Chapter 11
Mobilizing Departments of English for the Post–Method Paradigm: Empowering Heads of Department to Make the Transition

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ABSTRACT
This chapter makes the claim that English Language Heads of Departments are best suited to lead transition efforts from a traditional to a post-method pedagogy Department of English. It claims that though they are lacking some requisite competencies, skills, and disposition to do so successfully, special training preparation to undertake this mobilization could have a positive impact. It gives a brief overview of the dynamics of HODs’ operational context and illustrates why these heads are best suited to influence their department members’ embrace of the post-method paradigm. Additionally, it will also discuss some of the challenges that these department heads could encounter during the transition period and ways to resolve them. Finally, it will recommend a theoretical training framework of support to bridge the gap of skills, competencies, and dispositions to make them more suited to aid transition to post-method departments.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9228-0.ch011
INTRODUCTION

Teachers’ colleges in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and other parts of the world provide pre-service teacher trainees with an immersion in the teaching profession by exposing them to several courses in general education, professional studies, subject specialization and by requiring some in-the-field/practicum experience. Erdiston Teachers’ Training College, in Barbados, described their program on their webpage as one that

is designed to cater to the initial training needs of untrained teachers or persons who are desirous of entering the teaching profession [and] that which will provide participants with a sound foundation in the theory and practice of education to enhance their personal and professional growth.

Massey University College of Humanities and Social Sciences, in New Zealand, promised a course in “Education [-that-] will give you the chance to take a wide range of courses looking at the mainstays of educational policy and practice” (para.,4). Generalized categories for these courses are professional studies, general education and specialist areas.

While teachers’ colleges provide an initiation in their students’ personal, professional, and psycho-social development, a reasonable argument could be advanced to suggest that in-service teachers will have to develop other skills, abilities, teaching strategies and habits of mind. Some examples of these other requirements of the job include keeping accurate records, planning differentiated instructions, making contributions to curriculum and participating in common planning. Additionally, in-service teachers will have to pursue professional development efforts and extra-curricular activities. Functioning as professional models and mentors for students, becoming life-long learners and, more often than not, making the adjustments to shifts in curriculum and perspectives are other aspects of their jobs. Most importantly, in the context of this discussion, new teachers will have to develop skills to help them meet post-method demands, particularly that of being able to generate their own methods of teaching English, based their individual students’ contextual needs (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). New teachers are not fully prepared for all of the diverse demands of their jobs during their four-year tenure at teacher training colleges or universities offering teacher-training.

Meeting these demands is by no means a small feat for newly minted teachers (Kelchtermans, n.d.; Quinn & Byllie 2004; Bryan 2012). As a consequence, it seems that much of the practical, teachable moments and moments of epiphany that will influence and concretize the type of pedagogy teachers will aspire to
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