

## Chapter XVII

**EMPOWERING TEACHERS TO MANAGE CHANGE  
IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

Vera Savić\*

*University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia*

Olivera Cekić-Jovanović

*University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia*

Joan Kang Shin

*George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, United States*

**Abstract:** In the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education, which is characterised by great changes and constant restructuring of education systems in order to improve student achievement, teachers face a number of challenges while playing their complex roles. The current context requires teachers to become lifelong learners able to reflect on their regular practice and ‘theorise from it and practice what they theorise’. High quality preservice and inservice teacher education constitutes a major prerequisite in supporting teachers’ development of required competences. The paper studies the contribution of a professional development program to empowering teachers as lifelong learners and managers of change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The participants in the study were 400 primary English language teachers in Serbia who completed the accredited professional development (PD) program titled *Theme-Based Instruction in Teaching English to Young Learners* in the period from 2014 to 2018. The study aimed to trace all six dimensions of teacher empowerment, a construct that recognises teachers as experts on teaching and learning and as active participants in making decisions. Six instruments were applied in the study and both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The results indicate that the participants gained the critical capacities of empowered teachers and acquired attitudes and beliefs necessary for successful management of change. Evidence showed that a PD program can be truly empowering when it allows teachers to apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills and to reflect on the program’s success in terms of student engagement and their own growth. These findings should be acknowledged by policy-makers and preservice and inservice teacher education institutions for supporting teacher empowerment as a critical competence needed for successful teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Keywords:** *continuous professional development, empowered teachers, reflective practice, pedagogical skills, management of change.*

## Introduction

The Serbian system of education has undergone major restructuring in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, introduced by the *Strategy for Education Development* and *The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Education Development in Serbia by 2020* (Pantić & Wubbels, 2010; Pantić & Wubbels, Mainhard, 2011). *The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Education Development in Serbia by 2020* was adopted by the Serbian government in 2012, and the recently published Report highlights all achievements in the period 2015–2018 in four broad areas, one of them being “to initiate the renovation of curricula and teaching and learning programs in primary and general secondary education in accordance with the orientation towards the outcomes and the development of competences (key and inter-curricular)” (MoESTD, 2019c: 8). In the area of primary education, instead of obligatory and recommended contents prescribed by the previous national primary curriculum, the new curriculum includes key concepts of curricular content, oriented towards outcomes and learner competences, in line with the recommendations issued by the Council of the European Union (2018) promoting key competences for lifelong learning, such as literacy, multilingualism, mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering, digital competence, personal, social and learning to learn competence, active citizenship, entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression.

The curricular changes have put new demands on teachers in terms of knowledge, skills and strategies needed to effectively introduce the policy changes into their classrooms. Since teachers have the most direct impact on student achievement (Edelenbos, Johnston, Kubanek 2006; Enever 2011, 2016; Garton, Copland, Burns, 2011; Hattie, 2015; Murphy, Evangelou, 2016; Pinter 2011; Savić, Shin, 2016), an important component of restructuring initiatives is enhancing the quality of preservice and inservice teacher education and empowering teachers as lifelong learners and managers of change occurring in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Furthermore, an adequate response to policy changes is needed in the area of preservice and inservice teacher education and professional development, i.e., teacher education curricula need to incorporate changes, while professional development (PD) programs need to respond to new educational demands. The chapter aims to shed more light on how professional development (PD) can contribute to building teachers’ awareness of their own power to successfully adapt to educational changes and new curricular requirements, and to effectively cater to the changing needs of their learners. More precisely, the chapter studies the impact of a PD program in Serbia on foreign language teachers’ capacities critical for successful management of change.

## Background of the Study

### *Educational Changes*

Globally, teachers' roles are changing under the influence of access to information resulting from extremely fast technological development (Pantić & Wubbles, 2012). Teachers now need to build capacity to face the new challenges: to learn to build new content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge relevant to the new requirements; to unlearn by abandoning "deeply held assumptions about what it means to be a teacher, what classrooms look like, what the essence of teaching and learning is" (Klein, 2008: 80); and to relearn by creating new concepts in these three areas. These teacher abilities are critical for giving teachers "the opportunity and the confidence to act upon [their] ideas as well as to influence the way [they] perform in [their] profession" (Murray, 2010: 3), and for equipping them with the appropriate competences to provide quality education, to manage change in their teaching contexts, and, above all, to instill in their learners "a disposition towards lifelong learning" (Day, 1999: 2). Although changes may be introduced by governments in a variety of ways and time periods, such changes are always obligatory (Day, 1999), and teachers are expected not only to deal with them, but they should also be ready to change themselves by unlearning old habits and attitudes and adopting new ones (Franklin, 2015). In order to be able to teach effectively today and in the future, teachers are required to develop transversal knowledge, skills and attitudes, apart from expanding their specialist and subject-specific competences (Huber & Mompoin-Gaillard, 2011; Cekić-Jovanović & Mihajlović, 2018).

The requirement for teachers to quickly acquire new pedagogical skills, to effectively introduce novelty into their classrooms, and to transform their attitudes and abandon some of their practices, makes management of educational changes rather demanding. This process does not always run smoothly as teachers may resist changes or be reluctant to change, so that the impact of the training programs aiming to introduce educational changes may often be minimal (Harris & Lázár, 2011). Research has found that novice teachers tend to teach in the ways that mirror the approaches of their previous education rather than the university curriculum or innovative approaches they have been introduced to in academic or PD programs. They may also find it too time-consuming to introduce changes while they are still developing their teacher personality, particularly if they are not supported either by the teaching materials or experienced colleagues in their teaching environments (Harris & Lázár, 2011). Summarising research results, Harris & Lázár, (2011) emphasize the following reasons for teachers' resistance to change: powerful misconceptions about teaching and learning they develop prior to attending teacher education courses, the absence of first-hand experience or knowledge in the given area,

feelings of incompetence due to insufficient training, or the inability to see the value of change. As a result, PD courses may be ineffective in terms of raising teachers' awareness of their own misconceptions or in relation to introducing sustainable changes into everyday practice.

Bringing about change in educational contexts may be achieved through teachers' feelings of self-efficacy, which need to be encouraged and supported (Bandura, 1994). It is a complex psychological process that requires "creating and strengthening self-beliefs of efficacy through the vicarious experiences provided by social models. [...] People seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire. Through their behavior and expressed ways of thinking, competent models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands" (Bandura, 1994: 3). The process of the development of new knowledge and skills is, therefore, best facilitated by quality PD programs that result in teacher empowerment for successful implementation of new programs (Pyle, Wade-Woolley, Hutchinson, 2011). It is widely accepted that transforming educational landscapes requires teachers to engage in continuing professional development (CPD) targeting the development of specific pedagogical skills and strategies, so that they can successfully face the current and future challenges of the teaching profession (Day 1999; Guskey 2002; Pyle, Wade-Woolley, Hutchinson, 2011). What is more, teachers need to be empowered to autonomously make decisions both about their career development and about their everyday practice. Continuing professional development and empowerment go hand in hand in building the key skills of 21<sup>st</sup> century educators.

### *Teacher Empowerment*

Generally, empowerment refers to "individuals' belief that they have the skills and knowledge to improve a situation in which they operate" (Bogler & Somech, 2004: 278). In the area of education, the term has been used to refer to the process of or the conditions for becoming an empowered teacher/educator (Guskey, 2002; Klein, 2008; Murray, 2010; Pyle, Wade-Woolley & Hutchinson, 2011), or to the capacities and strategies possessed by or needed for becoming an empowered teacher/educator (Aliakbari & Amoli, 2016; Bernat, 2008; Franklin, 2015; Stacy, 2013; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005). Teacher empowerment is "allowing teachers to be an active participant in the instructional decisions of the school [...] [and] recognizing teachers as the experts about teaching and learning issues, [allowing them to] be involved in quality professional learning and providing it [and] acknowledging teachers' major contributions to improving student achievement" (Squirre-Kelly, 2012: 19).

Short & Rinehart, (1992) have identified six dimensions of teacher empowerment: 1. decision making; 2. professional growth; 3. status; 4. self-efficacy; 5.

autonomy; and 6. impact. Teachers are empowered when they are allowed to make decisions about their teaching and work environments (*decision making*), and when they are provided with opportunities for their professional growth through collaborative work in teams and participation in professional learning of new strategies and skills (*professional growth*). To feel empowered, teachers need to believe that their work is valued and respected by colleagues, students, parents, and community members (*status*), that they have the necessary skills to help students learn (*self-efficacy*), and that they are competent to design curricula (*autonomy*). They are empowered when they believe that they can influence school life and school environment (*impact*). The authors have developed the scale for measuring teacher empowerment that has been used to determine how empowerment relates to constructs like teachers' commitment to teaching, organisational commitment, professional commitment, job satisfaction and student engagement (Aliakbari & Amoli, 2016; Bogler & Somech, 2004; Squire-Kelly, 2012; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005).

All six dimensions of teacher empowerment have been found to relate to teachers' commitment to teaching (Aliakbari, Amoli 2016). Moreover, research has shown positive correlation between teachers' job satisfaction and teacher empowerment, and evidence has been provided that teacher empowerment leads to job satisfaction and that there is an impact of job satisfaction on teachers' sense of empowerment (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005). Although there is still no solid evidence about the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement, some recent studies have shown that teacher empowerment has a direct impact on student achievement and that teachers' commitment to teaching has a positive effect on students' learning (Aliakbari & Amoli, 2016; Squire-Kelly 2012). Furthermore, there are indications that teacher empowerment is important in making pedagogical decisions, and can directly affect EFL student engagement and motivation (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005). Importantly, teacher empowerment can play a decisive role in the implementation of new programs (Pyle, Wade-Woolley & Hutchinson, 2011).

Franklin, (2015) argues that one of the guiding principles for empowering educators is the introduction of a Big Idea of 'learning, unlearning and re-learning', and stresses the significance of these capacities in higher education settings:

Higher education classrooms must be the place where thinking occurs. The work of the classroom must be one of co-learning in which lessons are designed such that students construct meaning and connect in a networked environment. We have to move to a new model of Bloom's Taxonomy in which we teach conceptually and the students learn the skills as they work through the materials to learn the 'big' idea. The problems of today and tomorrow will need to be solved

through big ideas. Ideas matter; big ideas are what excite, engage and motivate learners. [...] Changing instruction to embrace big ideas, the use of technology to flip a classroom or connect students in participatory learning requires an educator that is willing to learn, unlearn and relearn new pedagogies for teaching, learning and moving higher education forward. (Franklin, 2015: 1091–1092)

The Big Idea of ‘learning, unlearning and relearning’ is particularly important in teacher education, as teaching at all levels involves the process of making difficult changes in one’s teaching practice through learning new content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, through unlearning by abandoning old assumptions, and through relearning by creating new concepts about effective teaching practices (Klein, 2008). It is argued that “the demands on teachers to learn, unlearn, and relearn, more and more require that the model of the isolated teacher be set aside” in order to build “professional communities that support learning, unlearning, and relearning” by engaging teachers in PD (Klein, 2008: 95). Murray, (2010: 3) links PD very closely to teacher empowerment, arguing:

One of the main reasons to pursue professional development is to be empowered – to have the opportunity and the confidence to act upon your ideas as well as to influence the way you perform in your profession. Empowerment is the process through which teachers become capable of engaging in, sharing control of, and influencing events and institutions that affect their lives. Feeling empowered can also manifest leadership skills, and teacher empowerment leads to improvement in student performance and attitude.

To conclude, teacher empowerment can be a key to introducing and implementing curricular changes. However, there may be a number of obstacles to achieving teacher empowerment (Stacy, 2013), which calls for providing quality PD programs to support teachers in building the six dimensions of empowerment (Aliakbari & Amoli, 2016; Klein, 2008; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Pyle, Wade-Woolley & Hutchinson, 2011; Stacy, 2013).

### *Professional Development*

Behind any teacher’s learning and development is a desire to have an impact on the lives of their students (Day, 1999). Consequently, PD programmes have three major goals, i.e., to generate “change in the classroom practices of teachers, change in their attitudes and beliefs, and change in the learning outcomes of students” (Guskey, 2002: 383). PD programs provide teachers with “opportunities to participate in a range of informal and formal activities which

will assist them in processes of review, renewal, enhancement of thinking and practice, and, importantly, commitment of the mind and heart” (Day, 1999: 1). Continuing PD, therefore, is the process through which teachers are equipped with resources to plan and practice new ideas and approaches, and enhance their own theoretical knowledge and pedagogical and reflective skills. It is made effective when teachers manage to achieve a balance “not only in the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of their teaching but also in the ‘why’ in terms of their core ‘moral’ purposes” (Day, 1999: 7). The success of any ongoing PD process is, therefore, grounded as much in content knowledge and practice as “in the context of particular students and classrooms” (Klein, 2008: 85) and depends on the development of reflective skills and on applying a reflective approach to teaching.

Since PD has been recognised as a crucial component in enhancing the quality of teaching and the success in achieving learning outcomes, the influence of PD programs on these two areas has extensively been studied (Büyükyavuz, 2013; Day, 1999; Guskey 2002; Ingvarson, Meiers, Beavis, 2003, 2005; Savić & Shin, 2016). Examining the factors that affect the impact of PD programs on teachers’ content knowledge, classroom practice and learner outcomes, Ingvarson, Meiers, Beavis, (2005) have found a dynamic relationship among these variables and a significant improvement of learning outcomes as a result of enhanced teacher efficacy. The factor that has been found to correlate significantly with the impact of a PD program is teachers’ belief that the program has influenced learners’ learning outcomes. This leads to a conclusion that “[p]rograms that model effective practice and invite teachers to try them out tend to be more successful than programs that devote resources primarily to changing attitudes first” (Ingvarson, Meiers, Beavis, 2005: 16). Another significant finding of this study refers to duration of PD programmes, both in terms of contact hours of training and the overall duration of a program (i.e. extension in time), and both variables have been found to contribute to enhancing a program’s impact. Furthermore, the school context and the professional community of teachers in it have been found to play an important role in making a PD program effective (Patton, Parker, Tannehill, 2015). For a change to be introduced, teachers need to be given time and opportunity to discuss with colleagues and administrators what and how learners are learning and how successful they are (Ingvarson, Meiers, Beavis, 2005). However, some recent studies conducted with English language teachers show that, although teachers generally value PD programs, young teachers usually lack proper understanding of PD and need guidance in planning their careers (Patton, Parker, Tannehill, 2015), while experienced teachers see a number of obstacles to fitting PD activities into their busy schedule (Büyükyavuz, 2013).

Nevertheless, effective PD can help teachers to build capacities to face the challenges and changes. Their understanding of a change is shaped by the

depth of their reflection on practice and by the scope of feedback they get on their classroom practice (Ingvarson, Meiers, Beavis, 2005). Besides, implementation of new initiatives depends on teachers' sense of empowerment that "provides teachers with the motivation to and the belief that they can improve their practice" (Pyle, Wade-Woolley, Hutchinson, 2011: 259). Innovation and change can, however, be introduced only upon careful and detailed planning of PD and upon deciding which skills, knowledge and attitudes must be acquired by all involved in managing change in a certain educational context.

### *Educational System in Serbia: Curricular Changes and Professional Development of English Language Teachers*

In the last two decades there have been significant curricular changes in the Serbian system of education that affected the area of foreign language teaching, the first one being the introduction of compulsory foreign language learning from primary Grade One (children aged 6.5 years) in 2003, and a later introduction of English as a compulsory school subject from the very beginning of primary education. Moreover, a second foreign language was made obligatory from primary Grade Five (age 10.5), while the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) was applied for restructuring the language curricula (Filipović, Vučo, Djurić, 2007). The implementation of early language learning policy in Serbia was part of a global trend of lowering the beginning of formal English language learning and teaching (Shin & Crandall, 2014), which posed a number of challenges, a major one being a shortage of language teachers qualified to teach young learners (Zein, 2019).

Generally speaking, in the past two decades teachers in Serbia did not receive extensive capacity building for their new roles in the selection of textbooks, participation in school or curriculum development, or cooperation with parents and the community (Pantić, Wubbels, Mainhard, 2011). Preservice teacher preparation remained primarily, if not exclusively, concerned with subject matter content and, to varying degrees, with pedagogy and psychology, approached from disciplinary foundations rather than in terms of educational value (Pantić, Wubbels, Mainhard, 2011). Moreover, inservice teacher training was the responsibility of the local authorities, yet without the resources and the authority to allocate funds for teacher training activities.

In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the main document that guided educational policy changes has been The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Education Development in Serbia by 2020, adopted in 2012 (MoESTDS, 2019c). The aim of this document was to guide the planning and preparation of the new national Law on Education System Foundations of Serbia, passed in 2017, and followed by primary grade curricula in 2018 and 2019



(MoESTDS, 2017a, 2017b, 2018, 2019a, 2019b). The new primary foreign language curriculum prescribed by the Law requires teachers to focus on defining appropriate objectives in teaching and applying approaches and materials to achieve them. Primary EFL teachers are expected to prepare children to achieve the new standards for foreign language proficiency at the end of primary education, determined and published by the Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation in Serbia, structured as three groups of learner competences: pragmatic, linguistic and intercultural, all defined with a number of descriptors at three levels, from basic, through intermediate, to advanced (Najdanović Tomić, 2017). As communicative competence is given priority in the new curriculum, teachers are required to contextualise their teaching by introducing self-created and self-selected materials from different sources, and, most importantly, by applying a cross-curricular approach to language teaching. Moreover, teachers are encouraged through primary curriculum and several documents published to assist them in applying the curriculum instructions (Najdanović Tomić, 2017) to introduce innovative approaches, like project-based learning (PBL) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and to apply formative assessment as a major form of monitoring learners' progress.

Extensive training of foreign language teachers for applying the new standards in their particular contexts was provided online by the Institute for the Improvement of Education in Serbia as late as in 2018. The training focused on determining the teaching objectives in terms of developing particular learner competences, and on identifying cross-curricular themes that could be transformed into projects, but lacked the development of teachers' competences for designing the curriculum, for selecting, adapting and designing quality multi-modal teaching materials, and for planning the lessons that would integrate a variety of subject-area content and language. The training in these key skills was timely provided in the period 2014-2018 by a PD program titled *Theme-Based Instruction in Teaching English to Young Learners* (TBI in TEYL) (Savić 2014; Savić & Shin, 2016). Although this PD program for primary English language teachers was accredited by the Institute for the Improvement of Education in Serbia, it was not as large-scale as the training provided by the Institute for the Improvement of Education in Serbia in 2018. Nevertheless, the effects of *TBI in TEYL* program were monitored and measured for the whole period of four consecutive years while it was carried out throughout Serbia and will be presented in the Study section of this chapter. Given that well planned and conducted PD programs may greatly contribute to empowering teachers to manage change affecting their particular teaching contexts, the paper aims to examine how the *TBI in TEYL* PD program affected teachers' empowerment based on Short and Rinehart's (1992) six dimensions of teacher empowerment.

The *TBI in TEYL* PD program was accredited as a training program for practising EFL teachers in state primary schools. It was a three-day inservice

seminar bearing 24 hours of PD, and was unique in terms of quality and open access<sup>1</sup> as all 22 seminars conducted in the course of four consecutive years were offered free of charge. It was designed to respond to the pedagogical requirements of teaching English as a foreign language to young learners (aged 7–11) and to train teachers to introduce innovation into their practice in terms of contents (cross-curricular themes, culture contents) and methodology (designing problem-based activities, development of learners' communicative competence, critical and creative thinking, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and fostering learning through storytelling, multimedia materials and formative assessment). The training involved three stages: 1) Stage One: two-day intensive training in theme-based instruction and the best practices in teaching languages to young learners; 2) Stage Two: two-month participant team work on developing and teaching thematic units in the participants' contexts; and 3) Stage Three: one-day workshop involving the participants' presentations of team-created thematic units and their reports on the thematic lessons taught in their own contexts, followed by reflections, discussions and self-, peer- and trainer evaluation.

At the time of commencing the program in 2014, the aim was to train teachers to introduce innovation that involved an effective child-friendly EFL pedagogy. By the end of the fourth academic year of the program's implementation, it could be regarded as a positive response to the requirements of the new primary EFL curriculum introduced in Serbia in the same academic year (2017–2018).

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of teacher professional development in *TBI in TEYL* program on six dimensions of Serbian EFL teachers' sense of empowerment, that is decision making, professional growth, autonomy, self-efficacy, status and impact. Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. In what ways did *TBI in TEYL* program contribute to enhancing opportunities for perceived decision making, autonomy and professional growth of EFL teachers in Serbia?
2. In what ways and to what extent did *TBI in TEYL* program contribute to enhancing a sense of self-efficacy, status and impact of EFL teachers in Serbia?

---

<sup>1</sup> The funds for training 16 teacher trainers (in collaboration with an expert from a US university) and for conducting 22 seminars were provided with five grants awarded by the American Embassy in Belgrade in the period 2013–2018.

3. In what ways and to what extent did *TBI in TEYL* program contribute to EFL teachers' willingness to learn, unlearn and relearn content knowledge and pedagogical skills?

### *Method*

Mixed methods were used and both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed with the statistical analysis package SPSS and by categorising qualitative data (answers to open-ended questions) through a process of thematic analysis.

### *Participants*

The sample involved exactly 400 EFL teachers who had completed *TBI in TEYL* PD program in the period 2014–2018 (see Tables 1 and 2). They were drawn from 255 state schools located in 97 towns throughout Serbia, and taught English in town schools, village schools (or village branches of town schools), or in both urban and country schools (see Table 2). Regarding the length of experience in TEYL, almost two thirds of the participants were at the beginning of their careers with up to 10 years of experience, while the rest were experienced teachers of English with more than 10 years of experience in the field (see Table 1). A great majority of the participants held bachelor's degrees as fully qualified English language teachers, a small minority were class teachers eligible to teach English, while about a fifth of the participants held master's degrees in English philology (see Table 1). The participants were mainly female, approximately representing differences in the overall ratio of women to men in TEYL in Serbian state primary schools.

*Table 1: Participants' experience in TEYL, qualification and gender*

Experience in TEYL			Qualification			Gender		
Years of experience	Frequency	Percent	Title	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
0-10	258	64.5	BA English teacher	278	69.5	Female	363	90.8
11-20	126	31.5	BA class teacher	41	10.3	Male	37	9.2
21-30	16	4.0	Master	77	19.3			
Total	400	100.0	Other	4	1.0	Total	400	100.0

The sampling was random, as teachers voluntarily applied for being trained within the program, which affected the sizes of the 22 seminar groups (ranging from 6 to 29 participants) (see Table 2).

*Table 2: Number of seminars, venues, participants, towns and schools represented, and evaluation grade awarded by the participants*

Academic Year	No. of seminars (venue)	No. of participants	No. of towns represented	No. of schools represented	Grade (M) (on the scale 0-4)
2014–2015	Jagodina (FEJ <sup>2</sup> )	22	6	14	3.97
	Belgrade (AC <sup>3</sup> )	22	4	15	3.92
	Novi Sad (AC)	9	3	8	3.87
	Kragujevac (AC)	8	2	8	3.79
	Nis (AC)	6	2	4	3.90
	Bujanovac (AC)	9	2	8	3.84
	Vranje(AC)	27	4	12	3.76
2015–2016	Kruševac (RPDC <sup>4</sup> )	26	4	19	3.86
	Belgrade (AC)	26	7	20	3.54
	Čačak (RPDC)	8	4	5	3.79
	Kikinda (RPDC)	16	6	13	3.82
	Nis (RPDC)	29	8	16	3.87
2016–2017	Leskovac (RPDC)	20	7	13	3.90
	Užice (RPDC)	14	5	10	3.85
	Novi Pazar (RPDC)	26	3	12	3.87
	Belgrade (AC)	14	7	9	3.86
	Niš (RPDC)	22	9	14	3.85
2017–2018	Šabac (RPDC)	11	2	6	3.62
	Knjaževac (RPDC)	28	4	15	3.73
	Zrenjanin (RPDC)	16	1	13	3.74
	Smederevo (RPDC)	26	3	13	3.88
	Kragujevac (RPDC)	15	4	8	3.95
TOTAL	22	400	97	255	-

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Education in Jagodina

<sup>3</sup> American Corner

<sup>4</sup> Regional Professional Development Centre

The participant seminar groups represented geographically distant areas located throughout the country (see Figure 1), the majority of the venues being outside the major big cities.



*Figure 1: Seminar venues and location of the participants' schools on the map of Serbia*

The seminar venues involved very well-equipped educational training centres (six American corners and seven Regional Professional Development Centres; see Table 2), with modern technological devices and internet access, necessary for the multimodal training materials.

### *Instruments*

The participants' attitudes and reflections were surveyed with a number of instruments used for monitoring the effects of the PD program. For the purpose of the study, the following sets of data were collected: 1) KWL Chart; 2) Stage One Evaluation Form; 3) Stage Three Self-Evaluation Form; 4) Final Evaluation; 5) ZUOV Questionnaire; and 6) Trainers' notes. The first four sets of

data were designed by the authors, while questionnaire 5 was the official questionnaire created and implemented by the Institute for the Improvement of Education in Serbia (ZUOV for short in Serbian), which also provided background and demographic data about the participants. All five sets of data were questionnaires with both closed and open-ended questions and are referred to as questionnaires 1–5. In Stage Three trainers' notes with comments on thematic unit plans and the participants' presentations were collected in a structured form developed by the authors and analysed for major themes.

### *Procedure and data analysis*

Stage Three of the PD program was the final day of the training held for each of 22 seminar groups approximately two months after the initial two-day training in Stage One. The period between Stage One and Stage Three was Stage Two that was not officially structured but rather organised independently by small participant teams to work on planning a thematic unit collaboratively and teaching it in their own contexts. In Stage Three the participants shared the results, reflected on their own achievements and experiences, and self-evaluated the effectiveness of their collaborative experience and their classroom application. Two questionnaires (questionnaires 1 and 2) were distributed to the participants at the beginning (questionnaire 1) and at the end (questionnaire 2) of the two-day initial training in Stage One, while the other four instruments (questionnaires 3, 4, 5 and 6) were applied on the final day of the program, i.e., in Stage Three. The SPSS program was used for statistical analysis, while the answers to open-ended questions were analysed for recurring themes.

## **Results**

The results will be presented as the participants' beliefs, attitudes and reflections obtained in two stages of the program: Stage One and Stage Three.

### *Participants' beliefs, attitudes and reflections in Stage One of the PD Program*

Although the seminar groups differed in terms of the participants' background knowledge of content-based instructional approach to teaching English to young learners, general thematic analysis of the first column (K = know) of KWL charts, filled in at the beginning of the training (before the content of the program was introduced), indicated that a half of the respondents knew nothing or very little about TBI (Savić & Shin, 2016; Cekić-Jovanović & Mila-nović, 2019), while the results collected through questionnaire 2 at the end of Stage One, after two-day initial training, indicated that about 70 percent of

the participants were mainly or entirely acquainted with the approach. Only a quarter of the respondents reported that TBI ideas were mainly or completely new to them (see Table 3).

*Table 3: Participants' evaluation of the content of TBI in TEYL training in terms of novelty of ideas (on a four-level rating scale)*

How much are the ideas new to you?		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Missed	20	5.0
	Completely new	11	2.8
	Mainly new	85	21.3
	Mainly familiar	229	57.3
	Entirely familiar	55	13.8
	Total	400	100.0

At the end of Stage One the participants were asked to evaluate the usefulness of the program's content on a four-level scale (see Table 4). A great majority (almost 90%) believed that the content was completely or mainly useful.

*Table 4: Participants' evaluation of the content of TBI in TEYL training in terms of its usefulness*

How much is the content useful to you?		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Completely useful	263	65.8
	Mainly useful	91	22.8
	Slightly useful	43	10.8
	Useless	3	0.8
	Total	400	100.0

Responding to the open-ended question about the most useful concept of the two-day training, the participants provided answers that involved various ideas and aspects of the training (see Table 5). The responses were grouped on the basis of a recurring theme and are presented in order of frequency. It is significant to note that the most frequent answers related to the strategies and techniques were how to use storytelling and picture books and how to apply multimedia in the classroom. Moreover, the participants highly valued the ideas about how to develop young learners' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, especially their

critical thinking, and how to use blogs, songs and games. Demonstration of a thematic unit, which was held in the form of a workshop, was found to be very useful, as well as creative activities used in the training to exemplify the basic principles of teaching young learners and applying thematic approach in the language classroom. Some participants also found the suggestions about how to integrate the language skills in the classroom useful.

*Table 5: Participants' beliefs about the most useful contents of the training (in order of frequency)*

No.	<b>For me, the most useful content of the training has been</b>
1	Storytelling/Picture books
2	Multimedia
3	21 <sup>st</sup> century skills for young learners
4	Demonstration of a thematic unit
5	Developing critical thinking skills
6	Songs
7	Games
8.	Creative activities
9.	Integration of skills

Three open-ended questions in Stage One evaluation Form (questionnaire 2) were designed to call for an overall reappraisal of the participants' own pedagogical practice under the background of the thematic approach training. The participants were asked to devise an action plan involving the decisions which strategies and techniques they planned to introduce into their pedagogical practice, which to keep and which to abandon. The responses were analysed on the basis of the frequency of recurring themes and the results are given in Table 6 in order of frequency.



*Table 6: Participants' action plans based on the initial training (in order of frequency)*

No.	Based on the training in TBI Program, my action plan is to		
	start	continue	stop
1.	Using stories and storytelling	Using multimedia	Using some traditional methods
2.	Creating thematic units and using TBI	Developing 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills	Forcing grammar tests
3.	Giving children interesting activities	Using songs	Using a coursebook or sticking to it
4.	Developing critical thinking in the classroom	Using stories	Being rigid
5.	Using multimedia and ICT	Using the internet	
6.	Improving ICT literacy	Developing critical thinking in the classroom	
7.	Developing creativity in the classroom	Using CLIL/TBI	
8.	Doing more group work	Being creative	
9.	Doing crafts	Improving ICT literacy	
10.	Having lessons outside and organising activities in which children are more physically active	Using role play and real-life communication	
11.	Using a blog	Using TPR	
12.	Using the wiki	Using flashcards	
13.	Using songs	Using group work	
14.	Using riddles	Preparing exhibitions and plays	
15.	Using cartoons	Using riddles	
16.		Using games	
17.		Using picturebooks	
18.		Using a blog	
19.		Using poems	

The participants' reflections on their new experiences in initial TBI training in Stage One indicated the areas of professional development they valued most and planned to introduce into their everyday practice ('start'), which

pedagogical practices were already part of their everyday practice and were recognised by them as ‘good practice’ (‘continue’), and which of their own regular pedagogical practices they found to be ‘bad practice’ and decided to abandon (‘stop’). As many as 19 different themes were proposed by the participants.

To sum up, the data collected in Stage One indicated different levels of familiarity of the participants with the concept of TBI before and after the training, as well as a very high level of usefulness attributed to the program. Moreover, the data show the participants’ willingness to better their practice by implementing the ‘good’ pedagogical practices both by introducing the new techniques and by abandoning the ‘bad’ ones.

*Partisipants’ beliefs, attitudes and reflections in Stage Three of the PD Program*

The self-evaluation questionnaire (questionnaire 3) required the participants to reflect on their experiences, both on difficulties and benefits, of designing a thematic unit in collaboration within their teams in Stage Two. These were open-ended questions and the findings were analysed for recurring themes. Table 7 shows the main difficulties reported by the participants and the ways of solving them.

*Table 7: Self-reported difficulties experienced in teamwork and solutions (in order of frequency)*

No.	Difficulties	Solutions
1.	Finding and creating appropriate materials and activities	Looking for a variety of activities
2.	Using ICT	Asking IT teachers for help
3.	Organising collaborative work	Using the internet, Viber, or Google forms
4.	Fitting the TU into the syllabus	Consulting other colleagues at school
5.	Using wikispaces for uploading the unit plans	Changing the syllabus
6.	CLIL	
7.	Time management	
8.	Having too many ideas and too much material	

The difficulties referred to the relationships within the teams and to practical constraints of working with members from different schools and towns, then to using technology, and finally to designing a TU (four lessons connected thematically) in the way that they allowed learning the language and the

content simultaneously in interesting, appealing and engaging activities. Moreover, there were formal restrictions, such as the existing syllabus, that had to be overcome. The solutions reported did not respond to all the challenges, but mainly to those that referred to technology, the syllabus and the provision of teaching materials.

More information on Stage Two collaboration and teaching content-based lessons was obtained through an open-ended question in the self-evaluation questionnaire (instrument 3) asking the participants to reflect on the benefits of teamwork and teaching a TU in Stage Two. The data were analysed by applying the interpretational analysis method, and are presented in Table 8.

*Table 8: Self-reported benefits of teamwork and teaching a TU (in order of frequency)*

No.	Benefits
1.	Cooperation, teamwork and collaboration
2.	Fitting the TU into the syllabus
3.	Learning new games
4.	Getting new ideas
5.	Sharing ideas
6.	Finding and designing appropriate materials
7.	Using ICT
8.	Using multimedia
9.	Connecting other subjects with English
10.	Learning more and more
11.	Storytelling
12.	Pupils are more interested in thematic language teaching
13.	Brainstorming ideas

The perceived benefits of designing a TU in collaboration mapped most of the difficulties, like collaborative work, fitting the TU into the syllabus, using ICT and multimedia, finding and designing appropriate materials, and cross-curricular language teaching. Unique to benefits were the participants' self-reported learning, storytelling and increased pupils' interest.

Asked to self-evaluate their expertise in planning a TU in terms of content, activities, teaching materials and syllabus fit, the participants felt they had achieved the highest expertise in selecting appropriate activities, and the lowest in selecting and designing teaching materials, although all TBI expertise components were rated rather high (over grade 8, on a scale 5–10) (see Table 9).

Table 9: Self-evaluation of participants' own expertise in planning a TU (on a scale 5 – poor to 10 – excellent)

		Expertise			
		TU content	TU activities	TU materials	TU syllabus fit
N	Valid	400	400	400	400
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		8,815	<b>8,913</b>	8,808	8,783

Final evaluation (questionnaire 3) involved overall evaluation of the PD program in terms of developing and enhancing the participants' professional expertise. A great majority of the participants (96%) believed that the program had contributed to their professional competences substantially or very much (see Table 10), while the answers *not at all* and *a little* were not chosen by the participants.

Table 10: Self-reported contribution of the PD program to enhancing the participants' own professional expertise (on a five-point rating scale, from not at all to substantially)

	Scale	Frequency	Percent
Valid	Substantially	159	39.8
	Very much	225	56.3
	Somewhat	16	4.0
	Total	400	100.0

Final Evaluation questionnaire (questionnaire 4) was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the PD program in terms of the participants' self-reported acquisition of new knowledge and pedagogical skills. It involved a number of statements with a five-point scale of agreement, from 0 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree. The participants were mostly satisfied with the extent to which the PD program responded to their needs, deepened their understanding of TBI and how their TU encouraged learner participation in the classroom.

Questionnaire 5, ZUOV questionnaires required the participants to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the 22 seminars on a scale from 0–4 (0 – strongly disagree; 1 – disagree; 2 – neutral; 3 – agree; 4 – strongly agree) in terms of the content presented, its usefulness, the presenters' expertise, communicative

skills, and appropriateness of feedback provided, venue, time, and technology applied. All of the 22 seminars were rated excellent, with grades over 3.50, ranging from 3.54 to 3.97 (see Table 2).

Finally, trainers' notes with comments on thematic unit plans and the participants' presentations of the TU content and of its practical classroom application in Stage Three were analysed for major themes. Three areas appeared to be significant and interconnected: 1) Content of a TU; 2) Collaboration of team members; and 3) Learners' interest and motivation. Creative and innovative TU materials resulted as a rule from collaborative efforts of teams that reported and displayed excellent communication and collaboration, and success in motivating and engaging all the learners in a class. The reports also involved results of collaborative efforts within schools presented by the respondents, that included not only effective language teacher collaboration, but also the participants' collaborative work with subject teachers (e.g. Art teacher) in designing and selecting creative teaching materials for cross-curricular language teaching, such as origami, or appropriate video materials (e.g. about housing or food throughout the world). However, the trainers noted down that even in cases when the materials were not so varied (e.g. the use of simple flashcards), the participants reported fun and enjoyment in the language classroom. The trainers reported about extremely enthusiastic teams consisting of the participants from different schools that had managed to collaborate successfully on designing a TU by using Google forms or connecting on social networks, and succeeded in attracting the attention and admiration of all the faculty by displaying learners' products in school halls and participating in the thematic day activities. They assessed their new professional actions as highly supported by the school management and other colleagues and having an effect on school life.

On the other hand, there were presentations given by single members of teams, when other team members failed to be present and participate in Stage Three, that lacked creativity, and in whose lessons the learners did not show much interest in the activities. In such cases a TU was mainly a product of a single participant who had done all the work in Stage Two of the program. However, the trainers reported a very small number of such presentations.

The above data show a rather comprehensive and consistent display of the participants' attitudes, beliefs and reflections on how effective the PD program was in improving not only their own pedagogical knowledge and skills, but also their own readiness to share and learn from peers.

#### *Correlation analyses of the participants' attitudes and beliefs*

Correlation analyses of the relationship between the participants' attitudes and their qualification, gender or teaching experience, showed no

statistical significance. However, correlation analysis between the participants' attitudes at the end of Stage One and those at the end of Stage Two (ANOVA test) showed that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < .001$ , see Table 11).

Table 11: ANOVA test scores

Total score					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	13334.251	36	370.396	35.520	.0003
Within Groups	3743.636	359	10.428		
Total	17077,886	395			

The statistical significance indicates a factor or factors that made the difference. Although there is no statistical analysis that might indicate the exact variable(s), it can be assumed that the PD training process resulted in significant changes.

All above results will be discussed in the following section in terms of teacher empowerment.

## Discussion

The data described in the previous section will be discussed in the sequence of the research questions.

### Research Question 1

The answer to this research question was obtained by applying the self-evaluation questionnaire (questionnaire 3). The results indicated a number of challenging situations identified by the participants that provided opportunities for their decision making in terms of introducing changes required for introducing an innovative approach into their teaching practice (see Table 7). The critical decisions involved issues related to scheduling and curriculum content, i.e., fitting the TU into the syllabus, which directly affected the participants' work (Bogler & Somech, 2004). Moreover, selection of materials and the process of planning a TU provided opportunities for developing autonomy as the participants expressed a feeling to freely make classroom decisions, from choosing the teaching materials to overall instructional planning.

What is more, the participants' decisions reflected their perception that the school environment provided opportunities for them to grow professionally

and expand their own knowledge and skills in order to successfully introduce the innovative TBI approach, like ICT skills, using multimedia in teaching, learning cross-curricular content and creating appropriate teaching material (see Table 5). The participants reported the usefulness of the PD program for their teaching practice (see Table 4) and its contribution to their own professional growth through horizontal learning and sharing at school (Bogler & Somach, 2004; Short & Rinehart, 1992; Squire-Kelly, 2012, Golubović-Ilić, Ćirković-Miladinović, Cekić-Jovanović, 2010).

### *Research Question 2*

The second research question was answered through the analysis of the data obtained by applying the self-evaluation questionnaire (questionnaire 3), final evaluation questionnaire (questionnaire 4), ZUOV questionnaire (questionnaire 5) and the trainers' observation notes (questionnaire 6). The results indicated that the participants had developed a very high sense of self-efficacy in terms of upgrading the competences to help learners learn and to increase their motivation (see Table 8). The self-reported areas of very high expertise included planning a TU, selecting TU content and materials, and fitting the TU lessons into the existing syllabus (see Table 9). What is more, the participants' rated the contribution of the program to enhancing their professional competences extremely high (see Table 10). The participants' feeling of mastery in knowledge and teaching practice was also noted by the trainers (questionnaire 6) who reported of the participants' accounts of increased learner enjoyment and engagement in the TU activities (Bogler & Somach, 2004; Short & Rinehart 1992; Squire-Kelly, 2012).

Regarding status and impact, a great majority of the participants reported a high level of collaboration and horizontal teaching in schools where they had opportunities to share their new expertise (thematic day activities) (questionnaire 6). Moreover, in their presentations they reported about successful collaboration both with other language teachers and ICT and other subject teachers at school (see Table 8), expressing a belief that their new professional actions were highly supported by the school management and other colleagues and had an effect on school life (Bogler & Somach, 2004; Short & Rinehart, 1992; Squire-Kelly, 2012). From the participants' report on effective teamwork in the process of creating a TU as a major benefit of the PD program (see Table 8) it can be concluded that their sense of status and impact was highly assessed.

### *Research Question 3*

The question related to the PD program's contribution to the participants' willingness to learn, unlearn and relearn content knowledge and pedagogical

skills was answered with data collected with all six instruments used in the study. The participants' awareness of the need for acquiring new knowledge and skills was revealed by analysing their reflections in the KWL chart on what they knew (K) about TBI approach before the training and wanted to know (W) about it before the training. The areas of their learning were revealed by thematic analysis of the column "learned" (L) in the KWL chart and by studying the responses related to the action plan based on the initial training, then to the benefits of teamwork, and finally to the newly developed areas of professional expertise. General learning about the innovative approach was indicated by an increased number of the participants familiar with TBI at the end of Stage One as compared to much lower percentage familiar with it before the training (see Table 3). The areas of intensive learning involved pedagogical skills for using storytelling and picture books in TBI, applying multimedia, developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for young learners, developing critical thinking skills, using songs, games, creative activities and integrating the language skills in teaching young learners. Moreover, the participants also reported a high level of expertise in planning TU activities, developing TU content, designing TU materials and fitting a TU into the syllabus (see Table 9).

One important aspect of learning in the PD program resulted from creating a community of practice (Klein, 2008; Murray, 2010) for completing the practical tasks of the program, that allowed the participants to gain competences needed for collaborative work, using ICT and multimedia, finding and designing appropriate materials, and cross-curricular language teaching. Although some aspects of teamwork were challenging, they provided opportunities for learning and problem solving. Moreover, sharing within the community enabled the participants to develop skills specific not only to cross-curricular language teaching, but typical of effective early language teaching, such as storytelling and using games in the YL classroom (see Table 8).

Newly acquired knowledge and pedagogical skills were summarised as part of the participants' action plans to be introduced into their regular teaching, indicating their empowerment through learning. Significantly, a great number of identical pedagogical practices were recognised both as newly learned and worth being introduced into practice, and as already practised and worth being kept, indicating the differences in the participants' experience in TEYL generally. For example, while a number of participants expressed readiness to introduce storytelling, a number of the participants reported planning to keep that type of good practice. The same holds for applying multimedia in the classroom, using technology and the internet, developing critical thinking and creativity, using group work, blogs, songs, and riddles.

On the other hand, the decision to abandon the practices they did not find effective based on the newly gained content and pedagogical knowledge and



skills, indicated the participants' capacities to unlearn (Franklin, 2015). The decision to reject grammar explanations and tests as ineffective traditional methods is fully in line with the current theory on teaching languages to young learners (Cameron, 2008; Pinter, 2011; Savić & Shin, 2013; Shin & Crandall, 2014), showing the process of relearning what good practice of early language teaching should be like (Franklin, 2015). In that way the participants gained the critical capacities of empowered teachers able to relearn by introducing innovative approaches, changing the syllabus, fitting the thematic unit into the existing syllabus, introducing subject content into the language curriculum, collaborating and sharing with colleagues in successful teamwork.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and the PD program for training primary English language teachers in Serbia. The results indicate that there was an impact of the training in *TBI in TEYL* program on all dimensions of teacher empowerment as well as on the participants' willingness to learn, unlearn and relearn (Franklin 2015). A PD program that requires teachers to apply an innovative approach in their teaching contexts indispenibly demands the introduction of a number of changes into regular practice, followed by the process of learning, unlearning and relearning. The effectiveness of *TBI in TEYL* program depended on the participants', i.e., EFL teachers' past experience, their abilities, willingness, institutional support and social context (Day, 1999), which provided opportunities for enhanced decision making, autonomy, and professional growth, and potentially increased the participants' feeling of self-efficacy, status and impact (Bogler & Somach 2004; Short & Rinehart, 1992; Squire-Kelly, 2012). The EFL teachers in our study became empowered through their autonomous decision making about what and how they would learn and how they would use what they had learned (Patton, Parker, Tannehill, 2015), and through a reflective approach to the innovation they applied in their classrooms. What is more, the teamwork and the communities of practice the participants managed to establish contributed to the EFL teachers' sense of self-efficacy, status and impact. These communities also assisted the participants in meeting the immediate professional needs caused by the demands of a PD program, like the lack of ICT skills, insufficient subject content knowledge, or the requirement to provide multimedia teaching materials.

The implications of the study relate to teacher education programs, both preservice and inservice ones, to provide opportunities for student teachers and practising teachers for enhanced decision making, autonomy and reflection on what happens in the classroom. Since "curricula reforms suffer from time lags between recognition, decision making, implementation and impact"

(OECD, 2018: 6), empowering teachers to embrace changes can contribute to shortening the period between the introduction of a new curriculum and learning outcomes. Policy-makers should be aware of the significance of teacher empowerment for the success of changes needed to be introduced in education. Moreover, considering the recent changes introduced by the new primary curriculum in Serbia, and the requirement for enhanced cross-curricular approach to teaching, the need for PD in the area of TBI in teaching languages to young learners will constantly be rising, calling for more inservice programs in content-based language teaching.

Limitations of the study refer to self-reporting of all changes introduced into the participants' teaching practice. Observation of changes in attitudes, abilities and practices of teachers is needed to verify the self-reported data, and future studies should include both observation and interviews with EFL teachers for deeper understanding of changes introduced. Also, a survey of empowerment components through collection of quantitative data would be needed for further comparison and correlational analyses, especially when compared to learner achievement.

To sum up, empowerment stresses a key role of teachers in making professional decisions, and has in our study been linked to the PD program with the capacity to make a change in the professional career of teachers. A distinguished feature of *TBI in TEYL* inservice PD program was the opportunity for EFL teachers to try out the newly acquired knowledge and skills and to reflect on the program's success in terms of student engagement and their own growth. It is believed that such PD experience will have a lasting positive effect on the EFL teachers' attitudes to introducing changes and innovation into their regular practice, and further contribute to their lifelong learning practice and professional growth.

## References

Aliakbari, M. & Amoli, F. A. (2016). The effects of teacher empowerment on teacher commitment and student achievement. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(4), 649–657. Doi:10.5901/mjss.2016.v7n4p649

Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior*, Vol. 4 (pp. 71–81). Academic Press. (Reprinted in H. Friedman (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of mental health*. Academic Press, 1998).

Bogler, R. & Somech, A. (2004). Influence of teacher empowerment on teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 277–289. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.02.003>

Büyükyavuz, O. (2013). Professional development for Turkish teachers of English: Is it a must or luxury? *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 89, 363–367. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.861>

Cameron, L. (2008). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge University Press.

Cekić-Jovanović, O. & Mihajlović, A. (2018). Integrativni pristup u pedagoško-metodičkim idejama Sretena M. Adžića [Integrative approach in pedagogical ideas of Sreten Adžić]. *Uzdanica*, 15 (2), 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/8501>

Cekić-Jovanović, O. & Milanović, S. (2019). Students' attitudes to integrative teaching approach. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 7(2), 396–403.

Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. Falmer Press.

Edelenbos, P., Johnstone, R. M. & Kubanek, A. (2006): *The main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of languages to very young learners, languages for the children of Europe: Published research, good practice & main principles*. European Commission, Brussels: Education and Culture, Culture and Communication, Multilingualism Policy. Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/> <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/>

Enever, J. (2011). Introduction. In J. Enever (Ed.), *Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE)* (pp. 9–22). British Council. Available online at: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/earlylanguage-learning-europe>

Enever, J. (2016). What can we expect of an early start to foreign language learning in Europe today? *Gyermeknevelés*, 4(1), 2–10. <https://doi.org/10.21832/ENEVER8316>

Filipović, J., Vučo, J. & Djurić, Lj. (2007). Critical review of language education policies in compulsory primary and secondary education in Serbia. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 8(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.2167/cilp103.0>

Franklin, J. T. (2015). Embracing the future: empowering the 21st century educator. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 176, 1089–1096. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.584>

Garton, S., Copland, F. & Burns, A. (2011). *Investigating global practices in teaching English to young learners*. British Council.

Golubović-Ilić, I., Ćirković-Miladinović, I. & Cekić-Jovanović, O. (2010): Korelacija nastave Sveta oko nas i Engleskog jezika kao mogućnost inoviranja nastave [Integrative teaching of Science and English as an approach to teaching innovation]. In *Proceedings of IV International Conference – Current Pedagogical Challenges*. Subotica: Faculty of Teacher Education in Hungarian as a Minority Language, 711–724.

Guskey, T.R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 8, 381–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>

Harris, R. & Lázár, I. (2011). Overcoming resistance. In J. Huber, P. Mompoin-Gailard (Eds.), *Teacher education for change: The theory behind the Council of Europe Pestalozzi Program* (pp. 91–104). Council of Europe Publishing.

Hattie, J. (2015). The applicability of visible learning to higher education. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 1(1), 79–91. <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000021>

Huber, J. & Mompoin-Gaillard, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Teacher education for change: The theory behind the Council of Europe Pestalozzi Program*. Council of Europe Publishing.

Ingvarson, L., Meiers, M. & Beavis, A. (2003). Evaluating the quality and impact of professional development programs. In M. Meiers (Ed.), *Building teacher quality: research conference 2003 proceedings* (pp. 28–34). Melbourne: Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER). Retrieved from [https://research.acer.edu.au/professional\\_dev/3](https://research.acer.edu.au/professional_dev/3)

Ingvarson, L., Meiers, M. & Beavis, A. (2005). Factors affecting the impact of professional development programs on teachers' knowledge, practice, student outcomes & efficacy. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13(10), 1–26. ISSN 1068-2341. Retrieved from [https://research.acer.edu.au/professional\\_dev/1](https://research.acer.edu.au/professional_dev/1)

Klein, E. (2008). Learning, unlearning, and relearning: Lessons from one school's approach to creating and sustaining learning communities. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(1), 79–97. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ810659.pdf>

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From Method to Postmethod*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia (MoESTDS) (2017a). Bylaw on the first cycle primary education curriculum and the first grade curriculum. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia: Education Gazette*, 10/17. Retrieved from <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/viewdoc?uuid=f5a145fb-96a0-44ed-bcb3-b00cfb189a72>

Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia (MoESTDS) (2017b). Bylaw on general standards of achievement for the end of primary education for foreign languages. Retrieved from <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/ministarstva/pravilnik/2017/78/1/reg>

Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia (MoESTDS) (2018). Bylaw on the first cycle primary education curriculum and the second grade curriculum. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia: Education Gazette*, 16/18. Retrieved from <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/viewdoc?uuid=f5a145fb-96a0-44ed-bcb3-b00cfb189a72>

Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia (MoESTDS) (2019a). Bylaw on the first cycle primary education curriculum and the third grade curriculum. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia: Education Gazette*, 5/19. Retrieved from <https://zuov.gov.rs/download/3-razred-osnovne-skole-nastavni-program/>

Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia (MoESTDS) (2019b). Bylaw on the first cycle primary education curriculum and the fourth grade curriculum. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia: Education Gazette*, 5/19. Retrieved from <https://zuov.gov.rs/download/4-razred-nastavni-program/>

Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia (MoESTDS) (2019c). *Progress report on the Action plan for the implementation of the strategy for education development in Serbia by 2020*. Retrieved from <http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/AP-SROS-IZVESTAJ-15jun-Eng.pdf>

Murphy, V. A. & Evangelou, M. (Eds.) (2016). *Early childhood education in English for speakers of other languages*. British Council.

Murray, A. (2010). Empowering Teachers through Professional Development. *English Teaching Forum*, 48(1), 2–11.

Najdanović Tomić, J. (Ed.) (2017). *Opšti standardi postignuća za kraj osnovnog obrazovanja za strani jezik [General Standards of Foreign Language Learning Outcomes in Primary Education]*. Institute for education Quality and Evaluation.

OECD (2018). *The future of education and skills: Education 2030*. [https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20\(05.04.2018\).pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf)

Pantić, N. & Wubbels, T. (2010). Teacher competencies as a basis for teacher education – Views of Serbian teachers and teacher educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 694–703.

Pantić, N. & Wubbels, T. (2012). Competence-based teacher education: A change from Didaktik to curriculum culture. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 44(1), 61–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2011.620633>

Pantić, N., Wubbels, T. & Mainhard, T. (2011). Teacher competence as a basis for teacher education: Comparing views of teachers and teacher educators in five Western Balkan Countries. *Comparative Education Review*, 55(2), 165–188.

Patton, K., Parker, M. & Tannehill, D. (2015). Helping teachers help themselves: Professional development that makes a difference. *NASSP Bulletin*, 99(1), 26–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636515576040>

Pinter, A. (2011). *Children learning second languages*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230302297>

Pyle, A., Wade-Woolley, L. & Hutchinson, N. L. (2011). “Just listen to us”: The role of teacher empowerment in the implementation of responsiveness to intervention. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 57(3), 258–272.

Savić, V. & Shin, J. K. (2013). Contextualising language learning through stories in Serbia. *Teaching Innovations*, 26(1), 62–83.

Savić, V. & Shin, J. K. (2016). Improving quality of primary English language teaching in Serbia through *Theme-Based Instruction*. In: J. Teodorović (Ed.), *Improving Quality of Elementary Education* (pp. 328–338). Jagodina: Faculty of Education.

Savić, V. (2014). Tematska nastava engleskog jezika na mlađem uzrastu kao odgovor na zahteve obrazovanja u 21. veku [Theme-Based Instruction in Teaching English to Young Learners as a response to 21<sup>st</sup> century educational needs]. *Uzdanica*, XI (2), 123–138.

Shin, J. K. & Crandall, J. A. (2014). *Teaching young learners English: From theory to practice*. Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning/Cengage Learning.

Short, P. M. & Rinehart, J. S. (1992). School participant empowerment scale: Assessment of level of empowerment within the school environment. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 52, 951–960. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t07600-000>

Squire-Kelly, V. D. (2012). *The relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement*. (Electronic Theses and Dissertations: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/406>)

Stacy, M. (2013). Teacher-led professional development: Empowering teachers as self advocates. *The Georgia Social Studies Journal*, 3(1), 40–49.

Zein, S. (2019). Introduction to early language learning and teacher education: International research and practice. In S. Zein, S. Garton (Eds.), *Early language learning and teacher education: International research and practice* (pp. 1–16). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/ZEIN2654>

Zembylas, M. & Papanastasiou, E. C. (2005). Modeling teacher empowerment: The role of job satisfaction. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 11(5), 433–459. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13803610500146152>