposes two specific forms of follow-up strategies for the trainer and teachers, respectively, to support teachers' implementation effort with new instructional practice: 1. *Trainer follow-up strategies*, which adopt lesson observation, learner assessment, progress meetings, checklist, trainer playing a supportive versus an inspectorial role, and demonstration; and 2. *Teacher follow-up strategies*, which involve workshop handout, diaries, self-evaluation forms, and peer coaching. O'Sullivan's research is an extensive and detailed longitudinal study that focuses on effective follow-up strategies for teacher PD, particularly in a developing country. In addition, none of the studies that the present study's author has reviewed have disputed the significance of follow-up support in PD programs.

Two of the common follow-up strategies in the aforementioned four studies are classroom and lesson observations, which are highly recommended to assist teachers in implementing new skills and activities (see Bratcher & Stroble, 1993; Hayes, 1995, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2002; Teed & Franco, 2014). Both strategies enable observers to provide support for, to share their experience with, and to learn from the teachers, which will subsequently lead to lasting change and continuing support (Hayes, 1995). However, O'Sullivan (2002) argues that there are issues arising pertaining to the adoption of these methods of observation. Firstly, the use of a grading system in lesson observation data may lead to observer bias due to its subjective nature and the influence of factors in observers' judgement (O'Sullivan, 2002). Secondly, O'Sullivan (2002) describes the contradictory outcomes at the end of her two lesson observations whereby the same group of students had produced poor and excellent standards of writing, the latter which she described as the result of a rehearsed lesson, most probably due to the pressure of teachers' being observed and desire to produce good student achievement results. Furthermore, lesson observation is generally and negatively perceived by teachers as a form of inspection, performance evaluation, and

judgemental (Hayes, 1995). In addition to lesson observation, Hayes (1995) suggests adopting peer observation when two or more teachers from one school attend a course. This is also advocated by Joyce and Showers (1995), as peer observation allows teacher to practice and commit errors with each other when implementing new innovations, and to build a community of practice.

However, an interesting finding from Robbins and Wolfe's (1987) longitudinal study shows that, when follow-up support and supervision for teachers are subsequently ceased, it can result in a negative impact on students' academic achievement, e.g. students' activity engagement rate and achievement in reading and mathematics, which had shown significant improvement in the first three years of the four-year staff development program, declined by the fourth year. Robbins and Wolfe (1987) justify the plausible reasons for these findings as due to the absence of prior regularly scheduled classroom observations by the trainer, and the teachers' involvement and added responsibilities in new programs, which resulted in their receiving little feedback on their teaching. These crucial findings by Robbins and Wolfe substantiate findings from the literature in regard to the importance of ongoing follow-up support and supervision in order to sustain teachers' instructional practice.

Change in teachers' instructional practice is a slow process (Hayes, 1995); but why do some teachers fail to adopt new practice or innovation? Adams and Chen (1981) argue that, when teachers are familiar and comfortable with the teaching strategies they have adopted, especially for long term, and they are effective, teachers find no reason to adopt alternative strategies into their instructional practice. Their decision is even more reasonable when there is no guarantee that the new strategies are more effective than the "old" ones (Adams & Chen, 1981). Hayes (1995, p. 258) provides an example to substantiate this situation, in which trainers at the English Resource and Instruction Centres (ERICs) in

Thailand initially employed the transmission models during courses, prior to receiving any trainer development training:

> …trainers simply exemplified a series of techniques or activities for various skills, then provided written handouts which detailed the steps for carrying them out. Little effort was made to get teachers to consider the rationales or principles underlying the use of particular classroom activities, or to encourage specific teaching-learning behaviour — why teach one way rather than another?

On the other hand, Adams and Chen (1981) explain that the second reason for the slow change in teachers' teaching practice after completing a training is because they may, consciously or subconsciously, rationalise that adoption of the new strategies denotes their objection to the validity of their previous practice. Prabhu (1987, pp. 105-106) considers that teachers' reluctance is due to pedagogical 'threat' and 'harm':

> The threat to existing routines can make many teachers reject innovation out of hand, as an act of self-protection. Alternatively, a strong sense of plausibility about some existing perception may make some teachers see the innovation as counter-intuitive and look on its implementation as pedagogically harmful.

However, open rejection, as Prabhu describes above, is not an option for teachers when a new education curriculum syllabus has been sanctioned. An example is the implementation of the Malaysian national New Primary School Curriculum, or *Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah* (KBSR), in 1983. It required a departure from a teacher-centred to learner-centred approach, and the adoption of English for communicative purpose activities (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1982, 1983), as opposed to grammar rote learning. When rejection is too great a risk, teachers may adopt the new strategies while rejecting their previous perceptions, but only employing them as a routine; or disregard the perception from practice, but only apply it in a relevant context, for example employing professional discussion outside the classroom (Prabhu, 1987).

Based on Adams and Chen's (1981) aforementioned reasons for teachers' hesitance in adopting new teaching instructions and innovations into their lessons, follow-up support is vital to ensure an effective transfer and implementation of new skill and knowledge into their respective unique classroom settings (Guskey, 2002; Ingvarson et al., 2005), especially when it involves the implementation of a new curriculum (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Program providers' and trainers' ignorance of the necessity of follow-up among teachers might be likely to result in the failure of the program, as Fullan (1991, p. 4) posits in his phenomenology of change:

> Neglect of the phenomenology of change – that is, how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended – is at the heart of the spectacular lack of success of most reform.

Current state-of-the-art PD programs, particularly long-term training, provide follow-up support throughout or after the completion of the programs. For example, the *Algebra Learning for All* (ALFA) project, which was conducted for two years, offered on-site follow-up meetings for the teachers (Givvin & Santagata, 2011); and the *Instructional Intelligence* program, which aimed to support *Vocational Education and Training* (VET) teachers to extend their instructional skill in teaching young adults, ran for four years and provided team meetings with the teachers (Saunders, 2012). Both studies report positive learning outcomes amongst the teachers, which might be attributed to specific factors other than the provision of follow-up support. For example, teachers in the Instructional Intelligence program had voluntarily participated in the program, which means it would not be a surprise that they had reported successfully implementing the project innovations into their lessons. In contrast, the participation in the ALFA project was mandatory for all Grade 6 teachers. The positive learning outcomes amongst these teachers could be attributed to the content of the project, which addressed three specific areas of mathematics, namely fractions, ratio/proportion, and

variables/expressions/equations, as opposed to having generic content. Hence, this shows that follow-up support in PD programs partially contributes to the impact of the program, in addition to other effective elements.

This section has reviewed existing literature concerning five selected elements that contribute to an effective and successful PD program. These elements were incorporated into the present study's questionnaire and interview, in order to evaluate the ProELT teachers' perceptions and the impact of the program, in terms of the following details:

- **Teachers' needs**: The ProELT participants were selected based on their CPT and Aptis tests results without taking into consideration their PD needs, experience, teaching levels and locations, and students' language proficiency, among other factors. The present study aims to identify the teachers' perceptions of whether the ProELT fulfilled their PD needs.

- **Content**: The ProELT coursebook is context-independent (standardised), involving delivery of standardized content to the teacher participants from mixed teaching levels and locations. This study aims to identify the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT coursebook and activities, whether they were relevant to their teaching, whether they had an impact on their skills and knowledge or their subject matter content, and their suggestions to improve the content of the program.

- **Active learning**: This study aims to identify the teachers' learning experiences during the ProELT, whether they had the opportunities to participate in interactive activities such as problem-solving and role play.

- **Program duration**: The ProELT was a one-year PD program. This study aims to identify the teachers' perceptions of whether the program duration affected their learning and instructional practice, and also suggestions for their preferred training duration, e.g. short term or long term.

- **Follow-up support**: This study aims to identify the teachers' perceptions of the follow-up support that was provided by the ProELT trainers and program provider, and the impact of the follow-up support on the teachers' learning experiences and learning outcomes.

2.5 Theoretical framework

This study is guided by the theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation by Huber (2011) (Figure 2.1). The reasons for the suitability of the framework will be explained below.

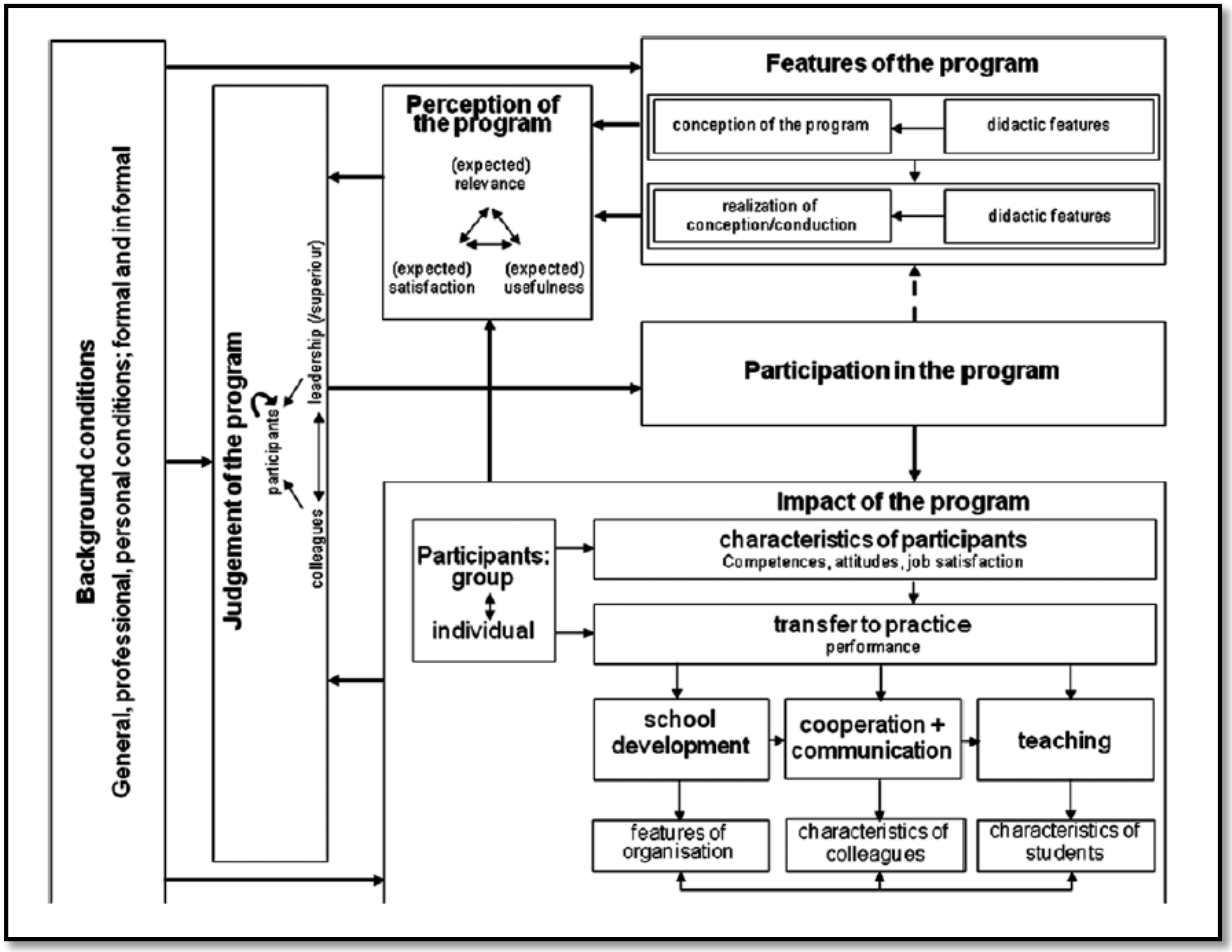

Figure 2.1 Theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation on PD.

Source: Huber (2011)

Huber outlines six main elements in a PD that can be researched and/or evaluated on: 1. features of the program; 2. background conditions; 3. perception of the program; 4. judgement of the program; 5. participation in the program; and 6. impact of the program. It is not possible for a study of this scope to address all these areas. The researcher has chosen to focus on the participants' perceptions of the ProELT (*perception of the program*), and the impact of the ProELT on the characteristics of the participants (*impact of the program*). *Features of the program* such as the program coursebook was also included as a secondary

focus of this study, as they also have an impact on teachers' perceptions towards the program (Huber, 2011).

The justification for choosing the *perception of the program* element was because the participants were the main stakeholders in the program. The participants' perceptions are influenced by the *features of the program* (didactic features), which Huber divides into macro- and micro-didactic features. The former features include the program provider, the purpose of the PD, the trainers' professional background, the status of the PD (mandatory versus optional), the duration, the timing, and the time structure (i.e. multi-phase, modularisation, sequencing) (p. 846). Examples of micro-didactic features include the aim of teaching-learning situations, the formats, the content, the methods, the media used, and the trainers who conduct and implement the program (p. 846). This justifies the researcher's purpose for analysing the features of the ProELT as a secondary focus of the study in relation to their influence on the teachers' perceptions of the program.

Meanwhile, Huber proposes that the *impact of the program* may be observed on two **levels**: the entire group of participants (collective impact), and the individual participant (individual impact). For the present study, the researcher focused on the impact on the individual teacher participants in order to gather more personal views from each participant. In addition, Huber further proposes two **kinds** of impact that may be observed: the *change of characteristics of participants* (e.g. competences, attitudes, job satisfaction), and *transfer of practice* (e.g. application of new knowledge from the PD into the classroom lessons and modification in instructional practice) (p. 848). For the present study, the researcher focused on both impacts in order to determine the extent of the ProELT's success in fulfilling the participants' professional needs and in transferring the knowledge and skills gained into the classroom.

The main attraction of Huber's framework is that '[it is] not only a framework of structure and analysis for particular research studies but also a framework for evaluation and for the needs assessment of PD' (p. 846). Due to the design of this framework, which reflects up-to-date components of effective PD, and the influence and impact of each component on one or more other components, it has been considered as the ideal point of reference for exploring and identifying the ProELT participants' perceptions of and experiences with the program. In addition, the framework is also an ideal reference to identify the impact of the ProELT on the participants and the program design. For example, based on Huber's model, teachers' *perception of a program* is determined by the macro and micro didactic features of the program. If the teachers negatively perceive the program, the framework guides the study one step back to the *features of the program* in order to determine the reasons; and if necessary, another step backward leads the study to the starting point of the model, which looks into the *background conditions* of the teachers. Any findings arising from this study would also be used to elucidate and substantiate the remaining components of the theoretical framework as well as to further enhance and expand the framework.

The present study is also guided by a second theoretical framework namely Adult Learning Theory. It is known as *andragogy*, which is defined as 'the arts and science of helping adults to learn' (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). The andragogical model (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005, pp. 64-68) is based on six principles of adult learning requirements:

1. **The need to know** - Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
2. **The learners' self-concept -** Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions.
3. **The learners' experience** - Adults have a vast experience that is a rich source for learning.

4. **Readiness to learn -** Adults become ready to learn things that they need to know that are relevant to their real-life situation.
5. **Orientation to learning -** Adults' learning is life-centred (or task-centred or problem-centred), which will motivate them to learn when they perceive that learning will help them perform tasks or deal with problems in their life situations.
6. **Motivation -** Adults are more responsive to internal motivators (e.g. self-satisfaction, self-esteem) as opposed to external motivators (e.g. promotions, higher salaries).

Figure 2.2 shows a visual representation of the adoption of andragogy, and its relation to the ESL teachers' perceptions of and experiences with the ProELT.

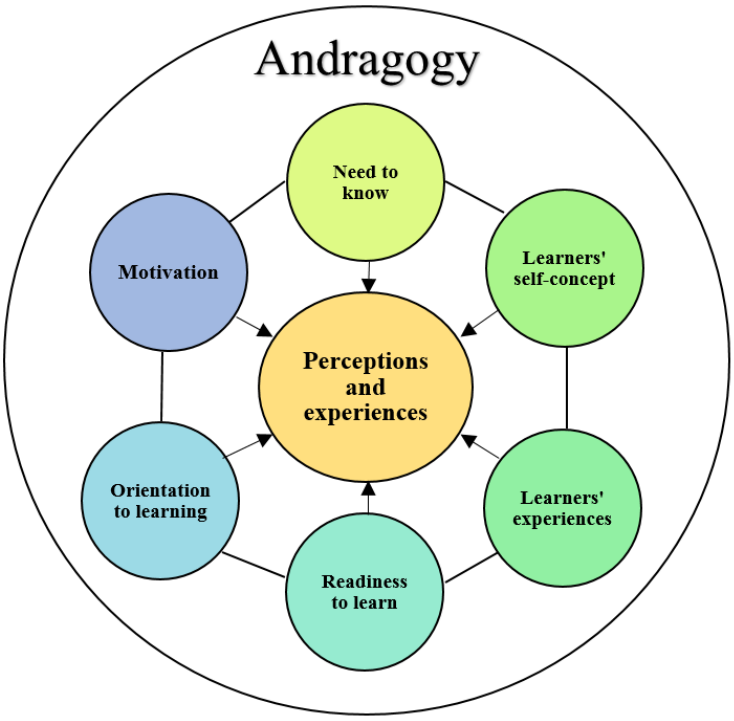

Figure 2.2 The relationship between andragogy and ESL teachers' perceptions of and experiences with the ProELT.

Source: Based on the ideas of Karagiorgi, Kalogirou, Theodosiou, Theophanous, and Kendeou (2008) and Knowles (1980).

Andragogy is used in this study to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences with the ProELT on whether the program provider had taken the aforementioned into consideration, i.e. teachers' previous experiences, self-concept, learning orientations, readiness to learn, and motivations prior to designing the program, and also whether the former had clearly explained the program purpose, aim and structures to the teachers at the commencement of the program (i.e. catering to the teachers' need to know about the program). Although not all of these factors might be fully embedded in the ProELT, they are among the pertinent factors that ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of a PD (Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 1991; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Hayes, 1995, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2002). Hence, andragogy also influences the perceptions' of the ProELT participants as to whether the program was relevant, satisfying and useful (Huber, 2011). Research also indicates that program providers need to consider teachers' experiences, particularly experienced teachers, when designing a program, due to the different stages of their careers and teaching contexts (Lessing & De Witt, 2007), and the fact that they may have different learning needs (Knowles et al., 2005). Significantly, Karagiorgi, Kalogirou, Theodosiou, Theophanous and Kendeou (2008) have adopted this theoretical framework to explore the degree to which adult learning traits[8] were embedded in teacher seminars and workshops in Cyprus.

Adult learners are different from children (Merriam, 2001), in that an adult:

1. has an independent self-concept and can direct his or her own learning,
2. has vast life experiences that are a rich resource for learning,
3. has learning needs closely pertaining to his or her social roles,
4. is problem-centred and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and

[8] The terms "traits" and "principles" are used interchangeably in the present study, with the latter commonly utilised by Knowles (1980).

5. is intrinsically motivated as opposed to externally motivated.

Hence, Adult Learning Theory integrates self-directed learning, experiential learning, action learning, and project-based learning (Conlan, Grabowski, & Smith, 2003), which is different from children's learning, which is more teacher-centred, and in which children play a submissive role (Knowles et al., 2005).

2.5.1 Andragogy and its critiques

The term "andragogy" was first coined by German grammar school teacher Alexander Kapp in 1833 (Knowles, 1990). It was proposed as a theory of learning by Malcom S. Knowles, in 1968, who defined andragogy as 'the art and science of helping adults learning', as opposed to *pedagogy*, which is 'the art and science of teaching children' (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). The pedagogical model was the sole model of assumptions of learners prior to the advent of adult education in the early 1920s (Knowles, 1979). Due to the lack of an alternative model of assumptions specifically for adult learners and as a guide for adult educators, Knowles' intention for proposing andragogy 'was to present an alternative set of assumptions to those that had been traditionally made by teachers of children, so that teachers would have another choice' (Knowles, 1979, p. 52). Andragogy and pedagogy were initially regarded as antithetical, based on six assumptions of adults and children learning (Knowles, 1990), as illustrated in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4 Comparison between adults and children learning assumptions

Learning needs	Adults	Children
1. The need to know	Need to know the reason they need to learn something before undertaking learning task.	Do not need to know how knowledge will apply to their lives.
2. The learners' self-concept	Independent learner.	Dependent learner.
3. The role of learners' experience	Adult's rich experience influences their learning style and self-identify.	Children's experience has very little significance in their learning.
4. Readiness to learn	Ready to learn in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations.	Ready to learn in order to pass tests/exams or to get promoted.
5. Orientation to learning	Life-centred, problem-centred, or task-centred learning orientation. Learn more effectively when able to apply knowledge and skills to real-life situations.	Subject-centred learning orientation.
6. Motivation	Internally motivated by increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life. Sometimes externally motivated by better job prospects, promotions, and higher salaries.	Externally motivated by grades, teachers' approval or disapproval, and parental pressures.

Source: Knowles (1990) pp. 55-61

Despite having made considerable contributions to and been an influence on adult education, andragogy has also been critiqued by scholars of adult education. Firstly, theorists argue from a critical philosophical perspective that andragogy lacks critical theory that is more concerned with learning outcomes, specifically social change (Merriam & Brockett, 1997), and criticise its ambivalent capacity to 'serve as the foundation for a unifying theory of adult education' (Cross, 1981, p. 227). Mezirow (1991) and Brookfield (1984) argue that andragogy should encompass elements of learning outcomes, namely perspective transformation and a critical paradigm of self-directed learning, respectively, as opposed to

focusing on the teaching/learning transaction. Knowles accepted the criticism that andragogy does not adopt critical theory and social change, but explained that andragogy is rooted in humanistic and pragmatic philosophy (Knowles, 1989, 1990). The humanistic perspective focuses on individual self-actualization (Knowles et al., 2005), while the pragmatic philosophy values knowledge gained from learner's experience as opposed to that from educators (Merriam & Brockett, 1997). Hence, the philosophies of pragmatism and humanism, in addition to behaviourism and constructivism, focus on the dimensions of the learner and the learning transaction (Knowles et al., 2005), as opposed to social change; and this justifies andragogy as an individual-transactional model of adult learning (Brookfield, 1986). McKenzie (1977), a proponent of andragogy, posited that the aforementioned disagreements stemmed from the adult educators' different philosophical orientations, in which opponents of andragogy, who subscribed to a unified outlook on education, argued on the basis of a classical metaphysics approach, while adult educators, who adhered to a different perspective on education, adopted a phenomenological approach. Elias (1979) disputed McKenzie's position that the root cause of the andragogical-pedagogical debates were merely philosophical by nature, and further made a strong claim that it was 'a misguided attempt to enhance the status for the field of adult education' (p. 254). McKenzie (1977) responded to Elias' critique by assuming an existentialist stance that children and adults are existentially different; a point which Elias agreed with, but he suggested was not necessarily significant, since men and women are existentially different but no one has yet proposed that 'the art and science of teaching women differs from the art and science of teaching men' (Elias, 1979, p. 254).

The second critique pertains to the contention regarding the status of andragogy as a theory of adult learning. Previously, andragogy had been classified as 'a theory of adult education, theory of adult learning, theory of the technology of adult learning, method of

adult education, technique for adult education, and a set of assumptions' (Davenport & Davenport, 1985, p. 157). Hartree (1984) suggested that andragogy was merely a principle of good practice, or a description of 'what the adult learner should be like' (p. 205). Furthermore, she highlighted Knowles' conflicting description of andragogy as a theory of *learning* but also often using the term in opposition to pedagogy, the latter which focuses on the *teaching* of children; thus, Hartree questioned whether andragogy is a theory of learning or teaching, and the existence of a theory at all (Hartree, 1984). Meanwhile, Houle (1972), who taught Knowles during his graduate years, rejected andragogy as an organizing principle of adult education, and preferred to view education as a single fundamental human process instead of a division between andragogy and pedagogy; hence, Houle perceived andragogy as a technique or set of techniques, as opposed to a theory. In response to the critiques, Knowles concurred that andragogy is less a theory of adult learning than 'a model of assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for an emergent theory' (Knowles, 1989, p. 112), and 'more as a technique rather than a fully developed theory of adult education or adult learning' (Davenport & Davenport, 1985, p. 155).

The third and final critique pertains to Knowles' presenting the andragogy and pedagogy assumptions about learners as a dichotomy (Elias, 1979). Elias (1979) argued that andragogy was not exclusively for adults, as some andragogical principles could be applied to children by comparing and emphasising a significant resemblance between Knowles' theory of andragogy and Dewey's theory of progressive education (for children); and hence, that andragogy is a general concept of education that is adequate for both adult and children. In addition, elementary, secondary and college educators had reported to Knowles that children and youths were able to learn more effectively in many circumstances by using the andragogical model, and had observed conflicting results when the aforementioned model had been applied to adult learners in some situations (Knowles, 1990). These claims by Elias

and educators raised the question of to what extent the andragogy assumptions were characteristic of adult learners only. In respond to these critique and reports, Knowles admitted to making a serious mistake in subtitling his book *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: 'Andragogy Versus Pedagogy'* (Knowles, 1979), which had established a controversial dichotomous view of andragogy-pedagogy, even though Knowles had emphasised the adoptable value of andragogy approaches for children under certain circumstances (Knowles, 1990). Knowles' book was subsequently revised and re-subtitled *'From Pedagogy to Andragogy'* to emphasise the continuum perspective on both approaches (Knowles, 1990). These differences had been emphasised in an earlier article written by Knowles, in which he concluded:

> So I am not saying that pedagogy is for children and andragogy is for adults, since some pedagogical assumptions are realistic for adults in some situation and some andragogical assumptions are realistic for children in some situations. And I am certainly not saying that pedagogy is bad and andragogy is good; each is appropriate given the relevant assumptions (Knowles, 1979, p. 53).

From this discussion, andragogy will continue to generate debate, discussion, and research to further enrich the understanding and field of adult learning, in addition to its impact on adult education. Despite the debates over its status as a theory and Knowles' concurrence that andragogy is more of a model of assumptions about learning (for adults) than a fully developed theory of adult education or adult learning, andragogy continues to remain a 'pillar' of Adult Learning Theory (Merriam, 2001, p. 11).

For the present study, the six principles of adult learning in andragogy, *the need to know, learners' self-concept, learners' experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning*, and *motivation* (see Table 2.4), were adopted into the questionnaire as part of an evaluation of the degree to which adult learning principles were embedded in the ProELT. This is because the selection criterion for this program was based solely on the results of the

teachers' CPT and Aptis tests without taking into consideration their learning needs, teaching experience and background knowledge of the subject. This form of mandatory participation could negatively impact the teachers' motivation due to their lack of autonomy in selecting their own PD program; and it could also result in ineffective learning outcomes. To the researcher's knowledge, only one study, by Karagiorgi et al. (2008), incorporated adult learning principles into their questionnaire as a method of evaluating the degree to which adult learning traits were incorporated in voluntary in-service teacher seminars and courses, in Cyprus. Responses from survey participants indicate that the training had embedded adult learning traits to a great extent, with most of the traits scoring mean scores above 3.0 out of 5.0. This satisfactory result can be attributed to the voluntary participation of the training, which allowed the teachers to attend seminars and courses of their preference. Karagiorgi et al. (2008) note that one of limitations of their study was the adoption of closed-type questionnaire as its sole instrument. Thus, the present study contributes to the existing literature by incorporating adult learning principles as part of a more comprehensive evaluation of the ProELT with the inclusion of interview and focus groups, in order to add value to the program evaluation.

2.6 Study gaps

2.6.1 ESL teacher participation from heterogeneous teaching levels and districts in nationwide professional development program

A review of the literature reveals a paucity of research focusing on nationwide PD programs that involve participation of ESL teachers from both heterogeneous teaching levels (primary and secondary schools) and heterogeneous districts (urban and rural). Hayes' (1995, 2000) research focused on three English projects (one state-level, and two nationwide), which were

joint ventures between Britain, and Malaysia, Thailand and Sri Lanka, respectively. The state-level *Rural Primary English Program* (RuPEP), which was conducted in Sabah, Malaysia, assisted primary school teachers in the rural districts to implement the English syllabus for the national New Primary School Curriculum (Hayes, 1995). In Thailand, the nationwide *Project for the Improvement of Secondary English Teaching* (PISET) was established to develop and improve English language teaching among secondary school teachers (Hayes, 1995). Similar to PISET, the *Sri Lanka Primary English Language Project* (PELP) was also a nationwide training, which aimed 'to improve the quality of teaching in basic English language skills in primary schools in Sri Lanka by establishing a training cadre with the sustainable capacity to implement improved locally-based training for English teachers' (Hayes, 2000, p. 139). In all of the three aforementioned teacher PD programs, Hayes adopted an observation technique to examine the programs, and proposes nine principles for teacher development based on his training experiences with RuPEP and PISET (Hayes, 1995). Through his training experience in PELP, he also proposes a list of principles for project training and development that specifically adopt the cascade training method in order to ensure its successful implementation (Hayes, 1995).

Locke, Whitehead, Dix and Cawkwell's (2011) study pertains to the two-year *National Writing Project* in New Zealand, which aimed to assist primary and secondary school teachers across subjects to embrace the professional identity of a writer in order to enhance 'the experiences of and performance in the writing of their students' (p. 273). Locke et al.'s (2011) samples consisted of fourteen teachers from four primary and four secondary schools located in urban, rural, and semi-rural areas. The authors utilised questionnaire and focus groups to source their data; and their findings indicate that the teachers viewed positively all of the workshops' organisational and pedagogical practices and writing workshops, but to a varying degree.

Two limitations have been identified in the aforementioned studies. Both of Hayes' (1995, 2000) studies were limited to observation method of analysis of the programs, and they did not include any empirical findings from the teachers' perspectives of the programs. Secondly, the samples in Locke et al.'s (2011) study only included a small group of small teachers, although they consisted of heterogeneous teaching levels and locations. A larger sample size might have provided a different evaluation outcome of the National Writing Project by the participants.

Thus, the present study addresses these gaps, and contributes to the existing literature by:

- focusing on teacher participation from both heterogeneous teaching levels and locations in a nationwide, standardised PD program;
- examining the teachers' perceptions and the impact of the ProELT;
- including a larger sample size; and
- utilising a mixed methods approach.

2.6.2 Absence of language officers in professional development research

A review of the literature reveals that none of the existing PD studies, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, included language officers as part of the research participants in addition to the teachers. Most of the studies included either the PD trainers (Grace, Rietdijk, Garrett, & Griffiths, 2015; Rice & Dawley, 2009), school administrators/managers/principals (Cannon, Tenuto, & Kitchel, 2013; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001; Grace et al., 2015; Hoque, Alam, & Abdullah, 2011; Nabhani, Nicolas, & Bahous, 2014; Steyn, 2011; Walker, 1996), or school-university collaboration (Saito, Harun, Kuboki, & Tachibana, 2006).

The present study addresses the research sampling gap by including the DELOs in the research in order to triangulate and substantiate the views of the teacher participants with these DELOs. The researcher considers this an important contribution to the literature, because the DELOs are the teachers' primary contacts and consultants pertaining to logistic and personal matters with the ProELT, from whom the program trainer and project manager also seek assistance and consultation. In addition, the DELOs serve as crucial communicators between the teachers and the district and state education departments and also the MOE. For these reasons, the DELOs' views will add value and richness to the findings of this study.

2.6.3 Application of Huber's theoretical framework in a Malaysian context

Huber's theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation on PD is quite new (five-year), which has not been, to the researcher's knowledge, applied and investigated in any study. The present study will fill this gap by applying Huber's theoretical framework in a heterogeneous teaching level and location, and a one-year, standardised teacher PD program within the Malaysian and developing country context. This will also fulfil Huber's plea 'for more research in this field, especially outside North America' (Huber, 2011, p. 837), and thus will be a significant contribution to the literature.

2.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, a review of the definitions of PD and a current list of models of PD have been presented. The review proceeded with a comparison between the traditional and reform approaches in PD, whereby the latter approach is more favoured by adult educators. This chapter presented two theoretical frameworks, namely Huber's theoretical framework for

theory-based empirical research and evaluation on PD, and the Adult Learning Theory, which were adopted in the present study. A review of andragogy as a "pillar" of theory of adult learning has been represented, and also has highlighted critiques from adult educators. This chapter has presented five elements that constitute effective PD, viz. teachers' needs, content, active learning, program duration, and follow-up support. The findings in the review exposed three gaps in the teacher PD literature:

1. There is a paucity in the literature of a focus on teacher PD programs consisting of heterogeneous teaching levels *and* locations, i.e. most of the studies consisted of a single-level and/or single-location teacher PD;

2. No study, to the researcher's knowledge, has included language officers as samples to triangulate the views of teacher participants, i.e. most of the studies have only included trainers, school leaders and faculty members; and

3. No study, to the researcher's knowledge, has adopted Huber's theoretical framework to evaluate a teacher PD program within the context of a developing country.

Hence, this study seeks to add to the existing body of literature by:

1. exploring and comparing Malaysian ESL teachers' perceptions and the impact of the ProELT based on teacher participants from heterogeneous teaching levels and locations;

2. including language officers as research participants to triangulate and substantiate the teachers' views; and

3. adopting Huber's theoretical framework within the Malaysian and developing country context.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this section the methods that were utilised in the present study will be explained. Firstly, the research paradigm that has been selected will be discussed and justified, and then followed by the research approach. The research design underpinning this study based on the research questions will be outlined and operationalised. Next, a discussion of the population and samples of this study and explanation of the sampling and data collection methods will be presented. This is followed by discussion on the steps to analyse the data and important aspects of ethical considerations in carrying out this study. The chapter then concludes with a summary of the chapter and a preview of the subsequent chapter on the research findings and discussion.

3.2 Research paradigm

In order to explore the research questions, it was essential to explore the most suitable research methods to utilise in this study, through an understanding of research paradigms, or philosophical stances, as well as ontological and epistemological perspectives. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105) aptly emphasises that 'questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm'.

Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105) define paradigm as 'the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways'. For Patton (2002, p. 69), 'A paradigm is a

worldview — a way of thinking about and making sense of the complexities of the real world'.

There are two dominant paradigms in the field of social sciences, positivist and interpretivist paradigms (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) which will be discussed in Sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3. The definitions of ontology and epistemology will be presented in the following section, and how they are viewed differently from positivist and interpretivist perspectives.

3.2.1 Ontology and epistemology

Positivist and interpretivist paradigms view social reality with two differing conceptions in terms of ontology and epistemology. Ontology and epistemology assumptions were first identified by Burrell and Morgan (1979). Ontology is concerned with 'the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated' (L. Cohen et al., 2000, p. 5), e.g. 'What is the form and nature of reality?' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Positivists believe reality exists external to the researcher (Glogowska, 2011), as compared to interpretivists who believe that reality is constructed in a human's mind without any independent existence (Murphy, Dingwall, Greatbatch, Parker, & Watson, 1998).

Epistemology is concerned with 'the very bases of knowledge – its nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how communicated to other human beings' (L. Cohen et al., 2000, p. 6), e.g. 'What is the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). The differences between positivist and interpretivist paradigms, with regard to epistemology, are underpinned by the objectiveness of their stance and their relationship with the research participants (Glogowska, 2011). Positivists are able to maintain an objective stance in research, as opposed to interpretive

researchers, who have pre-existing assumptions, attitudes and beliefs prior to a research. Interpretivists have interactive relationships with their research participants (Glowgowska, 2011), compared to the independent, controlled and passive relationship between positivists and the researched (L. Cohen et al., 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008).

3.2.2 Positivist paradigm

The positivist paradigm, also known as the normative paradigm, is adopted by quantitative researchers. It follows the methods and procedures of the natural sciences, which include variables, controls, measurement and experiment (Bryman, 1988), and computer-assisted methods of statistical analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Bryman (1988, p. 14) describes positivism as a 'philosophy which both proclaims the suitability of the scientific method to all forms of knowledge and gives an account of what that method entails'. The scientific method involves the formulation of hypotheses derived from theory and collection of data to test the hypothesis validity (G. Anderson, 1998). The quantitative approach which underlies positivism emphasises the measurement of behaviour and prediction of future measurements, i.e. generalisability (G. Anderson, 1998).

The positivist paradigm has been vehemently criticised for ignoring human values, intentions, feelings, opinions, moral judgements and beliefs (G. Anderson, 1998). In addition, Ions (1977) objected to positivists' use of quantification as a method to explore and elucidate human conditions. The growing criticisms and dissatisfaction with the overemphasis on measure-oriented positivism resulted in the onset of the long-standing paradigm wars (Gage, 1989). Patton (2002, p. 69) succinctly summarises the paradigm wars, as:

> centred on two different and competing inquiry paradigms 1. using quantitative and experimental methods to generate and test hypothetical-deductive generalisations versus 2. using qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience and constructed meanings in context-specific settings.

This subsequently led to the emergence of an alternative paradigm, called interpretivism.

3.2.3 Interpretivist paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm adopts the qualitative approach. The three tenets of this paradigm are: 1. the values of the investigator influence the research; 2. the theories, hypotheses or framework that the investigator adopts influence the research; and 3. the understanding of the nature of reality is socially constructed (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). Interpretivists emphasise the social construction of the nature of reality and the value-laden nature of inquiry, through the intimate relationship between the researcher and research subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As mentioned previously in Section 1.7, the researcher's semi-insider status could potentially influence the framing of the research questions, cause the approach to be less objective, and in interpreting and reporting the data. Therefore, suggestions were provided in order to ensure these potential biases were guarded against.

However, qualitative researchers are perceived by positivists as journalists, or soft scientists, whose studies are deemed unscientific, exploratory, personal and full of bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The "softness" of qualitative data are mere anecdotes (Patton, 2002), and its intuitive component as a result of the researcher's idiosyncrasies makes it difficult to replicate its findings (Blalock, 1970), thus, establishing qualitative data as untrustworthy (Bryman, 1988). Qualitative researchers, in their defence, aim to understand social experiences, actions and interpretation of the world from the viewpoint of the research participant, not that of the observer, as opposed to quantitative researchers who impose

external and internal stimuli on the research participants in order to observe their behavioural responses to the stimuli (L. Cohen et al., 2000). Therefore, quantitative and qualitative approaches are often presented as two opposing and competitive paradigms.

'Pacifists' in the paradigm wars, later known as pragmatists (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), considered positivist or interpretivist paradigms not to be mutually exclusive nor superior over the other (Howe, 1988; Patton, 2002), and concluded that the debate was not due to paradigm differences but simply to technical issues concerning different research topics and problems (Bryman, 1988; Gage, 1989). Hence, they believed that both paradigms are compatible (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), and the debate was solvable by dovetailing the suitable research techniques to a specific research question (Bryman, 1988). Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 116) signalled an end to the paradigm wars and debates by stating as follows:

> The metaphor of the "paradigm wars" described by Gage (1989) is undoubtedly overdrawn. Describing the discussion and altercations of the past decade or two as wars paints the matter more confrontational than necessary. A resolution of paradigm differences can occur only when a new paradigm merges that is more informed and sophisticated than any existing one. That is most likely to occur if and when proponents of these several points of view come together to discuss their differences, not argue the sanctity of their view.

Pragmatists' orientation towards the compatibility between quantitative and qualitative approaches led to the rapprochement of both approaches and the subsequent advent of pragmatism.

3.2.4 Pragmatist paradigm

The pragmatist paradigm was posited and conceptualised by Howe (1988), in which the core tenet of pragmatism is the compatibility between quantitative and qualitative methods. The integration of these two approaches produced the mixed methods approach, also known by

its generic terms such as mixed methodology or methodological mixes, which is adopted in social and behavioural research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). Pragmatists (e.g. Patton, 2002) select their methodology based on the research purposes, resources and procedures as opposed to conforming to an exclusive or superior paradigm. Quantitative and qualitative approaches share similar fundamental values: 1. belief in value-ladenness of inquiry; 2. belief in theory-ladenness of facts; 3. belief that reality is multiple and constructed; 4. belief in the facility of knowledge; and 5. belief in the under-determination of theory by fact (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994).

The ontological assumption from a pragmatic perspective is that 'pragmatists view reality as both singular (e.g. there may be a theory that operates to explain the phenomenon of study) as well as multiple (e.g. it is important to assess varied individual input into the nature of the phenomenon as well)' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 41). Pragmatists adopt practical epistemological assumptions whereby data collection methods are determined by "what works" to address their research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Nevertheless, pragmatists have had their fair share of critiques pertaining to their rather generic use of the term 'mixed methods' to refer to different ways of conducting research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008), and the 'lack of a worldview, paradigm, or theory for mixed-model studies' (Datta, 1994, p. 59). The latter criticism was counter-argued by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), who presented four stances that best pertain to mixed methods researchers' studies: 1. one 'best' overview for mixed methods (e.g. pragmatism, transformative-emancipatory paradigm, critical realism); 2. multiple worldviews (or paradigms) in mixed methods (e.g. constructivist and participatory); 3. worldviews related to the types of mixed methods design (e.g. the use of more than one worldview and its selection pertains to the type of mixed methods design adopted); and 4. worldviews depend

on the scholarly community (e.g. a consensus among researchers in a specialty area about meaningful questions and appropriate procedures for answering the questions). Being pragmatic allows researchers to break away from 'methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness' in making decisions pertaining to methodological quality and suitability for different research situations (Patton, 2002, p. 72).

Hence, instead of adopting a single paradigm or approach, an amalgamation of both quantitative and qualitative approaches was chosen, i.e. a mixed methods approach, to provide a holistic comprehension for this study. The following section will further discuss the adoption of the mixed methods approach in order to comprehend the rationale and choice of mixed methods approach in this study.

3.3 Research approach

This study utilised a mixed methods approach (pragmatism), which adopted the combination of quantitative (positivist) and qualitative (interpretivist) approaches in order to capture a more comprehensive understanding of the study through multiple methods and perspectives of the research participants. Rudestam and Newton (2007, p. 51) describe this approach as one which 'combines the rigor and precision of experimental (or quasi-experimental) designs and quantitative data with the depth of understanding of qualitative methods and data.'

The core problem of the study was identifying and comparing the teachers' views on the ProELT program. This study first attempted to explore the teachers' needs in PD and whether those needs were fulfilled in the ProELT, the impact of the program, and the teachers' experiences with the program. The quantitative method was considered suitable for gathering this information as 'quantitative methods require the use of standardised measures so that varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fitted into a limited

number of predetermine response categories to which numbers are assigned' (Patton, 2002, p. 13). According to Patton (1990, p. 13):

> Quantitative approach is…possible to measure the reactions of a great many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data. This gives a broad, generalizable set of findings presented succinctly and parsimoniously.

Three hundred and thirty survey respondents were sampled in the present study, and the quantitative approach was considered suitable for statistically analysing a large number of samples.

The study's second attempt was to gather more in-depth perspectives of the teachers' experiences with and the issues that they had encountered during the ProELT. Despite having adopted a positivist method in gathering the initial information, this method was limited in presenting first-hand and "real-life" information from the participants' point of views to support the statistical findings. Based on this justification, a qualitative approach was considered to be appropriate because 'qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed information about a smaller number of people and cases…[and] increases understanding of the cases and situation studied' (Patton, 1990, p. 14).

Ivankova, Creswell and Stick (2006) rationalise that 'the quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provide a general understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and their analysis refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth' (p. 5) The strengths of this approach include its 'straightforwardness and opportunities for the exploration of the quantitative results in more detail', while its limitations are the 'lengthy time and feasibility of resources to collect and analyse both types of data' (Ivankova et al., 2006, p. 5).

Thus, the present study adopted the integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches via mixed methods, which provided strengths that compensated for the weaknesses and limitations of both approaches and also provided a holistic perspective for the study.

3.4 Research design

This study used a mixed methods explanatory sequential design, whereby mixed methods is defined as procedures for 'collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a series of studies…[which] provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 5). Explanatory sequential design, also called a 'two-phase model' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), consists of, firstly, collecting quantitative data, and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results (Creswell, 2012). The main justification for selecting a mixed methods design was to ensure that the study would be able to provide sufficient details and insights from more than a single perspective. A single research approach, either quantitative or qualitative, would lack the richness offered in a mixed methods approach. The presentation of quantitative statistical results only, through closed- and open-response items, without the supplement of qualitative interviews, or vice versa, was considered incomplete due to the limitations of each approach. The combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods can 'incorporate the strength of both methodologies' (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 23), which together 'allow for a more robust analysis' (Ivankova et al., 2006, p. 3). This triangulation process enables the weaknesses of one method to be countered by the strengths of another (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Denzin (1978) proposes four basic types of triangulation: 1. data triangulation (the use of a variety of data sources in a study); 2. investigator triangulation (the use of a several different researchers); 3. theory triangulation (the use of multiple perspectives to interpret the results of a study); and 4. methodological triangulation (the use of multiple methods to study a research problem). In the present study, data triangulation (via questionnaire and interview transcript data) and methodological triangulation (via questionnaire survey, individual interviews and focus groups) were adopted.

Creswell (2012) highlights four decisions that researchers need to consider pertaining to their choice of a mixed methods design: 1. priority (e.g. what priority will be given to the quantitative versus qualitative data and analysis, i.e. more emphasis on one than the other or both are treated equally?); 2. implementation (e.g. what is the implementation sequence of the quantitative and qualitative data collection in the proposed study?); 3. analysis (e.g. will the data be combined in one analysis or kept separated?); and 4. integration (e.g. at what stage of the research will the data be combined, linked or mixed?).

Based on the four aforementioned criteria, Creswell (2012) proposed six mixed methods designs – three sequential and three concurrent designs:

1. the explanatory sequential design
2. the exploratory sequential design
3. the convergent parallel design
4. the embedded design
5. the transformative design
6. the multiphase design

The first of these designs, explanatory sequential design, was adopted in this study, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

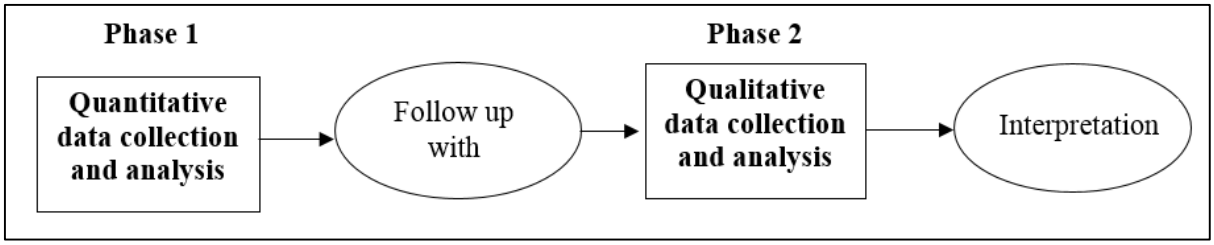

Figure 3.1 Explanatory sequential design.
Source: Creswell (2012)

The explanatory sequential design shown in Figure 3.1 consists of two phases: a quantitative phase, followed by a qualitative phase. It is called 'explanatory' because the study begins with a quantitative method in which theories or concepts are tested, followed by a qualitative method involving detailed exploration with a few cases or individuals for explanatory purposes (versus 'exploratory' in which the study begins with a qualitative method for exploratory purposes, to be followed by a quantitative method with a large sample so that results can be generalised to a population) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this design, the researcher first collects and analyses the quantitative data, then proceeds to collect and analyse the qualitative data to explain and elaborate on the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. The two phases are connected in the intermediate stage in the study (Ivankova et al., 2006).

3.4.1 Operationalising the research approach

Taking into consideration the priority, implementation, analysis and integration of the mixed methods approaches, the explanatory sequential design of this research project was operationalised into a framework that incorporated two phases, as presented in Table 3.1 on the following page: 1. the quantitative phase, which involved conducting a questionnaire survey among teacher participants to obtain inter-district data regarding their general views

of PD and their focused views on the ProELT; and 2. the qualitative phase, which involved conducting interviews with the teacher participants and DELOs to explore arising issues from the first phase of the study in greater depth and to triangulate the data between the teachers and DELOs. It also involved text and comparative analyses between the ProELT coursebook, and the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test, in order to compare these findings with the findings from the teacher interviews.

As shown in Table 3.1 below, Phase 1 of the research procedures adopted a quantitative approach in the data collection and analysis, while Phases 2 and 3 adopted a qualitatively-oriented approach. As shown in the second column, the quantitative approach employed one survey instrument in the form of a questionnaire to gather the teacher respondents' feedback to research questions 1 to 8. As the same column also shows, Phase 2 of the research intended to elicit further understanding and clarification of research questions 1, 4, 7 and 8 via interviews with the teacher participants and DELOs, pertaining to the impact of and issues with the ProELT, and also their suggestions to improve the program. In Phase 3, the research intended to explore the compatibility of the ProELT coursebook with the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test via research question 9. This was undertaken through the analysis of the coursebook content.

Equal priority was given to both the quantitative (QUAN) and qualitative (QUAL) data collections and analyses. This was based on the purpose of the study, i.e. to identify the views of the primary and secondary school teachers from the urban and rural districts, and also the views of the DELOs, pertaining to the impact of and issues with the ProELT. Both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study were equally important, as the responses elicited from the survey provided directions to further explore particular areas in the program. This was achieved by interviewing the teachers and DELOs, who were able to

provide rich and detailed explanations pertaining to the program that could not be obtained from the survey.

The quantitative data were collected via questionnaires from three hundred and thirty ESL teachers from seven districts in Sabah, Malaysia, then were followed by interviews with voluntary participants to gather the qualitative data and to triangulate the questionnaire analyses. The researcher acknowledges the limitations of adopting voluntary participation. Firstly, the qualitative data is only representative of a subgroup of the population, which cannot be generalised. Therefore, the researcher needs to be cautious in making claims about findings from the research (Jupp, 2006). Secondly, there is a possible bias that results from dependence on volunteers, based on the type of information required of the subjects and the mode of their participation (e.g. interview)(Wallin, 1949) . Lastly, there is a possibility that volunteers' main purpose intention in participating in the research is to gain some benefits (Jupp, 2006). The justification for adopting self-selection among for the interview participants is because the State Education Department did not have the contact numbers or emails of the teachers, i.e. only the list of ProELT participants. Hence, the researcher was unable to directly contact the teachers, and was forced to depend on their interest and willingness to participate in the study by indicating their intention and providing their names and contact numbers in the participant information and consent form.

After completing the interviews, an analysis of the coursebook was undertaken to explore and substantiate findings from interviews with the teachers.

Table 3.1 Overview of the research design procedures

Phase	Procedures	Research Questions
PHASE 1: QUANTITATIVE QUANTITATIVE data collection ↓ QUANTITATIVE data analysis ↓	• Survey of the ProELT teachers (n = 330) • Data screening • **Frequency** (respondents' demography, total item responses) • **Mean** (item responses) • **Mann-Whitney U test** (response differences between primary and secondary school teachers, and between urban and rural school teachers) • IBM SPSS Statistics v.22	1. What do teachers want in a PD program? 2. Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding PD programs? 3. Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding PD programs? 4. What are the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT? 5. Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding the ProELT? 6. Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding the ProELT? 7. What are the issues that the teachers encountered during the ProELT? 8. What are the teachers' suggestions to improve the ProELT?
PHASE 2: QUALITATIVE QUALITATIVE data collection ↓ QUALITATIVE data analysis ↓ Connecting quantitative and qualitative phases	Interview participants (n = 10 teachers, 2 DELOs) • Conduct individual interviews and focus groups with the ProELT teachers. • Conduct individual interviews with the District English Language Officers (DELOs). • Coding and thematic analysis using NVivo 10.	1. What do teachers want in a PD? 4. What are the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT? 7. What are the issues that the teachers encountered during the ProELT? 8. What are the teachers' suggestions to improve the ProELT?

Phase	Procedures	Research Questions
PHASE 3: QUALITATIVE Coursebook analysis ↓ Integration of the quantitative and qualitative results	• Analyse and compare between the coursebook and Malaysian primary and second curriculum specifications. (n = 12) • Analyse and compare between the coursebook and the Aptis test. • Interpret and explain the quantitative and qualitative results.	9. To what degree does the standardised ProELT coursebook content match the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test?

3.5 Population and samples

When the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) was implemented in January 2013, 5000 ESL teachers from the primary and secondary levels were selected to participate in the first cohort of the ProELT (Eshtehardi, 2014). As described in Section 1.1, the selection was conducted via the administration of the Cambridge Placement Test (CPT), which assessed the teachers' language competency in the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and also in grammar and vocabulary. Teachers who scored Bands B1 and B2 (independent user) in the pre-CPT were required to attend the three-month ProELT training and, after completing the program, they were expected to score at least one band higher in the post-CPT, i.e. B2, C1 or C2 (Bands C1 and C2 are categorised as proficient users). Thereafter, the second cohort in the present study, which was conducted from April 2014 to February 2015, involved a total of 14 000 teachers (Eshtehardi, 2014). At this time, the Aptis test, which is a British Council-designed language assessment, was administered to the teachers in lieu of the CPT.

As previously stated in Section 1.2, the ProELT consisted of two forms of training modes, namely cluster and centralised modes. The researcher will only focus on the cluster mode for this study because, based on the participant list from the Sabah State Education Department, there were 1182 participants in the cluster mode compared to sixty one participants in the centralised mode, which provided more questionnaire survey participants. In addition, it would have required substantial additional time to conduct the fieldwork, which would not fit into the time frame to complete this research, because the teachers in the centralised mode training were from the remote and interior districts, and it would have required a much longer period to gather a sufficient number of interview and focus group participants. Hence, a separate and follow-up study on the centralised mode training would be more suitable. Meanwhile, the samples for the present study's survey were selected from amongst the ESL teachers in Sabah, who were involved in the 2014 ProELT Cohort 2.

This study precluded a full-scale state sampling of all the ESL teachers involved in the ProELT Cohort 2 in Sabah, because the intention was not to conduct a state-level survey but to provide a "snapshot" of the context which covered the urban and rural districts in order to complement the qualitative phase of the study. In addition, the time and resources available for this study precluded a large-scale research. Therefore, it was decided that the samples for the survey will comprise teachers from three urban districts and four rural districts, as follows:

Urban districts: Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, and Tawau

Rural districts: Keningau, Kota Belud, Papar, and Tuaran

The rationale for choosing both urban and rural districts is to compare whether the ProELT, a standardised PD program, is able to fulfil the professional needs of the urban and rural teachers, and also their students' learning needs. Different teaching and learning contexts

between the urban and rural districts might require a PD program that is tailored to meet the varying needs of teachers from urban and rural districts.

Figure 3.2 Location map of the research sampling districts in Sabah.
Source: Google Maps (2015)

Figure 3.2 above presents the map of Malaysia and the seven sampling districts in Sabah, which are encircled in red. However, samples from another rural district, in Lahad Datu (encircled in blue), had to be excluded prior to the data collection, because the training was temporarily halted from October to December 2015 due to the unavailability of a trainer. It was eventually resumed in January 2015. Due to the time constraint to complete the program in Lahad Datu by February 2015, this resulted in the training being converted from a cluster mode to a centralised mode; which required the teachers to travel to the capital city of Kota Kinabalu for the remaining two-month phase of the training.

Creswell (2012) offers several options to determine the sample size of a study: 1. selecting approximately 350 respondents for a survey study, but the size will vary depending on several external factors; 2. selecting 10% of the population for a sufficient number of samples; 3. asking as many people to participate as possible within the resources and time that the researcher and participants can provide; and 4. using sample size formulas such as the sampling error formula for survey and a power analysis formula for experiments. For Phase 1 of this study, there were 330 samples, which was considered sufficient as it fell within 10% of the population, as Creswell recommended in the second option above.

The selection of samples for the Phase 2 individual interviews and focus groups were also from one of the aforementioned urban and rural districts, respectively, and is described in Section 3.6.2. The purpose was to triangulate the survey data with the interview data, and also to elicit more in-depth and "richer" data from the ProELT participants pertaining to their perceptions of the ProELT and their experiences in participating in the program.

3.6 Sampling methods

3.6.1 Phase 1: Questionnaire survey

The researcher had initially planned to adopt a random sampling method for the questionnaire survey phase of this study, but subsequently had to resolve to a cluster sampling during the data collection due to logistical reason, as will be further justified as follows. In order to conduct a random sampling, the researcher would have to obtain consent from potential respondents if they were willing to participate in the study. This is accomplished by mailing 330 invitations to the selected participants via the Sabah State Education Department, who acted as the main gatekeeper. However, this method was not feasible because the State Education Department did not have the teachers' mobile numbers and/or email addresses, and it was not possible to obtain this kind of personal information. Therefore, the researcher was unable to personally contact the teachers to obtain their consent to participate in the study. This matter was resolved after the ProELT trainers, who were the next closest source to the teachers, offered to verbally extend the researcher's invitation to the teachers to participate in the study. On the researcher's behalf, the trainers explained the purpose of the study and assured the teachers of confidentiality. The teachers who accepted the invitation were given a set of participant information and consent forms, and questionnaire to complete and later to return the completed copies to their trainers. Due to the aforementioned constraints, the random sampling for this study was subsequently revised to a cluster sampling.

Another alternative sampling option would be stratified sampling. Stratified sampling involves dividing (stratifying) the population on some specific characteristic (e.g. gender) and then sampling from each subgroup (stratum) of the population (e.g. females and males), via simple random sampling. This guarantees that the sample will include specific

characteristics that the researchers want included in the sample. However, this sampling method was also not feasible for the present study, because it involved *random sampling* of the stratum (i.e. teachers as the sampling units). As previously mentioned, the researcher was unable to contact the teachers directly, because the State Education Department did not have their personal contact details.

According to Henry (1990, p. 106) , "Cluster sampling is random selection of *groups*, referred to as clusters, from which all members are chosen for the sample". However, cluster sampling is generally categorised as a *non-random, non-probability sampling* method, because all members (e.g. teachers) in a cluster (e.g. district) are chosen for the sample, i.e. non-dependent sample. In the present study, the list of clusters *and* population were available, but not the populations' contact details, which hindered the researcher from contacting the participants. Hence, cluster sampling was the most suitable sampling method, as opposed to stratified sampling.

The benefit of adopting cluster sampling in this study was a shorter waiting duration to receive the questionnaires and a high return rate of 91.2% (303 responses). However, the disadvantage of cluster sampling must also be acknowledged, whereby it limits making generalisations and representation of the population from the findings of a study (O'Leary, 2013), which remain a limitation of the present study. On the contrary, stratified sampling enables a generalisation of the population and decreases the sampling variability (Henry, 1990). Nevertheless, despite this limitation, a number of interesting and meaningful findings were obtained from the study. Table 3.2 below provides details of the number of samples in the seven urban and rural districts involved in the survey.

Table 3.2 Survey respondents in the urban and rural districts in Sabah

District	Category	Number of Respondents	Total
Kota Kinabalu	Urban	71	148
Sandakan	Urban	46	
Tawau	Urban	31	
Keningau	Rural	50	155
Kota Belud	Rural	47	
Papar	Rural	8	
Tuaran	Rural	50	
		Total	303

3.6.2 Phase 2: Individual interviews and focus groups

Phase 2 of the study involved interviewing the ProELT teacher participants and the DELOs. Firstly, the sampling methods, which were adopted in selecting the teacher participants, will be explained and then followed by the sampling methods for the DELOs.

The ProELT teacher participants were selected on a voluntary basis, i.e. volunteer sampling. After completing the questionnaire survey in the first phase of the study, the teachers who were interested in participating in the second phase indicated their interest by ticking a designated box in the participant information and consent forms, and by including their contact details. The researcher later contacted the participants to arrange a day, time and venue that were convenient for them to attend the individual interviews and focus groups. One of the key issues with volunteer sampling is representativeness and "research bargain" (Jupp, 2006). According to Jupp (2006), research bargain pertains to volunteers who participate in research in order to gain some benefit to themselves. For the present study, there is no concrete evidence to prove that the teachers' participation in the individual interviews and focus groups were not due to any research bargain such as tokens and

payment, even though the rewards would be very small. This remains one of the limitations of the study.

In the proposal stage of this study, the researcher had initially planned to conduct only focus groups with the teachers in order to gather further details pertaining to their thoughts and perceptions of the ProELT. However, due to logistical reasons, a combination of individual interviews and focus groups were conducted[9], as will be further justified as follows. During Phase 2 of the data collection in December 2014, most of the teachers were away on holiday during the year-end school semester break. This did not permit the undertaking of the initially planned focus groups, as the teachers were not able to agree upon a specific date, time and venue to meet up together. Due to this justification, an individual interview was included, in addition to the focus groups, in order to cater to the convenience of each teacher who volunteered to participate in the interview. Fortunately, one group of teachers from the rural district of Papar, about an hour drive from the capital city of Kota Kinabalu, were able to meet up at the training centre for the focus group interviews. Some of the individual interviews were conducted in November 2014, at the request of the participants, before they left for their holidays in December.

Meanwhile, the DELOs were selected based on a purposive sampling. The selection criterion depended on the district where the teachers participated in the ProELT training, i.e. the DELO from the aforementioned district would be interviewed after the researcher has completed the interviews with the teachers. The justification for this sampling method and criterion was to ensure that the interview data from the teachers and DELOs were valid for triangulation in the subsequent data analysis stage. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 summarise the

[9] Ethics amendment approval (see Appendix 2).

interview participants' demographic data. The order of the participants' data are arranged according to the sequence of their interview sessions. One caveat is worth mentioning. As a result of the voluntary participation sampling, coincidently, all of the teacher interview participants consisted of female, senior teachers who had between six and twenty eight years of teaching experience. This might result in findings that are representative of a specific subset of the teacher population as opposed to a broader sample.

Table 3.3 Teacher participants' demographic data for individual interviews

Teacher	Age	Gender	Highest qualification	Years of teaching	Teaching level	Teaching area	Current position
T1	51	F	M. Ed. TESL	28	Secondary	Urban 1[+]	Senior teacher
T2	39	F	B. Ed. TESL	17	Primary	Rural 1[+]	Head of EL[*] Panel
T3	49	F	M. Ed. TESL	23	Primary	Rural 2[**]	Head of EL Panel
T4	38	F	B. Ed. TESL	14	Primary	Urban 1[+]	Senior teacher
T5	37	F	BA. Hons.	12	Secondary	Urban 1[+]	Senior teacher

[*]EL (English Language)
[+] Same district as DELO 1
[**]Same district as DELO 2

Table 3.4 Teacher participants' demographic data for focus group interview

Teacher	Age	Gender	Highest qualification	Years of teaching	Teaching level	Teaching area	Current position
T6	30	F	B. Ed. TESL	6	Secondary	Rural 2[**]	Senior teacher
T7	38	F	BA. Hons.	10	Primary	Rural 2[**]	Senior teacher
T8	36	F	B. Ed. TESL	14	Secondary	Rural 2[**]	Senior teacher
T9	45	F	B. Ed. TESL	18	Primary	Rural 2[**]	Senior teacher
T10	40	F	BA. Hons.	12	Secondary	Rural 2[**]	Senior teacher

[**]Same district as DELO 2

In the initial research proposal, the researcher had planned to include the ProELT trainers as part of the interview participants, in addition to the DELOs. As the next closest individuals to the teachers, the perspectives of the trainers would have provided a richer and value-added data to compare and to triangulate with those from the teachers and DELOs. Unfortunately, permission was not granted by the British Council Malaysia to allow its trainers to be direct participants in this research, which was probably due to its privacy and confidentiality policies. This limitation is proposed as one of the recommendations for further study to extend any future research sampling.

3.6.3 Selecting the time frame

Several factors were taken into consideration in selecting the time frame for this study. The researcher's time frame was planned based on a "backwards mapping" process, a term that Broad and Evans (2006) coined in their explanation about the incorporation of PD assessment into a PD cycle in Kelleher's (2003) article. Backwards mapping is achieved by 'identifying the outcomes and then planning toward them' (Broad and Evans, 2006, p. 26). Firstly, the Cohort 2 participants were scheduled to complete their training by the end of February 2015. Therefore, the interviews had to be completed by this month. Secondly, the Semester 2 one-month school break in Malaysia commenced from early December 2014 until after the New Year. The researcher had to take into consideration that there might not be many participants available for the interview due to their pre-planned holidays. Therefore, suitable months to conduct the interviews were in November 2014, and January and February 2015. Fortunately, a number of the participants offered to participate in the interviews in December before leaving for or after returning from their holidays. Next, the survey was planned to be undertaken throughout October 2014 to ensure that there was enough time to gather as many responses as possible, to briefly analyse the questionnaire,

and to identify respondents who had indicated their interest to participate in the follow-up interview in the information and consent forms. August and September 2014 involved follow-up contacts and arrangements with the Sabah State Education Department senior officers, the British Council's senior officers in Kuala Lumpur, and its project manager/senior trainer in Kota Kinabalu. During this period the pilot study was undertaken and relevant amendments were made to the questionnaire. Therefore, using this backward mapping approach the seven-month survey and interview data collection were undertaken from August 2014 to February 2015. After the analysis of the survey and interview data, there followed an analysis of the coursebook and its comparison with the curriculum specifications and Aptis test, in August 2015. Table 3.5 below summarises the data collection time frame.

Table 3.5 Data collection time frame

Month	Fieldwork
August 2014	• Arranged an official meeting with the Sabah senior education officer to discuss the study and data collection plans. • Obtained approval from the British Council in Kuala Lumpur, which allowed the British Council trainers in Sabah to assist with the administration of the questionnaires to the teachers. However, permission to involve the trainers as participants in the interview session was not granted. • Arranged a meeting with the senior British Council trainer in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah to discuss plans to distribute and administer the questionnaires.
September 2014	**Pilot study** • Administered questionnaires to 30 teachers who were selected from the 2013 ProELT Cohort 1 and 2014 ProELT Cohort 2. • Analysed reliability of questionnaire items. • Amended questionnaire items. • Prepared 330 copies of finalised questionnaire.
October 2014	**Phase 1: Questionnaire Survey** • Distributed and administered questionnaire to teachers. • Identified and contacted voluntary teacher participants for Phase 2 study. • Met up with DELOs from the same districts as the voluntary teacher participants to obtain permission to conduct interviews and subsequently set the interview appointments. • Preliminary data analysis of survey.
November 2014	**Phase 2: Individual interviews** • Conducted interviews with teachers.
December 2014	**Phase 2: Individual interviews** • Conducted interviews with teachers and DELO (rural district).
January 2015	**Phase 2: Individual interviews** • Conducted interviews with teachers and DELO (urban district).
February 2015	**Phase 2: Focus groups interview** • Conducted focus groups with teachers.
August 2015	**Phase 3: Coursebook analysis** • Analysed ProELT coursebook and compared it with the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test.

3.7 The pilot study

3.7.1 Phase 1: Questionnaire survey

The pilot study comprised 30 teachers (13 teachers from the 2013 ProELT Cohort 1, and 17 from the 2014 ProELT Cohort 2). Thirteen sets of questionnaires were administered to the Cohort 1 teachers on different days[10] and at various venues[11] via face-to-face, e-mail and registered mail. This group of teachers were considered ideal participants for the pilot study, as they closely resembled the respondents of the chosen population, i.e. they had previously participated in the ProELT and were the pioneer cohort. Therefore, they were able to offer valuable feedback on the questionnaire, especially on the suitability of the items.

The initial plan during the pilot study was to elicit feedback from 30 teachers in Cohort 1[12]. However, due to the shortage of respondents[13], 17 teachers from Cohort 2 had offered to volunteer in the pilot study. Their feedback was considered equally valuable and relevant as they represented the actual population of the study. In addition, the ProELT might have gone through a few changes after the pioneer phase, and some of the items might not be suitable and/or relevant. According to Creswell (2012), after a pilot study the respondents must be excluded from the final sample of the study. Therefore, the aforementioned 17 respondents from Cohort 2 were excluded from the study samples during the administration of the finalised questionnaire. Of the 30 teachers who were asked to complete the

[10] Meetings were held on weekdays when the teachers had free periods, and on Saturdays.

[11] Teachers' schools, and the state and city libraries.

[12] The teachers were identified and gathered via snow ball sampling, i.e. the respondents contacted their previous cohort participants to participate in the pilot study.

[13] Teachers who had initially agreed to participate in the pilot study decided to withdraw due to busy work schedules, and family matters. Another respondent did not return the questionnaire, which was delivered via registered mail, despite repeated reminders.

questionnaire, the researcher received a 100% return rate. Based on the respondents' feedback, the questionnaire was revised and the instrument was further analysed and checked for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha in the IBM SPSS Statistics version 22 statistical software, and its validity.

3.7.1.1 The ProELT Teachers Questionnaire

Brown (2001, p. 6) defines questionnaires as 'any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers'; and he states that questionnaires can elicit individual's reactions to, and perceptions and opinions of an issue or issues. Other functions of questionnaires include obtaining demographic information about respondents (Creswell, 2012), scoping the respondents (L. Cohen et al., 2000), and eliciting and measuring abstract, cognitive processes, individual preferences and values (Brown, 2001; Dornyei, 2003).

There were two reasons why questionnaires were selected as the research instrument for this study. Firstly, there was the practical factor. This study involved 330 teachers from seven urban and rural districts across the state of Sabah. The questionnaire allowed a bigger volume of data to be gathered in a shorter period compared to other instruments, e.g. interview. The bigger volume of data could easily be analysed using current advance statistical software such as IBM SPSS Statistics. Secondly, questionnaires are ideal for yielding factual, behavioural and attitudinal data (Dornyei, 2003, p. 8). The ProELT Teacher Questionnaire contained factual questions to gather the respondents' demographic information (*factual data*) that were relevant to interpreting the findings of the survey.

Attitudinal questions in the questionnaire were used to elicit the teachers' perceptions pertaining to their thoughts and experiences of participating in the ProELT (*attitudinal data*).

However, there were a number of limitations in using questionnaires as a form of data elicitation, as Dornyei (2003, pp. 10-14) has succinctly summarised: 1. simplicity and superficiality of answers; 2. unreliable and unmotivated respondents; 3. little or no opportunity to correct respondents' mistakes; 4. social desirability (or prestige) bias; 5. self-deception; 6. acquiescence bias; 7. halo effect; and 8. fatigue effects. While the present study's researcher acknowledged these drawbacks, it was considered appropriate to confirm the adoption of the questionnaire for this study on the basis that: 1. there were no other significant alternatives available within the constraints mentioned above; 2. the qualitative phase of the research depended on the data elicited from the questionnaire to further explore the understanding and details of the study; and 3. the piloting stage of the questionnaire would be able to preclude as many of the potential obstacles as possible identified by Dornyei.

The ProELT Teachers Questionnaire comprised the following main sections:

Section A: Closed-response questions pertaining to the teachers' needs in PD programs.

Section B: Closed-response questions pertaining to the benefits and impact of the ProELT.

Section C: Closed-response questions pertaining to the degree of incorporation of six adult learning principles in the ProELT.

Section D: Closed-response questions pertaining to the issues that the teachers encountered in the ProELT.

Section E: Open-response questions pertaining to the teachers' suggestions to improve the ProELT.

Section F: Questions pertaining to the teachers' demographic information.

This questionnaire was constructed based on the adaptation of three separate questionnaires by Kabilan and Veratharaju (2013), Ingvarson et al. (2005) and Karagiorgi et al. (2008), which were suitable for capturing the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT and its impact on them, in order to answer the research questions.

Firstly, the original questionnaire by Kabilan and Veratharaju (2013), specifically Section A, consisted of thirteen items pertaining to the PD needs of primary school ESL teachers in Malaysia. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the thirteen items was 0.843, which was considered good, and it showed that the construct had strong internal consistency. In the present study, only six items were adopted and adapted, while the other seven items were considered irrelevant. Therefore, these six items made up *Section A: Teachers' needs in professional development programs* in the pilot questionnaire.

Next, the original questionnaire designed by Ingvarson et al. (2005), specifically *Section 2: Aspects of the PD program* and *Section 3: The impact of the PD,* consisted of fifty six closed-response and two open-response questions, i.e. fifty eight items[14]. The purpose of Ingvarson et al.'s questionnaire was to investigate the structural and process features of PD development programs on teacher's knowledge, practice, and efficacy. Thirty closed-response items, which were considered relevant to the ProELT study, were adopted and

[14] *Section 1: School and teacher information* contained seven items, which pertained to the respondents' demographic information.

adapted into the pilot questionnaire. The ubiquitous term "professional development program" in Ingvarson's questionnaire was changed to "ProELT" in order to correspond with the present study. Therefore, the thirty items were compiled in *Section B: Benefits and impact of the ProELT* of the pilot questionnaire, which intended to elicit the ProELT teachers' perceptions pertaining to the features and impact of the program on their language competency, and teaching skills and knowledge.

Karagiorgi et al. (2008) designed a questionnaire that aimed to explore the degree of incorporation of adult learning in teacher PD in Cyprus. It consisted of 36 closed-response items covering six factors: 1. orientation to learning; 2. readiness to learn; 3. accumulated experience, 4. self-concept; 5. organization of seminar; and 6. dissemination of results. The first four factors reflected the adult learning traits, which were identified in the literature, while the last two factors indicated additional dimensions, which emerged during the factor analysis process of her study. For the present study, only the first four factors were adapted due to their relevance to the study. Twenty three items were considered suitable for and were adapted to make up *Section C: Incorporation of adult learning traits in the ProELT* of the pilot questionnaire.

Two adult learning traits were missing from Karagiorgi et al.'s questionnaire, namely *motivation* and *relevance* factors. As a result, the researcher constructed an additional four items and compiled them under the *motivation* factor, and another five items under the *relevance* factor. These 32 items measured the degree to which adult learning traits were incorporated in the ProELT.

Meanwhile, *Section D: Issues relating to the ProELT* of the pilot questionnaire pertained to issues that the teachers might have encountered during the program. Twelve items in this section were self-constructed by the researcher after several informal

discussions via e-mail and Skype with teachers from the ProELT Cohorts 1 and 2, regarding the issues that they had personally experienced and hoped that the program provider would improve. The items included issues pertaining to the teachers' workload, their communication and relationship with the trainers and program participants, assignments, course materials and program duration. The reliability of these items were tested using IBM SPSS Statistics version 22, and yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.729.

Section E: Changes to the ProELT consisted of four open-response items, which aimed to elicit the respondents' suggestions to improve the ProELT, if any. The open-response items provided an opportunity for the respondents to offer their views, which was restricted in the closed-response items. In addition, it allowed the researcher to understand the respondents' justifications for suggesting those changes to the program.

Lastly, Section F consisted of questions pertaining to the respondents' demographic information. Based on the research questions, only relevant respondent information was included, among others, years of teaching experience, teaching position (i.e. junior, senior and/or Head of English Language Panel), teaching level (i.e. primary or secondary), teaching area (i.e. rural or urban) and training duration, to ensure that only respondents who were in the one-year cluster training mode were involved in the study.

3.7.1.2 Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

Testing the reliability of a questionnaire scale is one of the essential procedures in designing a questionnaire. A reliable questionnaire is one which consists of reliable items that consistently convey the same meanings to all people in the population being surveyed (J. F. Anderson, Berdie, & Niebuhr, 1986). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient alpha is used to test for internal consistency.

Using data from the thirty sets of questionnaires in the pilot study, the total test reliability was computed for every factor in Sections A, B, C, and D. Table 3.6 summarises the Cronbach's alpha coefficient comparison between the pilot study and the questionnaires from Kabilan and Veratharaju (2003), Ingvarson et al. (2005) and Karagiorgi et al. (2008).

Table 3.6 Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores comparison between adopted questionnaires and pilot study

Adopted questionnaires	Pilot study
Kabilan and Veratharaju (2003) **Section A: Teacher's Needs for Future PD Programs** View on professional development = 0.84	**Section A: Teacher's needs in a PD program** View on professional development = 0.79
Ingvarson et al. (2005) **Section 2: Aspects of the PD Program** Content focus = 0.79 Active learning = 0.79 **Section 3: The Impact of the PD** Impact on: Knowledge = 0.92 Teaching practice = 0.93 Student learning = 0.93	**Section B: Benefits and impact of the ProELT** **i. Aspects of the ProELT** Content focus = 0.81 Active learning = 0.81 **ii. Impact of the ProELT** Impact on: Knowledge = 0.92 Teaching practice = 0.96 Student learning = 0.93
Karagiorgi et al. (2008) **Degree of incorporation of adult learning traits in PD seminars** Orientation to learning = 0.87 Readiness to learn = 0.88 Accumulated experience = 0.90 Self-concept = 0.86	**Section C: Degree of incorporation of adult learning traits in the ProELT** Orientation to learning = 0.88 Readiness to learn = 0.90 Experience = 0.89 Self-concept = 0.89 Motivation = 0.85 (self-constructed) Relevance = 0.92 (self-constructed)
	Section D: Issues with the ProELT Issues with the ProELT = 0.73 (self-constructed)

Section A of the pilot study yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.79, which indicates that the construct had an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability. It scored slightly lower than Kabilan and Viratharaju's score of 0.84, probably due to the adoption of six out of thirteen items from the original questionnaire. No items were deleted to raise the alpha coefficient.

In Section B, both *content focus* and *active learning* traits yielded alpha coefficient scores of 0.81, which were slightly higher than Ingvarson et al.'s score of 0.79 for both factors. No items in both the traits had to be deleted. Next, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores for the *impact on knowledge* and *impact on student learning* factors in the pilot study were the same as Ingvarson et al.'s score of 0.92 and 0.93, respectively. The *impact on teaching practice* trait yielded a score of 0.96 in the pilot study, which was higher than 0.93 in Ingvarson et al.'s study. Similarly, no items needed to be deleted and the total item remains at thirty.

Meanwhile, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores comparison between Karagiorgi et al.'s questionnaire on the degree of incorporation of adult learning traits in PD and Section C of the pilot study indicated quite similar results. The *orientation to learning* trait in Karagiorgi et al.'s study scored 0.87 compared to 0.88 in the pilot study. *Readiness to learn* had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.90 in the pilot study, which was slightly higher than 0.88 in Karagiogi et al.'s analysis. *Experience* and *self-concept* traits measured similar scores in the pilot study at 0.89. However, in the adopted questionnaires, *experience* scored 0.90, and *self-concept* scored 0.86. As mentioned earlier in Section 3.7.1.1, two additional adult learning traits were added to this section of the pilot study questionnaire, which were missing from Karagiorgi et al.'s questionnaire, namely *motivation* and *relevance* traits, and four and five items for each trait, respectively, self-constructed for each trait. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for both traits measured at 0.85 and 0.92 respectively. A review of the item-total correlation table indicated a good correlation between the items in the *motivation* trait. Meanwhile, none of the five items in the *relevance* trait were omitted, as deleting items C28, C29, C30 and C32 would reduce the internal consistency reliability, while deleting item C31 would only slightly increase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient from 0.922 to 0.926. Hence, thirty two items were adopted into Section C of the questionnaires.

The twelve items in Section D were self-constructed, which pertained to issues that the teachers might have encountered in the ProELT. The internal consistency reliability of the items indicated a score of 0.73, which was considered acceptable. Item-total correlation showed that, by deleting item D1 (I had to leave my classes without a substitute teacher), it would increase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient from 0.729 to 0.744. Therefore, item D1 was omitted, and Section D consisted of eleven items in the finalised questionnaire.

Next, Section E, which consisted of four open-response questions, aimed at eliciting teacher's proposed suggestions on changes to the implementation of the ProELT, had also undergone some changes. The answer column was made more detailed by categorising the answers into, a. duration, b. trainer, c. content, and d. others (if any); instead of not providing a list of categories. This ensured that the teachers were given some guides to pen down their suggestions. The "other" category was added to the list of questions, in case the respondents had additional suggestions to add on.

Section F aimed at gathering demographic information from the respondents, namely their gender, age, highest education level, years of teaching experience, teaching position, teaching level, and teaching area.

Based on the internal consistency reliability analysis, the finalised questionnaire now contained eighty three items, i.e. seventy nine closed-response items and four open-response items, excluding the respondents' demographic information. Throughout the process of designing and piloting the questionnaire, it was necessary to constantly ensure that the questionnaire would be kept as short and concise as possible so that it could be reasonably answered without over-burdening the respondents. A summary of items per section in the finalised questionnaire is shown in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7 Pilot study: Total items in each questionnaire section

Section	List of item	Total items
A: Teacher's needs in a PD program	A (1 – 6)	6 closed-responses
B: Benefit and impact of the ProELT 1. Emphasis on content knowledge 2. Engagement in active learning 3. Impact on teachers' knowledge 4. Impact on teaching practice 5. Impact on student learning	 B (1a – 1c) B (2a – 2f) B (3a – 3g) B (4a – 4j) B (5a – 5e)	30 closed-responses
C: Incorporation of adult learning traits in the ProELT 1. Orientation to learning 2. Readiness to learn 3. Experience 4. Self-concept 5. Motivation 6. Relevance	 C (1 – 6) C (7 – 12) C (13 – 21) C (22 – 23) C (24 – 27) C (28 – 32)	32 closed-responses
D: Issues with the ProELT	D (1 – 11)	11 closed-responses
E: Suggestions to improve the ProELT	E (1 – 4)	4 open-responses
F: Respondents' demography	F (1 – 7)	7 closed-responses

A valid questionnaire is one that consists of valid items, which stimulates accurate and relevant data. A questionnaire item cannot be valid unless it is also reliable. Many people design questionnaires by borrowing questions from other people's questionnaires, but the problem with this practice is that it assumes that the respondents are all the same. Questionnaire items that are reliable and valid for one group of people are often not so for those in another group, who have different experiences, different level of knowledge, or different world view (J. F. Anderson et al., 1986).

Content Validity

Content validity was examined to determine the degree to which the questionnaire was representative of the content that it was designed to measure (Brown, 2000a). According

to Brown (2000a) also, the degree of match is determined by enlisting the assistance of experts to make the necessary judgements and to provide suggestions for improvement to a test's content. In the present study, the questionnaire was submitted to a statistics and education specialist for evaluation. The necessary changes were made based on the specialist's suggestions.

In the pilot questionnaire, a column was allocated on the left-hand side on each page for the respondents to note any suggestions, queries or errors in the items, as they were completing the questionnaire. After the completion of the questionnaire, the researcher discussed with the 30 respondents whether 1. there were any items which were not relevant to them or the ProELT, 2. any of the item structures were too long or confusing, and 3. any of the words were ambiguous, among other issues discussed. No issues were raised for questions 1 and 2, while for question 3 some of the respondents noted that 'mentor' should be changed to 'trainer'.

Construct Validity

One aspect of construct validity refers to the relationship among test items (Creswell, 2012) and 'the degree to which the test measures the construct' (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 83). In the present study, the construct validity of the questionnaire items was determined by assessing the inter-item correlation matrix. Items that had low correlation values below .3 were omitted to enhance the validity of the questionnaire. Items that were strongly correlated ensured convergent validity (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Response Validity

Creswell (2012, p. 163) states that response validity seeks 'evidence of the fit between the construct and the performance of the test-taking individuals', who in this case were the pilot study participants. The 30 participants were asked: 1. whether they understood the meaning of "professional development" and "professional needs"; 2. the duration to complete the questionnaire (e.g. (too) short, acceptable, (too) long); 3. whether a neutral option should be included in the Likert scale; and 4. whether an open-response item should be included in the questionnaire. For Question 1, all of the respondents understood the meaning of "professional development" and "professional needs". There was a variety of feedback from the respondents to Question 2 with regard to the duration to complete the questionnaire. 19 respondents stated that the duration was acceptable, seven respondents stated that it took a long time to complete the questionnaire, and four thought that the duration was short. Similarly in Question 3, there were also variations in the respondents' views as to whether neutral options should be included in the Likert scale. 15 respondents agreed that neutral options should be included, as some respondents may not have a definite opinion of a certain item. However, a number of the pilot study respondents were wise to caution that the inclusion of a neutral option would "encourage" some respondents to select this option as "the easiest and safest answer", which supports the view of Dornyei (2003). As a result, this would affect the validity of the overall analysis. In contrast, 13 respondents disagreed with the inclusion of a neutral option, in order to ensure that the respondents take a stand and 'do a little thinking'; while two respondents were on the fence, and believed that the inclusion of the neutral option depended on the research objectives.

Face Validity

Sanchez (1992) points out the lack of emphasis on the design of a questionnaire layout as a vital missing component in the development of the instrument. In order for a questionnaire to look attractive and professional, Dornyei (2003, pp. 19-22) summarises five important points features required: 1. booklet format; 2. density (e.g. reducing margins, using space-economic yet readable fonts such as 11- or 12-point Times New Roman, and utilizing the whole width of the page); 3. orderly layout (e.g. utilizing various typefaces and highlighting options such as bold characters or italics, and producing a nice printout of the final version); 4. quality and coloured paper (e.g. using different colour-coding of papers for different sections or different colours for the cover page and contents); and 5. sequence marking (e.g. marking each main section, question and subparts with different types of numerals and figures; including the phrase 'Continued on back' at the bottom of the first side of a double-printed page; and not splitting a question between two pages).

In the pilot study, the participants were asked about the arrangement of the items per section and the 10-point Arial font. The researcher's justification for using a 10-point font size was due to the eighty three items, and the need to condense the items into the least number of pages as possible, yet not making the pages look too crowded. Psychologically, respondents would be more willing to fill in a shorter-page questionnaire instead of a longer set (Dornyei, 2003). Meanwhile, Arial font type was chosen instead of Times New Roman, as suggested by Dornyei (2003) because the former font looked more solid and bold, which made reading easier and the wordings stand out.

3.7.1.3 Deciding between closed and open-response items

After the aforementioned closed-response items in Sections A, B, C and D were selected, there was consideration on whether to include a section on open-response items in Section E. It was initially considered that the eighty three items in the pilot questionnaire would require a considerable amount of time for the participants to complete. Closed-response items were suitable forms to gather, analyse and code data from respondents that total in the hundreds, and when the questionnaire consists of many items (Dornyei, 2003 & Nunan, 1992). This enables a researcher to gain generalisability from the large sample survey. However, the researcher risks losing the depth and nuance of the responses' views, i.e. it restricts freedom of expression from the respondents (Dornyei, 2003).

Dornyei (2003, p. 47) suggests that open-response items should be included as they can 1. provide a far greater "richness" than fully quantitative data, 2. offer graphic examples, illustrative quotes, and can also lead us to identify issues not previously anticipated, and 3. for the simple reason that we do not know the range of possible answers and therefore cannot provide pre-prepared response categories. Dornyei's aforementioned suggestions were echoed by Brown (2009), who added that the responses are often surprising and unanticipated, which is crucially important. In addition, open-response items are especially useful when researchers want to know the respondents' reason(s) for a given answer (Brown, 2009). Oppenheim (1992) argues that there are advantages to asking the same question in both open and closed items. However, Dornyei (2003) cautions of the pitfalls of including open-response items: it is time-consuming for the respondents and thus restricts the range of topics to cover in the questionnaire; and the coding process is demanding. Vogt, Vogt, Gardner and Haeffele (2014) echoed these pitfalls, observing that issues with open-response items occur in two aspects: measurement, and resources. Firstly, respondents tend to skip

such items, as they are slightly time-consuming and require the respondent to ponder on the questions, which some respondents might not be willing to invest additional time on. As a result, this raises problems of response bias and missing data. Secondly, open-response items require more resources, mainly time, to code and analyse. If a research consists of hundreds of respondents and many items, then open questions are definitely not suitable forms to adopt in a survey instrument.

Therefore, in the pre-piloting stage of this study, after weighing the aforementioned arguments and referring to the research questions, it was considered vital to offer the respondents the freedom of expression to pen their personal thoughts pertaining to the ProELT, which the closed-response items might not have covered. By including the respondents' written responses in the thesis, it would enable the readers to hear the 'voices of the teachers' (Asraf, 1996, p. 5). Secondly, the open-response items would be able to provide richer data to support the quantitative data; and lastly, the written responses would be pertinent to be used as follow-up information during the interview sessions with the teacher and DELOs. This decision was further justified based on the feedback that was gathered from all the 30 teacher participants in the pilot study, who agreed that the open-response items should be included in the questionnaire. They felt that it allowed them to express their thoughts freely and fairly instead of being limited and constrained to the views of the researcher in the closed-response items. When the respondents were questioned whether the eighty three items would be time-consuming to complete and, thus, hinder their attempts in answering the open-response items, they disagreed. They justified that if the items were of any interest to the respondents they would make an effort to respond to the items. Therefore, based on the majority feedback obtained from the pilot study and the consideration of obtaining richer data, it was then finally decided that the open-response items would be included in the finalised questionnaire. Another benefit of eliciting responses

from the respondents' unique perspectives is that it enables the researcher to develop and deepen his or her understanding of the research issue (Brown, 2009). During the pre-piloting stage, there were also several doctoral supervision meetings focusing on the items, sentence constructs, and Likert scales, which also resulted in further revisions.

3.7.1.4 Determining the Likert-scale points

The original questionnaire sample by Ingvarson et al. (2005) consists of a four-point Likert scale, 'Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', 'Agree', and 'Strongly Agree'; while the questionnaires by Kabilan and Veratharaju (2013) and Karagiorgi et al. (2008) both consist of a five-point scale. The decision on whether to include a neutral option,[15] i.e. 'Neither Agree nor Disagree', in the pilot questionnaire was weighed with respect to two considerations. Firstly, by eliminating the neutral option, i.e. using the forced-choice format, the respondents were forced to take a stand on their responses, which allowed the researcher to obtain better answers and scores with bigger variances for analysis (Brown, 2000b; Wivagg, 2008). However, by doing so, the researcher is forcing the respondents to have an opinion when in fact some may have actually felt neutral or did not have an opinion pertaining to a particular issue (Brown, 2000b). Secondly, a neutral option should be included because they are valid opinions which are worthy of investigation. In addition, the purpose of this study was to explore the ProELT teachers' perceptions and experiences of the ProELT program, i.e. to assess their convictions (certainties, firm opinions). According to Payne (1951), a research purpose that involves assessing respondents' convictions should include a neutral option, instead of assessing respondents' leanings only (e.g.

[15] Neutral option is different from a "no opinion" or "do not know" answer (Dassa, Lambert, Blais, Potvin, & Gauthier, 1997).

predispositions, propensities). However, this decision could backfire if the respondents frequently selected the neutral response in order to avoid making a decision or to take the easy way out, which, as a result, could tend to reduce variances and made it more difficult for researchers to obtain statistically significant results (Dornyei, 2003 & Vogt et al., 2014). Dornyei (2003) assures that this is only evident in roughly 20% of respondents, and 'does not affect the relative proportions of those actually expressing opinions and thus does not modify the results significantly' (p. 38). Based on these considerations, the researcher decided that the neutral option should be included in the five-scale points as an equal option for the respondents to choose from, if they are certain about their neutral or uncertain stand in any of the items. The respondents have the right to choose all of the neutral options, and if this happens, 'that is the researcher's problem, not the respondents' problem' (Vogt et al., 2014, p. 30). The administration of the questionnaire is discussed in Section 3.8.1.1.

3.7.2 Phase 2: Individual interviews and focus groups

The purpose of the individual interviews and focus groups was to triangulate and cross-validate the responses between the teachers and DELOs, in addition to triangulating and providing explanations of the questionnaire data (Vogt et al., 2014). Data that are collected using a variety of methods and from a variety of stakeholders in lieu of a single group ensure authenticity of perceptions and minimise bias (Smith & Freeman, 2002). This also enhances the confidence in the preceding findings via the questionnaires, and overcomes limitations associated with the approach (Smith & Freeman, 2002).

The focus groups method offers an alternative to gathering supplementary data that would not be feasible when using other methods. Focus groups draw upon the respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions to a particular subject in a more

personal and enriching manner. The researcher, who also plays the role of the moderator, controls the discussion by ensuring that the participants stay focused to the topic. MacIntosh (1993) recommends six to ten participants per group; but Goss and Leinbach (1996) have used up to fifteen people, while Kitzinger (1995) used as few as four. The interview site can be conducted in a variety of places such as a person's home, a rented facility or where the participants hold their regular meetings if they are already a pre-existing group. However, it is advisable not to choose a venue that the participants have a negative association with (Powell & Single, 1996).

This study utilised a semi-structured interview, which involved the ProELT teachers and DELOs. Semi-structured interview was chosen as opposed to a structured interview because the former structure enables a researcher to prompt and probe deeper into the given situation compared to the latter structure, in which the researcher needs to adhere strictly to the interview guide and which may be the cause of not probing for relevant information (David & Sutton, 2004). In addition, a semi-structured interview is more flexible, whereby the researcher can explain or rephrase the questions if the respondents are unclear about the meaning of questions, which can ensure more validity in the respondents' answer as it adheres to the meaning of the questions (David & Sutton, 2004). In contrast to structured questions, the respondents may hear, interpret or understand the questions in a different manner since there is a set interview guide. Besides, the researcher's verbal comments and non-verbal cues can cause bias and influence the respondents' answers (D. E. Gray, 2014). The purpose of the interview in the present study was to triangulate the descriptive data and to enhance confidence in the preceding findings via the questionnaires survey, and to overcome limitations associated with the latter approach. One of the limitations of a questionnaire was the restricted responses that the researcher was able to gather from the respondents. Therefore, through the interview, more in-depth information can be obtained

from the interviewees based on the questionnaire themes. This enabled the researcher to gain richer data that would enhance the findings of the study by including the voice of the respondents.

In the pre-piloting stage, the researcher's academic supervisor had helped in providing valuable feedback pertaining to the earlier draft of the interview questions. The semi-structured interview questions were trialled and piloted with a sample of the teachers who were also involved in the pilot study survey, and also an administrator from the Sabah State Education Department. Open-ended questions were utilised in the semi-structured interview to obtain detailed responses, and to permit relevant follow-up questioning with the teachers and DELOs. Open-ended questions also allowed for questioning that was not too rigid, as some of the respondents tended to express their views on other matters as they were elaborating on one view earlier on before the question had been posed by the researcher. This situation occurred during a few interview sessions. In this event, when the respondents' views were relevant to one of the list of questions to be asked, the researcher would proceed to encourage the respondents to elaborate their views with follow-up questions and the researcher would later resume the original sequence of the list of questions. The administration of the interview and focus groups are discussed in Section 3.8.2.1.

3.8. Data collection methods

3.8.1 Phase 1: Questionnaire survey

3.8.1.1 Administering the questionnaire

Due to the weekly training schedule of the ProELT, the trainers and program participants had to abide strictly by the eight-hour training duration. The British Council Malaysia had

granted permission for its trainers to assist the researcher with the distribution and collection of the questionnaires on her behalf, and it had also allowed thirty minutes of class time for the teachers to complete the questionnaires (see Appendix 6). The questionnaires and instructions to administer the questionnaire were prepared and placed in eight mailing boxes, which were purchased from the Malaysia Post Office. Earlier on, enquiries were made to a courier company about their delivery charges and sufficient cash was attached in an envelope for the trainers (except for the trainers in Kota Kinabalu and Papar[16]) to courier the parcels back to the researcher. The courier company was requested by the researcher to send its representatives to collect every box from the training centres, as this was also one of the requirements that was stated by the British Council Malaysia. This was to ensure the least inconvenience to the trainers when they returned the questionnaires to the trainer. Both the senders' (trainers) and recipient's (researcher) addresses and contact numbers were also attached with the questionnaires for the courier representatives to refer to when they completed the delivery forms. After all logistical matters have been settled with the courier company, the researcher hand-delivered the eight boxes of questionnaires to the British Council senior trainer in Sabah, who later handed them over to the respective trainers when they met up for a meeting that weekend. The researcher received all the questionnaires by the end of the following week.

3.8.1.2 Response return rate

A response rate refers to 'the percentage of questionnaires that the participants return to the researcher' (Creswell, 2012, p. 390). A high response rate of 50% or above is pertinent to

[16] The researcher was able to meet up with and collect the questionnaires from the trainers in Kota Kinabalu; both the trainers and researcher were residing in Kota Kinabalu.

ensure that the data that are obtained from the sample of the study can be generalised to the population (J. F. Anderson et al., 1986 & Babbie, 1998). In the present study, out of the 330 sets of questionnaires that were distributed to the teachers, 303 questionnaires were completed and returned. This gave a return rate of 91.3%.

Babbie (1998) states that responses will fluctuate depending on proper notification, adequate follow-up procedures, respondent interest in a study, the quality of the instrument, and use of incentives. However, studies show mixed results on the impact of incentives, even small ones such as giving enough money for a cup of coffee (Babbie, 1998). In addition, survey researchers are also concerned whether the returned responses are biased, especially if the return rate is low (Creswell, 2012). Although response rate is important, bias is a larger concern than return rate, because if the return responses are biased, the database will be inadequate, regardless of the return rate (Creswell, 2012).

3.8.1.3 Factor analysis

The factor analysis of the questionnaire was not undertaken during the pilot study due to the small number of samples, i.e. thirty samples. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), sample size and the strength of the relationship among the items (or variables) are two main issues that need to be considered in order to determine whether the survey questionnaire data is suitable for factor analysis.

In regard to the sample size, Tabahnick and Fidell (2007, p. 613) suggest that ‘it is comforting to have at least 300 cases for factor analysis’. Alternatively, Tabachnick and Fidell also suggested that the sample size could be determined using a five to one ratio: that is, five cases for each item. At the data collection phase of this study, the researcher managed to gather feedback from 303 survey respondents, which fulfilled Tabachnick and Fidell’s

first recommendation. In addition, the study's questionnaire consisted of 79 closed-items, and by using Tabachnick and Fidell's five to one ratio the ideal number of respondents should have been 395 respondents, e.g. 5 respondents x 79 items. This means that the study is short by 92 respondents, and the alternative requirement for the data to be suitable for factor analysis was not fulfilled. However, since the study's sample size fulfilled Tabahnick and Fidell's recommendation of at least 300 samples, the data set was still considered suitable for factor analysis.

The second issue addresses the strength of the relationship among the items. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) recommend that the correlation matrix of coefficient be greater than .3. Factor analysis may not be appropriate if few correlations above this level are found. Next, the Barlett's Test of Sphericity should be significant ($p<.05$) for the factor analysis to be considered appropriate ((Pallant, 2011). Lastly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, which has an index range from 0 to 1, should have a minimum value of .6 for a good factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). These three factors will be discussed in Sections A, B, C and D below.

A. Section A: Teachers' needs in professional development programs

Six items in Section A of the questionnaire in regard to teachers' needs in the PD program were subjected to Principal Components Analysis (PCA) using IBM SPSS Statistics version 22. Prior to performing the PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The KMO value was .72, exceeding the recommended value of .6, and Barletts' Test of Sphericity was significant (χ^2 (15) = 597.85, $p<.05$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

PCA revealed the presence of one component with eigenvalues exceeding 1, and no items were deleted. The internal consistency for each of the scales was examined by Cronbach's alpha, and the alpha were high at .79.

B. Section B: Benefits and impact of the ProELT

Twenty five items in Section B of the questionnaire in regard to the benefits and impact of the ProELT were subjected to Principal Components Analysis (PCA) using IBM SPSS Statistics version 22. Prior to performing the PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The KMO value was .95, exceeding the recommended value of .6, and Barletts' Test of Sphericity was significant (χ^2 (300) = 5225.04, $p<.05$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

PCA revealed the presence of four components, Components 1, 2, 3, and 4, with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 49.1%, 7.9%, 4.7% and 4.0% of the variance, respectively. Component 1 was labelled as 'Teaching Practice', Component 2 as 'Teachers' Knowledge', Component 3 as 'Active Learning', and Component 4 as 'Content Focus'. The factor labels proposed by Ingvarson et al. (2005) suited the extracted factor and were retained. However, a total of five items were eliminated because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure. Item B4(g) (*link assessment into the teaching and learning cycle more effectively*) had factor loadings of .65 and .52 in 'Teaching Practice' and 'Active Learning', respectively. Item B3C (*increased understanding about linking assessment into the teaching and learning cycle*) had similar factor loadings, between .55 and .58 on 'Teachers' Knowledge' and 'Active Learning', respectively. Items B2(f) (*relate to other programs designed to improve learning in your school*), B2(d) (*enable you to gain feedback*

about your teaching from colleagues or other teachers) and B2C (*provide time for you to practise your new learning*) had factor loadings of .64, .64 and .43, respectively, in 'Teachers' Knowledge', and also factor loadings of .78, .72 and .58, respectively, in 'Active Learning'.

Internal consistency for each of the scales was examined by Cronbach's alpha. The alphas were high: .86 for 'Content Focus' (three items), .83 for 'Active Learning' (six items), .90 for 'Teachers' Knowledge' (seven items), and .93 for 'Teaching Practice (nine items). No substantial increases in alpha for any of the scales could have been achieved by eliminating more items.

C. Section C: Incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT

Thirty two items in Section C of the questionnaire pertained to the degree of incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The KMO value was .94, exceeding the recommended value of .6, and Barletts' Test of Sphericity was significant (χ^2 (528) = 7879.162, $p<.05$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

PCA revealed the presence of six components, Components 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 47.9%, 5.7%, 4.9%, 3.9%, 3.7% and 3.3% of the variance, respectively. Component 1 was labelled as 'Orientation to Learning', Component 2 as 'Readiness to learn' knowledge', Component 3 as 'Experience', Component 4 as 'Self-concept', Component 5 as 'Motivation', and Component 6 as 'Relevance'. However, a total of six items were eliminated because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure. Item C6 (*The program offered opportunities for the development of my critical thinking*) had factor loadings of .49 and .46 in 'Orientation to learning' and 'Self-concept', respectively.

Item C13 (*The program functioned in a friendly and comfortable atmosphere for the participants*) had factor loadings of .39 and .64 on 'Orientation to learning' and 'Readiness to learn', respectively. Item C14 (*The participants were involved in problem-solving activities)* had factor loadings of .38, .62 and .36 in 'Orientation to learning', 'Readiness to learn' and 'Self-concept'. Items C17 (*The program provided opportunities for interaction between the trainer and the participants*) and C18 (*The program provided opportunities for interaction among the participants*) had similar factor loadings of .64 and .43, respectively, in 'Orientation to learning', and also factor loadings of .76 and .78, respectively, in 'Self-concept'. Item C21 (*The program provided opportunities for active involvement of the participants in the learning procedures*) had factor loadings of .33 and .46 in 'Experience' and 'Self-concept', respectively.

Internal consistency for each of the scales indicated high alpha values: .85 for 'Orientation to learning (five items), .89 for 'Readiness to learn' (six items), .84 for 'Experience' (four items), .76 for 'Self-concept' (two items), .94 for 'Motivation' (four items), and .82 for 'Relevance' (five items). No substantial increases in alpha for any of the scales could have been achieved by eliminating more items.

D. Section D: Issues with the ProELT

Eleven items in Section D of the questionnaire pertained to the issues that the teachers might have with the ProELT. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The KMO value was .77, exceeding the recommended value of .6, and Barletts' Test of Sphericity was significant (χ^2 (66) = 1774.48, $p<.05$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

PCA revealed the presence of four components, Components 1, 2, 3, and 4, with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 35.3%., 19.7%, 10.1% and 9.3% of the variance, respectively. Component 1 was labelled as 'Relevance of materials and assignments', Component 2 as 'Duration and assignments', Component 3 as 'Communication', and Component 4 as 'School workloads'. Two items were eliminated because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure. Item D3 (*I was not able to get in touch with my trainer about matters related to English or the ProELT outside the program session*) had factor loadings of .55 and .48 in 'Relevance of materials and assignments' and 'Communication', respectively. Item D4 (*I was not able to get in touch with the other teacher participants about matters related to English or the ProELT outside the program session*) had factor loadings of .59, and .40 on 'Relevance of materials and assignments' and 'Communication', respectively.

Internal consistency for each of the scales indicated high alpha values: .89 for 'Relevance of materials and assignments' (three items), .81 for 'Duration and assignments' (two items), .82 for 'Communication' (two items), and .79 for 'School workloads' (two items). No substantial increases in alpha for any of the scales could have been achieved by eliminating more items.

Based on the internal consistency reliability analysis, the questionnaire after factor analysis contained seventy items, i.e. 66 closed-response items and four open-response items, excluding the respondents' demographic information. The thirteen items that were deleted from the questionnaire were excluded from the statistical analysis. See Appendix 10 for the finalised copy of the ProELT Teacher Questionnaire. Table 3.8 summarises the total items in each section of the questionnaire after the factor analysis.

Table 3.8 Total items in each questionnaire section after factor analysis

Section	List of item	Total items
A: Teacher's needs in a PD program	A (1 – 6)	6 closed-responses
B: Benefit and impact of the ProELT 1. Emphasis on content knowledge 2. Engagement in active learning 3. Impact on teachers' knowledge 4. Impact on teaching practice 5. Impact on student learning	 B (1a – 1c) B (2a – 2c) B (3a – 3f) B (4a – 4h) B (5a – 5e)	25 closed-responses
C: Incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT 1. Orientation to learning 2. Readiness to learn 3. Experience 4. Self-concept 5. Motivation 6. Relevance	 C (1 – 5) C (6 – 11) C (12 – 15) C (16 – 17) C (18 – 21) C (22 – 26)	26 closed-responses
D: Issues with the ProELT	D (1 – 9)	9 closed-responses
E: Suggestions to improve the ProELT	E (1 – 4)	4 open-responses

3.8.2 Phase 2: Individual interviews and focus groups

Phase 2 of this study utilised a semi-structured interview as opposed to a structured interview for the individual interviews and focus groups. Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to prompt and probe deeper into the given situation compared to the latter structure, in which the researcher needs to adhere strictly to the interview guide and may be the cause of not probing for relevant information (David & Sutton, 2004). In addition, the researcher can explain or rephrase the questions if the respondents are unclear about the semi-structured questions in order to ensure more validity in the respondents' answer as it adheres to the meaning of the questions (David & Sutton, 2004).

3.8.2.1 Administering the individual and focus groups interview

Each interview lasted on average an hour. The individual interviews with the teachers were conducted at two venues, namely Universiti Malaysia Sabah, which the researcher is affiliated, and a discussion room at the Sabah state library, due to the proximity between the teachers' homes and the venues. The two aforementioned venues are located in Kota Kinabalu the capital city of Sabah. Another important aspect was that both venues also provided a quiet environment in which to conduct the interviews and recording sessions with the least noise interruption. The focus group interview with a group of teachers was conducted at one of the Teacher Activity Centres on the outskirts of Kota Kinabalu. As mentioned earlier in Section 3.6.2, the initial plan was to conduct only focus groups with the teachers, but some participants could not agree on a date and time to gather for the focus groups due to the timing, which coincided with the year-end school term break. Hence, they requested for an individual interview, and the researcher gladly obliged.

Meanwhile, the individual interviews with the two DELOs were conducted at the district education office and the Sabah State Education Department, respectively. The times for all interview sessions with the teachers and DELOs were decided by the interviewees in order to accommodate their needs and convenience.

In order to ensure that they had sufficient time to read the interview questions thoroughly and to reflect on their views, the lists of questions were emailed to the teachers and DELOs a week prior to the interview. All the interviews were conducted in English and were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder after their consent was sought. The duration of the interviews ranged from sixty to ninety minutes.

3.8.3 Phase 3: Coursebook analysis

The decision to add Phase 3 of this study after the completion of the survey and interview data collection was mainly due to the major findings from the teacher interviews. There were consistent responses from the teachers with regard to the incompatibility between the ProELT coursebook content and the curriculum specifications. As a result, the program materials were challenging to implement in their classrooms according to the teachers who were interviewed. These findings prompted the researcher to conduct an analysis of the coursebook content and compare it with the primary and secondary curriculum specifications in order to understand the nature and degree of compatibility between these materials. Similar analysis and comparison were also undertaken with the Aptis test sample in order to identify the suitability of the coursebook in preparing the teachers for the Aptis test at the end of the program.

A coursebook can be analysed or evaluated based on external or internal evaluation (McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, 2013). The external evaluation pertains to the coursebook's visual materials and cosmetic value, layout and presentation of the materials, vocabulary lists and index, amongst others. On the other hand, the internal evaluation looks into the relationship of exercises to learner needs and what is taught in the course material, amongst others (McDonough et. al, 2013). The latter is the most compatible with the purpose of this analysis. Even though a coursebook is a ubiquitous source of teaching and learning materials in a program, there are three possible drawbacks to a standardised coursebook: 1. Inadequacy – the coursebook does not satisfactorily cater to the individual learning needs of the participants; 2. Lack of relevance or interest – the course materials do not pertain to learners' interests or needs; and 3. Homogeneity – the coursebook does not cater to the different levels of ability and knowledge, or learning styles and strategies of the individual

learners (Ur, 1999). In this study, the coursebook is analysed to identify to what degree its content matched the curriculum specifications and the content of the Aptis test, based on their activities and tasks, in order to fulfil the learning needs of the teachers (see Figure 3.3).

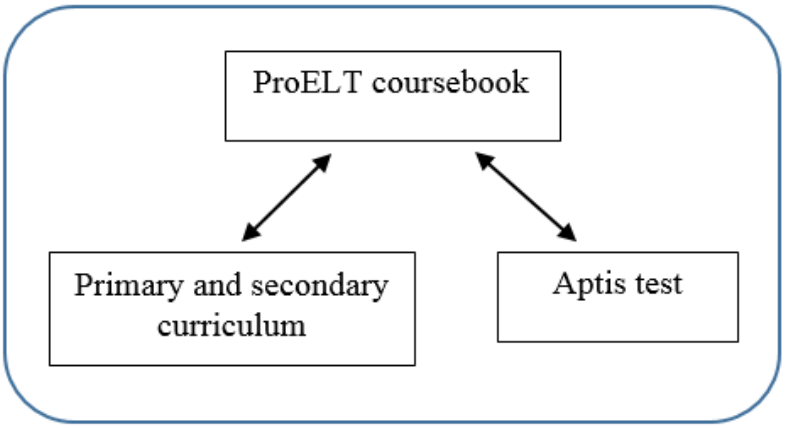

Figure 3.3 Relationship between the coursebook and the curriculum and Aptis test.

3.9 Data analysis

The present study adopted Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) six-stage approach to analysing the data. Their six step-by-step approach comprises: 1. preparing the data for analysis; 2. exploring the data; 3. analysing the data; 4. representing the analysis; 5. interpreting the analysis; and 6. validating the data and results. The six steps are elaborated in the following sub-sections.

3.9.1 Preparing the data for analysis

The raw data collected from the questionnaire surveys were converted and scored by assigning numeric values. The database was checked for and cleaned of any missing data. The computing processes were completed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 22.

Next, data collected from the individual interviews and focus groups were transcribed into a Word processing file, and the texts were constantly checked and re-checked for accuracy during transcription. The transcribed texts were imported into NVivo 10 into separate folders, also known as nodes, for analysis.

A copy of the ProELT coursebook was obtained from a program participant after the completion of program. For the purpose of the comparative analysis, the primary and secondary school curriculum specifications were retrieved from the MOE website, but they were incomplete; hence, the researcher was able to obtain the missing sets from teachers within the researcher's professional network. A total of twelve samples of the primary (six sets) and secondary (six sets) curriculum specifications were successfully gathered.

In addition, a sample of the Aptis test was downloaded online, and a copy of the Aptis practice booklet was obtained from a teacher who was previously selected to take the test and was given a practice sample by her DELO.

3.9.2 Exploring the data

The questionnaire survey data were inspected and analysed by utilising a descriptive analysis to determine the general trends and the distribution of the data. This analysis enables researchers to meaningfully describe many scores with a small number of numerical indices by means of frequency, mean and standard deviation (Creswell, 2012; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012) .

All the interview data were read through and reviewed to develop a general idea of the data. Initial thoughts were written in short memos, which were subsequently generated into broader categories of information, namely codes or themes. This process was repeated multiple times until all the data and information were exhausted and saturation point was

reached. In circumstances whereby the teacher participants' quotes required additional clarification and elaboration, they were contacted via email and/or text messages.

The content of the coursebook was explored by identifying the total modules and sections per module. In each section, the list of activities was also identified. Meanwhile, the curriculum specifications were explored by identifying the specific learning outcomes, sections and activities for the primary and secondary curricula.

The content of the Aptis test was also explored by identifying the total components, sections and items.

3.9.3 Analysing the data

This stage of the quantitative data analysis proceeded from the descriptive analysis to the inferential analysis. The Mann-Whitney U test was utilised to answer the research questions, i.e. to compare the perceptions between the primary and secondary teachers, and also between the urban and rural teachers, in the ProELT. Although the function of Mann-Whitney U test and t-test is to compare quantitative data between two groups, Mann-Whitney U Test was selected over the latter, because the questionnaire survey respondents om the present study were selected via cluster sampling, as opposed to random sampling. Therefore, a non-parametric test, i.e. Mann-Whitney U test would be more suitable to analyse the survey data. If the respondents were randomly selected, a parametric test, i.e. t-test would have been utilised to analyse the data.

Qualitative data analysis of the interview texts involved three types of coding techniques, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Open coding is the 'process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 61). As shown in Table

3.9, open coding commences once data has been collected. Open coding leads to the formulation of coding schemes, i.e. a list of codes.

Table 3.9 The development of coding schemes through open coding

Interview extract	Coding scheme
I know the CPT…there is some technical problem.	Dispute over test result
I don't know is this CPT…is this Aptis world-recognised? Or is it some sort of a standardised test?	
I think it should be done in a language lab, because there will be some speaking done.	Unsuitable test venue
I feel I've not done my best, because I need to speak aloud on my headphone then I only I could see the lines going up and down.	
But then when I'm speaking all aloud, I'll disturbing people on my left and people on my right. They are doing their writing, and some of them are doing their listening.	
I had problem with the headset. When you test, your voice is like 'husky'	Faulty headsets
I had problem with my headset. I couldn't listen to the audio and also my voice	
That's why we don't know. We did ask the PPD and they also couldn't answer us	Lack of clarity from the program provider
We post the question to the ministry, and the ministry still ask us to wait.	Lack of clarity from the program provider
I heard lots of rumours that they say that if the course participant did not achieve the grade accepted like C1…the minimum is C1…they say that we have to teach another subject, but that's only rumours.	Uncertain over consequence of post-test result

Axial coding involves reassembling the data and delineating the identified categories (Boeije, 2010) (see Table 3.10). Selective coding refers to 'looking for connections between the categories' (Boeije, 2010, p. 114) (see Table 3.11).

Table 3.10 The development of categories through axial coding

Category	Coding scheme
Logistical issues: Administration of test	Dispute over test result
	Unsuitable test venue
Technical issue	Faulty headsets
Lack of information and follow-up	Lack of clarity from the program provider
	Uncertain over consequence of post-test result

Table 3.11 The development of core concepts through selective coding

Category	Core concept
Logistical issues: Administration of test	Selection process
Technical issues	
Lack of information and follow-up	Lack of program provider support

The coursebook analysis was conducted using an internal evaluation (see McDonough et al., 2013). Seven tables were designed to represent seven sections (e.g. Language, Methodology, In The Classroom, Pronunciation, Magazine, Vocabulary, and Activity Page) in each module. Every table contains a list of the fifteen modules in the ProELT coursebook, which were compared to the activities in the Malaysian curriculum specifications for primary and secondary levels. This comparison was also undertaken to identify the compatibility of the coursebook in enhancing teachers' teaching knowledge and skills, according to the program objectives. For example in Module 10 (see Appendix 14), activity 1.5 (Common Mistakes) in the "Language" section pertains to a grammar group activity on article. In this activity, teachers take turn to identify errors in the usage of the definite article in a sentence. Next, the researcher reviews all twelve sets of the Malaysian curriculum specifications, in order to determine whether the article is included in the

curriculum specifications. The review outcome shows that article was indeed included in all the primary and secondary curriculum specifications. Therefore, a tick was inserted in the "Primary" and "Secondary" columns. This is repeated for the other six sections in all the fifteen modules (see Tables 7.1 to 7.7 in Section 7.3.1).

Similarly, the five components in the Aptis test were also compared using internal evaluation with all the sections in the modules.

3.9.4 Representing the analysis

The findings from the questionnaire survey were reported in the form of tables and summary statements of the statistical results. Meanwhile, findings from the interview analysis were summarised and presented in the form of table/matrices and a visual model. Similarly, findings from the coursebook content analysis and Aptis test were also summarised and presented in tables.

3.9.5 Interpreting the analysis

At the interpretation of the analysis stage of the study, the researcher advanced the findings into a larger view of the study based on the research problem, research questions, and the existing literature and also the researcher's personal experiences. The questionnaire survey findings were compared with the research questions in order to determine how the study answered the questions.

The interpretation of the interview data findings was also similar to that of the questionnaire survey, i.e. the findings were compared with the research questions to determine the answer that was obtained from the study, and how they compared to previous

research studies in the literature. A key element that sets apart qualitative research from the quantitative approach is that the researcher may also incorporate his/her personal experiences and draw personal assessments of the significance of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The findings from the coursebook content analysis were compared with the findings from the teacher interviews in order to determine their consistency.

The findings from the Aptis test were compared with findings from the coursebook content analysis.

3.9.6 Validating the data and results

According to Creswell (2012, p. 210), quantitative investigators assess the validity of their study by establishing 'the validity of their instruments through content validity and of their scores through criterion-related and construct validity procedures'. As previously discussed in Section 3.7.1.2, during the pilot study the content validity was assessed by statistic and education specialists, and the construct validity was undertaken by assessing the inter-item correlation matrix in order to select and omit items that had low correlations, except for items which were not meant to measure specific traits or factors. Similarly, the data and results of the findings were validated by assessing the reliability and inter-item correlation matrix. However, criterion-related validity was not applicable to this study, as the purpose of criterion-related validity is not to assess scores in order to make a prediction based on a standard and/or well-established test. Therefore, criterion-related validity was not included nor discussed in this study.

Qualitative validation was undertaken via two methods. The first method was member-checking whereby the summaries of the findings were presented to the interview

participants to validate the accuracy of the findings with their experiences (Creswell, 2012). The second method was triangulating the transcripts from all teachers and DELOs in order to ascertain their views and also to build codes or themes.

The validity of the coursebook content analysis was undertaken via member-checking (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The summary of the findings in the form of tables were presented to two teachers, one each from a primary and a secondary school.

Similarly, the validity of the Aptis test was also undertaken via member-checking. The summary of the findings were presented to teachers who had previously sat for the test.

3.10 Ethical consideration

This study was approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Committee (see Appendices 1 and 2). In the following sections, the key ethical issues that the researcher encountered and addressed during the study will be discussed.

3.10.1 Access

Prior to conducting this study in Sabah, the researcher had to acquire approvals from various gatekeepers in Malaysia in the following order: 1. the Malaysian MOE, 2. the Malaysian Economic Planning Unit (MEPU), 3. the Sabah State Education Department, and 4. the British Council Malaysia (see Appendices 3, 4, 5 and 6, respectively). The MOE, MEPU, and the Sabah State Education Department granted approval to proceed with the study. However, the British Council established a condition in its approval whereby its trainers were not allowed to be involved as research participants, as proposed in the preliminary phase of this study, but only to assist with logistical matters such as the administration of the

questionnaires to the teachers. The British Council did not specify its justification for establishing this condition.

3.10.2 Informed consent

In the present study, the participants were presented with written information about the research and its implication for them as research participants. They were made aware that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any time and at any stage, without having to give a reason and without consequence[17].

3.10.3 Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were vital to protecting the participants' identities in circumstances where they may impart sensitive or delicate information that could compromise their safety and security. The research participants of this study were assured that their identities would remain anonymous, and pseudonyms would be utilised if their quotes from the interviews were considered significant and were used later in any publications. They were also assured that all the information which was gathered via the questionnaire survey and interviews would remain confidential and only accessible by the researcher and her chief supervisor.

[17] Questionnaire survey, individual interviews and focus groups consent forms (see Appendices 7, 8, and 9).

3.10.4 Tokens and payments

During this study, the participants were given tokens and/or payments as appreciation for their involvement in the research. The teacher participants in the questionnaire survey were given a Macquarie University key ring, and teacher participants in the individual interviews and focus groups were presented with a Macquarie University ceramic mug and AUD$15. The payment was to cover their travelling expenses to the interview venues. The DELOs were also given a Macquarie University ceramic mug without cash token, because the interviews were conducted at their respective offices, which did not incur any travelling expenses for them. Appropriate acknowledgement was also noted in the reports and presentations resulting from the study.

This study took into account various perspectives of ethical considerations. The research strategies utilised were approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Committee[18], as were the amendments to the research, namely the research participants (i.e. exclusion of the ProELT trainers) and the data collection method (i.e. a combination of individual interviews and focus group[19]).

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided descriptions of the research methodology utilised in this study. The mixed methods approach and the mixed methods explanatory sequential design were selected to identify and compare the teachers' views on the ProELT program by identifying their needs in PD and whether those needs were fulfilled in the ProELT; to investigate

[18] See Appendix 1
[19] See Appendix 2

teachers' perceptions and the impact of the program. Based on the mixed methods explanatory sequential design, the data collection took place over three phases, commencing with the quantitative phase, which utilised a questionnaire survey, and followed by the qualitative phase, which utilised individual interviews and focus groups. Finally, a content analysis of the ProELT coursebook was undertaken and compared with the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test. 303 respondents participated in the questionnaire survey, involving ESL teachers from mixed teaching levels and locations. Ten teachers volunteered for the individual interviews and focus groups, and two DELOs were invited to participate in the individual interviews separately for the purpose of triangulating their views with the teachers' responses pertaining to the ProELT program.

The methodology for this study generated statistical data in the form of descriptive, frequency and mean statistics from the questionnaire survey, and interview transcripts from the individual interviews and focus groups. This chapter also described the sampling methods employed in the selection of the survey respondents and interview participants, and also the selection of the time frame to conduct the data collection. This proceeded with an explanation of the pilot study for the questionnaire survey, and individual interview and focus groups. The reliability and validity of the research instrument, deciding between open- and closed-response items and determining the Likert-scale points, were described in detail. Next, administration of the questionnaire survey and individual interview and focus groups were explained. Six stages of data analysis were conducted to compare the views of teachers pertaining to the ProELT program via the questionnaire survey, and also to identify and represent key themes and findings from the interview data: preparing, exploring, analysing, representing, interpreting, and validating the data. In addition, these stages of data analysis were also adopted to analyse the content of the ProELT coursebook and Aptis test. Discussions pertaining to key ethical issues were also included in this chapter. Key ethical

issues focussed on access to the research sites and respondents via the gatekeepers; informed consent from the survey respondents and interview participants; privacy, anonymity and confidentiality; and presentation of tokens and payments.

Chapter 4: What Teachers Want in a Professional Development Program

4.1 Introduction

The presentation of the data will be divided into four chapters: Chapter 4 (What teachers want in a PD program); Chapter 5 (Teachers' perceptions of the ProELT); Chapter 6 (Teachers' experiences with the ProELT), and Chapter 7 (The ProELT coursebook). As previously described in Section 3.4.1 in the Methodology chapter, the aim of Phase 1 of the study (i.e. the questionnaire survey) was to obtain inter-district data among the ProELT teachers to elicit a general view of their perceptions of PD programs and the ProELT. The purpose was more exploratory than explanatory. The responses elicited from the survey provided directions to further explore particular areas in and issues with the program. Meanwhile in Phase 2 of the study (i.e. interview), it aimed to explore issues arising from the first phase of the study in greater depth by interviewing the ProELT teachers and DELOs, and (as far as was possible given the limitations of comparability of the groups) triangulating the data between them. The interview findings from Phase 2 regarding the ProELT coursebook were further explored by conducting a coursebook analysis, and comparing the book's content with the curriculum specifications and Aptis test.

In this chapter, the findings in Section A (What teachers want in a PD program) from the ProELT Teachers Questionnaire, and also findings from the interviews will be presented. The respondents' demographic data in Section F of the questionnaire will also be presented.

There are three research questions under the first central question, '**What are teachers' perceptions of a PD program that would fulfil their PD needs?**'. This chapter will attempt to answer the following three research questions:

RQ1: What elements do teachers want in a PD program?

RQ2: Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding PD programs?

RQ3: Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding PD programs?

4.2 Quantitative analysis

Before presenting the findings from Section A, the respondents' demographic data, which were obtained in Section F, will be presented, in order to establish the context of the study involved.

4.2.1 Demographic data of the ProELT teachers

The respondents involved in this questionnaire survey consisted of ProELT teachers from seven districts — three urban and four rural districts — across Sabah (see Section 3.5). Table 4.1 below shows the demographic information of the respondents involved in the survey.

Table 4.1 Demographic information of ProELT teachers

Demographic Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	57	18.8
Female	246	81.2
Total	303	100.0
Age		
20-25	2	0.6
26-30	34	11.3
31-35	65	21.5
36-40	88	29.0
41-45	71	23.4
46-50	37	12.2
Above 50	6	2.0
Highest education level		
Certificate	7	2.3
Diploma	45	14.9
Bachelor degree	225	74.3
Master degree	26	8.6
Doctoral degree	0	0.0
Years of teaching experience		
Less than 1 year	0	0.0
1-4	27	8.9
5-9	61	20.1
10-19	134	44.2
20-29	78	25.7
30 years and beyond	3	1.0
Teaching position		
Senior teacher (5 years and above in service)	215	71.0
Junior teacher (less than 5 years in service)	22	7.3
Senior teacher & Head of English Language Panel	61	20.1
Junior teacher & Head of English Language Panel	5	1.7
Teaching level		
Primary school	187	61.7
Secondary school	116	38.3
Teaching area		
Urban	125	41.8
Rural	178	58.7

The aforementioned respondents were selected using clustered sampling from a population of 1182 ProELT participants in Sabah. Of the total 303 respondents, 246 were female, and 57 were male, which is a ratio of four female to one male teacher. In terms of the respondent's age, the majority of the teachers were between 36 and 40 years old (n = 88, 29.0%). This figure produced a vertical "bell curve" with the 20-25 year-old and above 50 year-old groups having the least number of teachers at each end of the age range, i.e. 2 (0.6%), and 6 (2.0%) teachers, respectively. A majority of the teachers have a bachelor's degree (225 respondents, 74.3%), and 26 (8.6%) respondents have a postgraduate degree.

In the case of teaching experience, more than half of the respondents have ten years and beyond of teaching experience (n = 215, 70.9%). Out of this total, 78 (25.7%) respondents have been teaching between twenty and twenty nine years, and 3 (1.0%) respondents have been teaching for three decades and beyond.

Among the survey respondents, there were 277 (91.4%) senior teachers, and, out of this total, 61 (20.1%) respondents held the position of Head of English Language Panel. Meanwhile, out of the 26 (8.6%) junior teachers, 5 (1.7%) respondents were Head of English Language Panel.

This study consisted of 187 (61.7%) primary school teachers, and 116 (38.3%) secondary school teachers. Meanwhile, 125 (41.8%) of the total respondents were teaching in urban schools, and 178 (58.7%) respondents were assigned to rural schools.

4.2.2 Section A: What teachers want in a professional development program

Section A of the questionnaire contained six items, which were intended to gather the teachers' perceptions of what they wanted in a PD program. It was important to begin with this aspect in order to understand the teachers' general needs in a PD program, and to review the degree of

fulfilment of their needs by the ProELT (see Section 6.4). The respondents were asked to respond to six items by circling one answer only along a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Not at all Important (NI); 2 = Slightly Important (SI); 3 = Neutral (N); 4 = Important (I); and 5 = Very Important (VI). Table 4.2 below presents the computed scores of the respondents' answers.

Table 4.2 Overall teachers' needs in a professional development program

Item No.	Item	NI	SI	N	I	VI	Mean	SD
As a teacher, I want the professional development programs to:								
1.	Be based on teachers' professional needs (i.e. the subjects or skills that I need to develop).	0	0	19 6.3%	126 41.6%	**158** **52.1%**	4.46	0.612
2.	Be based on students' needs.	1 0.3%	1 0.3%	27 8.9%	**140** **46.2%**	134 44.2%	4.34	0.680
3.	Be based on school needs.	3 1.0%	20 6.6%	73 24.1%	**126** **41.6%**	81 26.7%	3.86	0.920
4.	Be regularly evaluated to determine students' academic achievement.	1 0.3%	18 5.9%	82 27.1%	**144** **47.5%**	58 19.1%	3.79	0.830
5.	Be regularly evaluated to determine its impact on increasing teachers' teaching and learning effectiveness.	1 0.3%	11 3.6%	65 21.5%	**152** **50.2%**	74 24.4%	3.95	0.796
6.	Be conducted over a short period.	3 1.0%	13 4.3%	92 30.4%	**122** **40.3%**	73 24.1%	4.01	0.709

NI=Not at all Important, SI=Slightly Important, N=Neutral, I=Important, VI=Very Important, SD=Standard Deviation

As indicated in Table 4.2, three items, namely Item 1 (*Be based on teachers' professional needs*), Item 2 (*Be based on students' needs*), and Item 6 (*Be conducted over a short period*) have the three highest mean scores of 4.46 (SD = 0.612), 4.34 (SD = 0.680), and 4.01 (SD = 0.709), respectively, which the respondents consider as "Very Important" elements in a PD program. Although Items 3, 4, and 5 have mean scores of 3.863 (SD = 0.920), 3.79 (SD

= 0.830), and 3.95 (SD = 0.796), respectively, which were considered “Neutral”, they are considered “Important” elements by a majority of the respondents.

Next, Sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 will compare the perceptions of participants from two categories, namely teaching levels (primary and secondary school teachers), and teaching locations (urban and rural school teachers), pertaining to Items 1 until 6, in order to determine whether there are any significant differences between the perceptions of both categories of respondents in what they want in a PD program.

4.2.3 Comparison between what primary and secondary school teachers want in a professional development program

Table 4.3 Comparison between what primary and secondary school teachers want in a professional development program

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.0000
Secondary	116	3.8889
Total	303	4.0000

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
Mann-Whitney U	9829.000	10167.500	9152.500	10082.500	10659.000	10227.500
Wilcoxon W	27407.000	27745.500	15938.500	16868.500	28237.000	27805.500
Z	-1.547	-1.014	-2.415	-1.107	-.274	-.916
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.122	.310	.216	.268	.784	.360

Based on Table 4.3 above, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in all of the six items pertaining to what the primary and secondary school teachers want in a PD program.

4.2.4 Comparison between what urban and rural school teachers want in a professional development program

Table 4.4 Comparison between what urban and rural school teachers want in a professional development program

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.0000
Total	303	4.0000

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
Mann-Whitney U	10731.000	10964.000	10775.000	10667.000	10579.000	10871.500
Wilcoxon W	18606.000	26895.000	18650.000	18542.000	26510.000	26802.500
Z	-.592	-.238	-.493	-.656	-.789	-.371
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.554	.812	.622	.512	.430	.711

Based on Table 4.4, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in all of the six items pertaining to what the urban and rural school teachers want in a PD program.

4.2.5 Summary of findings from Section A

A table summary of the mean scores and standard deviation, and the comparison between the teachers' perceptions from different teaching levels and locations, pertaining to the elements of an ideal PD program, is presented in Table 4.5. In this section of the study, there were no significant differences in preferred PD program type between the primary and secondary teachers, and also urban and rural teachers.

Table 4.5 Section A: Summary of the findings on the elements of an ideal PD program

Section B: Benefits and Impact of ProELT			
Factor	**Mean and standard deviation (SD)**	**Teaching levels (Primary and secondary) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**	**Teaching locations (Urban and rural) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**
1. Be based on teachers' professional needs	$\bar{x}$ = 4.46, SD = 0.612	No significant difference	No significant difference
2. Be based on students' needs	$\bar{x}$ = 4.34, SD = 0.680	No significant difference	No significant difference
3. Be based on school needs	$\bar{x}$ = 3.86, SD = 0.920	No significant difference	No significant difference
4. Be regularly evaluated to determine students' academic achievement	$\bar{x}$ = 3.79, SD = 0.830	No significant difference	No significant difference
5. Be regularly evaluated to determine its impact on increasing teachers' teaching and learning effectiveness	$\bar{x}$ = 3.95, SD = 0.796	No significant difference	No significant difference
6. Be conducted over a short period	$\bar{x}$ = 4.01, SD = 0.709	No significant difference	No significant difference

4.3 Qualitative analysis: Interviews

The data considered in this section were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question A5:

What courses do you want to attend to enhance your professional development (e.g. courses to enhance or learn certain skills, knowledge, etc.)?

The responses given by the teachers indicated varying needs and preferences for heterogeneous PD programs and courses that would enhance their English and instructional skills, or their students' learning outcomes. Below are the participants' responses.

Justina[20] (T5) said:

> I want to participate in all the courses like teaching and learning, [and courses] to improve my grammar, speaking, listening and writing and communication.

Aidah (T9) explained:

> For me, I need to know how to teach grammar effectively. The different techniques to teach grammar.

Similarly, Danielle (T10) said:

> For me, [I want to attend courses on] how to teach grammar, because I'm not very good in grammar because during my KPLI[21] I learned only for six months and that's it.

[20] Pseudonyms were given to all of the interview participants in accordance with the privacy and confidentiality agreement stated in the Ethics approval (see Appendix 1 for the Ethics approval).

[21] KPLI (*Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Ijazah*) is a one-year postgraduate diploma in teaching course.

Jacqueline (T8) wanted to attend literature workshops, which introduce teachers to the revised Form 4 (Year 10) literature syllabus:

> Starting next year (2015) they (the MOE) are going to change the literature books, again, for Form 4. So, we need to re-read, get to know the books, get to know the stories again. So, if they have the courses, the literature especially, we will get the idea and then we can share with others how to teach the stories and poems.

Manjit (T3), who was less technology-savvy, said that she wanted to attend ICT-related workshops:

> I want more ICT workshops like how we go and search for things, you know, and how to download them because sometimes I still don't know how to work it.

Both Betty (T1) and Vicky (T2) wanted PD programs that would benefit their students' learning. Betty spoke about Toastmasters, which she hoped her Form 6 (Years 12 and 13) students would be encouraged to participate, in order to enhance their language skills:

> I would like to attend a Toastmasters meeting and perhaps later on be a member of the Toastmasters Club. And I would like my students to join too so that they would be capable speakers. I find my students rather weak in speaking. I believe good communication skills is very important for them to develop self-confidence and this in turn will lead to better writing, reading and listening.

As for Vicky, she described a previous PD program called "Walking Dictionary", which benefitted her students from low-income families:

> "Walking Dictionary" was something I really enjoyed [learning] and I find that especially [useful] for the poor students [because] they don't have money to buy dictionaries. So this program really benefitted the school. I did a lot of adaptation. So, I want something like that [in a PD program].

Both Farah (T7) and Lily (T6) were interested to join PD programs that were similar to the ProELT. Farah said:

> I like this [ProELT] program. But I want it to be intensive. I don't like to…they have a [one-week] break.

Lily echoed Farah's view:

> I think I like the ProELT but in shorter duration, as Farah had said.

Thus, these findings show the need for personalised PD programs to cater to the varying needs and preferences of the teachers. Further comparison between the significance of these findings and the impact of the ProELT on teachers' knowledge (see Section 5.2.3.3) and teaching practice (see Section 5.2.4.2) revealed a mixed degree of fulfilment of those needs and mixed learning outcomes.

4.4 Triangulation

The mean values in the quantitative analysis showed that the survey respondents wanted PD programs to be based on teachers' professional needs ($\bar{x}$ = 4.46, SD = 0.612), and students' needs ($\bar{x}$ = 4.34, SD = 0.680). The teacher interviews supported the survey findings, whereby all of the teachers stated that they wanted to participate in a PD program that was related to English skill and teaching development for the purpose of their professional development, and for the benefit of their students' learning outcomes. Not surprisingly, based on the consistent findings between the quantitative analysis and teacher interviews, it appeared that teachers' professional needs, and the ability to meed students' needs are the two most sought-after elements in a PD program by teachers. Significant findings from the interviews in

relation to the impact of the ProELT on teachers' knowledge (see Section 5.2.3.3) and teaching practice (Section 5.2.4.2), teachers' orientation to learning (Section 5.3.1.2), teachers' readiness to learn (Section 5.3.2.2), teachers' experience (Section 5.3.3.2), teachers' self-concept (Section 5.3.4.2) and relevance of the program (Section 5.3.6.2) revealed teachers' mixed responses as to whether the ProELT encompassed one or both of these two vital elements.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided an analysis of the demographic data of the 303 study samples in Section F of the ProELT Teachers Questionnaire, and also the findings in Section A, and the interview analyses pertaining to the first central research question, '**What are teachers' perceptions of a PD program that would fulfil their PD needs?**'. The findings have also answered the first three research questions:

RQ1: What elements do teachers want in a PD program?

RQ2: Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding PD programs?

RQ3: Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding PD programs?

Based on the mean and standard deviation, teacher PD programs *based on teachers' professional needs* ($\bar{x}$ = 4.46, SD = 0.612), and *students' needs* ($\bar{x}$ = 4.34, SD = 0.680) indicated the two highest mean scores. However, the frequency count and percentage scores indicated that the teachers viewed all of the six items in the questionnaire as important

elements in a PD program. The other four elements of PD are listed below according to their mean scores from the highest to the lowest:

1. To be conducted over a short period of time;
2. To be evaluated to regularly evaluated to determine its impact on increasing teachers' teaching and learning effectiveness;
3. To be regularly based on school needs;
4. To be regularly evaluated to determine students' academic achievement;

The findings were subsequently compared across two categories, namely teachers' teaching levels (primary and secondary levels), and teaching locations (urban and rural districts) using Mann-Whitney U Test. The comparison between the teaching levels and locations found no significant difference in any of the six items.

In addition, analyses of the interview transcripts have identified two aspects of a PD program that were important to the teachers, which validated the survey finding. These were:

1. To be based on their professional needs;
2. To be based on students' needs.

Chapter 5: Teacher's Perceptions of the ProELT

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, the findings from Section A of the questionnaire pertaining to what the teachers want in a PD program were presented, and the findings from two categories, namely teaching levels (primary and secondary school teachers), and teaching locations (urban and rural school teachers) were compared.

In this chapter, the findings for the second central research question, '**How is the ProELT perceived as a PD program?**', will be presented via the following three research questions:

RQ4: What are the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT?

RQ5: Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding the ProELT?

RQ6: Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural teachers regarding the ProELT?

This chapter will present the findings from Sections B and C of the questionnaire, while the findings for Sections D and E will be presented in Chapter 6. Section B pertains to the teachers' experiences with the ProELT, with regard to the benefits and impacts of the program, and focuses on four factors based on the questionnaire adapted from Ingvarson et al. (2005):

1. Content focus;
2. Active learning;

3. Impact on knowledge; and
4. Impact on teaching practice.

Meanwhile, Section C examines data on the participants' beliefs in terms of the degree of incorporation of the six adult learning principles in the ProELT (see Section 5.3.7, Table 5.32):

1. Orientation to learning;
2. Readiness to learn;
3. Experience;
4. Self-concept;
5. Motivation; and
6. Relevance

5.2 Section B: Benefits and impact of the ProELT

In the following Sections 5.2.1 until 5.2.6, the survey findings in two categories viz. 1. teaching level (primary (n = 187) and secondary (n = 116) school teachers), and 2. teaching area (urban (n = 125) and rural (n = 178) school teachers) regarding teachers' perceptions of the ProELT will be presented and compared. The quantitative analysis will be triangulated with the qualitative analysis from the teacher interviews.

5.2.1 Emphasis on content focus

5.2.1.1 Quantitative analysis

In Items 1(a), (b), and (c), the survey respondents rated their responses on the ProELT's emphasis on content focus along a five-point Likert scale: 1 = No Emphasis; 2 = Minor

Emphasis; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Moderate Emphasis; and 5 = Major Emphasis. The items pertained to teachers' knowledge of their teaching content and students learning, and teaching methods.

Table 5.1 Emphasis on content focus

Item No.	Item	NE	MiE	N	MoE	MaE	Mean	SD
1. What emphasis did the ProELT give to:								
a.	knowledge of the content that you teach?	0	6 2.0%	33 10.9%	**137** **45.2%**	127 41.9%	4.27	0.732
b.	knowledge about how students learn the specific content that you teach?	1 0.3%	13 4.3%	43 14.2%	**157** **51.8%**	89 29.4%	4.06	0.797
c.	the methods you use to teach the required content?	0	8 2.6%	37 12.2%	**150** **49.5%**	108 35.6%	4.18	0.744
						Overall Mean Score	4.17	0.668

NE=No Emphasis, MiE=Minor Emphasis, N=Neutral, MoE=Moderate Emphasis, MaE=Major Emphasis, SD=Standard Deviation

Table 5.1 shows that the teachers believe there is moderate emphasis on content focus in the ProELT, based on the overall mean score of 4.17 (SD = 0.668). More than 80% of the respondents judged that there are moderate and major emphasis on Items 1(a) (*knowledge of the content that you teach*), (b) (*knowledge about how students learn the specific content that you teach*), and (c) (*the methods you use to teach the required content*), which produced mean scores of 4.27 (SD = 0.732), 4.06 (SD = 0.797), and 4.18 (SD = 0.744), respectively.

Table 5.2 Comparison between primary and secondary school teachers' perceptions of the emphasis on content knowledge

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.0000
Secondary	116	4.3333
Total	303	4.0000

	B1a	B1b	B1c
Mann-Whitney U	10618.000	10472.000	10361.500
Wilcoxon W	28196.000	28050.000	27939.500
Z	-.337	-.553	-.717
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.736	.580	.474

Based on Table 5.2 above, Items 1(a), 1(b), and 1(c) have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant differences in any of the three items pertaining to the ProELT's emphasis on content focus between the primary and secondary school teachers.

Table 5.3 Comparison between urban and rural school teachers' perceptions of the emphasis on content knowledge

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.3333
Total	303	4.0000

	B1a	B1b	B1c
Mann-Whitney U	10683.500	10773.000	10716.500
Wilcoxon W	18558.500	18648.000	18591.500
Z	-.644	-.514	-.597
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.519	.607	.551

Meanwhile, a similar comparison was computed between the urban and rural school teachers' perceptions. As shown on Table 5.3, Items 1(a), 1(b), and 1(c) also have $p > .05$. Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in any of the three

items pertaining to the ProELT's emphasis on the content focus between the urban and rural school teachers.

5.2.1.2 Qualitative analysis

The data considered in this section were obtained in response to the following interview question.

Interview Question B1:

Has the ProELT improved your understanding of your subject content? If so, how?

The responses given by the teachers interviewed showed that most of the participants, except for one, did not believe they gained much understanding of their subject content. This is because they felt there was lack of relevance between the ProELT contents and their teaching syllabus and, therefore, the teachers were unable to relate the contents to their teaching.

For example, Betty, who teaches Form 6 (Years 12 and 13), explained that the grammar components of the ProELT did not complement the Form 6 MUET[22] syllabus. She said:

> I've been taught [in the ProELT] recently there are four 'if' conditionals, Wendy. Did you know that there are four 'if' conditionals? I don't know will that help my students by knowing the four 'if' conditionals?

[22] MUET (Malaysian University English Test) is a compulsory language proficiency test for pre-university, matriculation and diploma students who intend to pursue a degree program at a Malaysian local university. The test contains four components which assess candidates' four language skills. The result is summarised and scored along six bands i.e. Band 1 to Band 6, where Band 1 = extremely limited user, Band 2 = limited user, Band 3 = modest user, Band 4= competent user, Band 5 = good user, and Band 6 = very good user. Beginning 2015, the minimum entry requirement into local universities for arts and social science courses has been raised from Band 1 to Band 2 (graduation requirement set at Band 3); science, technology, engineering and mathematics at Band 3 (graduation requirement of Band 4); and Band 4 has been set for law and medical studies (graduation requirement of Band 5) (Bernama, 2014, October 13).

She elaborated:

> You know MUET is a proficiency test. We are concentrating on the skills, how to answer questions on reading comprehension, how do you get contextual clues, find contextual clues, doing anaphoric references to get your answers and all these things. It (learning the 'if' conditionals) is kind of a knowledge enrichment.

Meanwhile, Manjit, who teaches in primary school, also thought that the program content did not suit her students' level:

> I find most of the activities and materials are more applicable to secondary level. Not much for the primary. For example like yesterday we were taught a listening game by my trainer but it did not suit my students' language proficiency. So I ask him, "Michael (pseudonym), what about my weak students who don't know how to read? I got 12 of them. So what do I do with them?"

In addition, the rural teachers in the focus groups stated that the ProELT coursebook contained general topics. Similar to Betty and Manjit, they also claimed that the coursebook was not designed according to their curriculum specifications:

Justina:	I'm from the secondary school. The other [ProELT] teachers are from primary school. This course does not teach using the school syllabus. It's general.
Jacqueline:	No. I don't think they even touch on our syllabus. We are not using our teaching syllabus [in the ProELT].
Farah:	I have a slightly better understanding of my subject but not much because the training module does not fully follow our primary school syllabus.
Danielle:	I agree with Farah. I am teaching in secondary school and I have only managed to gain just a bit of knowledge on my subject.

Surprisingly, Tan (T4), who teaches in primary school, was the only interview participants who thought that the program content aligned with the curriculum specifications:

> Yes. The content of the coursebook is planned well and based on our Malaysia content. So, it really helped a lot.

Thus, these findings show that most of the participants felt the ProELT coursebook had little impact on their subject knowledge due to its lack of relevance with their teaching syllabus. This will be considered in further depth in Chapter 7.

5.2.1.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed that the ProELT placed a moderate degree of emphasis on the teachers' teaching content. Surprisingly, the teacher interviews were more critical, as a majority of the participants claimed that they did not gain much understanding of their content knowledge, due to the lack of relevance between the program content and their curriculum specifications. Despite the contradicting findings between the survey and teacher interviews, more than 80% of the survey respondents agreed that there was emphasis on their teaching content in the ProELT.

5.2.2 Engagement in active learning

5.2.2.1 Quantitative analysis

What was the extent of teachers' engagement in active learning during the ProELT? This question is answered via Items 2(a) to 2(f) in the questionnaire, and the survey respondents rated their responses along a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Not at All; 2 = To a Minor

Extent; 3 = Neutral; 4 = To a Moderate Extent; and 5 = To a Major Extent. Table 5.4 presents the respondents' responses in regard to their engagement in active learning.

Table 5.4 Teachers' engagement in active learning

Item No.	Item	NA	MiE	N	MoE	MaE	Mean	SD
2. To what extent did the ProELT:								
a.	engage you in actively reflecting on your practice?	1 0.3%	4 1.3%	33 10.9%	**163** **53.8%**	102 33.75	4.19	0.702
b.	engage you in identifying specific areas of your practice that you needed to develop?	0	3 1.0%	26 8.6%	134 44.2%	**140** **46.2%**	4.36	0.680
c.	provide opportunities to test new teaching practices?	0	4 1.3%	33 10.9%	**136** **44.9%**	130 42.9%	4.29	0.711
d.	enable you to gain feedback about your teaching from colleagues or other teachers?	3 1.0%	19 6.3%	74 24.4%	**135** **44.6%**	72 23.8%	3.84	0.893
e.	provide time for you to practise your new learning?	0	13 4.3%	62 20.5%	**153** **50.5%**	75 24.8%	3.96	0.790
f.	provide follow-up/on-going assistance in your school or classroom to help you implement changes recommended in the program?	21 6.9%	24 7.9%	73 24.1%	**131** **43.2%**	54 17.8%	3.57	1.086
						Overall Mean Score	4.03	0.600

NA=Not at All, MiE=To a Minor Extent, N=Neutral, MoE=To a Moderate Extent, MaE=To a Major Extent, SD=Standard Deviation

In Table 5.4, the respondents experience a moderate extent of engagement in active learning during the ProELT, based on the overall mean score of 4.03 (SD = 0.600). More than 60% of the respondents rated experiencing moderate and major extent of engagement in active learning in all of the six items. However, Items 2(d), (e), and (f) have means scores of 3.84 (SD = 0.893), 3.96 (SD = 0.790), and 3.57 (SD = 1.086), respectively, which correspond overall to the "Neutral" category.

Table 5.5 Comparison between primary and secondary school teachers' perceptions of teachers' engagement in active learning

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.0000
Secondary	116	4.0000
Total	303	4.0000

	B2a	B2b	B2c	B2d	B2e	B2f
Mann-Whitney U	10786.000	10544.000	10713.000	9645.000	10399.000	10060.000
Wilcoxon W	28364.000	28122.000	28291.000	16431.000	17185.000	16846.000
Z	-.090	-.451	-.197	-1.724	-.655	-1.118
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.928	.652	.844	.085	.512	.263

Based on Table 5.5 above, Items 2(a), 2(b), 2(c), 2(d), 2(e), and 2(f) have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in all of the six items pertaining to the teachers' engagement in active learning in the ProELT between the primary and secondary school teachers.

Table 5.6 Comparison between urban and rural school teachers' perceptions of teachers' engagement in active learning

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.1667
Total	303	4.0000

	B2a	B2b	B2c	B2d	B2e	B2f
Mann-Whitney U	10290.500	9511.500	9636.500	9879.500	10329.500	10598.000
Wilcoxon W	18165.500	17386.500	17511.500	17754.500	18204.500	18473.000
Z	-1.239	-2.382	-2.177	-1.765	-1.151	-.740
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.215	.517	.329	.078	.250	.459

Meanwhile, the results of the comparison between the urban and rural school teachers' perceptions are presented in Table 5.6. Similarly, all of the six items have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test also revealed no significant difference in any of the

six items pertaining to the teachers' engagement in active learning in the ProELT between the urban and rural school teachers.

5.2.2.2 Qualitative analysis

This section presents the data that were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question B2:

Can you describe the learning activities in the ProELT?

The responses given by the urban teachers suggest that they were engaged in active learning, including micro teaching and presentation, which was consistent with the quantitative finding.

For example, Betty explained about conducting micro teaching with her colleagues:

> We do micro teaching but in a different kind of way. For example, my trainer gave us a group assignment to conduct warm up activities for our lesson. And then we picked a specific grammar item to teach. So, we started the lesson with a warmer and taught for fifteen to twenty minutes.

Justina described about presentation and micro teaching:

> Every session there will be a presentation. Sometimes it'll be a short presentation and once in a while there will be a micro teaching.

In contrast, the rural teachers claimed that their trainer was more engaged in preparing them for the post-Aptis test.

> Jacqueline: I think what she (the trainer) did was based on what we are going to be tested later.

Lily: [She is] more into teaching theories and how to succeed. Pass the test.

Jacqueline: Ya. She talks more on the Aptis test.

Farah: I think lately she's doing that (focusing on the Aptis test). It's like we are in our exam classes.

Jacqueline: [She advises] what you should do for this listening test. Speaking test, what you should.

Manjit also shared a similar view with the aforementioned rural teachers regarding the ProELT activities being more focused on the Aptis test:

> I find that they're preparing us for the Aptis test which I find the test doesn't have any connection with our teaching and learning. What has it got to do, you know? That's what make us very angry because if there's a connection to it, okay I understand. But there's nothing. No connection at all.

Thus, these findings confirm that the ProELT adopted a reform approach with the inclusion of hands-on and interactive activities.

5.2.2.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis indicated that the teachers were engaged in active learning to a moderate extent during the ProELT. As for the teacher interviews, they revealed that a portion of the teachers were more involved in teaching practice, while another portion were more focused on the language skills, which were evaluated in the Aptis test. Based on these consistent findings of the quantitative analysis and teacher interviews, it appears that the participants' engagement in active learning was partially emphasised. Although the *teaching*

practice component was given more emphasis than *language skills*, this does not mean that the latter was entirely disregarded during the entire program.

5.2.3 Impact on teachers' knowledge

5.2.3.1 Quantitative analysis

Items 3(a) to 3(g) pertained to the ProELT's impact on teachers' knowledge. The survey respondents rated their responses along a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree. The findings are summarised in Table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7 Impact on teachers' knowledge

Item No.	Item	SD*	DA	NADA	A	SA	Mean	SD
3. Knowledge: As a result of my participation in the ProELT, I now have:								
a.	increased knowledge of the content of the key learning area/s which I teach.	0	2 0.7%	10 3.3%	**173** **57.1%**	118 38.9%	4.34	0.576
b.	increased knowledge of teaching and learning strategies appropriate to the content of the key learning area/s that I teach.	0	2 0.7%	16 5.3%	**167** **55.1%**	118 38.9%	4.32	0.604
c.	increased knowledge about how students learn the content of the key learning area/s in which I teach.	0	2 0.7%	44 14.5%	**183** **60.4%**	74 24.4%	4.09	0.640
d.	increased understanding of individual differences amongst students and how I can cater to their needs.	0	2 0.7%	36 11.9%	**167** **55.1%**	98 32.3%	4.19	0.658
e.	increased understanding about linking assessment into the teaching and learning cycle.	0	6 2.0%	38 12.5%	**185** **61.1%**	74 24.4%	4.08	0.666
f.	increased knowledge of classroom organisation and management.	1 0.3%	5 1.7%	40 13.2%	**169** **55.8%**	88 29.0%	4.12	0.712
g.	increased knowledge of materials and resources in the key area in which I teach.	0	0	22 7.3%	**173** **57.1%**	108 35.6%	4.28	0.591
						Overall Mean Score	4.20	0.505

SD*=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NADA=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, SD=Standard Deviation

The overall mean score of 4.20 (SD = 0.505) in Table 5.7 shows the respondents agree that the ProELT has an impact on their knowledge, including knowledge of their teaching content, teaching and learning strategies, student learning, student needs, linking assessment to teaching and learning, classroom organisation and management, and teaching materials and resources.. All of the seven items have mean scores between 4.08 (SD = 0.666) and 4.34 (SD = 0.576), which correspond to the "Agree" category.

Table 5.8 Comparison between primary and secondary school teachers' perceptions of the impact on teachers' knowledge

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.1429
Secondary	116	4.0000
Total	303	4.1429

	B3a	B3b	B3c	B3d	B3e	B3f
Mann-Whitney U	10662.500	10098.000	10065.000	10527.500	9848.500	10261.500
Wilcoxon W	28240.500	16884.000	16851.000	17313.500	16634.500	17047.500
Z	-.285	-1.147	-1.207	-.481	-1.548	-.882
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.776	.251	.227	.630	.122	.378

	B3g
Mann-Whitney U	10541.000
Wilcoxon W	28119.000
Z	-.469
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.639

A comparison between the primary and secondary school teachers' perceptions was computed, and the findings are presented in Table 5.8 above. All of the seven items have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in any of the seven items pertaining to the ProELT's impact on teachers' knowledge between the primary and secondary school teachers.

Table 5.9 Comparison between urban and rural school teachers' perceptions of the impact on teachers' knowledge

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.1429
Total	303	4.1429

	B3a	B3b	B3c	B3d	B3e	B3f
Mann-Whitney U	10869.000	10395.000	11057.500	10178.500	11072.000	10303.500
Wilcoxon W	18744.000	18270.000	18932.500	18053.500	18947.000	18178.500
Z	-.392	-1.106	-.103	-1.412	-.081	-1.224
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.695	.269	.918	.158	.935	.221

	B3g
Mann-Whitney U	11097.500
Wilcoxon W	18972.500
Z	-.042
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.967

Similarly, all of the seven items in Table 5.9 have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test also revealed no significant difference in any of the seven items pertaining to the ProELT's impact on teachers' knowledge between the urban and rural school teachers.

5.2.3.2 Qualitative analysis

The data considered in this section were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question B3:

Besides language and teaching skills, what other knowledge have you gained from the ProELT?

The responses given by the majority of the teachers interviewed revealed that most of the participants, except one, had gained new knowledge which enhanced and assisted them with

their teaching practice. Most of the knowledge pertained to incorporating ICT into the lessons.

Vicky explained how she learned to use puppets as part of her teaching materials:

> One thing that I like about this course is that [my trainer] Angela[23] shares with us a few websites where you can create your own puzzles and then you can create your own drama like you use puppets. You can use the puppets and make all the [dialogue] bubbles.

Vicky further elaborated about using online websites to create quizzes and puzzles:

> The day before, she showed us the *Quizlet* website where we created quizzes. Then another one was *puzzle.com* where we created puzzles. So, if you do this game in the ICT room with all the students, your students can answer puzzles and straight away all the answers are there and you can even check the answers. So that is very interesting because now we are incorporating ICT in our teaching. And then they teach about games. We also play games.

Tan also echoed Vicky's view about incorporating ICT into her teaching:

> One thing that attracts me [about this program] is using ICT, because during my time, fourteen years back, we seldom use ICT [in the classroom]. So, my trainer would introduce a useful website. And we have e-book for reading. And then sometime he also introduce us to a website for us to produce teaching aids. Ya, that's very helpful. And from this course, we have online course. So, we will interact with the e-moderator. It's really helped me a lot using the ICT way.

When asked whether she had adopted her knowledge in ICT into her lessons, Tan replied:

> Actually I'm still experimenting, because in school the situation is different. First thing is the facility and then is the time. But I try to use whatever that suits to my classroom. So it really helped me a lot.

---

[23] pseudonym

As for Justina, she explained her learning about *needs analysis* for students, and its function in identifying her students' learning needs:

> In every unit, there's also this thing call the needs analysis. I didn't know that it's actually important to know…to carry out needs analysis in the beginning of the year so that you know a little bit about your students. And then now I know that it's actually good to carry out needs analysis before you start [a] lesson.

As mentioned above, Manjit, who is less confident with technology, was excited about learning to access teaching materials via YouTube, particularly listening materials for her students:

> I've learned how to use YouTube. How to search for listening materials from YouTube. Last time I just don't know how to go about it.

However, Betty, who had twenty eight years of teaching experience and was the most experienced teachers among all of the interview participants, thought that the ProELT did not suit her professional needs, and it was wasted on her:

> Basically for me it's like a refresher course *lah*[24]. They do the past tense, present tense, and simple and past continuous tense, past perfect continuous tense. So, all that again. Revising, when to use all these thing and all that *lah*. Tenses *lah*. So, for me it's like a refresher course. I feel that I am already proficient enough. So, I feel that the program is wasted on me *lah*.

Therefore, the summary of the findings indicated that the ProELT had an impact on most of the teachers' instructional knowledge.

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[24] "*lah"* is a colloquial form of Malay, which is adopted by Malaysian and Singaporean speakers of English. It is commonly used in the middle or at the end of a sentence, which 'may convey either "light-heartedness" or an "ill-tempered" effect, and it may either "soften" or "harden" a request (Goddard, 1994, p. 146).

5.2.3.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed the respondents agreed that the ProELT had an impact on their knowledge. The teacher interviews indicated that most of the participants had also gained some new knowledge on teaching techniques, ICT, and student learning needs analysis. Based on these consistent findings, it appears that the ProELT had beneficial effect on teachers' knowledge in providing new instructional ideas.

5.2.4 Impact on teaching practice

5.2.4.1 Quantitative analysis

Has the teachers' teaching practice improved since participating in the ProELT? Question 4 contains nine items, which seek to solicit the teachers' views on the ProELT's impact on their teaching practice, including linking teaching goal with classroom activities, managing effective classroom structures and activities, using effective and engaging teaching and learning strategies, meeting students' learning needs, linking assessment with teaching and learning, providing effective feedback to students, engaging in higher order thinking, and accessing and using materials more effectively. The 303 survey respondents indicated their responses from a range of five scales: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 5.10 Impact on teachers' teaching practice

Item No.	Item	SD*	DA	NADA	A	SA	Mean	SD
4. Teaching Practice: As a result of my participation in the ProELT, I now:								
a.	make clearer links between my teaching goals and classroom activities.	0	2 0.7%	17 5.6%	**191** **63.0%**	93 30.7%	4.24	0.578
b.	manage classroom structures and activities more effectively.	0	2 0.7%	30 9.9%	**175** **57.8%**	96 31.7%	4.20	0.634
c.	use more effective teaching and learning strategies appropriate to the content that I teach.	0	1 0.3%	26 8.6%	**174** **57.4%**	102 33.7%	4.24	0.614
d.	use more effective teaching and learning strategies appropriate to the classroom context.	0	1 0.3%	31 10.2%	**182** **60.1%**	89 29.4%	4.18	0.613
e.	use teaching and learning strategies that are more engaging.	0	1 0.3%	22 7.3%	**177** **58.4%**	103 34.0%	4.26	0.599
f.	am better able to meet the individual learning needs of my students.	0	2 0.7%	44 14.5%	**179** **59.1%**	78 25.7%	4.10	0.649
g.	link assessment into the teaching and learning cycle more effectively.	0	5 1.7%	54 17.8%	**196** **64.7%**	48 15.8%	3.95	0.633
h.	provide more effective feedback to my students to support their learning.	0	3 1.0%	41 13.5%	**201** **66.3%**	58 19.1%	4.04	0.605
i.	access and use materials and resources more effectively.	0	1 0.3%	32 10.6%	**187** **61.7%**	83 27.4%	4.16	0.606
						Overall Mean Score	4.15	0.495

SD*=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NADA=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, SD=Standard Deviation

The overall mean score of 4.15 (SD = 0.495), as shown in Table 5.10, indicates that the respondents collectively agree that the ProELT has improved their teaching practice. However, among the nine items, only one, namely 4(g) (*link assessment into the teaching and learning cycle more effectively*) has a mean score of 3.95 (SD = 0.699), which indicates the respondents neither agree nor disagree with this item.

Table 5.11 Comparison between primary and secondary school teachers' perceptions of the impact on teachers' teaching practice

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.0000
Secondary	116	4.0000
Total	303	4.0000

	B4a	B4b	B4c	B4d	B4e	B4f
Mann-Whitney U	9485.000	10508.500	10637.500	10620.500	10342.500	10191.000
Wilcoxon W	27063.000	17294.500	28215.500	17406.500	17128.500	16977.000
Z	-2.163	-.517	-.320	-.350	-.779	-1.005
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**.031**	.605	.749	.727	.436	.315

	B4g	B4h	B4i
Mann-Whitney U	10148.500	10388.500	10367.000
Wilcoxon W	16934.500	27966.500	27945.000
Z	-1.109	-.738	-.745
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.267	.460	.456

Table 5.11 presents the comparison between both teaching levels, which shows only Item 4(a) has $p < .05$. Therefore, in contrast to the other areas that have been considered, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in making clearer links between teachers' teaching goals and classroom activities between the primary (Md = 4.00, n = 187) and secondary school teachers (Md = 4.00, n = 116), U = 9485, z = -2.16, p = .03, r = 0.12.

Table 5.12 Comparison between urban and rural school teachers' perceptions of the impact on teachers' teaching practice

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.0000
Total	303	4.0000

	B4a	B4b	B4c	B4d	B4e	B4f
Mann-Whitney U	11045.000	10864.500	10892.000	10745.500	11030.500	11086.500
Wilcoxon W	18920.000	26795.500	26823.000	26676.500	26961.500	27017.500
Z	-.126	-.394	-.353	-.581	-.144	-.058
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.900	.693	.724	.561	.885	.954

	B4g	B4h	B4i
Mann-Whitney U	11115.500	10989.500	10244.000
Wilcoxon W	27046.500	26920.500	26175.000
Z	-.015	-.216	-1.354
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.988	.829	.176

Meanwhile, Table 5.12 summarises the comparison between the urban and rural teachers' perceptions. All of the seven items have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test did not indicate any significant difference in the nine items pertaining to the ProELT's impact on teachers' knowledge between the urban and rural school teachers.

5.2.4.2 Qualitative analysis

This section presents the data that were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question B4:

Has the ProELT improved your teaching skill? If so, how?

The responses from the teachers interviewed showed that the ProELT had positively impacted the teaching practice of only a portion of the teachers. The remaining teachers,

who were unsure of or did not experience any improvement in their teaching practices, attributed it to the program's incompatibility in fulfilling their teaching and learning needs. This indicated a deficiency in the program content. One of the teachers who benefited from the program was Manjit, who explained that the ProELT teaching materials helped to enhance her lessons:

> Yes. I find that the ProELT did improve my teaching skill. They (the trainers) have a lot of materials which they share with us that I can use for my students to make my lesson more interesting for them.

Danielle also attributed her improved teaching skill to the program activities:

> I think the course has really help to improve my teaching skills since we learn a lot of new activities from this [ProELT] program that we can conduct during the class.

Justina provided an example of how she had learned a better technique to teach tenses from her trainer:

> I do not know how to teach [tenses to] the students. Sometimes I just give examples. But when the trainer teaches us [tenses], I really love the way she taught us to use *time line*. So it's quite easy actually. Now I use it to teach my students.

Aidah, who teaches in primary school, noted that her teaching skill had improved, but the ProELT activities were more suitable for secondary school students:

> My teaching skill has improved but not that much, because I teach the primary level, and this program seem to be more suitable for secondary level. So, I need to adapt whatever I learn from this course. But overall I did improve [my teaching skill].

Farah, who also teaches low-proficient, primary school students, echoed a similar thought to Aidah's:

> Same with Aidah. I have to adapt and simplify the lessons and activities in my school because the students are from the rural areas and they have very poor English knowledge.

As for Lily, she said that she was unsure whether her teaching skills had improved, but found some of the activities were useful for her lessons:

> I'm not sure about my teaching skill but the things that I gained from this program is that I could apply some or few of the activities that I've learned in the ProELT class.

Similarly, Jacqueline was also unsure as Lily, because she seldom used the ProELT activities in her lessons. She explained that she had to focus on preparing her students for the Form 6 (Year 11) public examination:

> For me, I'm not sure whether [my teaching skills] has improved or not because I'm teaching the exam classes. Form 5. So, we need to focus more on the exam topics. So if we want to put all the [ProELT] activities [in our lessons] we will not have time to focus on the other exam questions. So we have to really focus on their exam so that they can get good results.

However, Vicky mentioned that the ProELT did not have any impact on her teaching skills. Vicky, who has been teaching for eighteen years, explained that ProELT was quite similar to other PD courses which she had attended:

> I cannot say I have improved my teaching skills because I've been teaching [for] eighteen years and I've attended a lot of courses. So when I went for this course (ProELT) what I realised that it is something similar to the other courses that I've attended but just maybe a bit of adaptation, a bit of changes, or something new they've added in. That's the only difference.

Vicky added that she had gained her long-term experience from teaching at various school locations and from teaching students with varied language proficiency:

> But for me, I'm not only experienced in the [teaching] method, but the [different] school that I've gone [to teach]. I've gone to a rural area school,

> the urban area, the middle area (sub-urban) also. I've been to all the schools. And I've been to schools where the students are from different language proficiency background. So I have already taught them. Once you have gone through these [experiences], you have lots of ideas to teach them. How to adapt your lessons.

Hence, these findings indicate that the ProELT had an absolute impact on three teachers, a slight impact on two teachers, but no impact on two teachers. Two other teachers were unsure.

5.2.4.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed the respondents agreed that the ProELT has an impact on their teaching practice. There was a significant difference between the primary and secondary school teachers' responses in regard to Item 4(a), in which the ProELT helped them to **make clearer links between their teaching goals and classroom activities**. This significant difference was reinforced by the findings from the interviews with the teachers, where teachers elaborated on the practical difficulties of applying what they had been taught.

The teacher interviews indicated that one group of teachers, whose work involved teaching mixed teaching levels, claimed that their teaching skills had improved, but a second group disagreed. In the latter group, the primary school teachers stated that the program content was more suited for secondary school level. They also claimed that the materials needed revision to suit their low-proficiency level students. In addition, the secondary school teachers explained that they had used only selected materials for their lessons or none at all. Based on the findings from the quantitative and teacher interviews, it appears that the ProELT had an impact the teaching practice of a majority of the teachers.

5.2.5 Summary of findings

A summary of the survey (including mean scores, standard deviation, and Mann-Whitney U Test) and teacher interviews is presented in Table 5.13 below.

Table 5.13 Section B: Summary of the findings on the benefits and impact of ProELT

Section B: Benefits and Impact of ProELT					
Factor	**Survey**			**Teacher interviews**	**Triangulation**
	Mean and standard deviation (SD)	**Teaching levels (Primary and secondary) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**	**Teaching locations (Urban and rural) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**		
1. Emphasis on content focus	Moderate emphasis ($\bar{x}$ = 4.17, SD = 0.668)	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	Most of the participants, except for one (primary, urban), did not gain much understanding of their subject content.	The majority of the program participants agreed there was emphasis on content focus.
2. Engagement in active learning	Moderate extent ($\bar{x}$ = 4.03, SD = 0.600)	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	The urban teachers were involved in active learning but the rural teachers were more engaged in preparing for the Aptis test.	The majority of the program participants agreed they were engaged in active learning.
3. Impact on teachers' knowledge	Respondents **agreed** that the program had an impact on their knowledge. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20, SD = 0.505)	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	Most of the teachers, except for one (primary, urban), agreed to have gained new instructional knowledge.	The ProELT has an impact on teachers' knowledge among the majority of the program participants.
4. Impact on teaching practice	Respondents **agreed** that the program had an impact on their teaching practice. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.15, SD = 0.495)	There is a significant difference between primary and secondary school teachers in making clearer links between their teaching goals and classroom activities (Item 4(a)).	No significant difference.	Five teachers had improved their teaching skills, two teachers did not improve, and two teachers were unsure.	The ProELT has an impact on the teaching practice among the majority of the program participants.

A review of the quantitative and qualitative analysis for Section B of the questionnaire showed that three findings were consistent between the survey and teacher interviews in regard to the ProELT's **moderate emphasis on active learning** and the program's **impact on teachers' knowledge**. However, two other findings were contradictory between the survey and teacher interviews in regard to the **emphasis on content knowledge** and **impact on teaching practice**. For example, the survey respondents agreed that there was moderate emphasis of their content knowledge in the program, but most of the interview participants, except for one, indicated otherwise due to the lack of relevance between the coursebook content and the curriculum specifications. In addition, the survey respondents also agreed that the ProELT had an impact on their teaching practice, but, in the interviews, some of the experienced teachers viewed the ProELT as similar to a refresher teaching methodology course. Despite some of these contradictory findings, it can be summarised, based on the majority of the survey respondents, that the ProELT had benefitted the teachers and had an impact on them. It is worth emphasising that findings from the interviews are equally important as the survey, but the former is representative of a specific subset of the teacher population as opposed to a broader sample, as highlighted previously in Section 3.6.2.

In the following Section 5.3, the findings from Section C of the questionnaire, which solicited information on the teachers' perceptions regarding the degree of incorporation of the six adult learning principles in the ProELT namely *orientation to learning, readiness to learn, experience, self-concept, motivation, and relevance* (of the program), will be presented.

5.3 Section C: Degree of incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT

Knowles's (2005) theory of adult learning (andragogy) described adult learners as having six learning principles: orientation to learning, readiness to learn, experience, self-concept, motivation, and relevance. Compared to children, adults learn through a task-centred or problem-centred approach (orientation to learning), adults become ready to learn things that they need to know that are applicable to their real-life situations (readiness to learn), adults have greater volume and different quality of experience, adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions and autonomy, adults are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, and they need to know the reason they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it (relevance). Hence, it is crucial that teacher PD developers consider the incorporation of these learning principles into their programs.

The following Sections 5.3.1 until 5.3.6 will present the findings of the teachers' perceptions pertaining to the degree of the incorporation of these six principles in the ProELT. Then, the findings will be compared among two categories of respondents viz. teaching levels (primary (n = 187) and secondary (n = 116) school teachers), and teaching locations (urban (n = 125) and rural (n = 178) school teachers). The survey respondents rated their responses along a range of five scales: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree. In contrast with the previous Section 5.2, some significant differences were found among the perceptions of teachers in the different contexts.

5.3.1 Orientation to learning

Adults' orientation to learning is task- and problem-centred, i.e. they want to learn skills that will assist them in performing tasks or in dealing with their current situation. For example, in this study, the situation pertains to teachers who want to enhance their language skills and seek assistance for their instructional needs.

5.3.1.1 Quantitative analysis

Participants' orientation to learning trait is compiled under Items 1 to 5. Table 5.14 summarises the data from the survey respondents.

Table 5.14 Teachers' orientation to learning

Item No.	Item	SD*	DA	NADA	A	SA	Mean	SD
1.	The program offered suggestions which are useful and can be applied immediately in my teaching.	0	5 1.7%	32 10.6%	**172** **56.8%**	94 31.0%	4.17	0.674
2.	The program content was strongly related to my professional needs.	0	3 1.0%	30 9.9%	134 44.2%	**136** **44.9%**	4.33	0.693
3.	The program material was related to my teaching syllabus.	1 0.3%	10 3.3%	88 29.0%	**150** **49.5%**	54 17.8%	3.81	0.773
4.	The program offered support or guidance to me with regard to the application of new ideas in my classroom.	0	0	32 10.6%	**157** **51.8%**	114 37.6%	4.27	0.640
5.	The program gave opportunities for me to practice in situations that simulated the classroom reality.	0	6 2.0%	48 15.8%	**163** **53.8%**	86 28.4%	4.09	0.718
						Overall Mean Score	4.13	0.551

SD*=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NADA=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, SD=Standard Deviation

On average, the respondents agree that the ProELT fulfill their learning needs by providing suggestions, support, and opportunities to develop their teaching skills, based on the overall mean score of 4.13 (SD = 0.551). All of the items have mean scores ranging between 4.09 (SD = 0.718) and 4.33 (SD = 0.693), except for Item 3 ($\bar{x}$ = 3.81, SD = 0.773).

Table 5.15 Mann-Whitney U Test of the orientation to learning between primary and secondary school teachers

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.0000
Secondary	116	4.1667
Total	303	4.1667

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
Mann-Whitney U	9366.000	10472.500	10770.500	9690.000	10327.000
Wilcoxon W	26944.000	17258.500	28348.500	27268.000	27905.000
Z	-2.252	-.556	-.111	-1.736	-.774
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**.024**	.578	.912	.082	.439

As shown in Table 5.15, Item C(1) has $p < .05$. The Mann-Whitney U Test reveals a significant difference in the **suggestions** being offered by the program which are **useful and can be applied immediately in teaching** between the primary (Md = 4.00, n = 187) and secondary school teachers (Md = 4.17, n = 116), U = 9366, z = -2.25, p = .02, r = .13.

Table 5.16 Mann-Whitney U Test of the orientation to learning between urban and rural school teachers

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.1667
Total	303	4.1667

	C1	**C2**	C3	C4	C5
Mann-Whitney U	10184.000	9777.000	10646.000	10692.500	10929.000
Wilcoxon W	18059.000	17652.000	18521.000	18567.500	18804.000
Z	-1.414	-1.980	-.693	-.641	-.289
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.157	**.048**	.489	.521	.773

Meanwhile, a review of Table 5.16 shows only Item C(2) has $p < .05$. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicates a significant difference in the **program content being strongly related to the teachers' professional needs** between the urban (Md = 4.00, n = 125) and rural school teachers (Md = 4.17, n = 178), U = 9777, z = -1.98, p = .48, r = 0.11.

5.3.1.2 Qualitative analysis

The data considered in this section were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question C1:

Before the ProELT commenced, what skills or knowledge did you want to gain from the program?

The responses given by the focus group participants revealed a discouraging fact about their forced participation in the ProELT, which was based on their Aptis test results, and the program did not fulfil their learning needs. The teachers' responses also demonstrated their uncertainty of the purpose and benefits of the program, and their acquiescence to abiding by

the order from the MOE to attend the ProELT without questioning or arguing the suitability of the program for their learning needs. The following extracts exemplify these views.

> Aidah: I don't really know what I'm doing here (giggle). When I go back to school, I do different things. I follow the teaching syllabus. Totally different from what I've learned from this program.
>
> Farah: I came for the ProELT because I was forced to [attend based on my Aptis result]. [The Education Department] said that I have to go, so I just come to gain knowledge for my teaching skills, but I do not know how it fulfils my career needs.
>
> Danielle: Ya, the same thing with me. Since my name is on the list, I have to go. So, I don't know how it can fulfil my career needs.
>
> Jacqueline: Just like them, I'm here because of the [Aptis] test. My name is on the list. So, I have to come here. I don't know how it will fulfil my teaching needs. But, I just come to gain knowledge.
>
> Lily: So far since I've been participating in this ProELT program, I still don't find any changes with my teaching skill. Just like what *Kak* (Sister) Aidah said, what we do at the ProELT we just do there, and we didn't apply it at our schools.

Meanwhile, Manjit wanted activities that could help her students improve their language skills. Her students consisted of Year 4 rural students who are mostly low proficiency learners. However, due to the lack of effective demonstrations from her trainer, Manjit argued she had difficulty implementing the ProELT activities in her lessons:

> We are English teachers. We understand [how to do the activities]. But [the trainer should] try to apply them on the students. That's what I want to see. Can the students do it, especially my students? If what [the trainers] are teaching us can actually be used, show us how to apply on our students. The weak students.

In contrast, Tan was one of two teachers who was excited to participate in the ProELT, because she was an avid learner:

> I want to learn everything. I teach Year 6 which is an exam class so I don't get selected to attend many programs by my headmaster very often because I need to focus on preparing my students for the UPSR[25] exam. I am very happy to be selected for the ProELT.

Similarly, Justina also found the ProELT to be beneficial:

> I think the ProELT is a very good course for the teachers to improve themselves and to freshen their memories about teaching. I used to teach by strictly following the textbook. But this course gives me extra new ideas on how to cater to my students' needs and how to adopt different teaching approaches for the students.

Thus, these findings reveal that most of the teachers have not set any learning goals, which they wish to attain from the ProELT, because they did not make an independent choice to attend the program.

5.3.1.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed the majority of the survey respondents agreed that the ProELT fulfilled their learning needs by providing suggestions, support and opportunities to develop their teaching skills. There was a significant difference between the primary and secondary school teachers in Item C(1) in regard to the **suggestions** being offered by the program which are **useful and can be applied immediately in their teaching.** In addition,

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[25] *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR), which is translated as Primary School Assessment, is a national public exam that assesses the academic performance of Year 6 pupils. Pupils who fail the assessment are still allowed to proceed to their secondary level education.

there was also significant difference between the urban and rural teachers' responses in Item (C2), in regard to the **program content being strongly related to their professional needs** between the urban and rural school teachers.

The teacher interviews indicated contrasting responses. A primary school teacher commented that the effectiveness of the learning activities were not demonstrated by her trainer especially for her weak students. This would most possibly not convince her at all to adopt the activities into her lessons. In addition, most of the rural school teachers were not interested in the ProELT, because they were forced to participate based on their Aptis test result, as opposed to being based on their professional needs.

Based on the findings of the quantitative analysis and teacher interviews, it appears that the ProELT has largely fulfilled the learning needs of the survey participants, except for a minority of teachers in the interviews and focus groups. Therefore, there was large incorporation of learners' orientation to learning in its program content.

5.3.2 Readiness to learn

Andragogy states that adults are ready to learn when the knowledge and skills that they acquire can be applied effectively to address their current situations, which in this context pertains to the teachers' teaching needs.

5.3.2.1 Quantitative analysis

Items 6 to 11 aimed to solicit the respondents' perceptions of their readiness to learn during the ProELT training. The findings are summarised in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17 Teachers' readiness to learn

Item No.	Item	SD*	DA	NADA	A	SA	Mean	SD
6.	The program helped me to obtain new language skills for the fulfilment of specific, personal needs.	0	1 0.3%	22 7.3%	**142** **46.9%**	138 45.5%	4.38	0.633
7.	The program helped me to obtain new teaching skills for the fulfilment of specific, personal needs.	0	1 0.3%	25 8.3%	**172** **56.8%**	105 34.7%	4.26	0.614
8.	A variety of teaching approaches was introduced in the program.	0	0	34 11.2%	**153** **50.5%**	116 38.3%	4.27	0.651
9.	The learning material was gradually provided so as to be better assimilated into my teaching.	0	6 2.0%	57 18.8%	**174** **57.4%**	66 21.8%	3.99	0.698
10.	The program systematically ensured that the participants' needs and interests were addressed.	2 0.7%	6 2.0%	57 18.8%	**178** **58.7%**	60 19.8%	3.95	0.724
11.	The program fulfilled my expectations with regard to its goals.	1 0.3%	4 1.3%	53 17.5%	**173** **57.1%**	72 23.8%	4.03	0.704
						Overall Mean Score	4.14	0.539

SD*=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NADA=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, SD=Standard Deviation

Table 5.17 reveals that the respondents generally agree that they are ready to learn throughout the ProELT training, based on the overall mean score of 4.14 (SD = 0.539). The respondents specifically agree that the program provides them with the opportunities to obtain new language ($\bar{x}$ = 4.38, SD = 0.633) (Item 6), and teaching ($\bar{x}$ = 4.26, SD = 0.614) skills (Item 7), introduces a variety of teaching approaches ($\bar{x}$ = 4.27, SD = 0.651) (Item 8), and fulfils their expectations in accordance with its goals ($\bar{x}$ = 4.03, SD = 0.704) (Item 11).

Even though Item 9 (*The learning material was gradually provided so as to be better assimilated into my teaching*) and Item 10 (*The program systematically ensured that the participants' needs and interests were addressed*) have means score of 3.99 (SD = 0.698)

and 3.95 (SD = 0.724), respectively, both values are very close to the mean score of 4.00, which indicate that the respondents also agree with these items.

Table 5.18 Mann-Whitney U Test of the readiness to learn between primary and secondary school teachers

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.0000
Secondary	116	4.1429
Total	303	4.1429

	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11
Mann-Whitney U	10658.500	9975.000	10418.500	10819.000	10774.500	9957.500
Wilcoxon W	17444.500	27553.000	17204.500	17605.000	17560.500	16743.500
Z	-.282	-1.335	-.639	-.041	-.109	-1.344
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.778	.182	.523	.967	.913	.179

A comparison between the respondents from both teaching levels is shown in Table 5.18, which indicates that all of the six items have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in all of the six items pertaining to the teachers' readiness to learn in the ProELT between the primary and secondary school teachers.

Table 5.19 Mann-Whitney U Test of the readiness to learn between urban and rural school teachers

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.1429
Total	303	4.1429

	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11
Mann-Whitney U	10000.000	10889.500	10825.500	10906.000	10782.000	10906.000
Wilcoxon W	17875.000	18764.500	18700.500	18781.000	18657.000	26837.000
Z	-1.673	-.356	-.442	-.327	-.516	-.327
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.094	.722	.658	.743	.606	.744

Similarly, a comparison between the urban and rural teachers indicates that all of the six items have $p > .05$, as shown in Table 5.19 above. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test also revealed no significant difference in any of the six items pertaining to the teachers' readiness to learn between the urban and rural school teachers.

5.3.2.2 Qualitative analysis

This section presents the data that were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question C2:

What skills or knowledge have you gained from the ProELT which were useful?

The responses given by all of the teachers interviewed, except for one, established that they have gained new instructional knowledge and have improved some aspects of their language skills. The following examples show the teachers' perceptions of the impact of the ProELT on their language and instructional skills.

Vicky described the improvement in her writing and teaching skills:

> My writing skill has improved. I love writing. Even my vocabulary has also enriched. I'm also interested in learning how to use ICT for my teaching.

Manjit mentioned that her teaching skill did not improve much. However, the training materials were beneficial for her lessons:

> Actually not much [improvement in my teaching skill]. The materials that I got from my trainer I can use some for my teaching.

Tan explained how the ProELT improved her overall language and communication skills:

> The program has really improved my language [skills], because in the program there are speaking and writing activities. Besides that, we always listen to our trainer speak in English. So, it has really helped me a lot. Sometimes when we make any grammatical errors my trainer will try to correct us. So, at least we know the correct grammar. Because as a teacher, you feel like you know everything already. But sometimes there's no one to correct your grammar. So, at least there's someone [who] can help us during the ProELT. I have also gained a lot in my communication skill [because] I talk a lot in the class.

Similarly to Tan, Justina said she had gained better speaking skills and higher confidence:

> I was not really good in speaking. Not that I'm saying I'm bad, but I'm slightly better than before. Before this when we have English panel meeting [in school] I was the quiet one. If I say something, I'm afraid they (the teachers) are not going to understand. I will get stuck. Don't have idea to continue because I have language issues. Now I think it improves my confident level as well.

The focus groups teachers also mentioned gaining better language skills from the program:

> Aidah: I feel more confident in my language proficiency especially my speaking skill. It's better than before.
>
> Farah: Yes, my speaking proficiency is better now.
>
> Danielle: The program has improved my language proficiency especially in grammar and a little bit on speaking.

Jacqueline: The same with them. I think it has improved my proficiency also in terms of speaking and a bit of grammar.

In contrast, Betty considered the ProELT to be unsuitable for her because it was similar to a refresher course on teaching, and she had only partially benefitted from it:

> I'm not saying I didn't learn anything *lah*. I did learn something. It's good. For me, it's kind of like a refresher course. There's nothing new *lah* that I haven't come across *lah*. Even though the module looks new, you can get everything online and the market is full of all these type of things, you know, all these activities. For me, like I said once again, it's wasted on me.

Hence, the above responses showed that the ProELT was perceived to have had an impact on most of the teachers' instructional and language skills.

5.3.2.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed the majority of the survey respondents agreed that they had acquired new knowledge and skills for their instructional practice and language development that were applicable to their personal and instructional needs. The teacher interviews revealed that a majority of the participants had gained some language and teaching skills from the ProELT, except for one teacher. Based on these consistent findings between the quantitative analysis and teacher interviews, it appears that the ProELT had largely incorporated learners' readiness to learn into its program content.

5.3.3 Learner's experience

Adults' experience is a valuable learning source and an important factor for program providers to consider when designing a training module. A module that disregards the participants' accumulated experience is a waste of the program providers' financial

resources and the participants' time, is considered ineffective, and can result in dissatisfaction among the participants.

5.3.3.1 Quantitative analysis

Items 12 to 15 aimed to solicit the respondents' perceptions of the incorporation of their teaching experience in the ProELT. The findings are summarised in Table 5.20.

Table 5.20 Teachers' experiences

Item No.	Item	SD*	DA	NADA	A	SA	Mean	SD
12.	The program offered opportunities to participants to exchange their views, knowledge and experiences on the topics.	0	1 0.3%	14 4.6%	**156** **51.5%**	132 43.6%	4.38	0.591
13.	The participants' previous knowledge and experience on the particular topic were taken into consideration.	2 0.7%	3 1.0%	32 10.6%	**186** **61.4%**	80 26.4%	4.12	0.675
14.	The content of the program was adjusted to the participants' previous experiences.	2 0.7%	5 1.7%	56 18.5%	**173** **57.1%**	67 22.1%	3.98	0.730
15.	The program efficiently connected new knowledge with my previous knowledge and experience.	0	5 1.7%	20 6.6%	**164** **54.1%**	114 37.6%	4.28	0.658
						Overall Mean Score	4.19	0.544

SD*=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NADA=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, SD=Standard Deviation

The overall mean score of 4.19 (SD = 0.544) in Table 5.20 indicates the respondents predominantly agree that their previous experience and knowledge in teaching are taken into consideration in the training. They agree that the program provides them with opportunities

to share their views, knowledge, and experiences on given topics through group discussions among the participants and trainers, and to be actively involved in the learning experience and problem-solving activities. All of the aforementioned items have mean values within the 4.0 scale, except for Item 14 (*The content of the program was adjusted to the participants' previous experiences*), which has a mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.730) that corresponds to the "Neither agree nor disagree" category.

Table 5.21 Mann-Whitney U Test of the experience between primary and secondary school teachers

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.2500
Secondary	116	4.3750
Total	303	4.2500

	C12	C13	C14	C15
Mann-Whitney U	10137.500	10277.000	9983.500	10537.000
Wilcoxon W	27715.500	17063.000	16769.500	28115.000
Z	-1.082	-.887	-1.303	-.470
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.279	.375	.192	.639

A comparison between the respondents from both teaching levels as shown in Table 5.21 shows that all of the four items have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference between the primary and secondary school teachers.

Table 5.22 Mann-Whitney U Test of the experience between urban and rural school teachers

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.1250
Rural	178	4.2500
Total	303	4.2500

	C12	C13	C14	C15
Mann-Whitney U	10824.500	10585.000	10080.000	9833.500
Wilcoxon W	26755.500	18460.000	17955.000	17708.500
Z	-.453	-.831	-1.559	-1.938
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.651	.406	.119	.053

Meanwhile, a comparison between the urban and rural school teachers also shows that all of the four items in Table 5.22 have $p > .05$. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test indicates no significant difference in all of the four items between the urban and rural school teachers.

5.3.3.2 Qualitative analysis

The data considered in this section were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question C3:

Can you describe whether the ProELT accommodated to your teaching experience?

The responses from two of the most senior and experienced teacher participants in the interview indicated their unhappiness with being selected for the ProELT, because it did not suit their professional needs, and its selection method was based solely on the Aptis test, which disregarded their teaching experience. One such example of a teacher who was unhappy in participating in the ProELT was Betty who, as has been discussed earlier, was the most senior, experienced teacher. She reacted strongly against the ProELT, because she

perceived that the program did not suit her teaching and language development needs. Betty thought that it was a good program, but would have been more suitable for trainee or novice teachers:

> In my honest opinion, the ProELT course is wasted on me. On me alone. I'm not talking about the rest of the people *lah*. But on me it's really wasted because it should be adopted to newly trained teachers or trainee teachers in the colleges, or undergraduates maybe in their first year or second year, or maybe in their final year. Make it, like, their final year project. But not for experienced teachers. I feel that I am already proficient enough. My first language is English. Basically for me it's like a refresher course *lah*. They do the past tense, present tense, and simple and past continuous tense, past perfect continuous tense. So, all that again. Revising. When and how to use all these tenses.

Another example of this unhappiness was presented by Vicky, who has been teaching in primary school for eighteen years. She was disappointed that her teaching capability was decided solely on the Aptis result. In addition, her years of service and teaching achievement, especially in helping weak students in the rural schools, were disregarded in order to be granted an exemption from the program provider. She said:

> I don't understand why we have to attend this course after sitting for the Aptis test when, furthermore, some of us have been teaching for quite long and we have performed well in school without sitting for that evaluation? So, does that mean that we are evaluated by just that test? We have performed, you know. I have performed. I told Angela[26] (trainer), 'I have performed. I dare to say that because I really have performed. I have increased my school's UPSR result. I have students who were not B or A [scorers], but they got B or A. I have very weak students. I got five students who we didn't expect to pass. They passed. So that means I know I have performed. I have used my own method. I have used a lot of activities. That means I spent so much time, but still that is not enough [to be recognised]?'

She continued:

[26] pseudonym

> So, as for my experience, I feel I have performed in my school. I used to think, 'How can they put me in this [ProELT] course?' But I'm not saying that, 'Oh, I cannot come for this kind of course. I'm so good.' No. But it's just that the [negative] feeling will be there, you know. I still attend the course. I have no problem because I still learn something. But at the same time I'm not satisfied because I feel like I already got the experience. I feel like I can perform well. Why must you look at the [Aptis] result that I got?

Hence, this shows that the ProELT was unsuitable for some experienced teachers due to its content and flawed selection process, which failed to take into account senior teachers' experience, knowledge, and skills.

5.3.3.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed the majority of survey respondents agreed that the ProELT complemented their experience. However, responses from the teacher interviews suggested that two of the experienced teachers felt that the program was wasted on them, because it did not suit their professional needs. Based on these findings, it appears that the ProELT did not adequately incorporate the experience of senior teachers into its program content.

However, responses from the teacher interviews suggested that two of the experienced teachers felt that the program was wasted on them, because it did not suit their professional needs. Based on the findings of the quantitative analysis and teacher interviews, it appears that the ProELT has largely complemented the teachers' experience with the program, except for two some senior teachers who stated otherwise in the interview.

5.3.4 Self-concept

Adults believe they are responsible for their decisions. They need to be seen and treated as capable and self-directed in making personal decisions through the offer of choices and the

encouragement to set their own learning goals. They resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them.

5.3.4.1 Quantitative analysis

Items 16 and 17 intend to solicit the respondents' views on self-direction, operationalised as whether the ProELT provided them with assistance according to their personal needs and opportunity to evaluate the program. Table 5.23 below summarises the findings.

Table 5.23 Teachers' self-concept

Item No.	Item	SD*	DA	NADA	A	SA	Mean	SD
16.	Individual help was provided to the participants according to their personal needs.	0	3 1.0%	54 17.8%	**168** **55.4%**	78 25.7%	4.06	0.688
17.	The program helped me to better realise my own needs, motives, interests and potential.	0	2 0.7%	19 6.3%	**153** **50.5%**	129 42.6%	4.35	0.628
						Overall Mean Score	4.18	0.544

SD*=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NADA=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, SD=Standard Deviation

The overall mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.544) reveals the respondents generally agree that the ProELT considers the participants' self-concept by providing individual assistance according to their personal needs ($\bar{x}$ = 4.06, SD = 0.688), and in helping participants to better realise their own needs, motives, interests, and potential ($\bar{x}$ = 4.35, SD = 0.628).

Table 5.24 Mann-Whitney U Test of the self-concept between primary and secondary school teachers

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.0000
Secondary	116	4.0000
Total	303	4.0000

	C16	C17
Mann-Whitney U	10621.000	10573.000
Wilcoxon W	17407.000	28151.000
Z	-.338	-.413
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.735	.679

Table 5.24 shows the comparison of the perceptions between the respondents from both teaching levels, whereby Items C(16) and C(17) have $p > .05$. No significant differences were found.

Table 5.25 Mann-Whitney U Test of the self-concept between urban and rural secondary school teachers

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.1667
Total	303	4.0000

	C16	C17
Mann-Whitney U	10822.000	9581.000
Wilcoxon W	18697.000	17456.000
Z	-.449	-2.308
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.653	.217

Meanwhile in Table 5.25, Items C(16) and C(17) also have $p > .05$. Again, there were no significant differences.

5.3.4.2 Qualitative analysis

This section presents the data that were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question C4:

Can you describe your feeling when you were selected for the ProELT?

Five themes emerged from the analysis of the participants' discussion of their feelings about being selected for the ProELT. Four senior teachers had expressed experiencing negative emotional feelings at the commencement of the ProELT, such as:

1. Feeling degraded;
2. Having lower self-confidence;
3. Feeling embarrassed;
4. Feeling inferior; and
5. Feeling demotivated.

The ProELT is perceived by many participants as training for linguistically unskilled and instructionally incompetent teachers. This is the reason teachers in the interviews felt embarrassed being instructed to attend the ProELT, because they were regarded as English language experts and educators by their colleagues and administrators.

I. Feeling degraded

An example is Vicky who said she felt degraded when her colleagues found out that she was selected for the ProELT. This is because Vicky is a well-known trainer and educator among the English language teacher community in her rural district. She is an experienced trainer, who has conducted various district-level English language courses and trainings for rural

ESL teachers, and has presented talks on UPSR examination guides for Year 6 pupils. One of her notable training experiences was as a trainer for the Mathematics and Science teachers during the implementation of the ETeMS[27] policy. She was also appointed as an adjudicator for various school-level English language competitions. Vicky said:

> I feel a bit degraded, because I give courses. I conduct courses. I even trained the Science and Maths teachers for ETeMS. When I went for that [ProELT] course, some teachers who attended the course said, 'She's attending this course?'… 'I cannot believe *lah* she's attending this course. Really *kah*[28]? What actually she got [in the Aptis test]?'…They themselves cannot believe that I'm attending the ProELT. So, when you see me sitting there [in the ProELT], what will you think? 'Really? She's here for this?'

Vicky continued:

> I told her (the trainer) what I felt about the course because how can you judge us based on a test whereas all of us got our degree and we studied for four years. Does that mean that the lecturers that taught us are not qualified? Does that mean that we are not qualified [to teach] and we are not performing well just because we are graded by that [Aptis] test?

Another example of this feeling was expressed by Manjit, who has a Master in Education (MEd) in TESL. She explained her and her colleagues' frustration about their language competence and academic qualification being undermined by the program provider:

> [S]ome of the teachers are very good in English. So when you call them to this (the ProELT) you are under-grading them, right? How do the teachers feel? I'm sure that's why we were very upset in the beginning, you know, that we are being treated like this. Some of us did our studies overseas. We did TESL. That means our proficiency is good enough. That's why we were accepted overseas. So why are they undermining us?

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[27] See section 1.1.2 for a brief description on ETeMS.

[28] "kah" is a colloquial form of Malay, which is adopted by Malaysian and Singaporean speakers of English. It is commonly used at the end of a word or sentence to indicate a question.

Similarly, Betty, who has an MEd in TESL, also felt degraded that her master's degree did not warrant her an exemption from the ProELT. She thought that her postgraduate qualification would have proven her teaching and language capability as an ESL teacher. Betty said:

> I already have my masters. Maybe the government thinks I need a PhD in order to teach Form 1 (Year 7) to Form 6 (Years 12 and 13). So, is a master degree [holder] not capable to teach? What criteria, what qualification does the government want from us teachers? Is it up to the CPT level? The Aptis level? I don't know is this CPT…is this Aptis world-recognised[29] or is it some sort of a standardised test? Is it the same as IELTS and TOEFL? I don't know. Because TOEFL and IELTS are recognised worldwide. So, if you want the teachers to have a certain standard, use an evaluation or an assessment that is accepted worldwide *lah*.

II. Having lower self-confidence

One teacher who experienced lower self-confidence is Lily who felt that being selected for the ProELT denoted her as being an incompetent teacher:

> You know what happened to me since I participated in this ProELT program? It has really turned me down as an English teacher, because, before I participated in this program, the way I teach in the class I felt more confident. But now I don't feel confident because I know…I'm not good enough.

III. Feeling embarrassed

A teacher who initially felt embarrassed when she was selected for the ProELT is Justina who was worried about her colleagues' negative perception about her capability as an English teacher. Justina explained:

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[29] According to the Aptis guide, 'Aptis is not a recognised test. It cannot be used for visa, university entrance or other immigration purposes. The test is designed to be used within institutions or companies, so the results are only of value to you within the client institution or company' (British Council, 2014, p. 5).

> [I felt] embarrassed because I know I am not good at certain aspect of teaching English. So, when they said that there is this [ProELT] program…and I got selected…[I felt] quite embarrassed because I thought the other teachers might think of me, "She's not capable of teaching English. She didn't achieve the expected grade [in the Aptis test]."

Another example of this feeling was also expressed by Lily, who was previously assigned to the same training group as her former English teacher. She related the latter's embarrassment about attending the ProELT:

> My former English teacher and I were in the same ProELT class. Imagine, she has been teaching for twenty two years... And now she has to attend the same class with me, and we just looked at each other. She was so upset maybe because of that [ProELT]. Maybe she thought that she wasn't good enough.

In addition, Lily also described her uneasiness when her colleagues at school questioned her absence from school to attend the ProELT weekly:

> When the teachers asked me where I go to every Thursday, I told them I was attending the ProELT program and they demanded to know what this ProELT program is. [I wanted to explain] it's for teachers that…I don't know what to say.

IV. Feeling inferior and demotivated

A teacher who felt inferior and demotivated is Farah who was judged by her colleagues, because of her average Aptis test result, and for having to attend the ProELT. Farah, who has been teaching primary school students in the rural district for ten years, described:

> We felt like we are not good. Like me, I know some of my colleagues from other schools think that I'm better than them. But just because my Aptis result is not very good, they said, 'Huh? You are attending the ProELT program?' I felt like, 'Oh my god…I felt I'm not suitable to teach…I'm not even a good English teacher.' So it's really demotivating…Just because of this one test that we've been told earlier that it is not going to affect us, but now it's really affected us.

Interestingly, Tan, a senior teacher with fourteen years of experience, was the only teacher among the interview participants who claimed to be excited to be selected for the ProELT. She recalled her reaction when she received the letter of notification to participate in the program:

> When I got the letter to go for the [ProELT] course, actually I was very happy, because I heard from one of my friends from the first cohort that she learned a lot. So many things. I asked why I wasn't selected for this course earlier. Actually I was looking forward to this. I'm very happy to attend the ProELT.

Thus, these significant findings reveal that being selected for the ProELT is negatively perceived by most of the aforementioned experienced teachers and their colleagues, which has adversely affected their reputation and self-esteem.

5.3.4.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed the majority of the survey respondents agreed that the ProELT has considered their self-concept in its program design by providing individual help according to their personal needs and by helping them to realise their own needs, motives, interests and potential.

However, the teacher interviews, which were able to probe this question further, revealed that five participants were negatively and emotionally impacted as a result of the ProELT. This was because the program provider disregarded their teaching experience and postgraduate qualification, in which the former did not assess their teaching skills, and relied on the Aptis test as the sole determinant in the selection of participants. The program was meant to upskill the participants' language *and* teaching skills. Therefore, the teachers felt that being selected for the ProELT denoted them as being less proficient and incompetent teachers. Interestingly, only one teacher was happy to be selected for the program.

Thus, it appears that the ProELT was largely successful in incorporating teachers' self-concept in the program, but the responses from five senior teachers indicated otherwise.

5.3.5 Motivation

Adults are responsive to external motivators such as better career and higher salaries, and internal motivators for example desire for increased job satisfaction and self-esteem (Knowles et al., 2005). In addition, their motivation can be hindered by training and education that disregard principles of adult learning (Knowles et al., 2005).

5.3.5.1 Quantitative analysis

In Items 18 to 21, the respondents were asked to rate whether their learning motivation was to improve their language and teaching skills, and their students' learning and academic achievement. The findings are summarised in Table 5.26.

Table 5.26 Teachers' learning motivation

Item No.	Item	SD*	DA	NADA	A	SA	Mean	SD
18.	I was motivated to learn because I wanted to improve my language skills.	1 0.3%	2 0.7%	15 5.0%	102 33.7%	**183** **60.4%**	4.53	0.655
19.	I was motivated to learn because I wanted to improve my teaching skills.	0	3 1.0%	17 5.6%	108 35.6%	**175** **57.8%**	4.50	0.650
20.	I was motivated to learn because I wanted to improve my students' learning.	0	2 0.7%	13 4.3%	106 35.0%	**182** **60.1%**	4.54	0.612
21.	I was motivated to learn because I wanted to improve my students' academic achievement.	0	2 0.7%	13 4.3%	122 40.3%	**166** **54.8%**	4.49	0.614
						Overall Mean Score	4.52	0.582

SD*=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NADA=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, SD=Standard Deviation

Based on Table 5.26, the overall mean score of 4.52 (SD = 0.582) indicates the respondents agree that they are motivated to develop their language and teaching skills, and to improve their students' learning and academic achievement. The mean scores for all of the four items are within the 4.0 scale of the upper range between 4.49 (SD = 0.614) and 4.54 (SD = 0.612).

Table 5.27 Mann-Whitney U Test of the learning motivation between primary and secondary school teachers

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.7500
Secondary	116	5.0000
Total	303	4.7500

	C18	C19	C20	C21
Mann-Whitney U	9528.000	9964.000	9774.000	10022.000
Wilcoxon W	27106.000	27542.000	27352.000	27600.000
Z	-2.065	-1.363	-1.681	-1.267
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**.039**	.173	.093	.205

Table 5.27 shows that only Item C(18) has $p < .05$. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicates a significant difference between the primary (Md = 4.75, n = 187) and secondary school teachers (Md = 5.00, n = 116), U = 9528, z = -2.07, p = .04, r = .12. The item indicates that the respondents were motivated to learn, because they wanted to **improve their language skills**.

Table 5.28 Mann-Whitney U Test of the learning motivation between urban and rural school teachers

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.5000
Rural	178	5.0000
Total	303	4.7500

	C18	**C19**	C20	C21
Mann-Whitney U	9212.000	8891.000	9961.500	9933.000
Wilcoxon W	17087.000	16766.000	17836.500	17808.000
Z	-2.959	-3.409	-1.801	-1.809
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**.003**	**.001**	.072	.070

Meanwhile, Items C(18) and C(19) have $p < .05$, as shown in Table 5.28. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicates a significant difference between the urban (Md = 4.50, n = 125)

and rural school teachers (Md = 5.00, n = 178), U = 9212, z = -2.96, p = .00, r = .17 in their being motivated to learn, because they wanted to improve their **language skills** (Item C(18)). In addition, the Mann-Whitney U Test indicates a significant difference between the urban (Md = 4.50, n = 125) and rural school teachers (Md = 5.00, n = 178), U = 8891, z = -3.41, p = .00, r = .20, in their being motivated to learn, because they wanted to improve their **teaching skills** (Item C(19)).

5.3.5.2 Qualitative analysis

The data considered in this section were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question C5:

Can you describe your motivation throughout the ProELT?

Sustaining self-motivation throughout the ProELT proved to be a struggle for two teachers due to the program features (i.e. the training duration and program content) and personal dissatisfaction. For example, Vicky attributed the one-year training duration and uninteresting grammar lessons to her lack of motivation to attend the ProELT:

> There are times I don't feel like going [to the ProELT]. During the training, I'll be thinking, "Oh, when can I go back?" Sometimes I find the lesson very boring. Grammar especially is so boring. I realise that if you don't know how to teach grammar in a very fun way, you tend to teach it in a very traditional way. A few grammar lessons under certain themes in the coursebook I don't find it interesting.

As mentioned previously, Betty felt degraded and dissatisfied that her master's qualification did not warrant her an exemption from the ProELT, and this has contributed to her lack of motivation to attend the ProELT (see Section 6.3.4.2 (I)). She explained:

> Actually, I am not motivated at all to participate in the ProELT since I started this program. I could have appealed to the Ministry of Education to get an exemption but it is just too much work. I worry they might even blacklist me for going against their instruction [to attend the ProELT]. My principal was willing to fight for me, but I didn't want to trouble him. He's very supportive of me.

Interestingly, maintaining an optimistic mindset helped Vicky and Betty to shift their focus away from the negative experience to their personal gain from the program, such as obtaining new knowledge, skills, and teaching ideas. This mental coping mechanism helped both teachers to stay positive until the end of the ProELT, despite their lack of motivation. Vicky elaborated her coping strategy:

> I will say like this [to myself], 'It's okay. I will just sit for the [Aptis] test. I will get C1 or C2. Then I get the [IProBI[30]] money and I will take a holiday'. Or I'll say, 'It's okay. At least I gained something especially doing the [teaching] materials for my student.' I will also say, 'Never mind. I'm learning something here. My writing has improved.'

In addition, keeping an open mind to gaining new knowledge from the ProELT also helped Betty to stay motivated, despite her mentioning previously that the program was wasted on her because it did not fulfil her professional needs (see Section 6.3.3.2). She said:

> So, I just come and learn whatever is new and useful for me or I can share it with my students.

Other responses were markedly different. For example, two other teachers have been motivated from the beginning of the program. Jacqueline, who has been teaching in a rural,

[30] IProBI (*Insentif Profisiensi Bahasa Inggeris)* which is translated as English Language Proficiency Incentive is awarded to teachers who scored Bands C1 and C2 in the pre- and post-CPT and Aptis tests from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2016. The cash incentives are RM5,000 (AUD1,724) for C2 and RM3,000 (AUD1,034) for C1, respectively (Pekeliling Perkhidmatan Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia Bilangan 3, 2014).

secondary school for fourteen years, explained that she was motivated to improve her speaking skill:

> I have been teaching in the rural school for fourteen years and most of my students have very low proficiency level. English is not even their second language. It's more of a foreign language. So I cannot use difficult or advanced words when I speak to them or when I teach them. Otherwise, they won't understand me and they will be demotivated. Sometimes I also have to mix English with Malay when I speak to my students. I do try to speak in English only but when they don't understand certain words, I have to say the words in Malay. Because of this, I feel as if I have forgotten a lot of advanced words. That is why I hope to improve my speaking skills.

In addition, Jacqueline was also motivated to improve her teaching skill:

> My students are from the rural district, and English not their second language. It's more like a foreign language. Therefore, I want to learn more teaching techniques to help my students improve their language proficiency and skills. I have used up all of my ideas!

Another teacher who was motivated to be a ProELT participant is Tan, who teaches in an urban, primary school. She described her motivation and the benefits of learning from the secondary school teacher participants:

> I'm teaching Year 6. I learn from the secondary school teachers especially writing skill. They can write good grammatical sentence and they know many adjectives. So I learn from them. As for primary school teachers, we need to lower our [language] standard [according to the students' proficiency]. So fourteen years of [teaching in] primary school feels like your vocabulary is lost already. That's the problem. In primary school, we tend to write very simple English. So that's why in the ProELT class I am able to improve my language skills when I'm with the secondary school teachers.

Thus, the above findings showed gradual positive changes in the motivation of some teachers who were initially reluctant to participate in the ProELT. These changes could be attributed to their positive mindset and attitude in seeking to gain benefit from the program despite being unmotivated.

5.3.5.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis indicated the majority of the survey respondents agreed that they were motivated, in a range of ways, to participate in the ProELT. There was a significant difference between the primary and secondary school teachers' responses in Item C(18), in regard to their motivation to **improve their language skills.** In addition, there were also significant differences between the urban and rural school teachers' responses in Items C(18) and C(19), in regard to their motivation to **improve their language skills** and **teaching skills**, respectively**.**

However, the teacher interviews showed that two teachers struggled to stay motivated due to the long training duration and the program content, which did not suit their professional needs. This was an exception for two teachers. Tan was motivated to learn from the secondary school teachers, and Jacqueline was motivated to improve her language and teaching skills; the former was for self-development, and the latter was to help her low proficiency students who were studying in a secondary school in a rural district. As set out above, the quantitative data reveals that the ProELT was able to motivate a majority of the survey respondents, except for two senior teachers, in the interviews, due to reason the program features which did not fulfil their professional needs and just by being chosen for the program.

5.3.6 Relevance

Adults need to know the reason for learning something before undertaking the learning task (Knowles et al., 2005). When adults undertake to learn something on their own accord, they will invest considerable time and effort to identify the benefits of learning it and the negative

consequence of not learning it (Knowles et al., 2005). In the present study, the context pertains to the relevance of the ProELT to the participants' professional needs.

5.3.6.1 Quantitative analysis

Items 22 to 26 intend to solicit the respondents' views on whether they know the purpose and content of the ProELT, and whether they are aware of the reason(s) that they are selected for the program. This relates to whether or not they perceive the course objectives and content to be relevant to them and, if so, whether this relevance relates to language or teaching skills.

Table 5.29 Relevance of program

Item No.	Item	SD*	DA	NADA	A	SA	Mean	SD
22.	The content of the program is relevant to my teaching needs.	0	2 0.7%	24 7.9%	**162** **53.5%**	115 38.0%	4.29	0.636
23.	The content of the program is relevant to my language development needs.	0	2 0.7%	27 8.9%	**171** **56.4%**	103 34.0%	4.24	0.633
24.	The structure of the program was explained to the participants.	0	2 0.7%	31 10.2%	**161** **53.1%**	109 36.0%	4.24	0.656
25.	I was selected to participate in this program to improve my English language proficiency.	4 1.3%	4 1.3%	21 6.9%	128 42.2%	**146** **48.2%**	4.35	0.778
26.	I was selected to participate in this program to enhance my teaching skills.	3 1.0%	6 2.0%	41 13.5%	**133** **43.9%**	120 39.6%	4.19	0.816
						Overall Mean Score	4.26	0.569

SD*=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NADA=Neither Agree nor Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, SD=Standard Deviation

Based on the summary on Table 5.29 above, the overall mean score of 4.26 (SD = 0.569) suggests that the respondents know and understand the purpose and content of the ProELT

Table 5.30 Mann-Whitney U Test of the ProELT relevance between primary and secondary school teachers

TeachingLevel	N	Median
Primary	187	4.2000
Secondary	116	4.0000
Total	303	4.2000

	C22	C23	C24	C25	C26
Mann-Whitney U	10740.000	10397.500	10768.500	10743.500	10181.000
Wilcoxon W	17526.000	17183.500	17554.500	17529.500	16967.000
Z	-.161	-.685	-.117	-.153	-.973
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.872	.493	.907	.878	.331

Based on Table 5.30, all of the five items have p > .05. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test indicates that teachers' perceptions of program relevance did not differ between the primary and secondary school teachers.

Table 5.31 Mann-Whitney U Test of the ProELT relevance between urban and rural school teachers

TeachingArea	N	Median
Urban	125	4.0000
Rural	178	4.4000
Total	303	4.2000

	C22	**C23**	C24	C25	C26
Mann-Whitney U	9729.000	9545.000	10126.500	10047.000	10702.500
Wilcoxon W	17604.000	17420.000	18001.500	17922.000	18577.500
Z	-2.089	-2.382	-1.485	-1.593	-.610
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**.037**	**.017**	.138	.111	.542

In contrast, a comparison between the perceptions of the urban and rural school teachers, as shown in Table 5.31, indicates Items C(22) and C(23) have $p < .05$. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicates a significant difference between the urban (Md = 4.00, n = 125) and rural school teachers (Md = 5.00, n = 178), U = 9729, z = -2.09, p = .04, r = .12 in the explanation of the program objectives to the participants (Item C(22)). In addition, the test revealed a significant difference between the urban (Md = 4.00, n = 125) and rural school teachers (Md = 4.40, n = 178), U = 9545, z = -2.38, p = .02, r = .14 in the explanation of the program learning outcomes to the participants (Item C(23)).

5.3.6.2 Qualitative analysis

This section presents the data that were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question C6:

Can you describe whether the ProELT was relevant to your professional needs?

The responses given by the majority of the teachers interviewed give a somewhat different picture to that obtained from the analysis of the survey data. With only one exception, they indicated that there was lack of relevance between the ProELT and their professional needs. In addition, as has been discussed above, most of them thought that the program was more suitable for trainee and novice teachers. In contrast to the survey data, this data did not confirm a difference in opinion between teachers from mixed teaching levels and locations. The following examples show some of the issues that were raised. Firstly, the course could be judged to be irrelevant if the content was not new. In line with her previous comment, Betty claimed the ProELT was wasted on her:

> As I have said earlier, the ProELT course is wasted on me because it is like a refresher course on teaching methodology and basic tenses – the present, past,

> and past perfect. These are nothing new to me. When I join a professional development program, I want to learn something new and useful. This course has been wasted on me. But it would be suitable for trainee teachers or newly trained teachers.

Vicky also shared Betty's view that the ProELT was more suitable for trainee or novice teachers:

> [The] ProELT is actually good. But the way they conduct it is not right. [The program provider] should do more research on this. They should see what the teachers really need [in their professional development]. They should change the way the course is run. They should create a module that certain group of teachers will find it beneficial. It's not suitable for experienced teachers, you know. They should offer it to teachers who just came out of college or university.

Secondly, it was considered important that course designers undertake a more thorough background research into the participants' needs, and brief them more thoroughly on the reasons for their selection. For example, Vicky mentioned that she and her colleagues did not know the purpose and relevance of the ProELT to their PD because they were not briefed by any education officers prior to the program:

> We were not given a briefing and we didn't even know what the objective of this course was. Our name was selected [for the Aptis test], we went and sat for the exam. Suddenly we were called to attend this course and it's a long period course and then we got our result. But we don't know why we attended that course and what reason to attend that course was.

Lily echoed Betty and Vicky's thoughts:

> I think it's a good program, but I think it shouldn't have been implemented for the teachers who have started teaching or universities undergrads and college students [who are] taking teaching course. Because I have wasted all the four years I had when I was studied at the university. I didn't use any of the…anything that I have learnt from university. If they (the MOE) have conducted this ProELT program at the university I think it's more suitable, more practical. Actually it's a very good program but not for experienced teachers.

Farah supported Lily's suggestion that the ProELT would be suitable as part of a teaching course:

> I took the KPLI[31] for one year only. I didn't take any teaching courses in my university but English is my second language. I think as what Lily said, it's better if they taught us during our KPLI.

In contrast, Tan said that she found the ProELT to be useful, and she was exceptionally grateful to be selected for the program, as it offered her an opportunity to enhance her PD:

> I would like to thank the government and especially to British Council and to my trainer and e-moderator to let me have this type of environment to study because actually I am looking to upgrade my teaching professional very long time already. So this is my very good opportunity. So I'm very grateful actually.

Thus, the responses by a majority of the experienced teachers indicate that the content of the ProELT did not match their learning needs, which suggest that the content should have been personalised to accommodate their varying needs.

5.3.6.3 Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed the majority of the survey respondents agreed that the ProELT was relevant to their teaching and learning needs. However, there was a significant difference between the urban and rural teachers' responses in Items C(22) and C(23), in regard to the program provider explaining the program objectives and learning outcomes, respectively, to the participants.

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[31] *Kursus Perguruan Lepasan Ijazah* (KPLI) is a postgraduate diploma in education course.

The teacher interviews revealed more about the reasons why most of the experienced teachers, except for one, thought that the program was not relevant to their professional needs. In addition, one rural school teacher mentioned that no education department officers had ever explained to her and her colleagues about the objectives of the program, which failed to help them understand the relevance of the ProELT to their professional needs. The findings from the quantitative and qualitative data show that the ProELT was mostly relevant to a majority of the teachers, but the program did not fulfil the professional needs of a selected number of senior teachers.

5.3.7 Summary of findings

A summary of the survey, teacher interviews and triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative analysis is presented in Table 5.32 below.

Table 5.32 Section C: Summary of findings on the degree of incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT

Section C: Incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT					
Adult learning principle	**Survey**			**Teacher interviews**	**Triangulation**
	Mean and standard deviation (SD)	**Teaching levels (Primary and secondary levels) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**	**Teaching locations (Urban and rural districts) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**		
1. Orientation to learning	A majority of the respondents **agreed** that orientation to learning was incorporated into the program. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.13, SD = 0.551)	There is a significant difference in the teaching suggestions being offered by the ProELT which are useful and can be applied immediately in teachers' teaching (Item C(1)).	There is a significant difference in the ProELT content being strongly related to the teachers' professional needs (Item C(2)).	• One primary, rural school teacher experienced difficulty in adopting the ProELT activities into her lessons because her trainer did not demonstrate the effectiveness of the activities for the students. • All of the teachers were 'forced' to participate the ProELT due to their Aptis test results. • Two teachers (primary and secondary, urban) found the ProELT had met their learning needs.	Large incorporation of learners' orientation to learning.

Section C: Incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT					
Adult learning principle	**Survey**			**Teacher interviews**	**Triangulation**
	Mean and standard deviation (SD)	**Teaching levels (Primary and secondary levels) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**	**Teaching locations (Urban and rural districts) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**		
2. Readiness to learn	A majority of the respondents **agreed** that readiness to learn was incorporated into the program. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.14, SD = 0.539)	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	• Most of the teachers have gained new instructional knowledge and have improved part of their language skills, except for one teacher (secondary, urban) who thought that the ProELT was similar to a refresher teaching and basic language course.	Large incorporation of learners' readiness to learn.

Section C: Incorporation of adult learning trait in the ProELT					
Adult learning principle	**Survey**			**Teacher interviews**	**Triangulation**
	Mean and standard deviation (SD)	**Teaching levels (Primary and secondary levels) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**	**Teaching locations (Urban and rural districts) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**		
3. Learner's experience	A majority of the respondents **agreed** that teachers' teaching experience was incorporated into the program. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.19, SD = 0.544)	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	• The ProELT did not suit the professional needs of two of the most experienced and senior teachers (secondary, urban and primary, rural). • The participant selection method was based solely on the Aptis test while disregarding teachers' teaching experience. • Therefore, the experienced teachers were very unhappy being selected for the ProELT.	Large incorporation of learners' teaching experience.

Section C: Incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT					
Adult learning principle	**Survey**			**Teacher interviews**	**Triangulation**
	Mean and standard deviation (SD)	**Teaching levels (Primary and secondary levels) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**	**Teaching locations (Urban and rural districts) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**		
4. Self-concept	A majority of the respondents **agreed** that teachers' self-concept was incorporated into the program. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.18, SD = 0.544)	No significant difference.	No significant difference.	• Five teachers felt their credibility as experienced educators and a trainer were questioned by their colleagues. • Two teachers felt that their postgraduate qualification was undervalued. • One teacher had doubted her teaching capability. • All of these have resulted in their having a lower self-esteem.	Large incorporation of learners' self-concept.

Section C: Incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT					
Adult learning principle	**Survey**			**Teacher interviews**	**Triangulation**
	Mean and standard deviation (SD)	**Teaching levels (Primary and secondary levels) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**	**Teaching locations (Urban and rural districts) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**		
5. Motivation	A majority of the respondents **agreed** that motivation was incorporated into the program. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.52, SD = 0.582)	There is a significant difference in the teachers being motivated to learn because they want to improve their language skills (Item C(18)).	• There is a significant difference in the teachers being motivated to learn because they want to improve their language skills (Item C(18)). • There is a significant difference in the teachers being motivated to learn because they wanted to improve their teaching skills (Item C(19)).	• Two teachers (primary, rural and secondary, urban) struggled to stay positive until the end of the ProELT despite not being motivated because the program did not fulfil their professional needs. • Two other teachers (primary and secondary, urban) have been motivated from the beginning of the program.	Large incorporation of learners' motivation.

Section C: Incorporation of adult learning principles in the ProELT					
Adult learning principle	**Survey**			**Teacher interviews**	**Triangulation**
	Mean and standard deviation (SD)	**Teaching levels (Primary and secondary levels) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**	**Teaching locations (Urban and rural districts) (Mann-Whitney U Test)**		
6. Relevance	A majority of the respondents **agreed** that the relevance of learning was incorporated into the program. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.26, SD = 0.569)	No significant difference.	• There is a significant difference in the explanation of program objectives (Item C(22)). • There is a significant difference in the explanation of the program learning outcomes (Item C(23)).	• A majority of the teachers indicated that the ProELT was not relevant to their professional needs, except for one teacher (primary, urban). • Most of the teachers thought that the program was more suitable for trainee and novice teachers.	Large incorporation of relevance for learning.

A review of the quantitative and qualitative analysis for Section C of the questionnaire showed contrasting findings in five adult learning principles, namely *orientation to learning, learner's experience, self-concept, motivation* and *relevance* compared to one consistent finding for *readiness to learn*. The majority of the survey respondents agreed that the former five principles were incorporated into the ProELT. In contrast, most of the interview participants stated otherwise. For example, the way the program participants were selected was based on their CPT and Aptis test results, as opposed to voluntary participation, which, had it occurred, may have led to better fulfilment of the teachers' professional needs. This was against the principles of *orientation to learning*, *learners' experience*, and *relevance*. This forced participation resulted in most of the interview participants feeling demotivated, and they struggled to stay positive until the completion of the ProELT (*motivation*). In addition, the selection process disregarded the teachers' teaching experience and postgraduate qualifications, which led some of them to experience lower self-esteem due to judgemental views from their colleagues in regard to their linguistic and instructional competencies (*self-concept*). However, there were consistent findings pertaining to *readiness to learn*. Despite the interview participants' reluctance to participate in the ProELT, they have gained new teaching knowledge, and have improved part of their language skills. Overall, these findings indicated that the ProELT had largely incorporated adult learning principles in its design.

5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings from Sections B and C of the questionnaire that answered three research questions from the second central research question, '**How is the ProELT perceived as a PD program?**', as follows:

RQ4: What are the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT?

RQ5: Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding the ProELT?

RQ6: Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural teachers regarding the ProELT?

Section B investigated the benefits and impact of the ProELT on its participants, which focused on four factors:

1. Emphasis on content focus;
2. Engagement in active learning;
3. Impact on teachers' knowledge;
4. Impact on teaching practice;

The findings showed that the ProELT:

1. had included **partial emphasis** on the content focus pertaining to teachers' teaching syllabus, i.e. the program content has partially complemented with the national syllabus;
2. had provided teachers' with only **partial engagement** in active learning;
3. had only a **partial impact** on teachers' knowledge in regard to providing new instructional ideas;
4. had only a **partial impact** on a portion of teachers' teaching practice.

Meanwhile, Section C investigated the degree of incorporation of six adult learning principles in the ProELT:

1. Orientation to learning;
2. Readiness to learn;

3. Experience;
4. Self-concept;
5. Motivation; and
5. Relevance.

The triangulation showed that the ProELT had **largely incorporated** all the five adult learning principles, although there were disagreements from a few senior teachers. The significance and implications of these findings will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Chapter 6: Teachers' Experiences with the ProELT

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, the findings from Sections B and C of the questionnaires, which solicited the teachers' perceptions regarding the benefits and impact of the ProELT on their instructional and language knowledge and skills, and the degree of incorporation of adult learning in their training, were presented.

This chapter aims to answer the third central question, '**What experiences and suggestions can be gathered from the ProELT participants?**', via two research questions:

RQ7: What are the teachers' experiences with the ProELT?

RQ8: What are the teachers' suggestions to improve the ProELT?

The findings in this chapter were derived from Section D (Issues relating to the ProELT), and Section E (Changes to the ProELT) in the questionnaire survey, and teacher interviews. The findings are important, because they identify specific issues and allow recommendations to be made. The purpose of identifying the teachers' experiences while participating in the ProELT is to understand the issues that they had encountered during and outside the training duration. This differs from the data discussed in the previous two chapters in one important way. In order to supplement the data obtained directly from the teachers, the DELOs were also interviewed to gather their perspectives of the teachers' problems. This is because the DELOs were responsible for overseeing the logistics management of the program and for assisting the program participants and trainers with various logistical matters in their respective districts. Through these bi-perspectives from the teachers and DELOs, it is hoped that their views and suggestions will be of value to the

program providers to improve the design and future management of the ProELT, and perhaps other future PD programs, and also to inform PD design in a more general and broader sphere.

One important caveat needs to be mentioned. The DELOs did not have autonomy in any decision-making pertaining to the design and content of the ProELT and, therefore, were not able to provide substantial comments on this matter. The presentation of findings will proceed with the program participants' suggestions on ways to improve the ProELT, and a review on whether the ProELT had fulfilled the six aspects that the survey respondents wanted in a PD program, which was presented in Chapter 4.

6.2 Section D: Issues with the ProELT

Three issues with the ProELT have been identified:

1. long training duration;
2. selection of the program participants; and
3. lack of support from the program provider.

The first issue was identified from one specific question in the questionnaire, while the second and third issues were identified from coding of the whole teacher interviews, as shown in Figure 6.1 below.

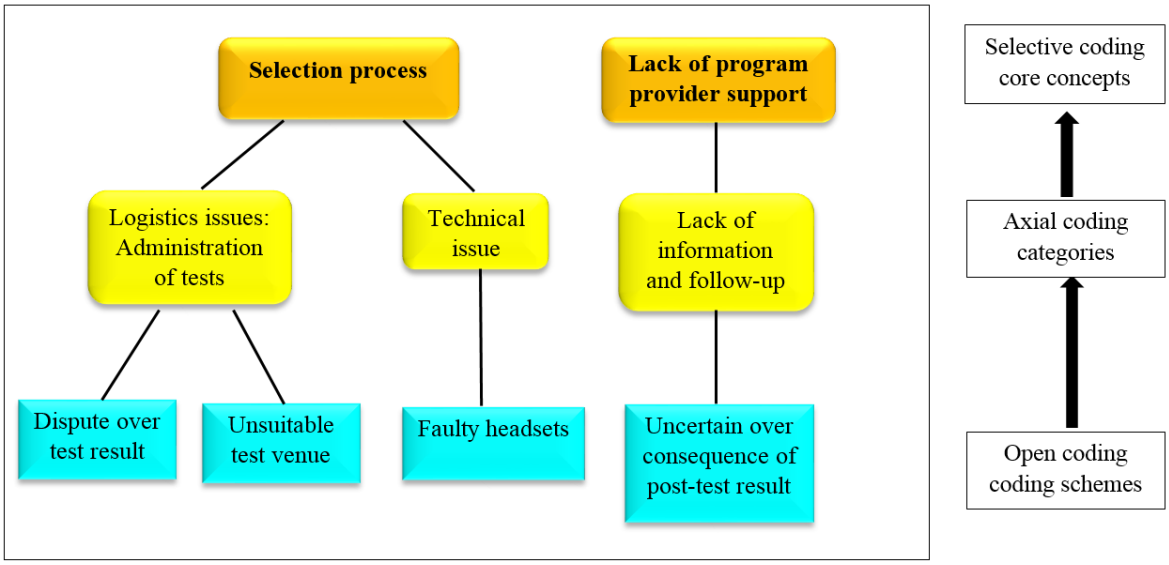


Figure 6.1 Development of coding schemes, categories, and core concepts of the study

Section D of the questionnaire sought to gather the survey respondents' views pertaining to the issues that they had encountered while undergoing the ProELT training. Some of the questionnaire items were related to their teaching and non-teaching workloads, communication with their program trainers and trainees, training materials, assignments, and training duration. The respondents selected an answer along a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; and 5 = Strongly Agree. Table 6.1 below shows the computed scores of the respondents' answers by averaging the respondents' rating for each of the items.

Table 6.1 Teachers' responses to issues with the ProELT

No.	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	The assignments did not fulfil my teaching development needs.	2.42	.938
2.	The assignments did not fulfil my language development needs.	2.25	.898
3.	The course materials did not relate to my teaching syllabus.	2.36	.909
4.	There were too many assignments.	3.25	1.059
5.	**The duration of the program was too long.**	**4.11**	**1.096**
6.	I had problems communicating well with my trainer.	1.93	.853
7.	I had problems communicating well with the other teacher participants.	1.72	.704
8.	I had to complete many non-teaching duties in school after completing the face-to-face phase of the program.	3.11	1.032
9.	I had to catch up on my lessons after completing the face-to-face phase of the program.	3.19	1.125

6.2.1 Issue 1: Long training duration

A. Survey

Table 6.2 below shows that 171 (56.4%) respondents believe that the program duration was too long compared to 48 (15.8%) respondents who disagree.

Table 6.2 Teachers' response regarding the one-year training duration

Duration

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	2.6	2.6	2.6
	Disagree	40	13.2	13.2	15.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	84	27.7	27.7	43.6
	Agree	88	29.0	29.0	72.6
	Strongly agree	83	27.4	27.4	100.0
	Total	303	100.0	100.0	

A review of the respondents' written feedback in Section E of the questionnaire describes the inconvenience of attending the long-term, weekly training program, due to mostly their school workloads, and their missing the opportunities to participate in school programs. Below are some of the respondents' comments:

i. I had to jumble between attending the course and teaching at school every week…This results in less focus in the class and it is a little overwhelming for the teachers. (KB21)

ii. Implementing ProELT every week for a year is quite demanding and we have to struggle with many commitments throughout the long period. (KB42)

iii. [O]ne year is quite long and there are times that I feel exhausted thinking about when to finish. (KG46)

iv. It is really distracting, stressful and burdening being a participant of this course and at the same time carrying out the responsibilities as a teacher. (KG50)

v. The other teachers in my school have to take turns to take care of my classes when I am not around. (TW1)

vi. We need to catch up with many work/documentation in school. No substitute teacher is provided. (TU1)

vii. We have tons of other works to do at school the whole year round. (KKB20)

viii. Unable to join many school activities especially at school end. (KKB7)

ix. The teachers sometimes cannot attend the school program. (SD14)

In contrast, several of the respondents supported the one-year training duration, because of its practicality and flexibility. Their justifications are as follows:

x. I personally prefer it this way because it gives us chance to reflect or practice what was being taught in class. (KB11)

xi. Once a week class gives me opportunities to implement the new strategies immediately. (KB41)

xii. Once a week is just nice, and not too taxing for us. (TW25)

xiii. The duration is fine as long as we do not have to be away from school and home too long. (SD42)

B. Teacher interviews

The data considered in this section were obtained in response to the interview question.

Interview Question D1:

What do you think of the duration of the ProELT?

Consistent with the quantitative data, the majority of the teachers, who were interviewed, stated that the program duration was too long. One of these teachers was Aidah who said:

> It's too long, stressful, tiring.

Justina and Vicky explained that the weekly ProELT training did not provide a sustainable learning condition, because they could not remember what they had learned from the last training a week later during the following training. Hence, they preferred an intensive form of program:

> Justina: I rather have the course [be conducted] continuously so that it'll be easier to remember the content we have learned.
>
> Vicky: Actually what I don't understand is why they have the [ProELT] course from 8 to 4 [in the afternoon] and every Thursday. Why don't you put us in one place, finish off the course in about one, two months. [With the current weekly training] by next week, I cannot remember already what I did last week because of the one-week gap.

Their views were echoed by Lily and Danielle:

> Lily: Even the students tend to forget what they learned last week. Imagine that ourselves we have to attend every week…and the trainer will ask us, 'What have you learnt last week?'
>
> Danielle: We have to recall [what we had learned last week].

Meanwhile, Betty, who considered herself a proficient user, also disagreed with the one-year duration:

> In my opinion, the duration of the program is too long for proficient language users. For those who are not proficient, I think one year is just nice for them because you only meet once a week.

Interestingly, only Tan thought that the one-year duration was too short:

> For me, it's short, because I feel that there are so many things I want to learn. These things are too rushed. There are many contents we need to cover especially in the coursebook. I like to learn. For me it's too short.

Similarly, Farah said she did not mind the one-year duration, except she preferred the ProELT to be conducted as a continuous program as opposed to weekly:

> I don't argue with the duration of the program. I prefer a full-time program. No break. Not every once a week I have to come here [for the training]. So, if you want me to come here [for] three months then I'll stay here [for] three months.

Hence, these responses suggest that it would be ideal to offer teachers with the options of selecting programs which matched their preferred training duration.

C. DELO interviews

In response to the teachers' views in regard to their preference for a shorter and intensive training, it would be crucial to know the capacity of the Education Department to accommodate the teachers' preference.

Interview Question B1:

The majority of the teachers think that the one-year training duration is too long and they would prefer a shorter, intensive training. What can the Education Department do about this matter?

The response given by DELO Alex revealed that there were mixed responses from the teachers in regard to the latter's preferred training duration, which were consistent with the survey and teacher interview findings.

> Some teachers said that they are okay with the one-year training because they get ongoing [teaching] ideas throughout the year, different teaching tips. But some prefer to get it over and done with. We have various responses from the participants, actually. Some of them really enjoy the ProELT. They cannot wait for Thursday (training day) to come.

Alex added that the District Education Department could forward the participants' suggestions of their preferred duration to the MOE:

> Because we have to follow the rules and regulations, the only thing we can suggest is to suggest to conduct the training every fortnight, for example, so that it's more convenient for the teachers

However, the District Education Department has limited autonomy in any decision-making in regard to the ProELT, which was centrally determined by the MOE. This matter was clarified by DELO Margaret who described how the ProELT cluster (weekly) or centralised (intensive) mode training was decided by the MOE:

> Actually I did suggest to JPN[32] (State Education Department) to conduct the ProELT as a centralised mode [training] for my district. We have two modes. One is the cluster mode which goes on for one whole year, once a week. The

[32] *Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri* (JPN)

> centralised mode is where teachers will gather in one place for a few weeks, and then they will go back to school to teach. After a few weeks, they will go back to the centre again to continue with the training. For me, I prefer the centralised mode because the teacher won't have to think about school work for that particular duration. I think that is better.

She continued:

> But when I posted this suggestion to JPN and it forwarded to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry said my district cannot implement the centralised mode because [it's an urban district and has] no transportation problem. It said that the centralised mode is only for [interior] districts which have transportation problems.

Hence, the DELOs' responses indicate their very limited ability to determine the program training duration and mode. Further feedback should be undertaken by the MOE from the participants in order to reconsider the suitability of the current training duration. However,

D. Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed that the respondents' main issue with the ProELT pertained to the program duration. It had a mean score of 4.11 (SD = 1.096), but the responses were mixed. 171 (56.4%) respondents agreed that the duration was too long and preferred a shorter training duration, due to their abundant school workload and missing out on school activities. In contrast, 48 (15.8%) respondents disagreed and preferred the one-year training, because it allowed them to experiment with the materials in their lessons immediately after the training, and they did not have to be away from their school and family for a long duration.

The teacher interviews also revealed a mixed response. A majority of the teacher participants also preferred a shorter and intensive training, which they said is less stressful, less tiring, and would help them to remember the program content. However, two teachers

preferred long-term training. One of them justified this by saying that it would enable her to thoroughly cover all of the program content.

Interviews with the DELOs showed that one of the DELOs had also received mixed feedback from the teachers from his district in regard to their preferred duration. In addition, the DELOs noted that their autonomy in deciding the program duration was limited.

Thus, the participants' contrasting preferences in the training duration seems to suggest the desirability of a choice between short and long-term training. This would be an idealistic option, but in reality this form of implementation might encounter some challenges due to manpower and logistic factors.

6.2.2 Issue 2: Selection process

Some of the interviewees' dissatisfaction with the selection method of the ProELT participants is classified into logistical and technical issues. Two logistical issues pertained to the administration of the CPT and Aptis tests, which included:

1. Teacher's dispute over the test result; and
2. Unsuitable test venue.

Meanwhile, the technical issue was related to faulty headsets.

Logistical issues

I. Dispute over test results

A. Teacher interviews

Interview Question D3:

Can you describe the management of the CPT or Aptis tests?

There was a dispute in regard to the CPT result by one of the interview participants, who was dissatisfied and questioned the validity of her result. Betty, who has an MEd (TESL), disputed her Band B2 CPT result after she was initially informed by an officer from the District Education Department that she had scored a C2 (proficient user), which is the highest band. However, she was surprised when she discovered that her name was not on the Band C candidates list, which was available on the MOE website. Betty lamented:

> For me, I know the CPT…there is some technical problem …because I have a friend who has a source in [the District Education Department] who saw my name. I'm already a C2, she says. I don't even have to…need to attend the ProELT. But then when it (the result) was [uploaded] online, the MOE website, I checked, my name was not there. That means my name is not in the list of C1 and C2 category.

When the researcher asked whether Betty had sought assistance from her DELO, Margaret, to look into her CPT result, she replied:

> I didn't speak to her. I only texted her about my CPT result. All she answered back, 'No, I cannot find your name [on the list]'. After that, that's all. For me, when she says, 'My hands are tied, teacher' so, basically she's just the spokesperson for the Ministry *lah*, because she says her hands are tied. So, what can she do? She can't fight for me. So, I find it useless to tell her my problem.

B. DELO interviews

In response to Betty's serious claim about issues with her CPT result, and her DELO's, Margaret, limited capacity in assisting her with this matter, it was crucial to understand this circumstance from Margaret's perspective in her dealing with the issues.

Interview Question B2:

How did you handle teachers who were unhappy with their CPT or Aptis test result?

The response given by Margaret indicated her limited capacity in assisting teachers, who had issues and were dissatisfied with their CPT and Aptis test results. Margaret explained:

> We have to comfort the teachers so that they won't feel demotivated. Some of the headmasters and principals told me that their teachers were very demotivated when they got the result. Some of the teachers are even the *Guru Cemerlang* (Excellent Teacher) and *Jurulatih Utama* (Master Trainer) but then somehow they got B1 and B2. And they feel very demotivated. I have an experienced teacher who got A1 or A2 (basic user) and she has been teaching English for more than ten years. The teacher told me she was so demotivated and she will not teach English anymore.

This supports the senior teachers' responses in regard to experiencing negative emotional impact, due to their test results and being selected for the ProELT (see Section 5.3.4.2). Margaret acknowledged that technical issues might have affected the teachers' results:

> I told her that it's not because you are not good. It might be some other problems, or technical problems. I believe in my teachers since they've already been teaching for so many years.

Margaret explained that teachers had the option to apply for an exemption from the ProELT through the MOE:

> When the ProELT starts I will go to all the [training] centres and I will brief [the teachers]. I will bring the circular for the ProELT policy and also the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for the ProELT. If let's say they do not like…or they have their own reason they do not want to join in the ProELT, they have the right to write a letter to appeal [for exemption] to the Ministry. So I give all the SOP to the participants.

Although the above option was available, it was earlier presented that one of the teacher interview participants, Betty, revealed her hesitance to submit an application for an

exemption due to her worry of being blacklisted by the MOE for disregarding their instruction to attend the ProELT (see Section 5.3.5.2).

Thus, the responses from the teacher and DELO revealed the second limitation in the latter's autonomy in assisting the teachers with the ProELT matters, in addition to deciding the program training duration and mode (see Section 6.2.1 (C)). No interview participants from DELO Alex's district disputed their Aptis results. Therefore, the researcher did not direct the above question to Alex.

C. Triangulation

One teacher interview revealed the dissatisfaction of and dispute by a teacher participant, who considered herself a proficient English user, with her CPT result due to technical issue. She did not seek assistance from her DELO, because it was beyond the latter's authority.

The interview with the DELO showed that there were also other teachers who were dissatisfied with their test results, and the DELO acknowledged that it could be due to technical issues. In addition, the DELO explained that the participants could appeal for an exemption from the ProELT by submitting an appeal to the MOE. This shows that the DELO had no autonomy with regard to the test results and giving exemptions to teachers from the ProELT, which were under the MOE's jurisdiction.

II. Unsuitable test venue

A. Teacher interviews

Interview Question D4:

Can you describe whether you encountered any problems during the CPT or Aptis test?

The CPT and Aptis tests were conducted in public school computer labs, which were mostly equipped with basic computer equipment. Betty identified this as a problem potentially affecting her performance:

> I think it should be done in a language lab, because there will be some speaking done. So, you need to have a good headphone to be able to talk to, and [it is] in working order. I feel I've not done my best because I need to speak aloud on my headphone then only I could see the [audio] lines [on the monitor] going up and down. But then when I'm speaking aloud, I'll be disturbing people on my left and people on my right. They are doing their writing[33], and some of them are doing their listening [test]. So, it's a bit unfair, right? If I were doing that, they (the teachers) will be thinking, 'Why is this teacher talking so loud?' And also when you want to talk about personal reminiscence, you know, something that's kind of personal, if you are in an enclosure, in an English lab, you'll be able to talk more freely.

[33] At the CPT and Aptis test centres, the test candidates did not take the same language skill test simultaneously, for example writing test, in order to prevent a reduction in the internet connection speed due to network congestion from downloading the same test questions and uploading of the candidates' answers.

B. DELO interviews

Interview Question B3:

Can you explain why the CPT and Aptis tests were conducted in school computer labs?

The MOE's budget constraints was one of the reasons that did not permit the use of computer facilities other than the school computer labs, as Margaret explained:

> Actually during the ProELT Cohort 1, the British Council had asked why we didn't hold the test in a hotel or somewhere that has well-equipped computer lab. I said we do not have the budget. How to rent the place? The Ministry asked us to run the test in the school computer labs, and we tried our best to get the best labs.

Hence, this finding reveals the DELO's third limitation[34] in her autonomy in overseeing the ProELT, which depended on financial support from the MOE. No teachers from Alex's district mentioned any problems with their test venue, and, therefore, the above question was not directed to Alex.

C. Triangulation

The teacher interview indicated Betty's unsatisfactory experience of taking the CPT test in a school computer lab, which did not provide a conducive environment for the listening and speaking test compared to a language lab with separate cubicles. The interview with the DELO revealed that the MOE had instructed that the CPT and Aptis tests were to be conducted in school computer labs, due to budget constraints. Based on these findings, it appears that the MOE's decision to utilise the school computer labs was the most cost-

[34] See Sections 6.2.1 (C) and 6.2.2 (B) for the DELOs' first and second limitations, respectively.

effective way, because the computer labs were funded by the MOE and were available in selected schools in every district.

Technical issue

III. Faulty headsets

A. Teacher interviews

Interview Question D4:

Can you describe whether you encountered any problems during the CPT or Aptis test?

Faulty headsets in the computer labs were an issue, which had affected two teachers during the test. This issue had the potential to impact negatively on the teachers' performance. Justina explained about initially having difficulty in listening to her own voice on the headset during the listening and speaking tests, and she was immediately given a spare set:

> I had problem with the headset. When you test it, your voice is like "husky". It's very hard for you to…it's difficult to listen to your own voice.

Danielle also described encountering a similar problem with her headset:

> I had problem with my headset. I couldn't listen to the audio and also my voice. Luckily the lab technician gave me a new set but I had to wait 20 minutes. While I was waiting, I felt anxious seeing my colleagues who had started their tests.

Danielle noted that she was given an additional twenty minutes to complete the test, but the delay had caused her worries and affected her concentration. Her responses suggest that

more thorough and adequate inspection of all the headsets should have been undertaken by the computer lab technician prior to the test to avoid any delays during the test.

B. DELO interviews

Interview Question B4:

Some teachers had problems with their headsets during the Aptis test. Can you explain about these problems?

Despite the importance of ensuring the Aptis test ran with as few complication as possible, it was discouraging that basic technical issues were not dealt with efficiently prior to the test. Margaret responded to the cause of the technical issues:

> Not all of the computer labs in the schools have been upgraded or have new equipment. So, that's why the teachers have some technical problems with the head phones.

She further related the difficulties that she experienced in procuring enough headsets for the Cohorts 1 and 2 test candidates:

> For Cohort 1, we did not have budget [from the Ministry] to buy the head phones. So, we can only use what the schools have [available] during that time. But for ProELT Cohort 2, yes [there was a budget allocation]. The Ministry did deliver some budget for us to get the head phones but it's only for rental [purpose]. Who will rent headset for you? And then another problem we faced was that the budget was delivered late to us. The Aptis test was already done then we got the budget.

Due to the delay in receiving the budget to purchase the headsets from the Ministry, she stated that her Head of District Education Department assisted her in procuring funds by using the Department's budget to purchase eighty units of headsets:

> I got help from the finance department. I fought for it (the budget), for my PPD[35] (District Education Department]. So for ProELT Cohort 2, I managed to ask the office to buy eighty headsets for two labs. Using the PPD's budget. I feel very thankful to the Head of my Department. My PPD. He helped a lot. And [I thank] the finance department as well.

Margaret continued to explain the preparation that underwent for the Cohort 2 Aptis test, and her hope to the Ministry:

> For Aptis Cohort 2, it's a little bit better and I tried my best to get the head phones as well. Good head phones. So I do hope next time [the Ministry] can get a place that is well-equipped. It's unfair for the teachers if they failed the test because of the computer, or because of the head phone.

Hence, the DELO's responses suggest that her ability to equip the test venues with adequate hardware highly depended on financial support from the MOE. Alternative financial support can be obtained from the District Education Department, if the financial provision from the MOE is delayed or unavailable. The above question was only directed to Margaret, who was responsible for overseeing the preparation of computer labs which were used by Justina and Danielle.

C. Triangulation

The teacher interviews revealed that two teachers had experienced technical problems with their headsets, which disrupted the test progress of one of the teachers and caused her anxiety. Their DELO's responses indicated that she has purchased eighty new headsets, in time for the Cohort 2 Aptis test, despite the budget constraint and blunder with financial allocation from the MOE. These consistent findings from the teacher and DELO interviews

[35] *Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah* (PPD)

show that technical issues could affect the emotional wellbeing of teachers during the CPT and Aptis tests and impact their test results. However, it is equitable to acknowledge that technical issue could occur with new equipment.

6.2.3 Issue 3: Lack of support from program provider

Lack of communication from the program provider

The recurring issue which emerged from the interview transcripts analyses was the participants' complaints regarding the lack of communication from the MOE, mainly:

1. The purpose and function of the CPT and Aptis tests as language assessment tools; and
2. The consequence of not achieving one band higher in the post-CPT and Aptis tests i.e. Band B2 (if a candidate scores B1 in the pre-test), or Band C1 (if a candidate scores B2 in the pre-test).

I. Uncertainty over the consequence of post-test results

A. Teacher interviews

Interview Question D5:

What happens if you do not score a Band higher in the post-Aptis test?

The responses given by the teachers interviewed indicated a lack of communication from the MOE to the DELOs and trainers, which caused worries amongst the teachers. During the interviews, the teachers repeatedly lamented the lack of information and follow-up from the MOE pertaining to the consequence of not scoring a band higher in their post-Aptis test.

Neither the DELOs nor trainers were able to provide sufficient information to the teachers. Some of their concerns were whether they will have to repeat the one-year training, retake the post-Aptis test, or will they be barred from teaching English. Betty lamented her uncertainty:

> I asked my trainer what happens to us if we still get B2? I said, 'Do we have to attend another ProELT?' He doesn't even know. I know one or two teachers from Cohort 1 who got B2 or B1 in their post-Aptis test. There's no follow-up from the Ministry. He or she didn't have to attend another ProELT course and they're just back in school teaching.

Manjit related a similar uncertainty to Betty, and the fate of her friends from Cohort 1, who did not achieve a band higher in their post-Aptis test:

> We don't know. We did ask the PPD and they also couldn't answer us. I just found out yesterday from one of the teachers whose friend took the Aptis test last year [in 2013] and got B2 [in the pre-test]. After the post-Aptis test, she still got a B2. I thought the Ministry will be sending her back for the course but nothing happened.

Vicky explained that despite her DELO's and trainer's effort to clarify the teachers' queries the explanations were still unsatisfactory and unconvincing. She and her colleagues wanted to know the purpose of the Aptis test, the reason it was used as an assessment tool, and the reason teachers' teaching experiences and performances were disregarded in the selection of participants:

> The problem is the way they (the DELO and trainer) explain is not satisfying, you know. Actually KPM should send its officers to come and explain to us actually why we have to attend this course and what is the meaning if we get C2, B2 or A1 [in the Aptis test]. So what is the impact? So why we have to attend this course when furthermore some of us have been teaching for quite long [period] and we have performed well in school without sitting for that evaluation. Actually last time we asked [the trainer], we told her, 'Please ask a representative from the KPM (MOE) to come and give a talk.'

Vicky and her colleagues repeatedly requested a meeting with a representative from the MOE for first-hand information regarding the ProELT, but to no avail:

> [The DELO and trainer] try their best to actually give us insight of the course. But then, we still want to know more. So the more we wanted to know, they cannot answer. That can only be answered by the KPM. KPM never came.

Due to the lack of accurate and sufficient information from the MOE, the teachers were left in limbo, and their worries were exacerbated by the circulation of hearsay among the program participants. The hearsay included teachers having to teach another subject, in lieu of English, and a termination of service, which the latter was most unlikely to occur, as the termination of a Malaysian civil servant usually pertains to serious legal or criminal charges. Justina explained the hearsay:

> I heard lots of rumours that if the course participants did not achieve C1 [the Ministry] says that we have to teach another subject, but that's only rumour. We don't have any official letters [to confirm this].

Vicky provided her version of the hearsay:

> One friend posted on our *Telegram*[36], I don't know from where she got it, that if we did not achieve what is required they (the Ministry) can stop us from working as a teacher.

B. DELO interview

Interview Question B5:

What happens to the teachers who do not score a band higher in their post-Aptis test?

---

[36] Telegram is a text messaging application that is free to download and has no subscription fees. Other similar text messaging applications include Viber, WeChat, and Line.

The responses given by both DELOs revealed their uncertainty in regard to the consequence of the teachers' failure to achieve a band higher in their post-Aptis test. This confirmed the teachers' claims above about the lack of communication from the program provider, which indicated a crucial need to enhance effective communication between the program provider and the trainers and DELOs.

Margaret responded:

> The teacher also did ask [about the consequence]. We post the question to the Ministry and the Ministry still asked us to wait. It has already been a year and [still] no instruction given. We also do not know what will happen to those teachers.

Alex gave a similar explanation:

> We don't have any idea on that actually, sorry, because we have that kind of participants [in Cohort 1], they have the same Band in the pre- and post-Aptis, and we don't have any [follow-up] programs for them yet. But hopefully this time around there will be and ELTC[37] will conduct a course for those who have the same Band for the pre- and post-Aptis test.

Hence, these findings from the teachers and DELOs suggest the crucial need for the MOE to improve the effectiveness of its communication with the DELOs, trainers and teachers

C. Triangulation

The teacher interviews revealed a lack of information from the MOE to the teachers pertaining to the purpose of the Aptis test and the ProELT, and the consequence of not

[37] English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) represents the MOE in overseeing the ProELT.

achieving the targeted post-Aptis test result, which had left teachers in a state of limbo. The interview also indicated that the teachers were unable to acquire sufficient information on the same matters from their DELOs and trainers.

The interviews with the DELOs showed that they did not have sufficient information to respond to the teachers' queries regarding the Aptis test and ProELT. In addition, one DELO was unable to obtain the required information from the MOE one year after submitting her queries.

Based on the consistent findings from the teacher and DELO interviews, it appears that there is a serious lack of support from the MOE, and also a worrying lack of communication between the MOE and DELOs, which has resulted in uncertainty, anxiety and the circulation of rumours among the teachers.

The following section will present findings from Section E of the questionnaire and interviews with the teachers and DELOs pertaining to suggestions to improve the ProELT.

6.3 Section E: Changes to the ProELT

In the open-ended question in Section E of the questionnaire, the survey respondents were asked to provide their suggestions to improve the ProELT based on:

1. Training duration:
2. Trainer; and
3. Program content.

An additional component "Others" was also included if the respondents had other suggestions to add in addition to the three aforementioned components. A review of the

survey respondents' feedback noted an additional two suggestions to the aforementioned list which are:

4. Training venue; and
5. Meal provision.

A caveat worth mentioning is that only 254 (83.8%) respondents who actually responded to Section E. There were also some respondents who provided comments (positive and negative) in lieu of suggestions for improvement. Findings from the teacher and DELO interviews will also be presented to triangulate the survey findings as summarised in Figure 6.2 below.

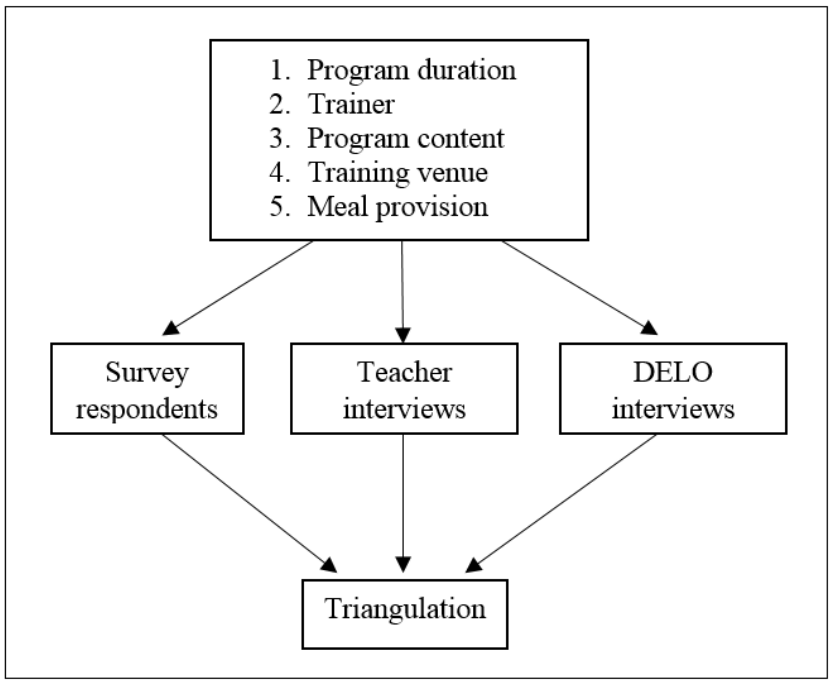


Figure 6.2 Changes to the ProELT: Triangulation of findings

6.3.1 Program duration

A. Survey

One hundred and nineteen (39.24%) respondents provided a myriad of suggestions pertaining to their preferred training duration of the ProELT program, which are summarised in Figure 6.3 below.

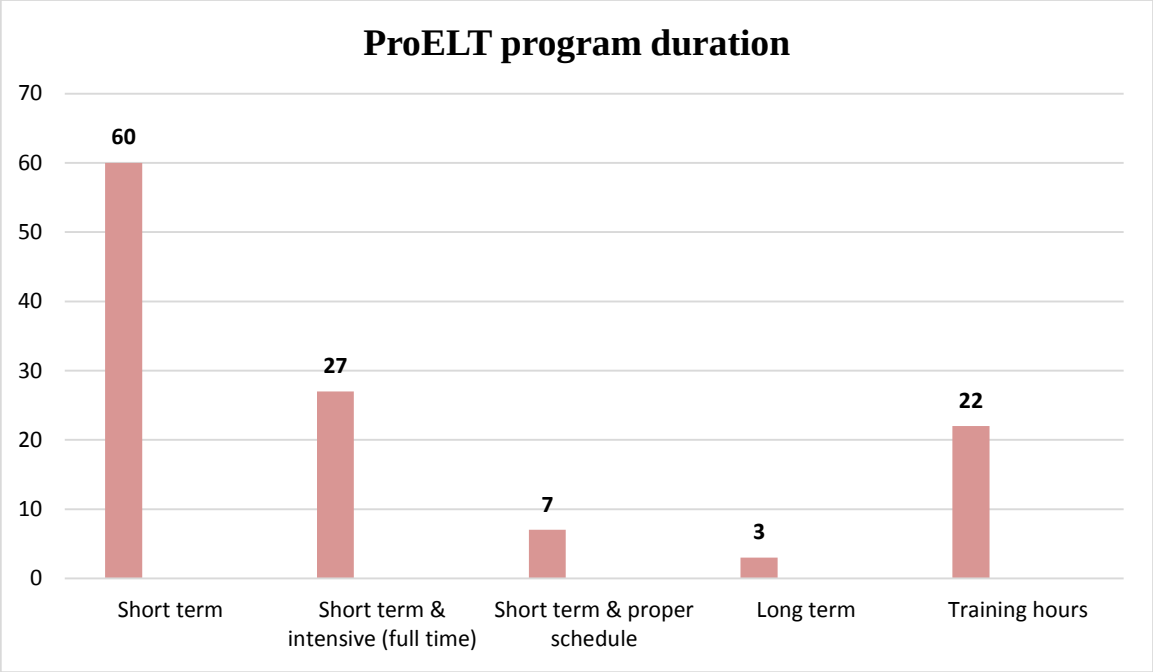


Figure 6.3 Suggestions for ProELT training duration

Figure 6.3 shows that 60 (50.4%) respondents wanted the one-year duration to be shortened to six months or less, and 27 (22.7%) respondents proposed a short-term, intensive (full-time) training, as opposed to the current weekly training. The respondents cited two reasons for wanting a shorter program:

1. Abundant school workload; and
2. Missed opportunities to participate in school activities and other workshops.

In addition, 7 (5.9%) respondents suggested that the ProELT should be short term and not be held during the school holiday. In the current Cohort 2, the program was held until the second week of December 2014, which coincided with the year-end school holiday that started from early November 2014 until the New Year. The respondents reasoned that they had made plans for their personal and family holidays. In contrast, only 3 (2.5%) respondents proposed to maintain the one-year duration, and 22 (18.5%) respondents suggested that the training hours should be reduced from eight hours a day to between three and six hours, i.e. 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., or 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. These results strongly indicate that it is not so much the specific format that is problematic, but the failure to tailor the available offerings to the teachers' needs, and offer them the opportunity to choose their preferred training schedule.

B. Teacher interviews

Interview Question Section D2:

What is your ideal duration for the ProELT?

The majority of the interview participants preferred short-term, intensive programs. The following extracts exemplify these views.

Betty: One month intensive.

Manjit: Intensive for one or two months.

Justina: I'm on the fence. Six months if it's continuous. One month is also okay. I'd rather have the course conducted continuously so that it'll be easier to remember the content we have learned.

Lily: Shorter than a year. Maybe three months continuous.

Farah: Three months continuous. I think that is going to help me more with my [language] proficiency.

Some interview participants did not specify their preference for an intensive program as long as it is conducted in less than a year.

Vicky: I would prefer to finish off the course in about one, two months.

Jacqueline: Three months and not to conduct the program during holiday.

Danielle: Less than a year.

Aidah stated her preference for a specific time of the day:

Only in the morning session until 12.30 or 1 o'clock.

Interestingly, Tan, was the most positive respondent, and the only participant who wanted a long-term program:

Two years. There are so many things I want to learn in detail in a program.

The main reasons suggested for the above format preference were as follows. Interview participants who preferred to attend short-term training said this was because they were restricted from participating in any meetings, programs, and school activities during the ProELT, unless they were organised by the MOE and the State Examination Department. Vicky explained the restrictions:

> They (the trainer) made it very clear. From KPM (MOE) and from *Bahagian Peperiksaan* (Examination Department) then you can go. Only that two you can excuse yourself [from the ProELT)]. Others you cannot [go].

The primary school teachers were not happy with this restriction, especially when the programs pertained to the *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah* (KSSR)[38] or Primary School Standardised Curriculum, because this new curriculum was recently introduced in 2011. The primary school teachers, especially the Head of English Language Panel, needed as much information and training as possible to comprehend the curriculum. According to Vicky, if a KSSR program was conducted on the same day as the ProELT, the MOE suggested that the school administrator appoint a substitute teacher. However, Vicky's commitment to her teaching, students, and her responsibility, as Head of English Language Panel, made her disregard the order and go ahead with the KSSR program:

> So they ask somebody else to replace me but it (the KSSR) is important because I'm going to teach that class. I should know. I should have first-hand information, right? I still went that day.

Farah and Lily also shared Vicky's sentiments and commitments towards their teaching and students by disregarding the Ministry's order:

> Farah: Some of us got courses that are really important for us. The courses that are not under the KPM. So our trainer will say this ProELT is more important. But we have to go to the district courses because it's more helpful for our teaching.
>
> Lily: Sometimes we just skip the ProELT because we think that is more important.

[38] KSSR was introduced in 2011 by the Ministry of Education to replace the preceding curriculum, *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah* (KBSR) or the Primary School Integrated Curriculum (Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2010), which was first implemented in 1983. The purpose of the KSSR was to overcome certain shortcomings within the older curriculum. This new curriculum contains pre-set standards of learning viz. knowledge, skills, and values that pupils are required to achieve at the different levels of their schooling. A school-based assessment is adopted to measure these learning standards. The new curriculum has also been designed to go beyond acquiring communication skills, self-development and the child's immediate environment as in the KBSR. It is designed to enhance and embrace the use of science and technology, develop values, understand humanitarian issues and also focus on the child's physical and aesthetical development. For additional reading, please see Sulaiman, Ayub & Sulaiman (2015).

In a second example, Vicky was invited by another school to assist with her district's English carnival. She explained her reason for skipping the ProELT:

> The district was having a few English carnivals. Those were the things I've already been involved for so long. And then just because of this [ProELT] course, you ask me not to go. We (English teachers) got the experience…people come to you and ask for help because you got the *kepakaran* (expertise). How can I not go? So I went for one [carnival] only and then the others I never went.

These responses shed light on the reasons for the teacher's preferences, and the disappointment felt by those whose priorities were disregarded by the MOE.

C. DELO interviews

Interview Question B1:

The majority of the teachers think that the one-year training duration is too long and burdensome, and they would prefer a shorter, intensive training. What can the Education Department do about this matter?

Issues with acquiring sufficient substitute teachers, when the ProELT teachers were away from school for an extended and continuous duration, was a reason the ProELT was conducted as weekly training, as opposed to intensive training. Margaret further elaborated on this issue:

> In order to run an intensive training, the schools must have a replacement teacher. They must. If they don't, of course the schools will file a complaint against us, 'I have no teacher and you still want to take away my teacher.' So, if the schools can find a replacement teacher, I prefer the teachers to come out from the schools for three months or four months and just finish up the ProELT at one go. Why not?

Margaret described having to be careful in assigning multiple teachers from the same school on different training days:

> I have schools that have seven or eight teachers who are involved in ProELT, and I cannot put them in the same [training] day. So [I assign] two teachers on Monday, another two teachers on Tuesday and so on because I have to think of the school's welfare.

Meanwhile, Alex explained that the District Education Department can forward the participants' suggestions to the MOE:

> Because we have to follow the rules and regulations, the only thing we can suggest is to suggest to the Ministry to conduct the training every fortnight, for example, so that it's more convenient for the teachers

Alex also added that there were mixed responses from the teachers regarding their preferred training duration:

> Some teachers said that they are okay with the one-year training because they get ongoing [teaching] ideas throughout the year, different teaching tips. But some prefer to get it over and done with. We have various responds (sic) from the participants, actually. Some of them really enjoy the ProELT. They cannot wait for Thursday (training day) to come.

These varied responses from the DELOs show their limitation in the decision-making of the program duration, and their responsibility to carefully and strategically plan the teachers' training schedule, in order to ensure the schools have sufficient teachers throughout the training week.

D. Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed that the respondents had mixed preference between a short-term and long-term training duration. However, as the quantitative data shows, a majority of

the respondents preferred a short-term duration. As outlined above, the qualitative data suggested that the preference was due to their abundant workload and missed opportunities to attend school activities and other workshops.

In addition, the teacher interviews also revealed a mixed preference among the interview participants. A majority of the participants preferred the ProELT to be conducted over a short-term duration, while one participant wanted the one-year duration to be maintained, and another participant proposed for shorter training hours per day. On the other hand, interviews with the DELOs also indicated mixed responses. One DELO agreed that short-term, intensive training would be more convenient for the teachers, but she noted that schools would need to have a substitute teacher(s) if one or more teachers were away for training. The second DELO noted that teachers from his district had mixed preference regarding the program duration, and District Education Departments could only forward any suggestions to the MOE because the former did not have autonomy in deciding the program duration. Based on these consistent findings, it appears that even though there are mixed preferences between a short-term or long-term program, a majority of the teachers preferred the ProELT to be conducted over a short-term period.

6.3.2 Trainer

A. Survey

This section of the open-ended question intended to gather the survey respondents' suggestions to improve the trainers. Nineteen (18.1%) valid responses were gathered and sorted into seven categories, as presented in Figure 6.4. Another 68 (64.8%) respondents wrote positive comments on their trainers, and 18 (17%) respondents indicated their preference for native-speaker trainers, even though this feedback was unrelated to the

question. However, it must be noted that these last two figures do not imply that the remaining respondents had negative comments of their trainers or preferred non-native speaker trainers. Below are some examples of the respondents' positive comments on their trainers, in regard to the latter's professionalism and dedication:

1. I would prefer trainer like Ms. [name redacted] who is very dedicated and cater the needs of the participants. (KB41)
2. I believe my trainer has performed her duty well, because she knows the participants'/teachers' goal very well. Well done! (KG27)
3. I love my trainer, for she is an awesome person in and out. She encourages us to speak more. There is nothing that I would want to change about my trainer. (KG37)
4. I like the way how my trainer deliver her message and she is the good trainer after all. She put a lot of consideration on us as a teacher which have a lot of work to do in school. (KG40)
5. I hope the trainer will continue to be in this Proelt program because she was an amazing and awesome person. She gave a lot of guidance and clarity all the modules. She did an excellent job as a trainer. (KG43)
6. Our trainer has done quite well in her duty. She allows us to feel good during her class. She did some homework to our culture (sic). (KG46)
7. Maintain the native speakers. They're so helpful and professional. (TW12)
8. I am satisfied with my trainer. She really understand the participants and had great time in her class. (KKA15)
9. The trainer that I have now is a well versed one. He should be offered to continue as one of the next trainers in future. (KKB18)

As previously mentioned in Section 6.3, not every respondent had provided their feedback in this section.

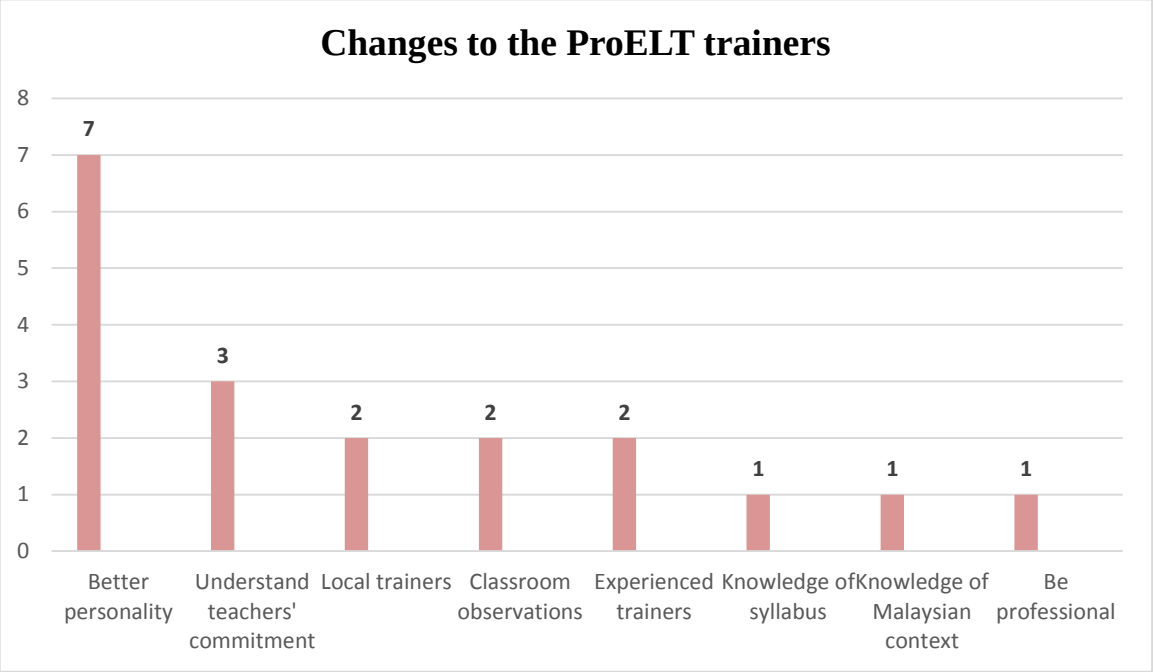


Figure 6.4 Changes to the ProELT trainers

In Figure 6.4, 7 (36.8%) out of 19 respondents suggested that the trainers needed to be *more friendly, helpful, able to communicate with the participants, more creative in teaching, knowledgeable, pleasant, flexible, approachable*, and *not too rigid*. Three (18.8%) respondents wanted the trainers to be more understanding of the teachers' school commitments, especially when the latter had to miss the training. Meanwhile, 2 (16.7%) respondents preferred to have local trainers, would like their trainers to conduct classroom observations, and requested more experienced trainers. In addition, 1 (8.3%) respondent suggested that the trainers should have knowledge of the Malaysian English curriculum syllabus, Malaysian teaching and learning context, and treat the senior teachers professionally. For example, respondent KG1 wrote:

> Please treat us like a professional teacher. Some of us are [in our] 40s and very experienced teachers.

B. Teacher interviews

Interview Question D6:

Can you describe your relationship with the trainer, e.g. communication and support?

Responses to this question indicated the teachers' mixed views of their trainers. The urban teachers, who shared the same trainer, gave positive comments on the latter. Although the rural teachers were generally pleased with their trainer, they noted her lack of sympathy towards their family and work commitments.

> Aidah: She supports us a lot but I think we know she has to be strict with us. But she has to understand with our situation, with our kids.

> Farah: Sometimes we do not purposely come late [for the training]. Some of us have to go to school first and settle our work.

In addition, Jacqueline, who also shared the same trainer as Aidah and Farah, expressed the focus group participants' dissatisfaction with their trainer for being biased towards another teacher:

> We are not satisfied because one of our colleagues always comes late but she (the trainer) didn't say anything. She will personally tutor her. But for those of us who are very active in class, when we came late once she just straight away scolded us. We seldom come late. So it's not fair. I feel very sad.

These responses suggest that the trainer of the above teachers should be more sympathetic towards them and treat all the teachers equally.

Classroom observations

Interview Question D7:

Do you think the trainers should conduct teaching observation in your classroom?

Responses to this question also revealed mixed views among the interview participants. Teachers who agreed to being observed in the classroom had reasoned that it would allow the trainer to understand their teaching and students' learning challenges. However, teachers who disagreed had reasoned that they felt pressured being observed by their trainers.

For example, Manjit thought that it was important for the trainer to conduct classroom observations in order to gain a greater understanding of the difficulty of conducting group activity in her classroom, which were introduced in the ProELT, due to the number of students in her class:

> It's *sekolah kampong* (village school)...The student is [sitting] wall-to-wall already. Thirty eight students…if I want to do group work, I cannot move them around.

Without this knowledge of the contextual parameters, it was difficult for the trainers to have a sense of the feasibility of the methodological changes they had proposed. Manjit was also sceptical about the effectiveness of conducting teaching practice among teachers in the training, because it did not simulate an actual classroom context with the students:

> What I prefer is that they (the trainers) can see the [classroom] situation that we are facing every day. Because if they apply the teaching materials on the teachers...we are English teachers…of course we know [how to do the activities]. We can do it faster. But what about the real situation? The real students who can't speak and understand English? And how do you do all these activities? Show us how to apply on our students. The weak students.

Vicky also agreed that she would prefer to have the trainer observe her classroom teaching and offer guidance:

> If they are working with me, they come to my school and guide me in the school, yes I agree they should observe me. See how I teach. But it should be the *nazir* (school inspectorate) [who comes and observes]. Those who really know our syllabus.

However, this viewpoint was not unanimous. For example, Tan expressed her concerns:

> It's not necessary actually because teachers who are under observation need to perform better than normal. There's pressure to do well. I will plan my lesson based on what I learned in the ProELT. I will try out in my own classroom. When I have any difficulty, I will ask my trainer. So that means I'm doing my own observation.

Justina raised the issue of stress and discomfort:

> I think maybe all of us, the course participants, don't like to be observed especially if you know that someone is going to observe you. It's not like your colleague [who is observing]. It's different, right? So there'll be extra tension [to perform]. But if he (trainer) wants to go and observe me then I don't mind. I'm okay with it.

The focus group participants also shared similar mixed opinions. Teachers who agreed to being observed by their trainer have set one condition: the trainer should be familiar with the Malaysian curriculum specifications. No specific reasons were given, but this was probably to prevent any confusion or misunderstanding with the trainer that might arise during the teaching observation such as the learning objectives and outcomes, and learning activities.

These responses highlight the needs for trainers to assure the teachers about the benefits of classroom observations in order to ensure successful implementation of the program materials, as opposed to being an assessment.

C. DELO interviews

Interview Question B6:

Can you explain whether the trainers should conduct classroom observations?

The decision on whether trainers should conduct classroom observations was determined by the program designer, and it was beyond the autonomy of the DELOs. Margaret agreed that trainers should conduct classroom observations, but it was not included as part of the trainers' responsibilities during the ProELT. Therefore, she took up the observation duty in her urban district, even though it was not instructed by the Director of the District Education Department. However, due to work and time constraints, and also the immense number of teachers in her district, she was unable to observe all of them, as she explained:

> We also have a lot of work and there's time constraints as well. Like ProELT Cohort 1, I focused on two or three teachers. So, I will go [to the schools] at the beginning of the year maybe around March or April and then mid-year maybe July/August, and then another time will be around October. But the rest [of the teachers] maybe I only manage to see once.

As for Alex, he also agreed that classroom observations should be part of a follow-up support:

> It would be good if the trainers could go to the teachers' school to observe their teaching. They can see the effectiveness of the activities that the teachers have learned from the ProELT. It's a good opportunity for them to discuss any problems with the lessons and activities.

The DELOs' responses suggest that the program designer should consider the inclusion of classroom observations in future ProELT trainings. However, the reason for excluding observation in the previous and current ProELT cohorts may be due to logistical reasons, such as lack of sufficient trainers to observe all of the participants within the limited

training time frame, or the limited number of observations, which could also be undertaken for each teacher, which might not provide any significant impact.

D. Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed that 68 (64.8%) out of 105 respondents were satisfied with their trainers, and 19 (18.1%) respondents provided suggestions for changes to the trainers' practice. Among the suggestions were that the trainers should be more understanding of the teachers' family and work commitments, treat the teachers professionally, and should conduct classroom observations.

The teacher interviews revealed that the majority of the participants were satisfied and have good relationship with their trainers. However, it was interesting that it was the rural teachers who were most dissatisfied, in which they mentioned that their trainer were less understanding and sympathetic of their family and school commitments, and practiced favouritism. Meanwhile, there were mixed views from the participants on whether trainers should conduct classroom observations in their schools

Interviews with the DELOs indicated that classroom observations was not part of the trainers' responsibilities during the ProELT, but they agreed that the trainers should conduct classroom observations in order to understand the teachers' teaching situation better, and to offer suggestions on the lessons, materials and activities, which were applied from the ProELT to cater to the learning needs of the students. Based on these consistent findings, it appears that the ProELT participants were generally satisfied with their trainers. In addition, taking the majority view into account, classroom observations should also be included as part of the program content for future cohorts.

6.3.3 Program content

A. Survey

One hundred and thirty six (44.9%) responses pertaining to the program content were obtained from the respondents. However, only 75 (55.6%) responses contained actual suggestions for changes to the program content. The remaining 47 responses pertained to positive feedback, and fourteen responses were critiques of the program content. Table 6.3 presents the twelve suggestions as proposed by the respondents.

Table 6.3 Teachers' suggested changes to the ProELT contents

No.	Suggestions	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Based on English language curriculum syllabus	26	34.7
2.	More language skills and grammar exercises	10	13.3
3.	Focus on teaching methodology	10	13.3
4.	Based on teachers' needs	6	8.0
5.	Based on students' needs	6	8.0
6.	Based on Malaysian context	5	6.7
7.	Simplified contents	4	5.3
8.	Separate content for primary and secondary school teachers	3	4.0
9.	More Aptis test practices	2	2.7
10.	Based on participants' previous knowledge and experience	1	1.3
11.	Varied reading texts	1	1.3
12	Exclude online assignments	1	1.3
	Total	**75**	**100**

Twenty six (34.7%) respondents proposed that the content should be based on their teaching syllabus, in order to apply the ProELT activities into their lessons. This finding supports the analysis of the ProELT coursebook, which revealed that more than half of the modules were irrelevant to the curriculum specifications (see Section 7.3.1). Ten (13.3%) respondents wanted more language skills and grammar exercises to improve their language proficiency, as respondent TU11 wrote:

> Should be based more on improving [teachers'] language skills instead of teaching skills because we had been exposed to the teaching skills ever since in teaching college. (TU11)

There were also some respondents who took the opposite view. Ten (13.3%) respondents wanted the content to focus more on teaching methodology. Respondents TU6 and KKA14 wrote:

> More on micro and macro teaching. Assessing feedback. Link between methodology and pedagogy. (TU6)

> I hope to have more teaching and learning skills/activities which suit to the young pupils to be taught. (KKA14)

Meanwhile, 6 (8.0%) respondents suggested that the content should be based on teachers' and students' needs. Five (6.7%) respondents proposed that it should be based on the Malaysian context. The following are two suggestions from respondents KG14 and KG45:

> [The content] needs to be improved and if possible to use the local context. The contents used now are mostly [based on] foreign context. (KG14)

> The content should be more towards Malaysian context and should be more towards topic highlighted in the English textbook such as environment, famous person, health and social issues. (KG45)

Four (5.3%) respondents thought that the contents should be simplified. Respondents KK(B)33 and KB40 wrote:

> Too many modules to complete. They (program designer) should consider teachers' workloads in the school. (KKB(B)33)

> Too rigid. With so many things needed done, it is demanding a lot of our time. (KB40)

Meanwhile, 3 (4.0%) respondents wanted the program content to be separated between the primary and secondary school teachers. Respondents KK(B)4 and TU1, who are primary school teachers, wrote that most of the contents did not suit their teaching level:

> The content should be divided into two categories for secondary and primary. Most of the materials used is for secondary level. (KK(B)4)

> The content is more individual benefitted. As a primary school teacher, most of the content does not suit my teaching. But the content did help me to improvise (sic) my English proficiency. (TU1)

These responses reveal the importance of providing separate program content for the primary and secondary teachers, and they further support the Mann-Whitney U test finding, which indicated a significant difference between primary and secondary school teachers in making clearer links between their teaching goals and classroom activities (see Section 5.2.5, Table 5.13).

KK(B)10 also commented about the drawback of the standardised content:

> We have participating teachers from primary to pre-university teachers. Contents may not be applicable for all, and the high level of difficulty may be a challenge for primary school teachers and vice versa. The content is also not 'Malaysian-based syllabus' so it's a challenge to all teachers. (KKB10)

The aforementioned responses from KK(B)4, TU1, and KK(B)10 were consistent with the findings from the teacher interviews, which indicated the majority of the teachers, except one, found the program content did not suit their curriculum specifications, and they were unable to relate the contents to their teaching (see Section 5.2.1.2)

Meanwhile, 2 (2.7%) respondents requested that the content included more Aptis test practices. Respondent KK(A)21 wrote:

> Frankly speaking, my purpose of participating the programme is to gain C1 or C2. However, the content of this programme is more towards teaching purpose – e.g. activities, effective teaching and learning and etc. (KKA21)

Lastly, 1 (1.3%) respondent proposed that the content should be based according to the teachers' knowledge and experience, should have a variety of reading texts, and the online assignments should be omitted. Respondent TW22 wrote about the assignment:

> It is too much. Just drop the online assignment which consists of hundreds of exercises. (TW22)

B. Teacher interviews

Interview Question D8:

What do you think of the coursebook and materials?

Responses from the teachers interviewed indicated a lack of relevance between the coursebook and their curriculum specification, which the teachers found to be unsuitable for their students' level, and time-consuming to adapt to their students' learning needs. For example, Manjit, who teaches primary level, explained that most of the materials did not relate to her textbook syllabus:

> Most of them I find are more applicable to the higher standard…the secondary [level]. Not much for the primary…some of the activities can apply with the primary teachers but most of them you can say is more to the secondary level. So that's why I would prefer if they have more on primary also like equal 50-50. But I find it's more like 20% for the primary and the rest 80% more to the secondary school.

Betty explained:

> I think the modules that they gave us are quite good. It's of good quality, and there are some interesting activities for us to do *lah*. I have nothing to complain about the materials. But materials like this you can also get them outside in the [publication] market. That's what I'm saying. Maybe these are original but there are so many others in the market also like this.

However, Betty, who teaches Form 1 (Year 7) and Form 6 (Years 12 and 13), described the challenge of adapting the ProELT materials and planning them into her lessons:

> It takes time *lah* to adapt and plan *lah*. It takes time…You can't use the same activities again. You want to adapt and change the module to suit your classes and even to suit your students. Of course I cannot teach the way I teach Form 6 to my Form 1 students. I already take up, sometimes, more than one hour to think what am I going to teach and I'll be typing, you know, putting in my record book and all these. I already used up one hour. If I want to [adapt the materials], how many hours will I need?

Justina echoed Betty's view about adapting the materials:

> I think the material is general. It's up for the teacher to really…they have to know how to use it later.

Interview Question D9:

How much of the materials have you implemented in your lessons?

Responses from the majority of the teachers revealed that they did not implement the program resources in their lessons, which indicated a discouraging outcome and a deficiency in the program. Some of the reasons given included the teachers' emphasis on preparing their students for the national examinations, and the unsuitability of the materials for their weak students.

However, only two teachers have tried some of the materials:

Justina:	Just some [of the materials] that are suitable for my lessons. Not all of them.
Tan:	Actually I'm still experimenting, because in school the [teaching and learning] situation is different [from the training centre]. First thing is the facility and then is the time consume (sic). But I try to use whatever that suits to my classroom.

These responses highlight a serious flaw in the coursebook, which was less successful in helping teachers implement the program materials in their lessons, and should be reviewed.

C. DELO interviews

Interview Question B7:

The primary school teachers think that the training materials are more suitable for teaching secondary school levels. What is your view on this matter?

The responses from the DELOs indicated the teachers' mixed views regarding the program content. The DELOs' responses also emphasised the District Education Department's lack of autonomy in deciding the program content. For example, Margaret reported the conflicting feedback that she received from the primary and secondary school teachers:

> I got two versions of feedback. Some of the [primary school] teachers told me that they feel the strategies, the ideas, the materials are more suitable for the secondary school. But some [secondary school] teachers told me that the materials are suitable for the primary school.

She elaborated that the probable reason the materials were not designed to be adopted directly into the lessons was to train the teachers to think creatively:

> But then, for me, it's should be suitable for both [levels]. It depends on the teachers how they use it. I think the trainers also want the teachers to think reflectively. They also want them to come up with new ideas from the modules or materials. That is the main thing, right? But then our teachers, it seems that they need to use exactly like the module. It seems that they didn't develop the thinking skill yet.

The creativity objective did not seem to be understood by the teachers, whose responses indicated they were more likely to view that the activities should be directly applicable in their classes.

Alex explained that the program provider would have to review the materials:

> Ya, that's why I'm not sure about that. Perhaps ELTC and British Council has to consider about that. Maybe they have to relook into the materials given to the teachers. For us in PPD, we are just monitoring [the program].

The DELOs' responses are consistent with the teachers' claims, which indicate mixed responses about the coursebook.

D. Triangulation

The quantitative analysis revealed that the survey respondents proposed twelve changes to the program content. One of the changes was that the content should be based on the teachers' teaching syllabus, which has the highest number of respondents. This is consistent with the analysis of the ProELT coursebook, which indicated that more than half of the modules did not match the primary and secondary curriculum specifications (see Section 7.3.1).

The teacher interviews showed that most of the teachers did not adopt the program materials into their lessons. They reasoned that the materials did not suit their syllabus, and it was time-consuming to adapt the materials.

Interviews with the DELOs indicated that the program content was supposedly meant to develop teachers' thinking skills and not designed to be adopted directly into their lessons. The interviews also revealed the DELOs' limited autonomy in deciding on the program content.

Based on the findings of the quantitative analysis and teacher interviews, it shows that there are several significant ways in which the program content should be revised in order to cater to the participants' teaching syllabus, and to ensure its practicality during and after the program.

6.3.4 Training venue and provision of meal

An additional 30 (15.5%) suggestions pertained to the training venue and provision of meals, as shown in Figure 6.5 below.

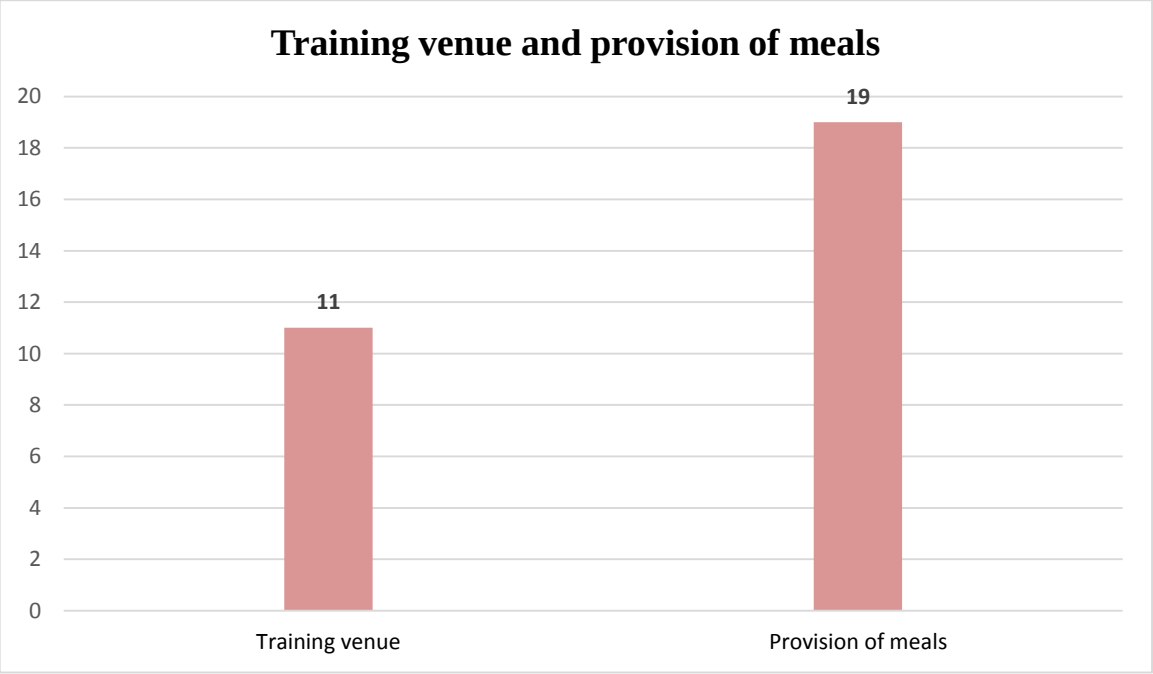


Figure 6.5 Changes to the training venue and provision of meals

I. Better training venues

A. Survey

Figure 6.5 shows that 11 (23.4%) respondents proposed that the training should be held in a comfortable venue for effective learning, for example, with air-conditioning and Wi-Fi. Most of the programs were conducted at the Teacher Activity Centres and classrooms, but some programs were conducted temporarily in school meeting rooms, before permanent venues were allocated. Respondent TW12 described having to undergo her training in an unconducive training room, but was later able to secure better, alternative venues:

> Conditions in the training room are highly not conducive for teaching or learning. Specifically problematic is the lack of air-conditioning and ICT facilities. Therefore, we had decided to find some suitable venues to undergo our training. We managed to use the meeting room of [school name redacted] twice, thanks to the school head, and luckily we have been given permission to use a room at the Teacher Activity Centre until the last day of the course. We're extremely happy with our alternative training room which is equipped with facilities needed and it's also spacious. (TW12)

B. Teacher interviews

Interview Question D10:

What do you think of the venue?

There were varying responses from the teachers in regard to the conditions of their training venues. A majority of the participants were very satisfied with the location of the training venues, as they were situated within a short distance from their schools and residences. However, Lily and Jacqueline were from different rural districts, which were located almost an hour drive to the training centre. Both teachers explained the reasons they could not transfer or did not request for a transfer to a nearer training centre:

Lily: I just got transferred from Sipitang last July and then I moved to SMK[39] [school name redacted]. Then I tried to apply for [a training centre in] KK (Kota Kinabalu) but the problem is that it's full.

Jacqueline: Actually, at the beginning of this course the trainer asked me if I wanted to move to Penampang. But then, since I don't know the teachers [at Penampang training centre] I'm quite shy. So it's better for me to be here with my friends.

Betty and Manjit complained about the heat in their classroom, which was used as the training centre:

Betty: But the room is not conducive. It's a big activity room *lah*, but it's hot. No air-conditioner. There is a fan, and it's on the fourth floor. It's not stuffy, but it's hot.

Manjit: The only thing is the room is quite hot. There's no air-con. That's the problem.

Tan, whose training was also conducted in a classroom, shared a similar remark:

> [School name redacted] is a new school. So all the facilities are new. It's okay for me. If possible, we would like to have air-con. We are sitting in the classroom. We are there the whole day, so it's quite hot.

Justina had a slightly better advantage of being allocated in an air-conditioned school meeting room, but she related its disadvantage:

> We are using the meeting room. When there's an activity that we need to run and move about, it's a little bit difficult. It's air-conditioned. But there's this one time when they have short circuit, or something, so we have to move to the computer room. But the computer room is quite stuffy. We were there for a short while. For a few sessions only, I think. Two or three sessions.

[39] *Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan* (SMK) is translated as National Secondary School. The acronym always precedes the name of a school. It is a similar practice for a National Primary School, which known as *Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan* (SRK).

Unlike Betty, Manjit, and Tan, the aforementioned rural teachers at the Teacher Activity Centre had the advantage of having an air-conditioned room throughout their training duration.

The above responses clearly reveal that the comfort of the training venue plays a role in its effectiveness as a learning environment.

C. DELO interviews

Interview Question B8:

Can you please explain where are the ProELT trainings held and why?

Responses from the DELOs acknowledged the teachers' concerns, but the former has limited capacity to act on them. For example, Margaret explained:

> The trainings are held at schools and PKG because they belong to MOE. We will contact the school principals and ask whether their school have extra classrooms for us to use for the ProELT.

Margaret acknowledged that some of the participants complained to her about the hot and uncomfortable classrooms:

> Yes, some teachers said that they feel hot and uncomfortable sitting in the classrooms because there are no air-conditioners. They wished that the training was held in a more comfortable place like a hotel. Unfortunately, MOE does not have the budget. So, we have to make use of what we have.

Alex said:

> The trainings are conducted at PKG from Monday to Thursday. My district is a small, rural district. So we were able to use the one and only PKG in the district which is more comfortable for the teachers because the rooms have air-cons. It is a suitable location because most of the teachers' homes and schools are near the PKG.

The DELOs' responses further reveal another limitation in their autonomy in the selection of training venues, which are either the schools or Teacher Training Centres.

D. Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed that the survey respondents proposed the ProELT be conducted in a more comfortable place that has air-conditioning. Meanwhile, the teacher interviews revealed that teachers, whose training centres were located in the classrooms, complained about the heat due to the absence of air-conditioning, but there were no complaints from teachers at the Teacher Activity Centres, which was air-conditioned. Interviews with the DELOs indicated that the trainings were only conducted in classrooms and Teacher Activity Centres, due to the Ministry's budget constraints.

Based on the consistent findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis, it appears that teachers who were placed in classrooms had the most disadvantage due to the physical environment. This need was not given high priority by the MOE, who cited budgetary constraints.

II. Provision of meals

A. Survey

In the previous Figure 6.5, 19 (40.4%) respondents suggested that the program provider prepares either lunch or refreshment for the participants. Respondents PP1 and TU38 explained their reasons:

> The Ministry should include meal for this course. It is troublesome to go out of the [training] centre to have our meals because we only have short lunch break. (PP1)

> Food is not provided. The venue of this course is far from the town. (TU38)

B. Teacher interviews

Interview Question D11:

Were you provided with food and drinks during the training?

There was no provision of meals for the program participants by the MOE throughout the training duration. This has caused some inconveniences, especially to the teachers whose training centres were located at the Teacher Training Centres, which did not have a canteen. Fortunately, teachers whose training were held at schools were able to purchase meals from the canteens. However, it is nevertheless important, because it demonstrates that unmet physical needs can impact on participants' perception of the effectiveness of learning. One of the fortunate participants was Manjit, who said:

> No, they didn't provide us with food and drinks. Luckily the school has a canteen. The food is very good and it's quite cheap. Reasonable.

Justina remarked that she also had her lunch at the school canteen:

> They don't provide us with lunch. But there is a canteen in the school.

However, when the canteen was closed during the school holiday, Justina explained how she and her colleagues obtained their meals:

> We had an intensive course for three days during a school holiday and the canteen was closed. So one of teachers helped us to cater lunch from someone. The caterer delivered the food to our school.

Unfortunately, there were no canteens or cafes at all of the training centres that were located at Teacher Activity Centres. Lily, Farah and Aidah commented:

> Lily: We are not given food. It's very inconvenient. Our lunch break is very short. We don't want to drive to the town because it's a waste of time looking for parking and getting caught in traffic. In the end, we only have ten minutes to eat.
>
> Farah: We have to bring our own lunch from home.
>
> Aidah: If we didn't have time to prepare lunch, we will drive to the nearest school canteen for lunch.

C. DELO interviews

Interview Question B9:

Some teachers suggested that lunch should be provided for them especially those who are at the Teacher Activity Centre because there is no canteen or cafe. What is your view on this?

The MOE's budget constraints did not permit the provision of meals for all the teachers throughout the duration of the training. Margaret acknowledged the teachers' concern and explained:

> Yes, I understand the teachers' problem especially those who attend their classes at the PKG because there is no canteen. We do not have any budgets from the Ministry to cater food for the teachers. So the only solution for them is to bring their own lunch. I wished I could help them.

Similarly, Alex explained about the Ministry's lack of budget:

> That is our problem actually because we don't have any allocations for food. We depend on the allocation given to us [from the Ministry]. If there is any allocations provided then we can provide food for the participants. But since we don't have it, so we cannot provide for them.

The responses highlights another aspect of the MOE's budget constraints for the ProELT, in order to place more emphasis on other aspects of the program. As previously mentioned, these budget constraints included the purchase of headsets (Section 6.2.2 (III)(B)) and allocation of training venues (Section 6.3.4 (I)(C)).

D. Triangulation

The quantitative analysis showed that the survey respondents proposed the MOE to provide meals during the program, due to the short lunch break and travelling inconvenience. The teacher interviews revealed that the Teacher Activity Centre did not have a canteen, which made it inconvenient for the teachers during lunch break. However, there was no food issue from teachers whose programs were conducted at schools, due to the availability of canteens throughout the training duration, except during school holiday. Interviews with the DELOs indicate that meals were not provided to the teachers due to the Ministry's budget constraints.

The consistent findings between the quantitative and qualitative analyses indicate that only teachers at the Teacher Activity Centres had to prepare their own meal, due to the unavailability of meal provision from the MOE. This lack of provision is understandable due to the major budgetary implications for 9000 participants nationwide (Eshtehardi, 2014).

6.4 A review of the ProELT's degree of fulfilment of teachers' need in a professional development program

As previously mentioned in the summary of Chapter 4 (see Section 4.5), there were six aspects that the survey respondents wanted in a PD program, which are arranged from the most important to the least important:

1. To be based on their professional needs;
2. To be based on students' needs;
3. To be conducted over a short period of time;
4. To be regularly evaluated to determine its impact on increasing teachers' teaching and learning effectiveness;
5. To be based on school needs; and
6. To be regularly evaluated to determine their students' academic achievement.

This section will review whether the aforementioned six aspects have been fulfilled in the ProELT based on the survey respondents and interview participants' feedback which were presented in Chapters 5 and 6 as summarised in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 Comparison between what teachers want in a professional development program and the degree of fulfilment in the ProELT

No.	Elements in a professional development program	Degree of fulfilment in the ProELT
1.	To be based on their professional needs.	Partially
2.	To be based on students' needs.	No
3.	To be conducted over a short period of time.	No
4.	To be regularly evaluated to determine its impact on increasing teachers' teaching and learning effectiveness.	No
5.	To be based on school needs.	No
6.	To be regularly evaluated to determine students' academic achievement.	No

1. **Based on teachers' professional needs** – The findings between the questionnaire survey and interviews were contradictory. The overall mean score for the *orientation to learning* trait in adult learning (see Table 5.14 in Section 5.3.1.1) was 4.13 (SD = 0.551), which indicated the survey respondents agreed that the ProELT fulfilled their learning needs. There was a higher response for Item 2 (*The program content was strongly related to my professional needs*), which has a mean score of 4.33 (SD = 0.693), and 270 (89 %) respondents who agreed to the item. However, statements from the interview participants, who were senior teachers, indicated a contradictory view, which claimed that the ProELT disregarded their teaching experience and postgraduate qualification. However, one important point is worth mentioning. The views of nine out of the ten senior teachers were from a minority sample, who were generally dissatisfied with the ProELT. This was acknowledged in the Methodology chapter in regard to the findings being representative of a specific subset of teacher population, as opposed to a broader sample (see Section 3.6.2). Therefore, by weighing the findings from the questionnaire survey and interviews, it is reasonable to conclude that the ProELT has partially fulfilled the survey respondents' wanting a program to be based on their professional needs. The interview data provides more

specific information as to where and how the failings occurred, on the occasions when they did.

2. **Based on students' needs** – The focus of the ProELT was solely on the development of the teachers' language and instructional skills. The program was not designed based on student needs assessment, in order to cater to their learning needs.

3. **Conducted over a short period of time** – The ProELT was conducted over a period of one year, but the quantitative finding indicated a majority of the survey respondents' preference for a short-term program, due to their school workload. However, the question whether long- or short-term programs have more impact on teachers' knowledge and learning is part of an ongoing debate (see Section 2.4.4). In regard to the ProELT content, responses from the teacher interview participants revealed that a majority did not implement the program content in their lessons, due to the lack of relevance between the content and the curriculum specifications. This finding supports M. Kennedy's (1999) argument that program content has more influence on learning than the total contact hour.

4. **Regularly evaluated to determine its impact on increasing teachers' teaching and learning effectiveness** – Classroom observations was not part of the ProELT design. Based on the interviews with the program participants, simple teaching activities were conducted in the training centres among the participants, and the teachers received comments and feedback from their colleagues and trainers. Some of the interview participants mentioned this form of practice was unreliable, as it did not simulate actual classroom situations with students, who have varied levels of English Language proficiency. In addition, the teaching activities were not standardised to cater to all students' learning needs. Therefore, the impact of the ProELT's teaching and learning effectiveness was undetermined due to the lack of a

standardised measuring tool compared to the CPT and Aptis tests, which were used to assess the participants' language proficiency.

5. **Based on school needs** – This aspect of a PD program was irrelevant to the ProELT because its aims were to improve teachers' language proficiency, and to develop their teaching skill, i.e. the program has no direct relation to school needs.

6. **Regularly evaluated to determine students' academic achievement –** The focus of the ProELT was solely on the teacher's up-skilling and not on the students' academic achievement. Therefore, this aspect that the teachers wanted in a PD was not fulfilled.

6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings from Section D (Issues relating to the ProELT), and Section E (Changes to the ProELT) of the questionnaire that answered two research questions from the third central question, '**What experiences and suggestions can be gathered from the ProELT participants?**', as follows:

RQ7: What are the teachers' experiences with the ProELT?

RQ8: What are the teachers' suggestions to improve the ProELT?

There were four arising issues that the teachers experienced during the ProELT: two school-related (e.g. teaching and non-teaching workloads) and two program-related (e.g. long training duration and high volume of online assignments) issues:

School-related issues: The teacher's teaching and non-teaching workloads did not warrant a reduction by their school administrators, despite their having to attend the one-year ProELT training. The teachers themselves explained the reasons were most probably

because the training was conducted only once a week compared to continuously for a year, and there were insufficient teachers to substitute their classes, and to take over their school responsibilities.

Program-related issues: The majority of program participants thought that the one-year training was too long, and they preferred a shorter, intensive training, which they justified mainly due to their heavy workloads. As for the online assignments, the participants stated that they were burdened by the amount of assignments that they had to complete for each of the eighteen course modules, which had added to the burdens of their already heavy workloads. Therefore, they suggested the amount should to be reduced.

Next, the survey respondents and interview participants provided their suggestions to improve the ProELT in regard to the program duration, trainer, program content, training venue, and provision of meals, as follows:

1. **Program duration**: As well as the proposal that the training duration be conducted intensively over a shorter duration instead of one year, there were also participants who suggested that the daily training duration be reduced from eight hours to between three and six hours.

2. **Trainer**: The respondents proposed three suggestions for improvement: 1. the need for classroom observations; 2. trainers have a basic knowledge of the Malaysian English curricular syllabus, and an understanding of the local cultures; and 3. selection options between native-speaker and local trainers.

3. **Program content**: There were three main recommendations pertaining to the program content by the respondents: 1. the teaching materials should be based on the

Malaysian curricular syllabus; 2. the training materials should differentiate between the primary and secondary school teachers; and 3. the program content should be based on the participants' needs.

4. **Training venue**: Classrooms that were installed with only ceiling fans became hot and stuffy especially in the late afternoon compared to Teacher Activity Centres, which were air-conditioned. Due to this uncomfortable environment, the respondents recommended that the program provider allocate training centres with air-conditioning for the future cohorts.

5. **Provision of meals**: There were suggestions that the program provider should prepare lunch for the participants as some of them, especially those who were assigned to Teacher Training Centres without a canteen or cafe, lamented having to rush to the nearest town to purchase lunch within the one-hour lunch break. This issue could also be addressed by the choice of a venue where lunch was readily available for purchase, such as schools with a canteen.

Finally a review was undertaken to determine whether the ProELT fulfilled the six aspects of what the survey respondents wanted in a PD program, as presented in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.5). Based on the survey and interview findings, only one aspect was partially accomplished in the ProELT, which was fulfilling the *teachers' professional needs*. The remaining five aspects were not achieved in the ProELT due to differences with the program aims, and the program design and module.

Chapter 7: The ProELT coursebook

7.1 Introduction

The findings from the teacher interviews presented in the previous chapter, Chapter 6, reveal that most of the teachers experienced challenges in implementing the program materials due to the incompatibility between the program course and the curriculum specifications. This prompted the researcher to further explore and evaluate the content of the ProELT coursebook.

This chapter aims to answer the fourth central research question, '**How does a standardised coursebook fulfil the learning needs of teachers from different teaching levels?**', via the ninth and final research question:

RQ9: '**To what degree does the ProELT coursebook content match the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test?**'

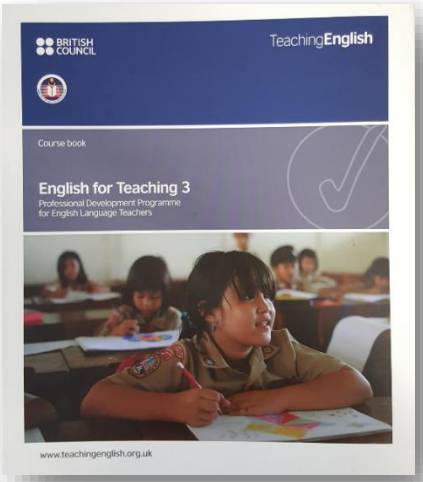
This chapter will begin with a description of the ProELT coursebook content, which was designed by the British Council, followed by an analysis of its content. The analysis will involve comparing each module in the coursebook with the Malaysian primary and secondary curriculum specifications, and identifying sections of the modules that pertain to enhancing teachers' instructional practice and knowledge. The findings will be discussed in Section 7.3.1.

In addition, this chapter will also present a summary of the five components of the Aptis test and the structure of the ProELT coursebook that are relevant to the test components. The purpose of this review is to provide an understanding of the proportion of

the coursebook content that is relevant to the Aptis test in preparing the participants for the test at the end of the program. The findings will be discussed in Section 7.4.

7.2 Description of the ProELT coursebook content

The ProELT coursebook contains 18 modules including three review modules (Modules 6, 12 and 18) and a glossary. The coursebook is compiled in a two-ring file, and the detachable modules are separated by dividers (Figure 7.1).



File cover

Content

Figure 7.1 ProELT coursebook.
Source: British Council (2015)

In every review module, the teachers reassess the first five modules before proceeding to the following five modules. For example, Module 6 includes reviewing Modules 1 to 5; Module 12 reviews Modules 6 to 11; and Module 18 reviews Modules 13 to 17. Each module is arranged according to a theme, and is divided into eight sections, which cover language and instructional practices, as follows (see Appendix 14 for a sample of Module 10: What do they think?):

1. **Language (including Language Analysis):** The language activities include speaking, listening, reading, writing, and vocabulary tasks. In a preliminary task, a single or a series of photo(s) is presented, or a topic is provided, and teachers are instructed to talk about the photo(s) or topic individually or discuss in a group. The teachers then complete a follow-up task related to the photo(s) or topic, which requires them to present their works to a partner or in front of a group. The **language analysis section** covers grammatical items such as tense. It includes practice activities, and most of the sections end with a writing activity that requires teachers to identify and rectify mistakes in sentences or an article.

2. **Methodology:** This section introduces a variety of teaching activities such as poems, project works, listening, and reading; lesson planning; teaching approaches according to learner styles (using Multiple Intelligence); monitoring techniques for reading, speaking and grammar lessons; getting/giving feedback; designing supplementary teaching materials; and developing a valid and authentic progress test.

3. **In The Classroom:** Teachers apply the theory and practice from the methodology section, and design an activity for their students. The teachers later present their ideas to their groups, which is similar to micro-teaching.

4. **Pronunciation:** This section introduces teachers to the importance of and variations in word stress and intonation.

5. **Magazine:** This section includes a brief, magazine-like article to reinforce teachers' knowledge of the module topic, which also includes additional individual, pair or group activities. Some of the articles were adapted from the 'TeachingEnglish' website at www.teachingenglish.org.uk .

6. **Vocabulary:** In order to expand teachers' vocabulary bank, teachers are introduced to words, phrases, phrasal verbs, and collocations, some of which are related to the module topic. For example, in a topic pertaining to classroom management, the compound words that are introduced to the teachers include *authentic materials, graded language*, and *class feedback*.

7. **Activity Page:** It provides additional classroom activities pertaining to one or more of the sections in the module for teachers to practice.

8. **Reflection:** Teachers review and reflect on the module they have learnt using posters, poems or diagrams; reflect on new ideas they have gathered from the module; or review changes that they might adapt in their instructional practice, among others.

Each of these sections was analysed in terms of its compatibility with the primary and secondary school curriculum specifications that the teachers were implementing (see Tables 7.1 to 7.7).

7.3 Comparison between the coursebook content and the Malaysian curriculum specifications

One of the ProELT's two objectives was to enhance teachers' instructional skill. Hence, the program needed to provide the participants with teaching materials and activities that were relevant to their teaching syllabus, or what is known as *curriculum specifications*, in Malaysia, and also to provide new instructional skills and knowledge. This justifies the purpose of reviewing the ProELT coursebook content, by comparing the relevance of its content with the Malaysian primary and secondary school curriculum specifications, and also to identify contents that contribute to teachers' instructional practice and knowledge

enhancement. The review presents an analysis of the amount of the program content that is transferable into the classroom lessons.

Figures 7.2 and 7.3 below are samples of the Years 1 and 2, and Form 1 English curriculum specifications that are adopted in Malaysia, respectively.

CONTENT STANDARD	LEARNING STANDARDS Year One	LEARNING STANDARDS Year Two
1.2 By the end of the 6-year primary schooling, pupils will be able to listen and respond appropriately in formal and informal situations for a variety of purposes.	1.2.1 Able to participate in daily conversations : (a) exchange greetings (b) introduce oneself (c) make polite requests (d) thank someone (e) express a simple apology 1.2.2 Able to listen to and follow: a) simple instructions in the classroom. b) simple directions to places in the school.	1.2.2 Able to participate in daily conversations : (a) exchange greetings (b) make polite requests (c) express apologies (d) talk about oneself (e) introduce family members and friends. 1.2.2 Able to listen to and follow: a) simple instructions in the classroom. b) simple directions to places in the school. 1.2.3 Able to give: a) simple instructions in school. b) simple directions to places in school.
1.3 By the end of the 6-year primary schooling, pupils will be able to understand and respond to oral texts in a variety of contexts.	1.3.1 Able to listen to and demonstrate understanding of oral texts by: a) giving Yes/No replies b) answering simple Wh-Questions	1.3.1 Able to listen to and demonstrate understanding of oral texts by: a) answering simple Wh-Questions b) giving True/False replies

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Figure 7.2 Years 1 and 2 curriculum specifications.

Source: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (2011)

KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF MALAYSIA

HURAIAN SUKATAN PELAJARAN
KURIKULUM BERSEPADU SEKOLAH MENENGAH
CURRICULUM SPECIFICATIONS

BAHASA INGGERIS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

TINGKATAN 1
FORM 1

2003

SECTION I: LEARNING OUTCOMES AND SPECIFICATIONS
The learning outcomes in the first column have been extracted from the syllabus in its original form. They represent skills to be achieved by the end of Form 5. Teachers, however, should be guided by the second column when planning lessons. The second column spells out the skills specifications that are specific to the Form 1 programme.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	SPECIFICATIONS	EXAMPLES / ACTIVITIES / NOTES
1.0 LANGUAGE FOR INTERPERSONAL USE **1.1 Make friends and keep friendships by** a. introducing oneself; b. talking about self, family, friends, interests, past events, feelings, and understanding when others talk about themselves; c. exchanging ideas and giving opinions on topics of interest; d. taking part in conversations and discussions.	**Level 1** i. **Introducing** oneself. ii. **Talking** about • Self • Family and writing a short paragraph on these topics. iii. **Asking** simple **questions** politely to get information and responding appropriately to questions.	• See appropriate sentence patterns at the back of this document.(pg. 24) • At Level 1, accept descriptions of 1-2 simple sentences, but encourage elaboration. • Self - e.g. personal details: where one lives, what one does during the weekend. • Family - e.g. parents' occupation, what the family does together during weekends – describe family outings and get-togethers. • Encourage 'true' sentences. e.g. 'Wh' questions. • Activities include role-playing. Teachers should structure the situation of a first meeting. For example at 1st meeting –general introductions and small talk about oneself, one's school, where one stays, and other common adolescent topics.

9

Figure 7.3 Form 1 curriculum specifications.
Source: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2003)

Twelve sets of curriculum specifications were utilised for this comparison: Years 1 to 6 (six sets), and Forms 1 to 6 (six sets). This comparison is crucial to provide an understanding of the nature and degree of compatibility between both materials to the teachers' teaching syllabus. The findings of the analysis were used to substantiate the teachers' views of the program content in the interviews (see Sections 5.2.1.2 and 6.3.3 (B)).

The interpretation of the coursebook analysis is undertaken as follows. In the *Primary* and *Secondary* columns, (✓) indicates that the items are taught in the curriculum specifications and (X) indicates otherwise. Certain items are only taught in selected Years or Forms and are noted next to the symbols. In the *Instructional practice and knowledge* column, (✓) indicates the module's relevance to teachers' instructional skill and knowledge, and (X) indicates otherwise. Brief notes are inserted next to selected symbols for explanation. Some of the modules may not be related to the curriculum specifications and, therefore, the *Primary* and *Secondary* columns are left blank. However, they may be relevant for instructional practice and knowledge enhancement and are thus marked with a (✓). Modules 6, 12 and 18 are review modules and, therefore, were excluded from this review. Thus, a total of fifteen modules were reviewed.

7.3.1 Findings

Tables 7.1 to 7.7 below summarise the comparison between the aforementioned seven sections, except for the *Reflection* section, in each module and the primary and secondary curriculum specifications, and also its contribution to teachers' instructional practice and knowledge enhancement.

Table 7.1 Compatibility between the coursebook and grammar components in the curriculum

Section: Language Analysis				
Module	**Content (n = 18)**	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Instructional practice and knowledge**
1	• Present perfect tense • Present continuous tense	X X	✓ ✓	
2	Narrative tenses – past and continuous tense	✓	✓	
3	'ing'; infinitive	X	✓ (F4, F5)	
4	• Future perfect tense • Time expressions e.g. 'By the time…'	X X	✓ X	 ✓
5	Passive voice	X	✓	
7	• Auxiliary verb 'will' • Past habit: 'would' and 'used to'	X X	✓ X	 ✓
8	Conditional sentences	X	✓ (F1)	
9	Third conditional – 'Wish' and 'If only'	X	X	✓
10	Articles	✓	✓	
11	Question tags	✓	X	
13	Defining and non-defining relative clauses	X	X	
14	Direct and reported speech	✓	✓ (F5)	
15	Modals for deduction and speculation	X	X	
16	Expression of certainty, possibility and probability	X	X	
17	Modifier and intensifier	X	X	

F (Form)

Table 7.1 above shows that, out of a total of 18 grammar items, only 4 (22%) of the items were relevant to the primary curriculum and 10 (55.6%) of the items were relevant to the secondary curriculum. Three of the items (16.7%) pertained to instructional practice and knowledge.

Table 7.2 Compatibility between the coursebook and teaching activities in the curriculum

Section: Methodology				
Module	**Content (n = 15)**	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Instructional practice and knowledge**
1	Lexical chunk	X	X	✓
2	Using a poem in class	✓	✓	
3	Project work	✓	✓	
4	Post-text discussion lesson			✓
5	Ways with text (activities to make reading lessons more interesting)			✓
7	Defining learner styles (multiple intelligence)			✓
8	Individual learner differences and differentiation			✓
9	Monitoring techniques (for reading, speaking & grammar lesson)			✓
10	Getting learner feedback			✓
11	Lesson planning			X (more suitable for trainee teachers)
13	Designing supplementary material			✓
14	Progress test (validity and reliability)			✓
15	Giving feedback to learners			✓
16	Planning for teaching new language			X (English is taught as a second language instead of a foreign language)
17	Checklist for fluency-based speaking task			✓

Based on Table 7.2, only 2 (13.3%) out of 15 items pertaining to teaching activities were relevant to the primary and secondary curricula. In contrast, 11 (73.3%) of the items were beneficial for the teachers' instructional practice and knowledge.

Table 7.3 Compatibility between the coursebook and student activities and tasks in the curriculum

Section: In The Classroom				
Module	**Content (n = 18)**	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Instructional practice and knowledge**
1	Lexical approach	X	X	✓
2	Micro-teaching: create an activity for a poem	✓	✓	✓
3	Planning a project	✓	✓	✓
4	• Agree or disagree • Agree to differ • Argument & counter-argument	X X X	✓ F4 (Text) ✓ F2, F3 (Class discussion) X	
5	Micro-teaching: reading activities & activity assessment			✓
7	Learner strategy (multiple intelligence)			✓
8	Conditional activities	X	X	
9	• Different learner interaction • Pair vs group work			✓ ✓
10	Learner feedback questionnaire			✓
11	Reading a teachers' plan – learning outcome			✓
13	Teacher-created supplementary activities			✓
14	Creating a progress test			✓
15	Giving feedback to learners			✓
16	Teaching a grammar point			✓
17	Designing a group activity: Questionnaire/survey, role play, find someone who…, discussion.			✓

F (Form)

Table 7.3 also indicates that very little of the coursebook content was relevant to the student activities and tasks in the curriculum: 2 (11.1%) items were suitable for the primary curriculum, and 4 (22.2%) items for the secondary curriculum. In contrast, the majority of the coursebook contents (11 (73.3%) items) could be used as activities for instructional practice and knowledge.

Table 7.4 Compatibility between the coursebook and speaking goals and competencies in the curriculum

Section: Pronunciation				
Module	**Content (n = 15)**	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Instructional practice and knowledge**
1	Word stress	✓ (Y3-6)	✓	
2	Word stress & linking	✓	✓	
3	Stress for emphasis	✓ (Stressing a word in a sentence) (Correct word stress)(Y3-6)	✓ (Sentence stress and intonation)	
4	Reduction & contraction	X	✓ (F1, F2, F4)	
5	Intonation	✓ (Y2-6)	✓ (F1-F5)	
7	Changing meaning through word stress	X	X	
8	Sentence stress in conditional sentences	X	X	
9	Intonation with 'wish' and 'if only' conditional	X	X	
10	Stressed and unstressed articles	X	X	
11	Question tag	✓	✓	
13	Commas in relative clauses	X	X	
14	Believing and not believing	X	X	
15	Modals and connected speech	X	X	
16	Integrated pronunciation practice into grammar lessons			✓
17	Intensifiers	X	X	

Y (Year); F (Form)

The findings of the analysis in Table 7.4 show that 5 (33.3%) items in the coursebook matched the speaking goals and competencies in the primary curriculum, and 6 (40%) items in the secondary curriculum. In addition, 1 (6.7%) item pertained to the development of teachers' instructional practice and knowledge.

Table 7.5 Compatibility between theory represented in the coursebook and activities in the curriculum

Section: Magazine				
Module	**Content (n = 16)**	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Instructional practice and knowledge**
1	Lexical thread	X	X	
2	Poetry and productive skills	✓	✓	✓
3	Project work for **teenagers**	X	✓	
4	Language and culture	X	X	
5	Ideas for helping elementary-level learners to read for pleasure	X	✓	
7	Does good teaching equal good learning?			✓
8	• Keeping learners motivated • Creating a poster on top ten motivational tips			✓ ✓
9	Managing the classroom			✓
10	Learner-centred feedback			✓
11	Intonation issues	✓	✓	✓
13	Why use games in the classroom			✓
14	Use language portfolios for assessment			✓
15	Building learner confidence - Getting **teenagers** to speak English in class			✓
16	Speaking aids			✓
17	The constraints of textbook			✓

The content in the *Magazine* section of every module of the coursebook was mostly theoretical (12 [75%] items) and pertained to instructional practice and knowledge, as shown in Table 7.5. Only 2 (12.5%) out of the 15 items could be transferred into the primary curriculum and 4 (25%) items into the secondary curriculum.

Table 7.6 Compatibility between the coursebook and vocabulary in the curriculum

Section: Vocabulary				
Module	**Content (n = 15)**	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Instructional practice and knowledge**
1	Classroom words and phrases	X	X	
2	Poetic collocation	X	X	
3	Project words	X	X	
4	Culture collocation	X	X	
5	Guessing an unknown meaning of a word	X	✓	
7	Classroom activities on multiple intelligence	X	X	✓
8	Motivational words	X	X	
9	Compound words	X	✓	
10	Phrases about reflection and feedback	X	X	
11	Intonation words	✓	✓	
13	Expressions	X	X	
14	Words connected with portfolio assessment			✓
15	Productive suffixes e.g. peer-centred, task-based	X	X	
16	Phrasal verbs with 'up'	X	X	
17	Group activity (no specific activity listed)			

Similarly, very few of the vocabulary activities and tasks in the coursebook matched the curriculum, as shown in Table 7.6. Only 1 (6.7%) activity was relevant to the primary curriculum, and 3 (20%) items could be implemented in the secondary curriculum. In addition, 2 (13.3%) activities pertained to the development of instructional practice and knowledge.

Table 7.7 Compatibility between the coursebook and integrated skills activities in the curriculum

Section: Activity Page				
Module	**Content (n = 18)**	**Primary**	**Secondary**	**Instructional practice and knowledge**
1	Collocation *Pelmanism*	X	X	
2	Classroom activity (no specific activity listed)			
3	• Activities for practicing '-ing' • Activities for practicing infinitives	X X	✓ ✓ (F4-F5)	
4	Future achievements (predictions) about others	X	X	✓
5	Reading games	✓	✓	✓
7	Memories board game	X	X	✓
8	Getting feedback from older learners	X	X	✓
9	Secret board	X	X	✓
10	Phrases about reflection and feedback	✓	✓	✓
11	Let's have a chat (using natural intonation)	✓	✓	✓
13	Practicing non-defining & defining relative clauses	X	X	
14	Interviewing famous person; pretending to be a famous person being interviewed	X	✓ (F3-asking questions politely to get information	
15	Lateral thinking puzzles; find the murderer			✓
16	• Discussion game • Speculating about picture			✓
17	• Telephone role play • Draw a landscape			✓

F (Form)

Finally, Table 7.7 shows 3 (16.6%) items from the coursebook that are relevant to the integrated skills activities in the primary curriculum, and 6 (33.3%) items in the secondary curriculum. In contrast, most of the coursebook contents in the *Activity Page*

section (10 [55.66%] items) were related to enhancing teachers' instructional practice and knowledge.

Table 7.8 Review summary of the ProELT coursebook content

Section	No. of relevant or suitable modules (out of 15 modules)		
	Primary	**Secondary**	**Instructional practice and knowledge**
Language Analysis	4	7 2 (partially)	3
Methodology	2	2	10
In The Classroom	2	2 1 (partially)	13
Pronunciation	4	6	1
Magazine	2	4	11
Vocabulary	1	3	2
Activity Page	3	5	10

Based on seven sections in the ProELT coursebook, Table 7.8 above shows the number of modules that are relevant to the primary and secondary level curriculum specifications, and to enhancing teachers' instructional skill and knowledge. It reveals that only less than half of the modules in each section, except for *Language Analysis* (secondary level), are relevant to both levels' curriculum specifications. In addition to the low level of relevance, the modules seem to be more relevant to the secondary level based on the higher figure under the *Secondary* column and also two activities catering for teenagers in the *Magazine* section (see Table 7.1), 'Project work for **teenagers**' (Module 3) and 'Building learner confidence - Getting **teenagers** to speak English in class' (Module 15).

However, between ten and thirteen modules in the *Methodology, Activity Page, Magazine*, and *In The Classroom* sections contain activities and ideas that pertain to instructional skill and knowledge enhancement, even though some are unrelated to the curriculum specifications. For example, in *Language Analysis* (Module 4) *time expression*, 'By the time…' is not taught in either teaching levels, but teachers can incorporate this knowledge or idea into their writing lessons as a useful and additional writing guide for their students. Another example is also in *Language Analysis* (Module 7), which focuses on the use of 'would' and 'used to' in reference to past habits. Even though this grammar component is excluded from the curriculum specifications, English teachers are expected to know the difference between both terms and be experts in a wide range of grammar aspects, because they are linguistic reference sources for their students and colleagues.

This analysis shows that more than half of the modules in each section were unrelated to the curriculum specifications; and this might cause reluctance amongst the teachers to adopt and transfer the ProELT teaching materials and activities into their lessons. This is consistent with and substantiates findings from the teacher interviews, which reveal that most of the teachers faced challenges in implementing the program materials in their classrooms (see Section 6.3.3(B)). On the other hand, the content offered substantial instructional guides and ideas that were suitable for teachers from both teaching levels. Based on this analysis, it can be summarised that the ProELT coursebook served more as a commercialised book, as opposed to being uniquely designed for the program, which would have catered to the teaching and learning needs of the teachers.

7.4 Comparison between coursebook and the Aptis test

The Aptis test consists of five components: Core (grammar and vocabulary), Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking (British Council, 2014)[40]. Table 7.9 summarises the description for each component, and sections of the ProELT coursebook, which are related to these components.

Table 7.9 Compatibility between the coursebook and Aptis test

Test	Test Design		Format	ProELT coursebook (Section)
Core 25 minutes	Part 1	Grammar	Complete a sentence of phrase.	✓ Language
	Part 2	Vocabulary	Word definition Word usage Word matching Word pairs or word combinations (e.g. birthday card)	✓ Vocabulary
Reading 35 minutes	Part 1	Text cohesion	Put sentences into correct order.	X
	Part 2	Short text comprehension	Text completing using appropriate words, focusing on text-level understanding.	X
	Part 3	Long text comprehension	A long text with a series of headings to be matched to each paragraph (with distractors).	X

[40] A partial sample of the Aptis test is included in Appendix 15, excluding the listening test.

Listening 25-50 minutes	Literal meaning.		Listen to two short conversations with two speakers or to monologues to identify specific information.	✓ Language
	Inference meaning.		Listen to two short conversations with two speakers or to monologues to identify speaker attitude, intention, mood etc.	✓ Language
Writing 50 minutes	Part 1	Word level writing.	Complete basic information on a form.	X
	Part 2	Short text writing.	Personal information questions.	X
	Part 3	Three written responses to written output.	Respond to written input on a social network-type website.	✓ Language
	Part 4	Formal and informal text writing.	Write an informal email to a friend and a more formal email. Both emails are in reaction to information about a change.	✓ Language
Speaking 12 minutes	Part 1	Personal information.	Respond to three personal information.	✓ Language Pronunciation
	Part 2	Description of picture and comparison with own situation.	Describe a picture and answer two related questions.	✓ Language Pronunciation
	Part 3	Describe, compare and speculate.	Two contrasting pictures presented. Answer three questions of increasing difficulty.	✓ Language Pronunciation
	Part 4	Discuss personal experience or opinion in relation to an abstract.	Picture prompt - though is not central to answering the task. Answer three questions related to a single topic.	✓ Language Pronunciation

Source: Adapted from British Council (2014, pp. 6-7)

Table 7.9 shows that the ProELT coursebook covers most of the Aptis test components, except for a partial component of the Writing test, but none of the Reading test. The coursebook does not contain identical samples to the Aptis test, but some sections in the modules are applicable to the test such, as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Part of the writing activities in the coursebook include writing sentences in reported speech, which are applicable in Parts 3 and 4 of the Writing test. Part 1 is a simple test that requires a test candidate to complete personal information in a form, and Part 2 pertains to writing a twenty- to thirty-word personal information description; both of which are rather simple tasks and would not require intensive practice. However, the reading materials and exercises in the coursebook pertain to discussion of ideas and topics as opposed to rearranging sentences, completing a text and matching headings to paragraphs in the Aptis test, and which are thus completely unrelated to the test.

The findings show that the ProELT coursebook is quite a useful and suitable reference material for helping the teachers to prepare for the Aptis test. However, the reading materials in the coursebook would require substantial revision in order to suit the reading component of the Aptis test. This is because the coursebook focuses only on reading comprehension and activities that differ from the tasks used to assess reading competency in the test.

7.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has analysed fifteen modules, excluding three review modules, in the ProELT coursebook, and compared the compatibility of its content with the twelve Malaysian primary (six sets) and secondary (six sets) school curriculum specifications, and identified contents that were relevant to teachers' instructional practice and knowledge enhancement.

This chapter aimed to answer the fourth central question, '**How does a standardised coursebook fulfil the learning needs of teachers from different teaching levels?**', via the ninth and final research question:

RQ9: '**To what degree does the ProELT coursebook content match the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test?**'

A summary of the analysis reveals three findings:

1. More than half of the modules, except for the Language Analysis section, are not relevant to the primary and secondary school curriculum specifications;

2. Most of the modules are more suitable for the secondary school level; and

3. Between ten and thirteen modules in *the Methodology*, *Activity Page*, *Magazine*, and *In The Classroom* sections provide activities and ideas that are relevant to teachers' instructional skill and knowledge enhancement.

This chapter also presented a summary of the Aptis test content and reviewed the ProELT coursebook relevance with the five components (i.e. Core (grammar and vocabulary); Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking) of the Aptis test. The analysis suggested that the coursebook would likely be a valuable resource in terms of most of the test components, except for elements of the Writing test (see Table 7.9). In addition, no suitable materials related to the Reading test were included in the coursebook (see Table 7.9).

The findings from this chapter further substantiate the earlier qualitative findings, which revealed that a standardised PD program that utilised a standardised course posed a challenge for some teachers to implement the program materials in their classrooms, due to

their different teaching levels and curricula. However, Suggestions to improve the program content will be discussed in the implications section of this study in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions and impact of the ProELT on primary and secondary school ESL teachers from the urban and rural districts in Sabah, Malaysia. The views of the teachers were supplemented with the views of the DELOs via individual interviews. As presented in Chapter 1, in seeking to investigate this topic, the study has addressed four central questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of a PD program that would fulfil their PD needs?
2. How is the ProELT perceived as a PD program?
3. What experiences and suggestions can be gathered from the ProELT participants?
4. How does a standardised coursebook fulfil the learning needs of teachers from different teaching levels?

The first and second central questions were further investigated by comparing the perceptions among two categories, namely teaching levels (primary and secondary school teachers), and teaching locations (urban and rural school teachers). The third central question was expanded by investigating the ProELT teachers' experiences during the training, and their suggestions to improve the program. The fourth central question was further explored based on findings from the qualitative data in regard to the compatibility of the ProELT coursebook with the curriculum specifications and Aptist. The implications of and contributions from this study were considered through the fifth central question 'What lessons can be learned from the study and ProELT, and their applications to other teacher PD programs in the context of a developing country?'

In Chapter 4, the survey findings identified six elements in a PD program that were important to teachers, and part of these findings were substantiated by the qualitative analysis from the teacher interviews. The top element that teachers wanted in a PD program was for it to be based on their professional needs.

In Chapter 5, the findings from the survey indicated that the majority of the ProELT participants had positive perceptions of the program, and there was little significant difference between the perceptions of the teachers from different teaching levels and teaching locations regarding the impact of the ProELT. However, further investigation via individual interviews and focus groups revealed that the majority of experienced teachers were not satisfied with the conduct and content of the ProELT, and some had experienced a negative emotional impact. The findings from the interviews and focus groups were not generalised to the wider population.

Chapter 6 presented three issues that were identified from the survey and interviews: the long training duration; selection of the program participants; and the lack of support from the program providers. This chapter also presented suggestions from the survey respondents and interview participants to improve the ProELT, namely the training duration, trainer, program content, training venue, and meal provision.

In Chapter 7, the findings from the analysis of the ProELT coursebook revealed that while more than half of the modules were irrelevant to the primary and secondary curriculum specifications, the remaining relevant modules were more suitable for the secondary level. However, the modules provided activities and ideas that were relevant to teachers' instructional skill and knowledge enhancement. The coursebook also covered most of the components in the Aptis test but had limited focus on the Writing and Reading tests.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses and explores implications of the four main weaknesses of the ProELT: 1. the flawed method for selection of participants; 2. negative emotional impact on experienced teachers' self-esteem; 3. not directly relevant program content; and 4. lack of follow-up support. It also discusses the significance of incorporating adult learning principles into teacher PD programs by situating the study's findings within the literature. This section also provides an enhanced version of Huber's theoretical framework, which incorporates four new elements: 1. selection of participants; 2. incorporation of Adult Learning Theory; 3. follow-up support; and 4. comprehensive assessment of program impact. The second section outlines key implications of the study for the program providers and program designers. The last section summarises the main points presented in this chapter.

8.2 Discussion of findings

8.2.1 Teachers' perceptions of the ProELT as a professional development program

Based on the application of an adapted version of Ingvarson et al.'s (2005) questionnaire, four factors were selected to gauge the program participants' perceptions of the ProELT pertaining to its: 1. emphasis on content focus; 2. engagement in active learning; 3. impact on teachers' knowledge; and 4. impact on teaching practice (see Table 5.13 in Section 5.2.5). Triangulation between the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that the ProELT involved participants in partial engagement in *active learning*, and it had partial impact on *teachers' knowledge* in providing new instructional ideas and partial impact on some of the teachers' *teaching practice*, due to the mixed responses among the survey respondents and interview participants. However, there was lack of emphasis on *content focus*.

This study also intended to investigate whether there was a difference in the perceptions between the primary and secondary school teachers, and between the urban and rural school teachers. Comparison of the quantitative findings indicate no significant differences in the three factors, except for *impact on teaching practice*, which showed a significant difference between the primary and secondary school teachers in making clearer links between their teaching goals and classroom activities. This could be linked to the lack of emphasis on *content focus*, as mentioned above, which referred to the curriculum specifications.

In Chapter 7, the ProELT coursebook modules were compared with the primary and secondary school curriculum specifications in order to determine the relevance of both materials, and the comparison indicated minor relevance between both materials (see Section 7.3.1). The result of the comparison was substantiated by the interview participants (see Section 5.2.1.2). The standardised program content and its lack of relevance to the curriculum specifications had two effects: most of the interview participants did not implement the program resources into their lesson; and it did not meet the professional needs of the experienced teachers. These will be discussed in the following Section 8.2.1.1. One important finding from this study is the negative impact of the ProELT on experienced teachers' self-esteem, which will be discussed in Section 8.2.1.2.

8.2.1.1 Not directly relevant and standardised program content

There were two issues with the ProELT content, which pertained to its lack of relevance to the curriculum specifications, and its standardised content. A program content that is relevant to the curriculum specifications is one of the crucial elements that would ensure teachers' success in implementing the program materials in their classrooms (Craig, Kraft,

& du Plessis, 1998). It helps teachers in directly relating the content and activities to their students and lessons instead of finding the “right lessons” to implement them, which might not happen. In the present study, most of the interview participants repeatedly commented on the lack of relevance of the program content to the curriculum specifications, which they were unable to relate the materials to their lessons. An analysis of the ProELT coursebook indicated that more than half of the contents were irrelevant to the primary and secondary curriculum specifications (see Section 7.3.1), which further substantiated the interview participants’ views. In addition, the standardised ProELT coursebook and content was found to be unbeneficial to most of the interview participants, especially those from the primary level. They commented that the content was more suitable for the secondary level (see Sections 6.3.3 (A) and (B)). The coursebook appeared to lack the personalised features that should complement the Malaysian context and curriculum specifications. In addition, it seemed to serve more as a commercialised book as opposed to being uniquely designed for the ProELT.

The impact of the irrelevant and standardised program content resulted in 8 out of 10 interview participants’ failure to implement the materials in their lessons. Furthermore, 6 interview participants stated that they did not gain much knowledge on their subject content (see Section 5.2.1.2). This may be considered a major negative outcome in regard to the program’s lack of impact on the teachers’ learning, and its ineffectiveness and failure for some participants. These findings echo the studies by Hamid (2010), Kariisa (2015) and Uysal (2012), which report that teachers who participated in local- and foreign-sponsored PD programs with irrelevant and standardised program content had implemented a very limited amounts of the knowledge and skills that they had gained through the training, and that those programs had low sustained impact on classroom practice and content knowledge. Findings from the present study support Day’s (1999) argument, in which PDs that are often

insensitive to the concerns of individual participants and make little effort to relate their learning experiences to workplace conditions have little impact upon them. One other example from the present study pertains to Manjit, a rural primary school teacher who encountered difficulty in implementing group activities from the ProELT in her lessons due to her small, crowded classroom. This is the reason PD programs should be linked to teachers' practice by carefully and precisely analysing their learning and PD needs (Craft, 2002), and also the needs of their students (Craft, 2002; Edelfelt, 1977), in order to ensure effective implementation of teachers' PD learning in their lessons (Loucks-Horsley, Stiles, Mundry, Love, & Hewson, 2010). In response to the standardised program content, nine out of 10 interview participants and 2 survey respondents (TUI and KKB4) suggested that the ProELT should be conducted separately for the primary and secondary school teachers.

There appears to be two reasons for the irrelevant and standardised content: the program designer's failure to conduct needs assessment among the teachers; and the program designer's failure to involve teachers in the decision-making and design processes of the content. Needs assessment is crucial to identify the gaps between learners' current and desired proficiencies (Galbraith, 1990), in order to maximise the coherence between the program content and teachers' needs (Waters & Vilches, 2012), and to select appropriate topics and materials (Knox, 1986). Program providers ought to bear in mind that teachers have accumulated vast experience throughout their teaching careers, they come from different teaching environments (e.g. urban, rural and remote districts), and they have students with mixed-levels of language proficiency. King (2014) and Waters and Vilches (2012) argue that training should match the needs, disposition, roles and settings in which teachers work in order to ensure maximised learning outcome for themselves and the students. Findings from the present study show that the ProELT participants had varying learning needs for themselves and their students (see Sections 4.2.2 and 4.5). Although most

of the interview participants, predominantly skilled and experienced teachers, agreed that they had gained some form of new language, and instructional skills and knowledge, in general the ProELT did not fulfil their professional needs and it did not benefit them much. Similar findings were reported by Nguyen (2011) among some Vietnamese primary school teachers who thought that workshops organised by the Ministry of Education and Training were 'not well-organised and not context specific', and they described the training as 'a waste of time' and of 'little benefit' (p. 238). However, it needs to be acknowledged that not every need of the teachers should be fulfilled by the program providers. According to Brookfield (1986), there are two forms of needs, namely *felt needs* and *prescribed needs*. *Felt needs* pertains to the preference or desire of the learner, while the *prescribed needs* are 'premised upon educators' beliefs concerning the skills, knowledge, behaviours, and values that they feel adults should acquire' (Brookfield, 1986, p. 222). Galbraith (1990) proposes that combining both *felt needs* and *prescribed needs* would be a more rational approach in order to achieve an equal collaborative teaching-learning environment, greater participation, and satisfying educational experience. Despite the long list of good ideas that "must" be addressed and/or problems that "must" be solved, program providers still have to be selective in what programs to organise based on the *importance, affordability and necessity* of running them (Galbraith, 1990). In the case of the ProELT, it was conducted in line with the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025), which aims to raise teaching quality and to improve student literacy in English (*importance*); and the program fulfilled all of the MOE's 6Cs criteria (e.g. competence, capacity, content, customisation, context, and cost), had the lowest cost (*affordability*) (Hasreena & Ahmad, 2015), and was a necessary intervention for the language and teaching enhancement of selected ESL teachers (*necessity*) ("Majority of teachers not proficient in English," 2012, September 26).

The second reason pertains to the lack of teachers' involvement in the decision-making and design processes of the program content. This should not be confused with the teacher participants in the pilot project, who were merely asked to provide their feedback on questionnaires. It actually pertains to the teachers and program designer, who convene to discuss and amend the content together. As the end-users, teachers are in a better position than the program instructors to determine how the innovation should be implemented (Uysal, 2012). They should be allowed to describe their own problems and situations, and share their expertise (Bax, 1997). Involving teachers in the process helps to create a 'context-sensitive approach' (Bax, 1997, p. 233), which gives priority to teachers' existing experiences and local classroom context. A context-sensitive approach bridges the gap between the adoption of teaching methodologies in the program and teachers' instructional realities (Uysal, 2012), and reduces teachers' anxiety and fear of change (Craig et al., 1998). This was evident in the present study among experienced teachers such as Betty, who said that the ProELT was a "waste" for her because it was similar to a refresher course on teaching methodology that was more suitable for trainee or novice teachers, and also the grammar items were too basic. Vicky, who has eighteen years of teaching experience, shared Betty's views and felt demotivated to stay on in the program for one year. These findings are consistent with Guskey's (1994) point that effective PD takes into account teachers' life stages and career development. As Knowles (1984) has theorised in his Adult Learning Theory, teachers with more experience are generally older and have different learning needs than younger adult learners with less experience. In addition, Ausubel, Novak and Hanesian (1978, p. vi) provide a precise reminder about the importance of ascertaining learners' prior knowledge: 'If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly'.

Up to this point, the researcher has strongly emphasised the importance of designing PD programs that fulfil the needs and teaching context of the teachers over the needs of policy makers such as the MOE. This could be particularly complicated and difficult to argue, because the latter are the financial provider of the programs, who would have the last say about their assumptions on areas that the teachers are lacking in, e.g. skills and knowledge, and what the policy makers want the teachers to do and to be. This is clearly evident in a centralised, top-down government context. It may be that when a program pertains to the introduction of a new national curriculum, the involvement of teachers in the decision-making of this matter would have to be overruled in favour of the policy maker, but, otherwise, the needs of the teachers should be prioritised in order to ensure an effective and cost-worthy PD program.

8.2.1.2 Negative impact on experienced teachers' self-esteem

Self-esteem is the awareness of self-worth and importance (Kahne, 1996). It is distinguished from self-concept in that self-esteem involves reflecting on self-feelings (e.g. 'I like myself) while self-concept pertains to reflecting on self-knowledge or self-beliefs (e.g. 'I am outgoing', 'I am smart') (Jordan, Zeigler-Hill, & Cameron, 2015). Self-concept has major impact on self-esteem, for example individuals with positive self-beliefs tend to feel better about themselves and vice versa (Segal, 1988).

Over the years of their career, experienced teachers build their self-esteem in what Lerner (1985) terms *"earned" self-esteem*. It is based on 'learning to tolerate frustration and delay, to care for others, to work hard, and to persevere in the face of obstacles (Juhasz, 1990, p. 238). Teachers' self-esteem is continually constructed and reinforced based on three major roles in their careers (Juhasz, 1990):

1. **teacher as learning facilitator** – a teacher is absorbed in his/her role in classroom teaching during the first year of his/her career.

2. **teacher as colleague-participant in planning procedure and policies** – a teacher gradually becomes more involved in school decision-making and planning.

3. **teacher as developing professional –** a teacher pursues advanced education, and takes on additional roles through his/her participation in and contribution to professional organisations.

In this study, the experienced teachers who were interviewed had been teaching for between six and twenty eight years, and had high self-esteem in regard to their teaching competency, and career and academic achievements. However, 9 out of the 10 teachers reported experiencing lower self-esteem as a result of being selected for the ProELT. The teachers claimed that they had lesser confidence, and felt demotivated, degraded, and inferior. In Lily's case, she had become less confident as an ESL teacher since her participation in the ProELT because she felt that she was "not good enough" to teach. Farah reported similar feelings as Lily when the former's colleagues were surprised that she had been selected for the ProELT, because they had the impression that the program was intended for teachers with low English proficiency. This made Farah felt inferior and demotivated, because she had the impression that her colleagues questioned her competence as an experienced ESL teacher who had been teaching for eight years. In a more extreme case, Vicky reported feeling "degraded" because she was one of the well-known ESL educators and trainers in her rural district, who had conducted various district-level ESL

courses for teachers (see Section 5.3.4.2 (I)). Similar to Farah, Vicky also felt that her language and teaching competence were being questioned and judged by her colleagues when she was selected for the ProELT.

8.2.2 Teachers' experiences with the ProELT

Two significant issues that were constantly mentioned during the interviews were the teachers' dissatisfaction with the flawed selection method of participants and the lack of follow-up, which will be discussed in the following sections.

8.2.2.1 Flawed selection method of participants

The selection of program participants must be carefully undertaken by the program designers in order to ensure a "match" between the participants and program, i.e. only suitable participants are selected based on their needs and the objectives and content of the program. In the present study, there was a misalignment between the single selection method and the two objectives of the ProELT, which targeted two different skills. For example, the CPT and Aptis tests were used to select the participants based on their language proficiency result, which fulfils the first objective, i.e. to raise the teachers' language skills. However, no assessment was conducted to assess the participants' instructional competency in order to fulfil the second objective, which was the development of teachers' teaching methodology. This resulted in dissatisfaction among the interview participants, particularly experienced teachers, who felt that they were unfairly selected, and they questioned how the MOE and the British Council could have determined whether or not they were incompetent in their instructional skills. Hayes, Chang, and Imm (2011) argue that teacher evaluation is multifaceted, which also involves views from various stakeholders and the teachers' own

self-reflection, as opposed to a summative or single evaluation. When a program has multiple objectives, Holt (1994) states that learner assessment requires utilising a variety of instruments and procedures to gather data to ensure that the program is 'ascertaining the extent to which the project objectives are being met' (p. 6). In addition, Wilde (1994) suggests that programs need to determine that there is a match between test objectives and the program objectives. In the present study, a suitable method to assess teachers' instructional competency would be to conduct formal lesson observations. However, this is probably an impractical and unrealistic option, because it would be extremely time-consuming and would require enormous manpower from the State and District Education Departments to conduct the evaluation, due to the immense number of teachers involved. For example, there were 5000 teacher participants in the ProELT first cohort in 2013, and 14 000 in the second cohort in 2014 (Eshtehardi, 2014). Although the manpower could be reduced by delegating the responsibility to the school leaders or Head of English Unit at the respective schools, there might be a risk of bias in the evaluation conduct. Due to this complexity, there is a case for suggesting that the second objective in the ProELT (i.e. to develop teachers' teaching methodology) should have included more measurable achievements, as proposed by Caffarella (2002), in developing program objectives.

On the other hand, the selection of program participants in other countries such as Indonesia indicates, sadly, an inequitable and politically influenced selection process. Bureaucrats often decide the total participants and their origin, and make the final selection according to political interests as opposed to the participants' needs (M. S. Zein, 2016). At the school levels, it is the school leaders who decide at their discretion (Rahman, Hoban, & Nielsen, 2014). Meanwhile, teachers from prestigious, international-based standard schools are favoured over rural teachers from lower status schools to participate in training sponsored by the Ministry of National Education and the central governments (S. Zein, 2016). In

addition to favouritism, the selection is also influenced by teachers' connection with bureaucrats at the local levels and teachers who hold the status of civil servants (S. Zein, 2016). Alderson (2009) refers to these forms of organisational and individual political influences as the macropolitics (organisations) and micropolitics (individuals within organisations) of education. In comparison to Malaysia, the selection of participants for the ProELT could be considered partially more valid and equitable with the adoption of an online standardised test, however, with some technical disadvantages and also glitches (see Hasreena and Ahmad, 2015).

8.2.2.2 Lack of follow-up support

Education researchers highly recommend classroom visitation and lesson observation as follow-up strategies in order to assist teachers in transferring and implementing new skills, activities and innovations in the classroom (Bratcher & Stroble, 1993; Hayes, 1995, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2002). In the present study, it was revealed by the interview participants that no forms of follow-up strategy from either the trainers or MOE were offered to them after the completion of the ProELT. This could partially substantiate the reason why most of the interview participants did not implement the program resources in their lessons, in addition to the lack of relevance between the program content and curriculum specifications (see Section 6.3.3(B)). Through a follow-up, the trainers would have been more aware of the teachers' issues in implementing the program resources in their lessons, such as classroom logistics, students' mixed-levels of language proficiency, and lack of teaching-assisted technology. In addition, follow-up support would have enabled the trainers to provide the teachers with the necessary support and advice to overcome the issues of implementation (Hayes, 1995). In the present study, the teachers' failure to implement the materials in their

lessons echoes Tomlinson's caution about the "disastrous" effect of the absence of follow-up, as follows:

> The motivation and stimulus they gained would soon have been negated by the confusion and frustration they would have suffered in trying to apply all that they had learnt…within the existing parameters of syllabus, examination, materials, official expectation, and class size (Tomlinson, 1988, para. 2).

The reason for the absence of follow-up in the ProELT is unclear, but there are two probable justifications. The first reason could be logistics – the large number of participants to trainer ratio (about 100:1) might make it impractical for one trainer to carry out multiple classroom visits and lessons observations for each teacher, which would put a considerable strain on manpower and resources. O'Sullivan (2002) cautions that follow-up should preferably be conducted among a smaller number of teachers in order to provide them with more effective coaching as opposed to a larger number. Secondly, the weekly training would allow teachers to experiment with the materials and try out the ideas with their students. Any problems arising during the lessons could be discussed with the trainer and other participants in the following training session (Peacock, 1993). Therefore, this weekly discussion might be justified as a follow-up compared to the ProELT being conducted as a one-off program, and follow-up to be carried out at the end of the training.

Despite the presence of these four weaknesses in the ProELT, i.e. not direct relevant and standardised program content, negative impact on experienced teachers' self-esteem, flawed selection method of participants, and lack of follow-up support, it does not inevitably lead to the conclusion that the program was a complete failure. The ProELT deserves fair acknowledgement for its partial success in promoting changes in teachers' practice, and developing instructional knowledge and language skill in some of the participants (see Sections 6.2.3.2 and 6.2.4.2). However, as a nationwide, MOE-proposed and sponsored

program, it was evident that the Ministry's top-down mandates and goals played a dominant role in the ProELT, as opposed to the teachers' goal, which Edmonds and Lee (2002) warn could result in teachers becoming frustrated and less motivated to implement continuing PD into their practice. This was evidenced as shown in Sections 8.2.1 and 8.2.2, in regard to the irrelevant and standardised program content, the failure of some of the interview participants to implement the program materials and activities in their classroom lessons, and the dissatisfaction of the experienced teachers about being unfairly selected for the ProELT.

8.2.3 Inclusion of principles of adult learning in a teacher PD program

Findings from the present study indicates that the six adult learning principles were largely incorporated into the ProELT, based on the findings from the questionnaire survey. However, responses from the teacher interviews reveal that most of the participants were dissatisfied with certain aspects of the program content and design that did not align with their professional needs and learning approaches. This section will discuss how the teachers' learning outcomes and experiences would have been more positive.

8.2.3.1 Orientation to learning

Adults' orientation to learning is problem-centred (or task-centred or life-centred), and they are motivated to learn new knowledge and skills that will help them in their tasks or deal with their current problems (Knowles et al., 2005). In the present study, most of the teachers who were interviewed stated that they had gained new knowledge in developing teaching materials, such as creating puppets as teaching aids, creating quizzes and puzzles from websites, downloading online teaching materials from YouTube, and creating students' needs analysis to identify their learning needs (see Sections 5.2.3.2 and 5.2.4.2). However,

primary school teachers from the rural district lamented the lack of demonstration by the trainer on how to effectively implement these activities for their weaker students. This could be addressed if the trainer had personally demonstrated or shown demonstrations of effective activities on videotaped teaching and learning sessions. For example, elementary school teachers in a study by Quick et al. (2009) first viewed a demonstration of a new strategy for writing instruction and then had the opportunity to practice and receive feedback from their trainers. In addition, mathematic teachers in Wood and Seller's (1996) study watched videotaped segments of third-grade children giving solutions to arithmetic problems in clinical interviews and in the classrooms. Most interestingly, Cobb et al. (1991) arranged for second-grade mathematic teachers to visit a simulation of a project classroom and conduct activities with the students. This shows the importance of demonstration in order to help teachers relate to the materials and activities and to effectively implement them in their lessons.

8.2.3.2 Readiness to learn

In the context of teacher PD, teachers are ready to learn something or experience a teachable moment (Knowles, 1980) when their needs and interests are at a specific developmental stage. For example, the primary school teachers in this study were introduced to the new Primary School Standardised Curriculum or *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah* (KSSR) in 2011. As previously discussed in Section 6.3.1(B), teachers mentioned during the interview that they were keen to attend any KSSR-related programs that would assist them in implementing the curriculum in their lessons. A few of the teachers revealed that they had once disregarded the MOE's directive not to attend any programs other than the ProELT or MOE-organised program and skipped the ProELT training in order to attend the KSSR program, which they considered was more crucial and pertinent to their current teaching

needs. This finding substantiates Knowles et al.'s (2005) claim that adults become ready to learn things that they need to know that are relevant to cope effectively with their real-life situation. Another example of teachers' readiness to learn is from the Netherlands, when a large-scale educational reform for secondary education was introduced to incorporate subjects that addressed social and technical competencies, the development of students' higher-order thinking skills, and preparing them for lifelong learning, amongst others: the teachers were ready to learn and adopt new pedagogical approaches in order to create stimulating environments and to be facilitators in students' learning process, as opposed to their traditional role as agents of knowledge transmission (Kwakman, 2003).

8.2.3.2 Learner's experience

Based on Steffy and Wolfe's (2001) *Life Cycle of the Career Teacher* model, teachers go through six phases in their career: *Novice, Apprenticeship, Professional, Expert, Distinguished* and *Emeritus*. Novice teachers' early careers are categorised under the *Novice* and *Apprenticeship* phases, while senior teachers' mid-careers can happen between the *Professional, Expert* and *Distinguished* phases, and potentially the *Emeritus* phase. This validates Knowles et al.'s (2005) statement that teachers are at different stages of their career, and they have accumulated vast experiences, making it inappropriate to treat such a 'teacher as a vessel to be filled' (Garmston, 1991, p. 64). It also supports the rationale for considering teachers' different experiences when designing a program, because a program that disregards participants' accumulated experience is ineffective, a waste of the participants' time and the program providers' funds, and can result in dissatisfaction among the participants.

As discussed in Section 5.3.3.2, two of the most experienced teachers among the interview participants described their dissatisfaction about being selected for the ProELT.

One of the teachers considered it was “wasted on her” because the program was similar to a refresher course in teaching methodology that was more suitable for trainee or novice teachers. The second teacher, who had been teaching in primary school for eighteen years, was unhappy that her long-term teaching experience and success in teaching rural students with low proficiency were not recognised by the program provider, and she was not exempted from the ProELT, which she also considered to be similar to a refresher course. Among her proudest teaching successes were helping some of her low-proficient students to pass the Year 6 *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR) public examination. This teacher’s satisfaction with her achievement can be described as experiencing significant results in her teaching practice in *impacting student learning and achievement*, based on a model developed by Huberman (1995). According to Huberman (1995), it is one of three actions or relationships that mid-career teachers associate with their most satisfying experience, with the other two being, undertaking a *role shift* such as becoming an instructional leader, and experiencing strong relationships with *special classes or groups of students*.

The *School Attuned Program* is an example of a PD approach that is designed primarily for experienced teachers to assist Kindergarten to Grade 12 educators to acquire the knowledge and skills to meet the diverse learning needs of students, by incorporating “neurodevelopmental” content in their lessons (Broad and Evans, 2006). Interestingly, this program is divided into two different curriculums to cater to different teaching levels. For example, the “Generalist Path” curriculum ‘builds upon case studies of students and draws from teacher experiences across content areas in grades Kindergarten to Grade 8 settings’ (p. 36), while the “Subject Specialist Path” curriculum was built upon Grades 7 to 12 classroom settings. Independent research studies indicate positive changes in teachers’ instructional practice, student learning outcomes, and school organisation.

8.2.3.4 Self-concept

According to Knowles et al. (2005), adults are self-directed learners who are responsible for their own decisions based on offers of choices and encouragement to set their own learning goals. Adults resent and resist others who impose their will and decisions on them (Knowles et al., 2005). In the present study, the teachers' participation in the ProELT was seen to be based on their CPT and Aptis test results as opposed to voluntary participation based on their professional needs. This form of "forced participation" had a negative emotional impact on some of the interview participants, which resulted in their experiencing lower self-esteem. As discussed in Section 5.3.4.2, the interview participants viewed being selected for the ProELT as denoting them to be unskilled and incompetent teachers who needed up-skilling training, even though that might not have been the program's intended generalisation of its participants.

The negative reaction and impact could have been avoided if the program provider and designer had ensured that the program objectives had corresponded to the teachers' needs and existing knowledge and experience (Caffarella, 2002; H. J. Lee, 2004). One example of a successful application of this principle is the participants in the *Settlement Language Training Program*, who were allowed to negotiate with their teacher and/or coordinator at the beginning of the project, and to evaluate and renegotiate regularly throughout the program (Burnaby, 1989). As mentioned in Section 8.2.1.1, the adoption of teachers' needs assessment and the involvement of potential participants and teachers in the decision-making and program-designing processes could have also provided crucial input and feedback to ensure the program content and design fulfilled the needs of the targeted group of participants.

8.2.3.5 Motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to 'behaviours performed out of interest and enjoyment', and *extrinsic motivation* 'pertains to behaviours carried out to attain contingent outcomes' (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002, p. 37). Adults respond to external or internal motivators to learn, to advance their career or to improve their personal life. External motivators include better careers and higher salaries, while internal motivators are increased job satisfaction and self-esteem (Knowles et al., 2005). In the present study, several teachers exhibited intrinsic motivation in wanting to improve their writing, speaking and communication skills for personal development, while others were extrinsically motivated to learn new teaching techniques to improve their students' learning outcomes.

In addition to the aforementioned two motivational constructs, Deci and Ryan (2002) propose a third motivational construct, called *amotivation*, in their research on *self-determination theory*. Amotivation refers to the state where individuals display an absence of motivation, i.e. they do not act or participate at all or they act passively (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002). As discussed in Section 5.3.1.2, this was evident amongst the teacher interview participants such as Aidah, Farah, Danielle, Jacqueline and Lily, who were unmotivated and uninterested throughout most of the ProELT duration, due to their forced participation in the program, which was not based on their learning needs. They also questioned the purpose and benefits of the program. These examples are consistent with Vallerand and Ratelle's (2002) explanation that amotivation occurs when individuals start questioning the benefits of engaging in the activity, or they do not value the activity or its learning outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Furthermore, findings from the present study reveal that most of the program content was irrelevant to the curriculum specifications, which might

have added to their level of amotivation and resulted in most of the teachers in the interview not implementing the program resources in their lessons (see Section 6.3.3 (B)).

This validates the reason for identifying and aligning teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations with the purpose of a teacher PD program. This can be achieved by providing autonomy to the teachers to participate in the decision-making of the program, including planning their own learning experience, implementing practices, providing feedback, and evaluating the program (H. J. Lee, 2004). This would build teachers' intrinsic motivation, which Deci and Ryan (2002, p. 17) argue is 'the prototype of autonomous of self-determined behaviour'. Findings by Gorozidis and Papaioannou (2014) reveal a positive predictive relationship between autonomous motivation and teachers' intention to participate in relevant training and to implement innovation in their classroom, as opposed to controlled motivation. As mentioned earlier, some of the teachers' external motivation to participate in a PD program might be to improve their students' learning or for personal development. However, it should not be to satisfy an external demand or to avoid consequences, which Deci and Ryan (2002) called *external regulation*, which is the least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. In the present study, the teacher participants were forced to participate in the ProELT according to the MOE's directive (external demand), and they had to achieve one band higher in their post-CPT or Aptis test (avoid consequences). Therefore, to be autonomous, teachers must participate as a result of free choice and for the sheer enjoyment and pleasure in the activity; however, certain prescribed PD is necessary if it pertains to delivering pertinent information such as a new sanctioned curriculum. Broad and Evans (2006, p. 33) succinctly summarise this argument:

> If adults feel disconnected from the content, if they feel that their prior, personal knowledge and experiences are not valued, if they feel no investment or engagement in the activity or if they feel it is not relevant to their needs, they will be much less likely to be motivated to learn.

8.2.3.6 Relevance

Adults need to know the reason for learning something before undertaking the learning task (Knowles et al., 2005). When adults undertake to learn something of their own accord, they will invest considerable time and effort to identify the benefits of learning it and the negative consequences of not learning it (Knowles et al., 2005). This is related to the purpose, objectives and contents of the program. In the present study, the majority of the survey respondents indicated that the ProELT was relevant to their teaching needs. In contrast, some of the interview participants stated that the program content was more suitable for trainee and novice teachers; in addition, most of the interviewees claimed that they did not implement the program resources in their lessons due to the lack of relevance of the program content to the curriculum specifications. This was substantiated by the review undertaken of the ProELT coursebook, which showed that only less than half of the modules in each section were relevant to the curriculum specifications (see Section 7.3.1). This is in line with the findings of Kariisa (2015) and Uysal (2012) who report that lack of relevance between program content and teachers' needs resulted in the latter not implementing the program resources in their lessons and also low impact on their classroom practices. Orlich and Ezell (1975, p. 59) also stress the importance of ensuring the relevance of program content with teachers' needs in the classroom if they are to have any impact:

> Teacher in-service can be successful 100 percent of the time if programs are judged relevant by the learned group. Our definition of "relevant" is that participants understand that the processes, skills or contents will be used in the very near or immediate future.

The *Challenge 2000 Multimedia Project* is an excellent example of a project that is relevant to the teachers' current need in understanding how to apply technology in project-based learning activities (Broads and Evans, 2006). They are provided with instructional and

planning supports, technical assistance and mentoring. Evaluation of the program shows that the teachers continue to use the new teaching practices (84%); the difference between this program and the ProELT are striking.

8.2.4 An enhancement of Huber's theoretical framework

The present study has identified four weaknesses in the ProELT (see Section 8.2.1), and has discussed the significance of the inclusion of adult learning principles in a PD program (see Section 8.2.2). It has also identified some gaps in the model that was deployed. Based upon these findings and discussion, four new elements were generated to enhance Huber's theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation, as follows:

1. Selection of participants based on the objectives of a program;
2. Incorporation of adult learning principles;
3. Follow-up support; and
4. Methods for assessing the impact of a program based on the program objectives.

Figure 8.1 below presents the enhanced version of Huber's framework, with the four additional elements being represented in coloured boxes.

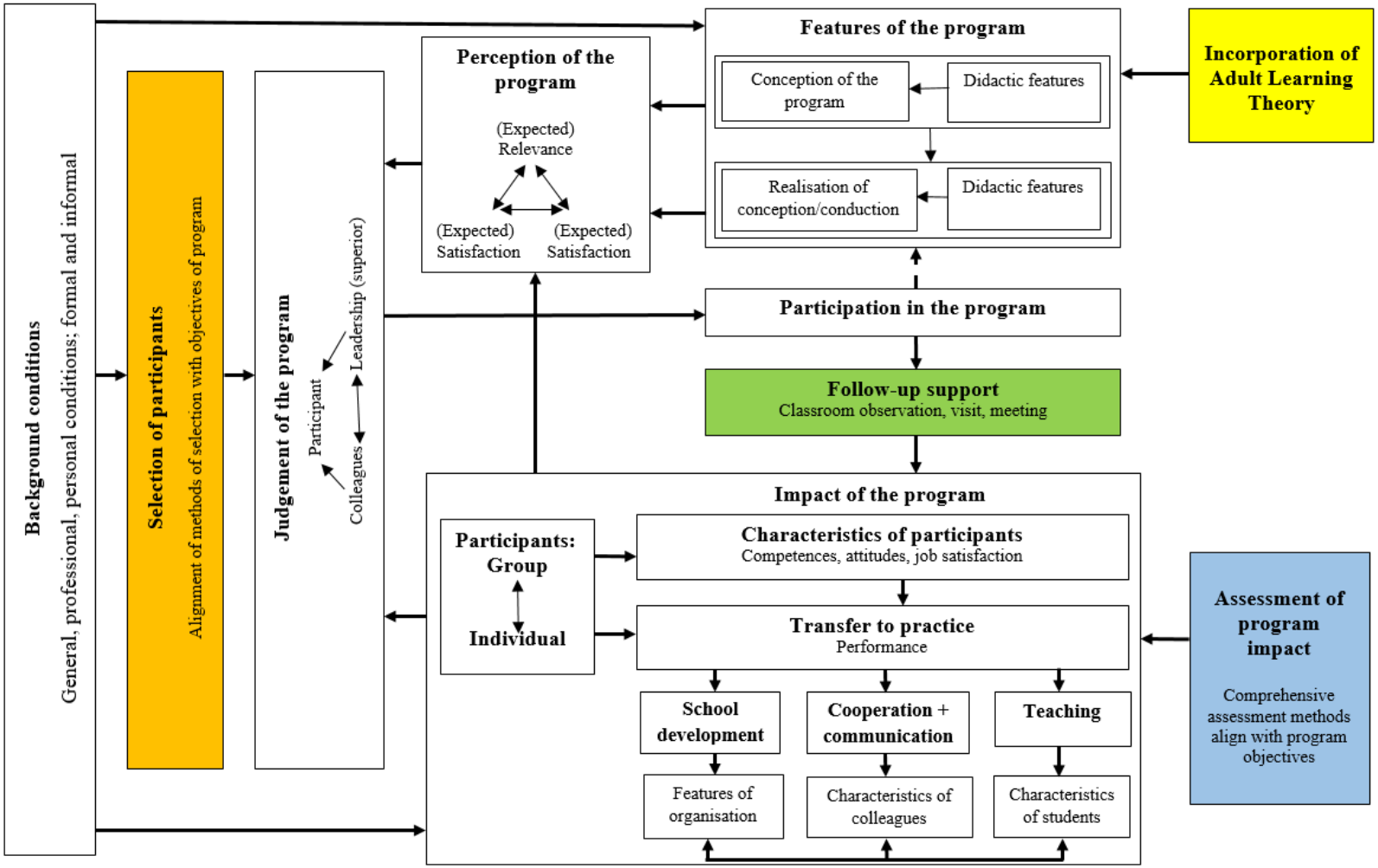

Figure 8.1 Enhancement of Huber's theoretical framework

8.2.4.1 Selection of participants

The element *selection of participants* was added to Huber's framework after *background conditions*, which Huber (2011, p. 847) has described as including:

> aspects of the job profile, educational aims, measures of the school board, the characteristics of the educational system, legal requirements, resources (financial, temporal and special), as well as general requirements concerning PD and the interest in PD. The personal background conditions are, for instance, individual learning and professional biography, moral values or family and health aspects.

If participation in a PD program is non-voluntary and targets a specific group of teachers, selection of participants must align between the methods of selection and the objectives of the program. The first of five general standards of assessment quality that were outlined by Stiggins (2001) was that Qualitative Assessments are derived from *clearly specified targets and outcomes*. However, in the present study, the second outcome or objective of the ProELT was to develop teachers' teaching methodology, which seems generic and non-specific, but no valid methods of instructional skill assessment were adopted to select suitable participants. As discussed above, this situation resulted in some of the experienced teachers viewing their participation in the one-year program as a waste of time, because it was similar to a refresher course in teaching methodology. Their dissatisfaction about being selected for the ProELT resulted in their negative judgement of the program as training that was more suitable for linguistically less proficient and instructionally less competent teachers, as represented in the *judgement of the program* element in Huber's framework. Therefore, if a PD program has two objectives that target two separate skill outcomes, the selection of participants should be conducted using two or more methods of assessment. For example, the objectives of the ProELT were to enhance teachers' language proficiency and to develop teachers' teaching methodology, so the selection of participants should be based on the results of their language proficiency test and instructional skill assessment such as classroom

observations and interviews. This element should only be applied if participation is non-voluntary and target-specific.

8.2.4.2 Incorporation of principles of adult learning

In Huber's framework, *features of the program* includes the didactic features, conception of the program and realisation of the conception, i.e. *features of the program* is determined by the *background conditions* element. According to Huber (2011), the didactic features may be divided into macro-didactic and micro-didactic features. The former includes the program provider, the purpose of PD, the speaker/trainer, the duration, and the timing, amongst others. The micro-didactic features are the formats, the contents, the methods, and the media used.

Findings from the present study indicate that the six adult learning principles were only partially incorporated into the ProELT, which did not completely fulfil the learning needs and approaches of the teachers and subsequently resulted in dissatisfaction amongst the participants. This is the reason that the second additional element, *incorporation of principles of adult learning*, was introduced to enhance Huber's framework, in order to ensure that the micro-didactic features are designed according to the learners' goals and needs instead of the organisation's goals, unless the program pertains to the introduction of a new curriculum (Hayes, 1995). If the latter was the case, therefore, the organisation's goals would dominate the learning objectives of the participants in order to ensure a successful transfer of knowledge.

8.2.4.3 Follow-up support

Follow-up support from the program provider plays a crucial factor at the end of a program to ensure that the transfer and implementation of the program resources in the teachers' lessons are successful. This might include classroom observations, school visits, and meetings, amongst others, to discuss arising matters with the participants and for the program designers to offer necessary advice. The impact of a program might not be immediately noticeable because change to teachers' instructional practice does not happen overnight (Hayes, 1995) and is only gradually followed by changes in students' learning outcomes. This is the reason the third additional element, *follow-up support*, preceded the *impact of the program* element in the enhanced framework.

8.2.4.4 Comprehensive assessment of a program impact

The *impact of the program* element of Huber's framework presents various aspects and levels for assessing the impact of a program, namely teachers' instructional skill, students learning outcomes, and cooperation and communication among colleagues and the organisation. However, the assessment of the impact should also be comprehensive and based on the objectives of the program in order to reflect the desired outcomes, and should be supported by relevant evidence (Stiggins, 2001). For example, the primary objective of the ProELT was to enhance teachers' language proficiency in all four skills. Therefore, the pre- and post-CPT and Aptis tests were utilised to gauge the participants' performance before and after the program. However, the secondary objective of the ProELT, which was to develop teachers' teaching methodology, unfortunately did not include either formative or pre-/post-instructional skill assessments. This negligence did not provide a perceptible indication of the success or failure of the program's secondary objective in regard to each

teacher. Previous studies show that methods of assessment could have included, for example, classroom observations and/or interviews with the teachers. In addition to these methods, the assessment of impact could even be more rigorous and comprehensive by assessing students' achievement and learning outcomes using a wide range of indicators such as 'assessment results, portfolio evaluations, marks or grades, scores from standardised examinations' and even behavioural measures such as attitude, attendance and participation in activities (Guskey, 2003b, p. 750). Studies by Fennema et al. (1996), Good and Grouws (1987) and Neale et al. (1990) are excellent examples that incorporate comprehensive assessments on the teachers' and students' changes in behaviour, beliefs, and learning outcomes.

8.2.4.5 Situating Huber's enhanced framework within the context of a developing country

The present study and the researcher's proposed enhancement of Huber's framework contribute to the research, planning and evaluation of teacher PD programs in developing countries. This is in line with Huber's (2011, p. 837) 'plea' for more original research in the field of PD, particularly outside North America, in order to alleviate the over-reliance on findings from studies conducted in the United States. As previously mentioned in Section 1.1.1, some developing countries have benefited from fully- and partially-funded teacher PD programs by generous international providers, for example, the large-scale *English Language Teaching Improvement Project* (ELTIP) in Bangladesh, which trained 35 000 out of 60 000 secondary school English teachers between 1997 and 2010, the *English for Teaching, Teaching for English* (ETTE) project, which was participated in by 2000 primary school teachers from remote districts in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2010), and the *Sri Lanka Primary English Language Project* (PELP), which aimed to improve the instructional

quality of 6000 primary school English language teachers in teaching basic English (Hayes, 2000). In addition, Cambodia and Vietnam have greatly benefited from international aid through monetary and manpower assistance to rebuild their education systems, which were left with substantial gaps as a result of the grim genocides of the Khmer Rouge era (1975-1979) and the Vietnam War (1965-1975), respectively. Most developing countries are currently able to self-fund locally-delivered programs, while other more financially-advantaged countries are able to offer foreign-delivered programs such as the ProELT. However, research findings on teacher PD programs in developing countries reveal mixed outcomes and limited perspectives on the planning and evaluation processes.

Huber's enhanced framework would offer a more systematic, effective and robust planning and evaluation of PD programs in developing countries, whether the programs are locally- or foreign-delivered. At the beginning stage of the planning process, the framework guides program designers to identify the *background conditions* of the potential participants, e.g. professional needs and educational aims, amongst others, which subsequently influence the *features of the program*. Next, the *selection of participants* element guides program designers to adopt relevant and sufficient instruments that align with the program objectives in order to select target-specific participants, i.e. this element also considers their experience, needs and skills. However, it is acknowledged that, on occasions, favouritism and bureaucratic influence are practiced (M. S. Zein, 2016), which might impede an equitable and valid selection process of participants.

Huber's enhanced framework also allows for a thorough and multi-perspective evaluation of the impact of a program from a narrow or widened focus, depending on the aim and orientation of the evaluation, such as: 1. the *judgement of the program* by the participants, their colleagues and superiors, which could influence the actual *participation*

in the program; 2. the degree of *incorporation of adult learning principles* in the program and the *features of the program*; 3. participants' *perception of the program* in regard to the (expected) relevance, (expected) usefulness, and (expected) satisfaction; 4. relevant *follow-up support*; 5. comprehensive *assessment methods* that align with the program objectives; and 6. three-level evaluation of the *impact of the program* on the school (organisation), the staff and the students, although this does not imply that every single PD program should evaluate the impact on all three levels as different programs evoke different kinds of impact. Hence, this multi-perspective enhanced framework would allow program designers to select the focus of evaluation that would help to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and subsequently further improve the planning and fine-tuning of the conceptions and the implementation of future PD programs in developing countries.

8.3 Implications of the study

The findings from this study have implications for the program providers (i.e. program funder) and program designers. These implications are discussed in the following sections.

8.3.1 Program providers

A. Method for selecting participants

Findings from the present study demonstrate a need for the program designer to adopt valid methods for selecting participants that align with the program objectives. For example, if the program objective is to enhance specific subject-matter or pedagogical knowledge, the program provider needs to identify and select the targeted group of teachers via voluntary participation or to conduct formal teaching observations and interviews with the teachers.

However, the last two methods are usually viewed as impractical for large-scale, nationwide programs because they are time-consuming and require enormous manpower.

If the selection is based on participants' language competency, program designers may adopt a standardised language test such as the CPT and Aptis tests. The adoption of online language tests is currently a ubiquitous method, due to their efficiency in accommodating numerous candidates simultaneously; and they only require minimal, basic technological equipment, e.g. hardware, software and peripheral devices. However, using an online test as a large-scale participant selection method has its challenges and disadvantages, as Hasreena and Ahmad (2015) report in regard to the CPT and Aptis tests. They list four technical flaws that occurred prior and during the tests which were the lack of computers that complied with the system requirement for ICT in schools, lack of microphones and headphones to conduct the listening and speaking tests, missing software such as Adobe Flash Player in the computer, and insufficient internet bandwidth. Technical glitches such as PC screens that froze or hung resulted in some candidates being unable to finish the test and subsequently receiving incomplete results (Hasreena and Ahmad, 2015). This shows that a large-scale online test requires careful logistical and technical preparation in order to ensure the least interruption during the test that might affect the candidates' results and the validity of the selection.

B. Funding spent on untested standardised programs

The findings from this study reveal that the majority of the teachers in the interviews did not implement the program resources into their lessons due to the lack of relevance of most of the program content to their curriculum specifications. The absence of follow-up support from the trainers in the form of classroom observations and visits, and meetings might have

also contributed to the lack of implementation. This would indicate partial failure in the ProELT's objective to develop teachers' teaching methodology.

These findings should convince the MOE to carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of funding future nationwide, standardised PD programs that do not cater to the professional needs of all the teachers. Guskey (2000, p. 270) warns about investing large amounts of taxpayers' money 'on untested program of unproven worth…and unfairly to continually raise and then dash the expectations of educators and the public by promising that PD programs will deliver more than they ultimately do.' Guskey (2000) also suggests that cost-benefit analysis be undertaken to compare the costs and effectiveness of a PD program. On the one hand, Birman et al. (2000) propose that program providers should focus funds on high-quality PD programs either by reducing the number of teacher participants or investing in more resources. In relation to the present study, the MOE needs to obtain substantial evidence from the program designers that the programs objectives and content fulfil the needs of the targeted teachers and have previously achieved satisfactory results with the program in *similar* settings. The MOE should be extremely cautious, especially with foreign- or international-designed programs that claim to have achieved successful learning outcomes in one country, because this success is not guaranteed to be replicated within the local setting due to differences in context and participants' backgrounds, objectives, needs and expectations, inappropriate or lack of materials, and/or inappropriate methodology (Kaplan, Baldauf, & Kamwangamalu, 2011).

8.3.2 Program designers

A. Teacher's needs assessment

The present study showcases the reported experience of senior teachers who were frustrated about being selected for the ProELT, which was irrelevant to their professional needs. It is crucial that program designers conduct teachers' needs assessment in the preliminary process of designing a program, in order to identify the specific needs of the teachers. Needs assessment should also be conducted throughout the program to allow for necessary adjustments, in order to ensure that the learners and program goals are met; by the end of the program, it can be used for assessing progress and also planning future directions for the learners and program (Orlich, 1983; Weddel & Van Duzer, 1997). Program providers need to be constantly aware that PD takes explicit account of the teachers' contexts of teaching and their diverse experiences (Little, 1993). For instance, H. J. Lee's (2004) *Teachers' Needs-Based PD Program* is an example that apply teachers' needs assessment at the beginning of and throughout their programs, which report successful learning outcomes among the learners.

B. Program content

A significant finding generated from the present study shows that most of the teacher interview participants did not implement the program resources in their lessons due to the mismatch between the program content and their curriculum specifications. This finding was substantiated with an analysis of the program coursebook, which contained standardised materials and activities that did not take explicit account of the teachers' different teaching levels. Little (1993, p. 138) argues that standardised materials neglect to provide a 'fit between new ideas and old habits, or between new ideas and present circumstances'.

Although Meister (2010) criticises top-down, mandated knowledge and skills-based approaches in teacher PD programs, she argues that teachers could still benefit from a program if the methods are comprehensible and applicable in the classroom. However, this was not the case for the ProELT.

It is recommended that the program designers prepare separate program content for the primary and secondary levels, and focus on teachers' understanding of subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge as opposed to generic learning. A separate program is absolutely crucial if the program pertains to the development of teachers' teaching methodology, due to the distinct teaching and learning approaches between young learners (primary level), and teenagers and young adults (secondary schools). This ensures that teachers gain better understanding of *what they teach* and *how students acquire specific content knowledge and skill* (Guskey and Yoon, 2009). Neale et al.'s (1990) work validates the above recommendation through their successful program for Kindergarten to Grade 3 science educators to develop their subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge on a unit on light and shadow. The Schools Attuned Program is an example of a teacher PD program that involved educators from Kindergarten to Grade 12, but it contained two separate curriculums for Kindergarten to Grade 8, and Grade 7 to Grade 12 teachers (Broad and Evans, 2006). The strengths of these curricula were their purpose to cater to the diverse learning needs of students, and the contents were based on focused study and school-based application of evidenced-based neurodevelopment constructs that affect student learning (Broad and Evans, 2006).

C. Follow-up support

Fullan (1991) argues two points of importance for monitoring a program: 1. information on innovative practices that is made available will provide access to good ideas; and 2. the information can be scrutinised in order to eliminate mistakes and develop better practices. The studies by Garet et al. (1999, 2001) and Guskey and Yoon (2009) have demonstrated the importance of follow-up support in the form of classroom observations and visits to ensure teachers' successful implementation of new instructional practices to their unique classroom contexts. Hayes (1995), who was previously involved in primary and secondary school English teaching projects in Sabah, Malaysia and Thailand, also highly recommended the inclusion of follow-up support. However, in the present study neither classroom visits nor lesson observations were conducted by the program trainers, and this was partially the reason that most of the interview participants neglected to implement the program resources in their lessons.

The effectiveness and importance of follow-up support are evident in a four-year study by Fennema et al. (1996), whose PD program staff members visit each teacher weekly during the first year, and subsequently reduce the visitation frequency to about once every two weeks by the second year, and thereafter only visit the teachers occasionally by the third year. By the end of the program, the teachers have experienced changes in their beliefs and methods that have resulted in an improvement in their students' problem-solving skills. O'Sullivan's (2002) doctoral research adopts what she termed *trainer follow-up strategies* in the form of lesson observation, learner assessment, progress meetings, checklist, coaching, and teaching demonstration. Therefore, the program designers' decision on the frequency and type of follow-up would depend on the type of innovation that is introduced in the program. If the innovation is foreign to the participants, such as the introduction of a

particular ICT-based teaching and learning, more frequent and longer follow-up would be required to ensure the least disruption in transition and application of the innovation into the classroom, by comparison to the introduction of a relatively minor change.

D. Inclusion of teachers in decision-making and program planning

In the present study, the lack of relevance of the program content could have been avoided if teachers had been included in the preliminary and ongoing decision-making and planning of the program. This validates B. Gray's (1989) report that teachers who have the power to implement decisions are usually omitted from decision-making processes. As one of the main stakeholders, it is crucial that teachers have some voice in selecting the goals and activities, evaluating any aspects of the program, and providing feedback that would require necessary adjustments to be made while the program is ongoing (Orlich, 1983). An example is the *Challenge 2000 Multimedia Project*, which focused on the use of technology in student project-based learning activities (Broad and Evans, 2006). 150 classroom teacher participants in this program were given autonomy to design the content and skill focus for their respective projects according to their relevant contexts, such as the learning focus of selected software. They were provided with mentoring, support and mini-grants to purchase specialised equipment.

Guskey (2000) argues that teachers' involvement in a program's development increases their specific knowledge and skills, and their ability to work collaboratively, share in decision making, become more aware of the perspectives of others such as administrators, parents and community members, and to be more appreciative of individual differences. He adds that, as a result, teachers 'have strong interest in the problems and issues addressed, and, hence are personally committed to finding workable solutions… [which are] more likely

to succeed' (Guskey, 2000, p. 25). This aligns with Barth's (1990) earlier claim that teachers who are not personally involved in a decision-making process are not always committed to the program goals. This is evident in the present study, based on the comments by interview participants that the program content was not aligned with the curriculum specifications, and by primary teachers who thought that the materials were more suitable for secondary level; which resulted in some interview participants' failure to implement the materials in their classroom lessons. Teachers' involvement in the preliminary and on-going planning phases of the program could have revised the contents to suit the needs of the participants.

E. Clear evidence to reflect achievement of program goals

Guskey and Yoon (2009) argue for the importance of evidence to determine the success of a teacher PD program. Scholars from the American Institutes for Research conducted and analysed findings from 1300 studies that potentially addressed the effect of PD on student learning outcomes. One of the four implications of the study is that program providers and developers must know how to critically assess and evaluate their programs through 'discussion about the specific goals of PD, what evidence best reflects the achievement of those goals, and how that evidence can be gathered in meaningful and scientifically defensible ways must be the starting point for all planning activities' (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 498).

Previous studies pertaining to the PD of teachers' instructional skill and pedagogical knowledge show that the effectiveness of the programs was assessed or evaluated based on teachers' beliefs, behaviours, and/or students' learning outcomes before and after the programs. For example, Good and Grouws (1987) wished to estimate the extent to which teachers used the Active Mathematics Teaching model, which they developed, and how well

the teachers used them. Good and Grouws conducted classroom observations with the teachers for three months and collected students' scores using the Stanford Achievement Test and two special content tests. In addition, Robbins and Wolfe (1987) evaluated the effectiveness of the four-year, Hunter-based staff development project by measuring teachers' behaviour using the *Instructional Skills Observation* instrument, students' engaged rate in reading and mathematics using the *Time-Off-Task* instrument, and students' reading and mathematics achievement using standardised achievement tests.

However, the present study reveals that only the ProELT teachers' language proficiency was evaluated using the CPT or Aptis test, but there was not valid evidence to support any indication of change in their teaching methodology or students learning outcomes that was the result of the teachers' instructional approach. Therefore, the achievement of this program's goals was not completely determined due to the absence of evaluation on teachers' instructional skill and/or students' learning outcomes. This shortcoming clearly echoes the question that was raised by Thomas (1991, p. 136), 'How can success be measured if no achievement was defined?'. Guskey (2000) outlines a five-level evaluation scale that examines the outcomes of PD. *Participants' reactions* is ranked the lowest level of outcome followed by *participants' learning* (Level 2), *organisation support and change* (Level 3), *participants' use of new knowledge and skills* (Level 4), and *students learning outcome* (Level 5), the latter which is the highest level for evaluation.

8.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented four main weaknesses of the ProELT as a standardised program and the factors that attributed to these weaknesses: 1. flawed selection method of participation; 2. negative impact on experienced teachers' self-esteem; 3. not directly relevant program

content; and 4. lack of follow-up support. Discussion in regard to the six adult learning principles was presented to justify the incorporation of these learning principles in a teacher PD program, by situating the study in relation to previous studies on teacher PD.

Based on the discussion, four elements were identified and incorporated into Huber's theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation, in order to present an enhanced framework: 1. selection of participants; 2. incorporation of adult learning principles; 3. follow-up support; and 4. comprehensive assessment of program impact. It is hoped that the multi-perspective enhanced framework would assist program providers, program designers, and education researchers in planning and fine-tuning future PD programs in developing countries more effectively, and also in evaluating PD programs from a narrow or wider focus.

The chapter concluded with the implications of the study, particularly for program providers (methods for selecting participants, and funding spent on untested standardised program) and program designers (the importance of conducting teachers' needs assessment, ensuring relevance between the program content and curriculum specifications as opposed to standardised content, providing follow-up support, and the inclusion of teachers in decision-making and program planning).

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This study has sought to investigate teachers' perceptions and the impact of the ProELT, which was a nationwide, one-year teacher PD program. The ProELT was sponsored by the Malaysian MOE and was designed and conducted by the British Council. In order to investigate and evaluate the program, the study adopted a mixed methods explanatory sequential design, which comprised a questionnaire survey, teacher interviews and focus groups, and DELO interviews. This study adopted Huber's (2011) theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation, and Knowles' (1980) Adult Learning Theory, or *andragogy*, as guiding frameworks in the analysis.

This chapter reviews and highlights key issues raised and addressed in the previous chapters. It also outlines the limitations of the study and identifies areas for further research.

9.2 Review of key issues

As discussed in Chapter 1 and the literature review (Chapter 2), there is limited research that explores teachers' perceptions and the impact of standardised PD programs that are conducted nationwide and in a non-western context. There is also a paucity of research that compares the views between primary and secondary school ESL teachers, *and* also the views between urban and rural school ESL teachers, participating in the same PD program. Based on these limitations, this study intended to identify the perceptions of teachers from mixed teaching levels and locations in regard to participating in the same national-level, standardised PD, and the impact of the program, due to the differences in their teaching

levels and curriculum specifications, students' level of proficiency, and geographic locations.

In line with the aforementioned gap in the literature, the present study explored the following nine research questions, under four central questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of a PD program that would fulfil their PD needs?

   RQ1: What elements do teachers want in a PD program?

   RQ2: Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding PD programs?

   RQ3: Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding PD programs?

2. How is the ProELT perceived as a PD program?

   RQ4: What are the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT?

   RQ5: Is there a difference between the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers regarding the ProELT?

   RQ6: Is there a difference between the perceptions of urban and rural school teachers regarding the ProELT?

3. What experiences and suggestions can be gathered from the ProELT participants?

   RQ7: What are the teachers' experiences with the ProELT?

   RQ8: What are the teachers' suggestions to improve the ProELT?

4. How does a standardised coursebook fulfil the learning needs of teachers from different teaching levels?

RQ9: To what degree does the standardised ProELT coursebook content match the Malaysian curriculum specifications and Aptis test?

The implications of this study were considered, and answered the fifth central question, '**What lessons can be learned from the study and ProELT, and their application to other teacher PD within the context of a developing country?**'

The research questions were addressed through the application of a mixed methods approach using questionnaire surveys, interviews and focus groups, and content analysis of the program coursebook. The research took place in the state of Sabah in Malaysia. The samples included survey respondents (n= 303), and interviews and focus group participants who were primary and secondary school teachers (n = 10) and DELOs (n = 2) from the urban and rural districts.

The research was conducted in three phases. Phase 1 involved collecting quantitative data via a questionnaire survey. In Phase 2, qualitative data were gathered from interviews and focus groups with the teachers, and interviews with the DELOs. Data from the two phases were triangulated. Based on the findings from Phase 2, an analysis of the ProELT coursebook content was undertaken to compare its compatibility with the Malaysian curriculum specifications and the Aptis test.

Four key ethical considerations were observed during the conduct of the study: 1. access to the teachers and DELOs; 2. acquiring participants' informed consent; 3. ensuring privacy, anonymity and confidentiality; and 4. the awarding of tokens and payments.

Five measures were utilised in trialling of the questionnaire: 1. content validity; 2. construct validity; 3. response validity; 4. face validity; and 5. reliability. Content validity of the questionnaire was established by submitting the questionnaire to statistics and education

specialists to assess the items, and changes were made based on their suggestions. Construct validity was achieved through factor analysis and assessing the inter-item correlation matrix. Response validity was achieved by asking about the pilot study participants' understanding of specific terms that were used in the questionnaire, such as: "professional development" and "professional needs"; the suitability of the duration to complete the questionnaire; whether a neutral option should be included in the Likert scale; and whether an open-ended item should be included in the questionnaire. Face validity was accomplished by gathering the pilot study responses regarding the arrangement of the items per section and the font size. The reliability of the items was measured using Cronbach's Alpha.

Following the data collection, the quantitative data was analysed using descriptive analysis and inferential analysis, specifically the Mann-Whiney U Test, to compare the differences between the perceptions of teachers from different teaching levels and teaching locations. Meanwhile, the qualitative data from the interviews were coded using open, axial and selective coding. The findings from the quantitative and qualitative data were then triangulated. Significant findings from the interviews, in regard to the teachers' claim about the lack of relevance between the coursebook and the curriculum specification, extended the research to analysis of the ProELT coursebook content.

The research findings reveal four key issues in regard to the ProELT: 1. the flawed selection method of participants; 2. negative emotional impact on experienced teachers' self-esteem; 3. not directly relevant program content; and 4. lack of follow-up support. The first key issue pertains to the flawed method of selecting the program participants, which did not align with the second program objective, namely to support the development of teachers' teaching methodology. The CPT and Aptis tests were utilised to assess the teachers' language proficiency, which aligned with the first program objective which was to enhance

teachers' language skills, but no assessment methods were adopted to assess the participants' instructional skill. This resulted in five major kinds of emotional impact (experiences described by teachers as feeling *degraded, embarrassed, demotivated, inferior* and *less confident*) that were felt by the majority of the experienced teachers in the interview: this had caused them to suffer low self-esteem, which leads to the second key issue. The main cause of the aforementioned teacher's low self-esteem was due to their and their colleagues' perceptions of the ProELT as training for linguistically and instructionally incompetent teachers. If (a) valid form(s) of instructional skills assessment had been utilised by the MOE and British Council for selecting the participants, it/they could have prevented these emotional impacts on the teachers. One valid form of assessment could have been formal lesson observations. However, this is an impractical and unrealistic option if an immense number of teachers were involved, because it would be extremely time-consuming and would require enormous manpower from the State and District Education Department to conduct the evaluation. Although the manpower could be reduced by delegating the responsibility to the school leaders or Head of English Unit at the respective schools, there might be a risk of bias in the conduct of the evaluation. Due to this complexity, the findings lead to the conclusion that program objectives should include more measurable instructional skill achievements as opposed to general ones, e.g. to develop teachers' teaching methodology.

The third key issue pertains to the not directly relevant program content, which was mostly non-transferable into the teachers' lessons due to misalignment between the modules and the national curriculum specifications. A review of the ProELT coursebook reveals that less than half of the modules in each of the sections (Methodology, In the Clasroom, Pronunciation, Magazine, Vocabulary and Activity Page), except for Language Analysis (secondary school level), were relevant to the primary and secondary school curriculum

specifications. In addition to the low relevance, the modules seem to be more relevant to the secondary school level based on the higher frequency count and two activities that catered for “teenagers”. This finding substantiates the survey and interview data, which showed that the teachers suggested that the ProELT be separated between the teaching levels. In addition, primary school teachers in the interview sessions stated that the program activities were more suitable for the secondary school level. The most interesting finding from the interviews was the claim that most of the teachers did not implement the program resources in their lessons due to the lack of relevance of the resources to their teaching syllabus. However, they agreed that some of the materials were a novelty and useful for their teaching knowledge and practice; but this raises the question of whether the teachers would actually use them in their lessons or whether they were likely to be quickly forgotten.

The last key issue pertains to the lack of follow-up support from the program trainers. The trainers did not conduct classroom observations in the teachers’ schools, either throughout or after the program, to ensure the successful implementation of the program resources in the teachers’ lessons. The lack of follow-up support meant that there was lack of feedback from the trainers, which could also substantiate the reason that most of the teachers in the interview did not implement the program resources in their lessons. Even though the participants might have discussed their problems with the trainers during the training regarding issues with implementing the resources in the classroom, this is not as effective as the trainers actually observing the lessons in progress.

Based on these findings, the thesis offers an enhanced framework of Huber’s theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation, with the inclusion of the following four new elements:

1. Selection of participants based on the objectives of a program;

2. Incorporation of adult learning principles;
3. Follow-up support; and
4. Comprehensive assessment of program impact.

The addition of these four new elements to the existing six elements, namely *background conditions, judgement of the program, participation in the program, features of the program, perception of the program,* and *impact of the program* (see Figure 8.1), has important implications for program providers, program designers and education researchers. The enhanced framework offers a multi-perspective guide for the planning, fine-tuning, and evaluation of teacher PD programs. It also provides both narrow and wide focuses on research and evaluation of different elements of teacher PD programs depending on the aim and orientation of the evaluation. Each element is related to one or two other elements; thus findings from one element can be traced back to the next related element(s). For example, teachers' *perceptions* of a program are influenced by the *features* and *impact* of the program. Teachers would have positive perceptions of the program if its features, such as the content, are relevant to their learning and professional needs. Meanwhile, if a program produces positive changes in teachers' behaviour and beliefs such as transferring knowledge and skills into the classroom, then teachers would have positive perceptions of the impact of the program.

9.3 Limitations

A major strength of this study is the mixed methods design to investigate teachers' perceptions of and experience with the ProELT. However, a number of limitations prevail in the present study. Firstly, this study was limited to a single state in, Malaysia, namely Sabah, which included 303 survey respondents (out of 1182 ProELT participants in the

state), 10 ESL teachers and 2 DELOs. This potentially limited the extent to which the findings could be generalised to different states in Malaysia and other developing countries. Thus, a larger sample size of teacher participants and DELOs from different states is needed to examine whether the findings from this study are supported elsewhere. Nevertheless, the findings were obtained from a fairly equal number of participants who taught in the primary and secondary levels and in the urban and rural districts of Sabah. This balanced demography provided an equitable view of the ProELT.

Secondly, this study coincidently involved only female teacher participants in the individual interviews and focus groups because the selection of participants was based on voluntary participation. Initially two male teachers had indicated their interest; the first respondent did not respond after initial and subsequent contacts from the researcher; and the second respondent did not provide his email address in the column of the Participant Content Form for the follow-up interview. This limitation potentially presents a biased view of the ProELT, being from the perceptions of female teacher participants only. Thus, it is possible that a balanced number of male and female participants would be preferable, to represent an unbiased view of the ProELT. However, it is difficult to obtain balanced-gender samples through a voluntary participation sampling method, due to the researcher's lack of autonomy in the selection process, which could result in either a majority female or male sample. Although the findings from the interviews and focus groups were obtained from female-only participants, a better gender balance was achieved in the questionnaire data, which consisted of 246 female respondents (81.2%) and 57 male respondents (18.8%).

In addition to individual interview and focus groups, this study also evaluated the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT's impact on their classroom practices and student learning outcomes using a questionnaire. The survey findings could have been substantiated

with other robust methods of evaluation such as classroom observations for the teachers, and formative assessment for the students during the pre- and post-training. These form of evaluations were not included in this study due to the timing of the ProELT which had commenced before the study was undertaken (i.e. pre-training evaluations), and due to time constraint to carry out multiple classroom observations and to assess the students' learning outcomes after the end of the program (i.e. post-training evaluations). Thus, in future research, multiple methods of evaluations could be incorporated to assess the impact of the program on both the teachers and students; and the evaluations should be conducted in a longitudinal study.

Lastly, the ProELT trainers were not included in this study, because the researcher was unable to gain approval from the British Council to conduct individual interviews with them. This was probably due to the organisation's privacy and confidentiality policies. As a result, the teachers' perceptions of the ProELT were neither substantiated nor disputed by the views of the trainers. The input from the trainers would have provided added value and richness to the findings of this study.

9.4 Recommendations for further study

Two areas for further study can be deduced from the findings of the present study. These will be discussed in the following sections.

9.4.1 Extending research setting and sampling

This study was conducted in a single state in Malaysia, namely Sabah, with a sample of 303 survey respondents, 10 teachers (interviews and focus groups), and 2 DELOs (interviews). It is recommended that future studies on nationwide-level teacher PD programs be extended

to other states and schools, particularly in the rural districts, which lack English-trained teachers in order to include a larger sample size. It is a common practice among rural school leaders to appoint teachers who are not trained in English to teach the subject if the latter have a moderately good command of the language. It would be interesting to study their opinions of the ProELT, and its impact on their language and instructional skills and their student learning outcomes.

It would also be useful to include the ProELT trainer, and the program providers, from the British Council and the Malaysian MOE, as research samples in order to add value and richness to the study. Their inclusion in the study would be valuable to explore the reasons why certain decisions were made, such as the method of selection of participants, designing a standardised program and coursebook, and not providing follow-up support such as classroom visits and lesson observations after the program had completed. In addition, the findings from this study show that the ProELT participants and DELOs lamented the lack of communication from the Malaysian MOE in regard to issues such as whether teachers who failed to obtain a higher band in their post-Aptis test would have to repeat the program, or be barred from teaching English. The inclusion of the program provider would provide a more balanced perspective on the program, from multiple stakeholders.

9.4.2 Extending scope of the study

The scope of this study has been limited to investigating the ESL teachers' perceptions and the impact of the ProELT. It would be useful to extend the study by investigating the impact of the program on teachers' instructional development and student learning outcomes using a mixed methods approach which combines an experimental research design (pre- and post-tests), classroom observations, and interviews with the teachers and students. Instruments

for the experimental research may include questionnaires to measure teachers' beliefs and knowledge, and a standardised achievement test for the students. However, this would require a longitudinal study, as changes in teachers' instructional practice is a slow process (Hayes, 1995).

In addition, the scope of the study should be extended to include the ProELT centralised training mode. The program consisted of two modes of training: cluster, and centralised modes. This study only focused on the one-year cluster mode, which was conducted weekly, as opposed to the centralised mode, which was conducted intensively for sixteen weeks over four phases. It would be interesting to investigate and compare the impact between both modes of training on teacher and student learning outcomes, e.g. the impact of a short-term versus long-term training in the same program.

9.5 Chapter summary

In this thesis, a review of the past and current literature on teacher participation in PD programs was provided, and the gaps that guided the researcher in the formulation of the research questions were identified. In the methodology chapter, a research design was developed. In the findings chapter, the research questions were addressed and an enhanced framework of Huber's theoretical framework for theory-based empirical research and evaluation was developed.

Through the results generated from this study, it is hoped that the research has provided substantial, relevant and significant evidence of the impact of a standardised teacher PD program that would contribute to the existing knowledge and literature on teacher PD in a developing country, and as such that it may make a significant contribution to the literature beyond its immediate context. It is worth bearing in mind that the success and

failure of a teacher PD program in any context does not depend only on theory or policy, but on the joint effort, accountability, and responsibility of multiple stakeholders who fund (program providers), design (program designers), deliver (trainers), implement (teachers), receive (students) and support (schools, organisations, institutions) the innovation.

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Appendix 1: Ethics Approval from Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee

MACQUARIE University

WENDY HIEW <wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au>

RE: HS Ethics Application - Approved (5201400380)(Con/Met)
2 messages

Fhs Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au> Fri, May 16, 2014 at 12:41 PM
To: Dr Jill Murray <jill.murray@mq.edu.au>
Cc: Miss Wendy Hiew <wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au>

Dear Dr Murray,

Re: "Teacher Professional Development Program and Its Impact on Teaching Development among English Language Teachers in Malaysia"(5201400380)

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 24th April 2014. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Jill Murray
Miss Wendy Hiew

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 24th April 2015
Progress Report 2 Due: 24th April 2016
Progress Report 3 Due: 24th April 2017
Progress Report 4 Due: 24th April 2018
Final Report Due: 24th April 2019

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements

are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Simon Boag
Acting Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Faculty of Human Sciences - Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: +61 2 9850 4197
Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Email: fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/

Appendix 2: Ethics Amendment Approval from Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee

MACQUARIE University

WENDY HIEW <wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au>

RE: HS Ethics Amendment 1 - Approved (Ref No. 5201400380)
1 message

Fhs Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au> Tue, May 26, 2015 at 12:03 PM
To: Dr Jill Murray <jill.murray@mq.edu.au>
Cc: Miss Wendy Hiew <wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au>

Dear Dr Murray,

RE: 'Teacher Professional Development Program and Its Impact on Teaching Development among English Language Teachers in Malaysia ' (Ref: 5201400380)

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the amendment request. The amendments have been reviewed and we are pleased to advise you that the amendments have been approved.

This approval applies to the following amendments:

1. Change to interview method with the teacher participants - to include individual and focus group interviews, as stated in Section 6;
2. Exclusion of interview with the program trainers, as explained in Section 6;
3. Participant Information and Consent form noted.

Please accept this email as formal notification that the amendments have been approved. Please do not hesitate to contact us in case of any further queries.

All the best with your research.

Kind regards,

FHS Ethics
****
Faculty of Human Sciences - Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: +61 2 9850 4197
Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Email: fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/

Appendix 3: Research Approval from the Malaysian Ministry of Education

BAHAGIAN PERANCANGAN DAN PENYELIDIKAN DASAR PENDIDIKAN
KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA
ARAS 1 - 4, BLOK E - 8,
KOMPLEKS KERAJAAN PARCEL E
PUSAT PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN
62604 PUTRAJAYA
Telefon: 03-88846591. Faks: 03-88846579

Rujuk. kami : KP(BPPDP)603/5/JLD.10 ()

Tarikh : 13/06/2014

Wendy Hiew

72 Taman Fortuna Phase 2 Lorong Seroja 4 Mile 3 Jalan Penampang

Kota Kinabalu Sabah 88200

Tuan/Puan,

Kelulusan Untuk Menjalankan Kajian Di Sekolah, Institut Perguruan, Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri dan Bahagian-Bahagian di Bawah Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia

Adalah saya dengan hormatnya diarah memaklumkan bahawa permohonan tuan/puan untuk menjalankan kajian bertajuk :

Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers - The Impact of a Long-Term Professional Development Program among English as a Second Language Teachers in Malaysia diluluskan.

2. Kelulusan ini adalah berdasarkan kepada cadangan penyelidikan dan instrumen kajian yang tuan/puan kemukakan ke Bahagian ini. **Kebenaran bagi menggunakan sampel kajian perlu diperoleh dari Ketua Bahagian / Pengarah Pelajaran Negeri yang berkenaan.**

3. Sila tuan/puan kemukakan ke Bahagian ini senaskah laporan akhir kajian /laporan dalam bentuk elektronik berformat *Pdf* di dalam CD bersama naskah *hardcopy* setelah selesai kelak. Tuan/Puan juga diingatkan supaya **mendapat kebenaran terlebih dahulu** daripada Bahagian ini sekiranya sebahagian atau sepenuhnya dapatan kajian tersebut hendak dibentangkan di mana-mana forum atau seminar atau diumumkan kepada media massa.

Sekian untuk makluman dan tindakan tuan/puan selanjutnya. Terima kasih.

"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Saya yang menurut perintah,

(Dr ZABAN BIN DARUS)
Ketua Sektor
Sektor Penyelidikan dan Penilaian
b.p. Pengarah
Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia

Appendix 4: Research Approval from the Malaysian Economic Planning Unit

UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI
Economic Planning Unit
Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Prime Minister's Department
Block B5 & B6
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62502 PUTRAJAYA
MALAYSIA

EPU
Telefon : 603-8000 8000

Ruj. Tuan:
Your Ref.:

Ruj. Kami:
Our Ref.: UPE: 40/200/19/3109

Tarikh:
Date: 12 Mei 2014

WENDY HIEW
No. 72 Taman Fortuna Phase 2
Lorong Seroja 4, Mile 2 1/2
Jalan Penampang, 88200
Kota Kinabalu
Email: hiewwendy@gmail.com

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA

With reference to your application, I am pleased to inform you that your application to conduct research in Malaysia has been *approved* by the **Research Promotion and Co-Ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department.** The details of the approval are as follows:

Researcher's name	:	**WENDY HIEW**
Passport No./ I.C No	:	**790423-12-5286**
Nationality	:	**MALAYSIA**
Title of Research	:	**"PROFESSIONAL UP-SKILLING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS: THE IMPACT OF A LONG-TERM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON THE TEACHING DEVELOPMENT AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN MALAYSIA".**
Period of Research Approved	:	**1 YEAR**

2. Please collect your Research Pass in person from the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Parcel B, Level 4 Block B5, Federal Government Administrative Centre, 62502 Putrajaya, Malaysia and bring along two (2) colour passport size photographs.

"Merancang Ke Arah Kecemerlangan"

3. I would like to draw your attention to the undertaking signed by you that you will submit without cost to the Economic Planning Unit the following documents:

a) A brief summary of your research findings on completion of your research and before you leave Malaysia; and

b) Three (3) copies of your final dissertation/publication.

4. Lastly, please submit a copy of your preliminary and final report directly to the State Government where you carried out your research. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

(MUNIRAH BT. ABD MANAN)
For Director General,
Economic Planning Unit.
E-mail: munirah@epu.gov.my
Tel: 88882809
Fax: 88883798

ATTENTION

This letter is only to inform you the status of your application and **cannot be used as a research pass.**

Appendix 5: Research Approval from the Sabah State Education Department

JABATAN PENDIDIKAN NEGERI SABAH
SEKTOR PENGURUSAN SEKOLAH
TINGKAT 1, BLOK C, BANGUNAN KWSP
88000 KOTA KINABALU
Pejabat Pengarah : 088-252224, Pejabat Am (SPS) 088-251720 / 251721,
Faks : 088-224585 Email: sps.sabah@moe.gov.my

Rujukan: JP (SB)/700/7/03 Jld. 35
Tarikh : 16 Jun 2014

Wendy Hiew
72 Taman Fortuna Phase 2
Lorong Seroja 4 Mile 3 Jalan Penampang
8820 Kota Kinabalu
Sabah

Tuan,

KELULUSAN UNTUK MENJALANKAN KAJIAN DI SEKOLAH, INSTITUT PERGURUAN, JABATAN PENDIDIKAN NEGERI DAN BAHAGIAN-BAHAGIAN DI BAWAH KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA

Dengan segala hormatnya, saya diarah merujuk surat tuan/puan mengenai perkara di atas

2. Sukacita dimaklumkan bahawa Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sabah tiada halangan bagi pihak tuan menjalankan kajian **"Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teacher- The Impact of a Long- Term Professional Development Program Among English as a Second Language Teachers in Malaysia "** seperti dalam surat Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun ianya tertakluk kepada syarat-syarat berikut:

2.1 Berhubung dan berbincang dengan pentadbir sekolah tentang pelaksanaan/ perjalanan kajian tersebut.

2.2 Penyertaan warga pendidik dan murid-murid dalam kajian adalah sukarela.

2.3 Proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran atau pelaksanaan aktiviti sekolah tidak terganggu atau terjejas semasa kajian dijalankan.

2.4 Tuan tidak dibenarkan menjalankan aktiviti di kelas-kelas peperiksaan awam sekolah.

2.5 Sebarang data / maklumat serta dapatan kajian hanyalah untuk memenuhi syarat-syarat kursus pengajian sahaja

2.6 Sila tuan kemukakan ke sektor ini senaskah laporan akhir kajian setelah selesai kelak sebagai rujukan

Sekian, terima kasih.

"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Saya yang menurut perintah

RAISIN BIN SAIDIN
Ketua Sektor
Sektor Pengurusan Sekolah
b.p Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sabah

s.k 1. Pendaftar Institusi Pendidikan dan Guru,
Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri sabah

(Sila catatkan nombor rujukan apabila berurusan dengan kami)
JANGAN TERJERUMUS KE DALAM PERANGKAP DADAH
Web: www.moe.gov.my/jpnsabah

Appendix 6: Research Approval from the British Council Malaysia

BRITISH COUNCIL

British Council, Ground Floor, West Block
Wisma Selangor Dredging, 142C Jalan Ampang
50450 Kuala Lumpur
T +60 (0)3 2723 7900
F +60 (0)3 2713 6599
www.britishcouncil.my

10th November 2014

Ms Wendy Hiew

No. 72 Taman Fortuna Phase 2

Jalan Penampang

88200 Kota Kinabalu

Sabah

Dear Ms Hiew

Further to your request to carry out research with teachers currently on the Pro-ELT programme, this is to confirm that British Council trainers will be informed that they can assist you in the following ways:

- Distribute and collect teacher questionnaires on your behalf
- Allow 30 minutes of class time for teachers to complete the questionnaires

Please note that only Malaysian teachers can participate in this research and not British Council trainers or other staff.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility to ensure that the questionnaires are available in the training venues and that you arrange for their collection once the teachers who have volunteered to participate have completed them.

I wish you all the best with your research and I look forward to reading your paper in due course.

Warm regards

Annette Zammit
Pro-ELT Deputy Director
British Council

Appendix 7: Written Consent Form for Survey Participants

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Mobile (Australia): +61 478 761 696
Mobile (Malaysia): +6 019 831 6221
Email: wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Jill Murray

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Professional Development Program: Its Impact on the Teaching Development among English Language Teachers in Malaysia

You are invited to participate in a study on English language teachers' views related to a teacher professional development program entitled Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers (Pro-ELT). The purpose of the study is to understand 1) the benefits of the professional development program for teachers, 2) the issues that teachers encountered during the professional development program, and 3) teachers' views of an ideal professional development program.

The study is being conducted by Wendy Hiew, a student at Macquarie University, Australia [Mobile (Australia): +61 478 761 696; Mobile (Malaysia): +6 019 831 6221; email: wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au]. This study is conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the supervision of Dr Jill Murray (email jill.murray@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Linguistics.

If you decide to participate in the first phase of the study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire which consists of five sections. The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, you will be given a small token of appreciation for your participation.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. Please be assured that any of your quotes from this interview, which could be considered significant and will be used in later publication, will remain anonymous. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Wendy Hiew and her supervisor will have access to the data.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, _____ *(participant's name*) have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 8: Written Consent Form for Individual Interview Participants (Teachers and DELOs)

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Mobile (Australia): +61 478 761 696
Mobile (Malaysia): +6 019 831 6221
Email: wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Jill Murray

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Professional Development Program: Its Impact on the Teaching Development among English Language Teachers in Malaysia

You are invited to participate in a study on English language teachers' views related to a teacher professional development program entitled Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers (Pro-ELT). The purpose of the study is to understand 1) the benefits of the professional development program for teachers, 2) the issues that teachers encountered during the professional development program, and 3) teachers' views of an ideal professional development program.

The study is being conducted by Wendy Hiew, a student at Macquarie University, Australia [Mobile (Australia): +61 478 761 696; Mobile (Malaysia): +6 019 831 6221; email: wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au]. This study is conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the supervision of Dr Jill Murray (email jill.murray@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Linguistics.

If you decide to participate, you will be taking part in a focus groups interview which should take about 60 minutes to complete. Audio-recording will be used during the interview session. These will be used for transcription purposes and only accessed by the researchers. At the end of the interview, you will be given a small token of appreciation for your participation.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. Please be assured that any of your quotes from this interview, which could be considered significant and will be used in later publication, will remain anonymous. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Wendy Hiew and her supervisor will have access to the data.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, _____ *(participant's name*) have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 9: Written Consent Form for Focus Groups Interview Participants (Teachers)

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

Mobile (Australia): +61 478 761 696
Mobile (Malaysia): +6 019 831 6221
Email: wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: Jill Murray

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: Dr

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: Professional Development Program: Its Impact on the Teaching Development among English Language Teachers in Malaysia

You are invited to participate in a study on English language teachers' views related to a teacher professional development program entitled Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers (Pro-ELT). The purpose of the study is to understand 1) the benefits of the professional development program for teachers, 2) the issues that teachers encountered during the professional development program, and 3) teachers' views of an ideal professional development program.

The study is being conducted by Wendy Hiew, a student at Macquarie University, Australia [Mobile (Australia): +61 478 761 696; Mobile (Malaysia): +6 019 831 6221; email: wendy.hiew@students.mq.edu.au]. This study is conducted to meet the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the supervision of Dr Jill Murray (email jill.murray@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Linguistics.

If you decide to participate, you will be taking part in a focus groups interview which should take about 60 minutes to complete. Audio-recording will be used during the interview session. These will be used for transcription purposes and only accessed by the researchers. At the end of the interview, you will be given a small token of appreciation for your participation.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. Please be assured that any of your quotes from this interview, which could be considered significant and will be used in later publication, will remain anonymous. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Wendy Hiew and her supervisor will have access to the data.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, _____ *(participant's name*) have read *(or, where appropriate, have had read to me)* and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 10: ProELT Teachers Questionnaire

(see next page)

(For researcher's use only)

PHD RESEARCH

Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers:
Its Impact among English Language Teachers
in Malaysia

SECTION A: TEACHERS' NEEDS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

This section is about your needs in professional development programs in general. Please answer by circling the best option provided.

	As a teacher, I want the professional development programs to:	**1 Not at all Important**	**2 Slightly Important**	**3 Neutral**	**4 Important**	**5 Very Important**
1.	Be based on teachers' professional needs (i.e. the subjects or skills that I need to develop).	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Be based on students' needs.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Be based on school needs.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Be regularly evaluated to determine students' academic achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Be regularly evaluated to determine its impact on increasing teachers' teaching and learning effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Be conducted over a short period.	1	2	3	4	5

[Continue on next page]

SECTION B: BENEFITS AND IMPACT OF THE PROELT

This section is about the structure and impact of the Professional Up-skilling for English Language Teachers (ProELT) program on your learning experience. Please answer by circling the best option provided.

1.	**What emphasis did the ProELT give to:**	**1 No Emphasis**	**2 Minor Emphasis**	**3 Neutral**	**4 Moderate Emphasis**	**5 Major Emphasis**
a.	knowledge of the content that you teach?	1	2	3	4	5
b.	knowledge about how students learn the specific content that you teach?	1	2	3	4	5
c.	the methods you use to teach the required content?	1	2	3	4	5

2.	**To what extent did the ProELT:**	**1 Not at All**	**2 To a Minor Extent**	**3 Neutral**	**4 To a Moderate Extent**	**5 To a Major Extent**
a.	engage you in actively reflecting on your practice?	1	2	3	4	5
b.	engage you in identifying specific areas of your practice that you needed to develop?	1	2	3	4	5
c.	provide opportunities to test new teaching practices?	1	2	3	4	5
d.	enable you to gain feedback about your teaching from colleagues or other teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
e.	provide time for you to practise your new learning?	1	2	3	4	5
f.	provide follow-up/on-going assistance in your school or classroom to help you implement changes recommended in the program?	1	2	3	4	5

[Continue on next page]

3.	**Knowledge: As a result of my participation in the ProELT, I now have:**	**1 Strongly Disagree**	**2 Disagree**	**3 Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**4 Agree**	**5 Strongly Agree**
a.	increased knowledge of the content of the key learning area/s which I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
b.	increased knowledge of teaching and learning strategies appropriate to the content of the key learning area/s that I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
c.	increased knowledge about how students learn the content of the key learning area/s in which I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
d.	increased understanding of individual differences amongst students and how I can cater to their needs.	1	2	3	4	5
e.	increased understanding about linking assessment into the teaching and learning cycle.	1	2	3	4	5
f.	increased knowledge of classroom organisation and management.	1	2	3	4	5
g.	increased knowledge of materials and resources in the key area in which I teach.	1	2	3	4	5

4.	**Teaching Practice: As a result of my participation in the ProELT, I now:**	**1 Strongly Disagree**	**2 Disagree**	**3 Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**4 Agree**	**5 Strongly Agree**
a.	make clearer links between my teaching goals and classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5
b.	manage classroom structures and activities more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
c.	use more effective teaching and learning strategies appropriate to the content that I teach.	1	2	3	4	5

[Continue on next page]

4.	**Teaching Practice: As a result of my participation in the ProELT, I now:**	**1 Strongly Disagree**	**2 Disagree**	**3 Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**4 Agree**	**5 Strongly Agree**
d.	use more effective teaching and learning strategies appropriate to the classroom context.	1	2	3	4	5
e.	use teaching and learning strategies that are more engaging.	1	2	3	4	5
f.	am better able to meet the individual learning needs of my students.	1	2	3	4	5
g.	link assessment into the teaching and learning cycle more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
h.	provide more effective feedback to my students to support their learning.	1	2	3	4	5
i.	access and use materials and resources more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5

[Continue on next page]

SECTION C: INCORPORATION OF ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES IN THE PROELT

This section is about your perceptions on whether the ProELT incorporated adult learning principles in the program. Please answer by circling the best option provided.

		1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1.	The program offered suggestions which are useful and can be applied immediately in my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The program content was strongly related to my professional needs.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The program material was related to my teaching syllabus.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The program offered support or guidance to me with regard to the application of new ideas in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	The program gave opportunities for me to practice in situations that simulated the classroom reality.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The program helped me to obtain new language skills for the fulfilment of specific, personal needs.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The program helped me to obtain new teaching skills for the fulfilment of specific, personal needs.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	A variety of teaching approaches was introduced in the program.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The learning material was gradually provided so as to be better assimilated into my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The program systematically ensured that the participants' needs and interests were addressed.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The program fulfilled my expectations with regard to its goals.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	The program offered opportunities for participants to exchange their views, knowledge and experiences on the topics.	1	2	3	4	5

		1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
13.	The participants' previous knowledge and experience on the particular topic were taken into consideration.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	The content of the program was adjusted to the participants' previous experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	The program efficiently connected new knowledge with my previous knowledge and experience.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Individual help was provided to the participants according to their personal needs.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	The program helped me to better realise my own needs, motives, interests and potential.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I was motivated to learn because I wanted to improve my language skills.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I was motivated to learn because I wanted to improve my teaching skills.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I was motivated to learn because I wanted to improve my students' learning.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I was motivated to learn because I wanted to improve my students' academic achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	The content of the program is relevant to my teaching needs.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	The content of the program is relevant to my language development needs.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	The structure of the program was explained to the participants.	1	2	3	4	5

[Continue on next page]

		1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
25.	I was selected to participate in this program to improve my English language proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I was selected to participate in this program to enhance my teaching skills.	1	2	3	4	5

[Continue on next page]

SECTION D: ISSUES RELATING TO THE PROELT

This section is about the problems that you might have experienced during the ProELT program. Please answer by circling the best option provided.

		1 Strongly Disagree	**2 Disagree**	**3 Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**4 Agree**	**5 Strongly Agree**
1.	The assignments did not fulfil my teaching development needs.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The assignments did not fulfil my language development needs.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The course materials did not relate to my teaching syllabus.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	There were too many assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	The duration of the program was too long.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I had problems communicating well with my trainer.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I had problems communicating well with the other teacher participants.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I had to complete many non-teaching duties in school after completing the face-to-face phase of the program.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I had to catch up on my lessons after completing the face-to-face phase of the program.	1	2	3	4	5

[Continue on next page]

SECTION E: CHANGES TO THE PROELT

In your opinion, what changes would you suggest in terms of the ProELT's **implementation (duration, trainer, content, and others)**, which would fulfil your professional need?

1) Duration:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2) Trainer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3) Content:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4) Others (if any):

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION F: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please answer each statement by ticking (✓) the answer that best fits your personal and job descriptions.

1. Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female	
2. Age	_____ years	
3. Highest education level	☐ Certificate ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor Degree	☐ Master Degree ☐ Doctoral Degree ☐ Others (please specify) _____
4. Teaching experience	_____ years	
5. Current teaching position *(you may tick **more than** one e.g. if you are the Head of English Language Panel **and** a senior teacher.)*	☐ Head of English Language Panel ☐ Senior teacher (5 years and above in service) ☐ Junior teacher (below 5 years in service)	
6. Current teaching level	☐ Primary school ☐ Secondary school	
7. Current teaching area	☐ Urban ☐ Rural	
8. ProELT duration	Start: _____ (month & year) End: _____ (month & year)	

Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Appendix 11: Interviews and Focus Groups Questions for Teachers

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
SYDNEY ~ AUSTRALIA

Semi-structured Interview with ProELT Teacher Participant

Name : _____

Date : _____

Time : _____ (start)

: _____ (end)

Location:_____

Section A: Introduction

1. What's the name of your school?
2. How long have you been teaching English?
3. What are your academic qualifications?
4. Are you the Head of English Panel in your school?
5. What courses do you want to attend to enhance your professional development (e.g. courses to enhance or learn certain skills, knowledge, etc.)?

Section B: Benefits of the ProELT

1. Has the ProELT improved your understanding of your subject content? If so, how?
2. Can you describe the learning activities in the ProELT?
3. Besides language and teaching skills, what other knowledge have you gained from the ProELT?
4. Has the ProELT improved your teaching practice? If so, how?

Section C: Incorporation of Adult Learning Theory in the ProELT

1. Before the ProELT commenced, what skills or knowledge did you want to gain from the program?
2. What skills or knowledge have you gained from the ProELT which were useful?
3. Can you describe whether the ProELT accommodated to your teaching experience?
4. Can you describe your feeling when you were selected for the ProELT?
5. Can you describe your motivation throughout the ProELT?
6. Can you describe whether the ProELT was relevant to your professional needs?

Section D: Issues with the ProELT

Duration

1. What do you think of the duration of the ProELT?
2. What is your ideal duration for the ProELT?

CPT and Aptis tests

3. Can you describe the management of the CPT or Aptis test?
4. Can you describe whether you encountered any problems during the CPT or Aptis test?
5. What happens if you do not score a Band higher in the post-Aptis test?

Trainer

6. Can you describe your relationship with the trainer, e.g. communication and support?

Teaching observation

7. Do you think the trainers should conduct teaching observation in your classroom?

Coursebook and materials

8. What do you think of the coursebook and materials?

9. How much of the coursebook contents and materials have you implemented in your lessons?

Venue

10. What do you think of the venue?

Meal

11. Were you provided with food and drinks during the training?

Other matters

12. What is your overall view about the ProELT?

Appendix 12: Interview Questions for District English Language Officers (DELOs)

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
SYDNEY ~ AUSTRALIA

Semi-structured Interview with the District English Language Officer (DELO)

Name : _____
Date : _____
Time : _____ (start)
: _____ (end)
Location:_____

Section A: Introduction

1. Can you briefly describe the ProELT program?
2. Can you describe a previous long-term* teacher professional development program that was successfully conducted in Sabah?
3. What do you think made that program successful?
4. What's your opinion about the effectiveness of short-term* and long-term teacher professional development programs? Which is better?

*short-term – a few days training; long-term – a few months to a year training

Section B: ProELT Program

Program duration

1. The majority of the teachers think that the one-year training duration is too long and they would prefer a shorter, intensive training. What can the Education Department do about this matter?

CPT and Aptis tests

2. How did you handle teachers who were unhappy with their CPT or Aptis test results?

3. Can you explain why the CPT and Aptis tests were conducted in school computer labs?
4. Some teachers had problems with their headsets during the Aptis test. Can you explain about these problems?
5. What happens to the teachers who do not score a band higher in their post-Aptis test?

Classroom observations

6. Can you explain whether the trainers should conduct classroom observations?

Program content

7. The primary school teachers think that the training materials are more suitable for teaching secondary school level. What is your view on this matter

Training venue

8. Can you explain where are the ProELT trainings held and why?

Meal provision

9. Some teachers suggested that lunch should be provided for them especially those who are at the Teacher Activity Centre because there is no canteen or cafe. What is your view on this?

Appendix 13: CEFR Common Reference Levels: Global Scale

Proficient user	**C2**	• Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. • Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. • Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
	C1	• Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. • Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. • Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. • Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent user	**B2**	• Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. • Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. • Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	• Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. • Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. • Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic user	**A2**	• Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). • Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. • Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	• Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. • Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. • Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Source: Council of Europe (2001, p. 33)

Appendix 14: ProELT Coursebook: Module 10 Sample

BRITISH COUNCIL

TeachingEnglish

Course book

English for Teaching 3

Module 10: What do they think?

www.teachingenglish.org.uk

1 Language

1.1 Impressions of a class

Think about a class you really enjoy teaching.
In the table below, write one idea in each column.
Talk to four other people in your class. Ask them to share their ideas, and add them to your table.

A good class is:	A good class has:
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

Share and compare your completed table with your group. Which ideas did you like best?
What would your learners say? Would they feel the same? Why/why not?

1.2 The rules

Work in groups.
Discuss:

- What difficulties did you have when you were learning how to use articles in English?
- What kinds of problems do your learners have?
- Do you use articles in a similar/different way in your language?

Brainstorm rules for using articles. Try to imagine them from a learner's perspective.
Write them in the box.

1.3 Task: Design a quiz

Work with your group.

Design a quiz about articles for the other groups. Points to consider:

- What age group/learner level will it be for?
- How long should it take?

Try it out to make sure it works and that you know the answers.

Now use it to test the other groups' knowledge!

Reflect and discuss:

- Was this task useful? How/why?
- Would it be helpful for your learners to develop quizzes for each other? Why/why not?
- What difficulties might arise? How would you deal with them?

Language analysis

1.4 Our favourite classes

Listen to three teachers talking about their favourite classes. Are their favourites similar to yours?

Listen again and write down examples of articles:

1. The first class I taught on my own.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Compare your answers with your group.

Now work together to answer the following questions:

- Which articles refer to something which **is mentioned the first time**?
- Which articles refer to something which **has been mentioned before**?
- Which articles refer to **something specific**?
- Were the rules you and your group created in section 1.2 correct?

Tell your group about which classes you enjoy teaching the most.

Do you have a favourite class?

1.5 Common mistakes

Part 1

Your trainer will give your group some cards with speech bubbles on them.

Put them in a pile face-down on the table.

Toss a coin to decide who takes the first turn (A). Move in a clockwise direction. 'A' picks up the top card and reads it aloud.

The next person (B) identifies the error and repeats the sentence correctly. 'B' then picks up the next card and reads it aloud.

The next person (C) makes the correction.

Continue moving in a clockwise direction until the cards are finished.

Here is a coffee that you ordered.

*Uh... here is **the** coffee that you ordered.*

Part 2

Write two more sentences with errors on the two empty speech bubbles.

Repeat the activity above, using only the new cards.

Part 3

When you've finished, turn all the cards face-up and spread them out on the table. Discuss the errors with your group – why did learners make these errors?

Class discussion:

- What benefits are there in doing an error correction activity in this way?
- Would you use this kind of activity with your learners? Why/why not?
- What would you do differently?

2 Pronunciation

2.1 Stressed and unstressed articles

Read these sentences aloud with your partner. Which words are stressed? Put a small circle above the stressed words.

Example: They are my first class.

- That's the one I'm teaching right now.
- I have a class of beginners and an advanced class.
- I really like the morning class.

Listen and compare your stressed words with the recording.

- What do you notice about the articles? Are they stressed or unstressed? Why?
- Can you think of any situations where you might stress the articles?
- Can you think of any other pronunciation difficulties your learners might have with articles?

2.2 Chanting with articles

Do you ever use chants to practise sentence stress with learners?

Read aloud the short poem below. Focus on sentence stress and build a rhythm.

Add the sentence stress markers to the last two sentences.

Underline all the articles.

Read it aloud again with your partner and clap your hands or tap your feet on the stressed words.

What do you notice about the articles?

I've got a **big**, old **apartment**
and a **beautiful garden** too.

The home is nice, the garden is fine,

but just when I share them with you!

Could you use examples from your textbook to write short chants or poems to help your learners practise?

3 Methodology

3.1 Getting learner feedback

Do you encourage feedback from your learners on:

- How they feel about the lessons?
- How they feel about a particular activity?

Discuss the charts below. Have you tried either of these approaches?

3.2 Speaking

Discuss:

- How often should teachers get feedback from learners?
- What are the most effective ways of getting feedback?
- What are the benefits to learners of giving feedback?

Look at the sentence halves posted around the room.

Complete the first three lines of the box below using the sentence halves.

Brainstorm other ideas and add at least two more to the box.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Share your ideas with the other groups.

4 In the classroom

4.1 Learner feedback questionnaire

In groups, design a questionnaire for getting written learner feedback.

Consider the following:

- Which age group will the questionnaire be used with?
- When would you use it, e.g. weekly, termly, annually?
- Will learners complete it individually or in pairs/groups?
- How will you show that you are genuinely interested in their opinions?

Now plan and design your questionnaire.

4.2 Learner feedback template presentations

Present your feedback questionnaire to the other groups.

You can make copies of each other's to keep as a reference.

5 Magazine

5.1 Learner-centred feedback

Discuss these questions with your group:

- How is learner-centred feedback different from teacher-led feedback?
- How do your learners usually respond to being asked to participate in feedback? Why?

Read the article.

- Circle the opinions you agree with, and put a question mark next to any you have questions about.
- Which ideas for getting feedback would you like to try?

Speaking.

- Compare the opinions you circled.
- Discuss any opinions you have questions about.
- Tell your group which ideas you would like to try.

The Teacher

The magazine for teachers everywhere

THIS WEEK'S HOT TOPIC

LEARNER-CENTRED FEEDBACK

Azmi and Sanjeet spoke at a recent teachers' conference about the importance of reflection for learners. We tracked them down and asked them a few questions about learner-centred feedback.

Why is it important to have learner-centred feedback?

Azmi: I think one of the most important benefits of getting learners involved in feedback is that it really helps them understand how they learn. This ongoing process will help them a lot as they develop their learning skills!

Sanjeet: Yes, even children should start thinking for themselves about their learning and what happens in the classroom. If they do think about their learning regularly, they will become more independent learners.

How do teenagers respond to being asked to participate?

Sanjeet: I think teenagers really like it when we ask them to think about what they are doing. When we ask them for their opinions, and involve them in some decisions about what happens in class, they always respond positively.

Azmi: Definitely. It shows that we value their opinions and take them into consideration. I think this can really increase their motivation.

Do you have any ideas for getting feedback from learners that you can share with our readers?

Sanjeet: Sure. I like to give them a questionnaire and find out what they think is the most useful (reading, writing, speaking, listening, learning grammar, learning vocabulary). I also ask them how they like to work (individually, in groups, in pairs) and activities they enjoy (they all have their favourites!).

Azmi: At the end of each lesson, I get the learners to complete a summary of the lesson under these headings:

- What we did today
- What I liked best
- What I didn't like
- What I want to do next

Sometimes I do this at the end of a block of work too.

One other idea I can suggest is individual counselling. If you have small classes, this is a good way to get feedback from learners. Give them some questions to think about before they meet with you. For example, which parts of the course have you found the most useful? Which activities do you prefer? What do you feel you need to do most in order to improve your English?

Sanjeet: Another way I get learners involved in feedback is by asking them to write a learning diary. I collect these regularly, and they really help me to learn my learners' likes and needs. When they are new to diary writing, I sometimes give them questions to guide them in their writing

6 Vocabulary

6.1 Phrases about reflection and feedback

Fill in the blanks

Read the first part of the magazine article below.

Work together. Complete the gaps, using the phrases in this box. Don't go back to the full magazine article for help!

involve them in some decisions **value their opinions** **increase their motivation**
ongoing process **thinking for themselves**

Why is it important to have learner-centred feedback?

Azmi: I think one of the most important benefits of getting learners involved in feedback is that it really helps them understand how they learn. This _____ will help them a lot as they develop their learning skills!

Sanjeet: Even children should start _____ about their learning and what happens in the classroom. If they do think about their learning regularly, they will become more independent learners.

How do teenagers respond to being asked to participate?

Sanjeet: I think teenagers really like it when we ask them to think about what they are doing. When we ask them for their opinions, and _____ about what happens in class, they always respond positively.

Azmi: Definitely. It shows that we _____ and take them into consideration. I think this can really _____.

6.2 Discussion

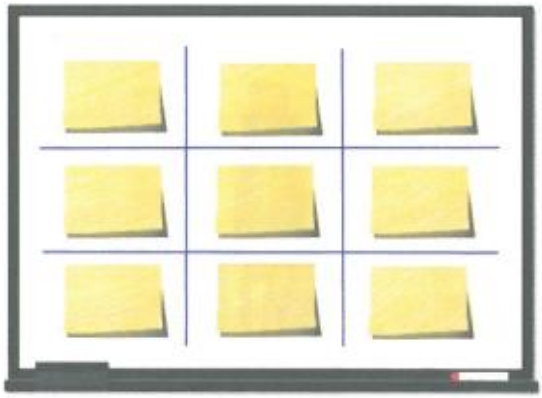
Work in groups of three. Take turns asking each other these questions.

1. Which decisions would you like to involve your learners in more?
2. Do your learners know that you value their opinions? How do/can you know?
3. How does learner feedback help increase motivation?
4. How are you training your learners to think for themselves?
5. Learner feedback should be an ongoing process. What can you change to make this true in your classroom?

7 Activity page

The page where you try out a classroom activity.

7.1 Three-in-a-row



Your trainer will give you instructions for this activity.

Did you enjoy the activity?
Could you use this technique with your learners?
What adaptations would you make?

8 Reflection

8.1 Message in a bottle

What is this?

Where might you see one of these?

Have you ever written a 'message in a bottle'?

Imagine there's an 'EfT3 bottle'. You are going to write a message anonymously on a piece of paper to put in the bottle.

Take a few minutes to reflect on this module. Then write a comment, suggestion, idea or question. Do it sensitively and constructively. The idea isn't to be negative.

Your trainer will collect the messages.

- Have you used this kind of reflection with your learners?
- If yes, was it effective? Would you do it differently next time?
- If not, why not?
- Would you like to try it with your learners?

What could you use to collect the reflections? Look at the ideas below!




Appendix 15: Aptis Test Sample

Speaking test

BRITISH COUNCIL

APTIS TRAINING MATERIAL

Mock Speaking Test – 12 minutes maximum

Outline
The speaking test consists of 4 different parts.
The candidate's responses are recorded.
A maximum of 5 marks are available for each task.
The test takes about 12 minutes.

Examiner reads everything from here onwards. The candidate speaks after the BEEP.

Part 1: Welcome to the Aptis speaking test. In this part I'm going to ask you three short questions about yourself and your interest.
You will have 30 seconds to reply to each question. Begin speaking when you hear this sound (BEEP)

- Please tell me about your first school. (BEEP)
- Tell me about the last time you visited an old friend (BEEP)
- Tell me about your favourite singer. (BEEP)

Part 2: In this part I am going to ask you to describe a picture. Then I will ask you two more questions about it. You'll have 45 seconds for each response. Begin speaking when your hear this sound (BEEP)

Can you describe this picture in detail for me (BEEP) (45 seconds)

- Tell me about a time when you laughed a lot. (BEEP)
- Do people from different countries laugh at the same things? (BEEP)

Reading test

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APTIS TRAINING MATERIAL

Aptis Reading

(25 Questions – 30 minutes)

Task 1

Choose one word (A, B or C) for each space and write the letter on the paper. The first one (0) is done for you as an example with the answer A marked on your answer paper.

Dear Sir,

My son, Kevin, left 0) __*A*__ two months ago and now he is looking for his first 1)_____. The problem is that companies always 2)____ they want people with experience, but how can he get experience if no one gives him a job? He reads the 3)_____ in the paper every day, but there is nothing for people like him. Today he's 4)_____ some gardening for our neighbours to 5)_____ a bit of money, but he needs a real job.

Mr. G Carter

EXAMPLE	0	A ***school***	B home	C me
	1	A work	B job	C occupation
	2	A say	B tell	C ask
	3	A news	B text	C adverts
	4	A making	B having	C doing
	5	A earn	B get	C spend

Writing test

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APTIS TRAINING MATERIAL

Task 2: You've joined the 'ORDER MEALS ONLINE' site. Fill in the form. Write in sentences. Use 20-30 words. You have 7 minutes.

MEMBER FORM

Please tell us about your favourite food and time when you prefer to have your meals.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Task 3: You are a member of MEALS DELIVERY ONLINE. You're talking to J. in the customer chat room. Talk to J. using complete sentences. Use 30 to 40 words per answer. You have 10 minutes.

J. Hi! I see you're new here. I joined a year ago after I started living alone. Why did you join?

You._____
_____
_____
_____

J. What do you think about the service?

You._____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Grammar test

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APTIS TRAINING MATERIAL

MODAL VERBS

(must, have to, mustn't, don't have to, should, shouldn't – for obligation and advice; must, can't, may, might, can – for deduction; can, can't, could, couldn't, be able to – for ability and possibility)
(-) means no modal

1. You _____ drink the tap water. It's not safe.
   a) shouldn't
   b) mustn't
   c) can't

2. We only have to be there at 1 o'clock and it's 9 o'clock now. We _____hurry.
   a) don't have to
   b) mustn't
   c) won't

3. You _____ submit the report by Friday, otherwise the boss will be furious.
   a) have to
   b) must
   c) should

4. The exhibition was free so I _____ pay.
   a) didn't have to
   b) mustn't
   c) hadn't to

5. In schools in England pupils _____ wear a uniform.
   a) must
   b) should
   c) have to

6. I think people who live abroad _____ learn the language of the country to be able to communicate with the locals.
   a) have to
   b) must
   c) should

7. This meeting is not obligatory. You _____ attend.
   a) don't must
   b) don't have to
   c) don't have

8. This dish is really spicy. It _____ have chilli in it.
   a) must
   b) may
   c) can't

Vocabulary test

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APTIS TRAINING MATERIAL

Aptis Vocabulary 1

(25 questions – 13 minutes)

Task 1

Finish each definition (1-5) using answers from the list (A-K). Use each answer once only. You will not need five of the answers (A-J). The answer to Question 0 is given on your answer paper as an example.

0. To argue is to __K.___
1. To check is to _____
2. To restrict is to _____
3. To ban is to _____
4. To boost is to _____
5. To allow is to _____

A. grow
B. control
C. increase
D. cut
E. permit
F. improve
G. examine
H. limit
I. prohibit
J. deteriorate
K. disagree

Task 2

Finish each sentence (6-10) using the word from the list (A-J) Use each word once only. You will not need five of the words (A-J).

6. I've got a terrible _____ in my shoulder.
7. That shirt really _____ you. It makes you look 10 years younger.
8. This piece of _____ will change the way we think about dinosaurs.
9. You can't believe anything you read in the newspaper. It's very _____.
10. The criminal was charged guilty by the _____.

A. court
B. bruise
C. matches
D. suits
E. research
F. accurate
G. throb
H. biased
I. ache
J. sentence

Task 3

Mark the letter on the right (A-J) that has the most similar meaning to the word on the left (11-15) (e.g. home=house). Use each word once only. You will not need five of the words (A-K).

11. generic
12. provisional
13. envision
14. supervise
15. impose

A. meager
B. resolve
C. manage
D. temporary
E. permanent
F. general
G. churn
H. visualise
I. demoralise
J. enforce

55